

JAN KOSMOWSKI, MIC

MARIANS

in
1670–1788



*From Hermitage
to Evangelization*

PROMIC

*Facile, Domine Deo ago, quod officio natus, et ad laudem
prope a Heremitibus meo eligatur, quia facit, et bene conat
fieri. Non in campis intersecant verum parum considerant
quod dicitur: Ultimum Domine mi, quod supplex tua pre
cibus. Tunc Mariatis providentia, quod opem plurimum et
quod in forma usque vixit meae me dicit, et in hereditas
quod in hereditas, agitationibus et armonibus in. Amen.*



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to Evangelization*



JAN KOSMOWSKI, MIC

*Translated by
Marina Batiuk*

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CONTENTS

Introduction	9
Abbreviations	19
 1. BEGINNINGS: 1670–1677	25
From a Shepherd Boy to the Shepherd of the People of God	27
From <i>Oblatio to Fundatio Domus Recollectionis</i>	39
Establishing the House of Recollection in the Korabiew Forest:	
Hopes and Difficulties	45
 2. APOSTOLATE OR CONTEMPLATION: 1677–1723	53
The Establishment in New Jerusalem	55
Extinct Foundations from the Time of Father Papczyński	67
Canonical Erection of the Congregation of Marian Fathers;	
Efforts to Obtain Approval from the Holy See	71
Erection on a diocesan level: April 21, 1679	72
Privileges Granted to the Marians by King John Sobieski:	
June 2, 1679	76
Papal Brief <i>Cum Sicut Accepimus</i> : March 20, 1681	77
Second Canonical Erection of the Marians on a diocesan level:	
February 21, 1687	79
Episcopal Committee and Its Decrees: June 14, 1685	83
Second Canonical Erection of the Marians: February 21, 1687 ..	85
The Marians on the Papal Law: November 24, 1699	88
“Lest You Remain without Work in the Vineyard of the Lord”:	
Towards the Apostolate	99
New Foundations: Goźlin and Skórzec	107
The Marians in Skórzec	115
Crisis of Identity and Charism: Reformed Franciscans in Relation	
to the Marians	123

3. STRIVING TO FOLLOW THEIR OWN PATH: THE “ROSTKOVIAN DISPERSION”	139
Religious and Political Situation in Poland in the 18th Century; Political and Social-Economic Relations	141
Heralds of the Revival	149
The Religious Situation	153
Two Factions within the Marian Order; the Rift and Origin of the “Rostkovian Dispersion”	159
Persons Responsible for the “Rostkovian Dispersion”	168
Father Joachim of St. Ann Kozłowski	168
Bishop Adam Rostkowski, Suffragan of Lutsk	173
Joseph (Alexander) Wyszynski	176
Father Matthew of St. Casimir Krajewski	178
The struggle against the “dispersion.” Reforms and the Renewed Papal Approval of the Congregation: September 3, 1723	181
<i>Statuta Marianorum</i> : Marian Constitutions of 1723	188
First Steps towards Reforms	196
 4. FATHER CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI: STABILIZATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE CONGREGATION, 1723–1755	 201
Moderator of the New Generation of Marians: Novice Master, Teacher, Educator; Cooperating with the Grace of Vocation	203
Educator of the New Generation of Marians	207
The Time to Repair and Build: Under Control of the Reformed Franciscans	210
Father Casimir Wyszynski’s Activities in Rome and Victory over the Crisis: 1730–1733	214
Formation: The Novitiate and Higher Education	222
Religious Studies	228
Father Casimir Wyszynski’s Generalate: 1737–1741	234
The Second Generalate of Father Casimir Wyszynski: 1747–1750	240
Procurator General in Rome	244

The Dispute with Father Stefan Turczynowicz; In Defense of the Marians' Title, Rights, and Habit	246
Efforts to Acquire a Church in Rome	256

5. SLOW EXPANSION OF THE CONGREGATION

Bohemians in the Marian Order as the Source of Spiritual Strength, Renewal, and Expansion	263
The Teachers of the Marian Youth	276
Pastoral and Organizational Work	282
Marian Fathers as Chaplains	287
Chaplaincies at the Gentry's Households; Educational Work	294
General Superiors in 1750–1776. From Father Casimir Wyszynski, a Renovator, to Father Raymond Nowicki, a Reformer	307
Father Cajetan Wetycki (1750–1757); New Foundations	307
Father Cyprian of All Saints Fijałkowski (1757–1760)	313
Father Ladislaus of St. Valentine Kanobrocki (1760–1763).....	316
Father Hyacinth Wasilewski (1763–1770)	318
Father Hadrian Ignatowski (1770–1776)	321
Marians in Portugal	324
Beginnings; Adversities and Hopes	324
On the Road to Balsamão	333
Under Brother John of God	339
The Opening of Father Casimir's Beatification Process	347
The Development of the Congregation in Portugal Under Father Alexis Fischer.....	350
The Portuguese Vicariate under the Episcopal Jurisdiction	357

6. FATHER RAYMOND NOWICKI'S WORK ON REFORMS:

ITS ORIGIN AND IMPLEMENTATION	363
Marians in Rome: Searching for a Place	365
The Acquisition of St. Vitus Church and Monastery	384
Endeavors for the Beatification of Fathers Stanislaus and Casimir ...	397

Choosing Their Own Path; Separation from the Reformed	
Franciscans; Work of Father Candide Spourny	406
Father Norbert Gołkowski as the Superior and Procurator General ..	418
Implementation of the Reforms	425
CONCLUSION	433
Bibliography: Source Materials	439
Index of People	461
Index of Places	471
Appendix	476

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, as part of the “*Studia Marianorum*” series, Jan Kosmowski’s book “*Marians in the years 1787-1864*” was published. This work presents the earlier history of the Marian Order and serves as a continuation of a comprehensive study of their origins and history. It reveals the 17th-century beginnings of the Marian Order and its 18th-century history, which had not yet received exhaustive treatment. The 350th jubilee of the Marian Fathers, which the Order celebrated in 2020, became an excellent opportunity and inspiring motivation to tackle this subject. I hope this work will contribute to expanding our Marian awareness, gaining a fuller understanding of our heritage, and engaging in creative reflection on Marian history, closely intertwined with Poland’s fate.

For the Marian Fathers, the first century of their existence was a challenging but crucial period. During this time, the foundations of Marian legislation were being formed. The first papal approval occurred in 1699, and the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary* was adopted. The two subsequent papal approvals in 1723 and 1786 marked further significant milestones in the struggles for the existence of the Order, its charism, and its directions. The 18th century illustrates the difficulty of giving birth to a mature religious institution with its own profile and charism. From the Order’s establishment in 1670, the struggle for faithfulness to the Founder’s intentions and its independent development path continued for a hundred years.

This was also the century when all Marian monasteries and residences were established and organized. In the 19th century, no new foundations were created. During this period, three key figures played essential roles: the Founder, Stanislaus Papczyński, the Renewer, Casimir Wyszynski, and the Reformer, Raymond Nowicki. In this work, we aim to highlight their roles as inspirers of the religious path, the discipline of their confrères, and fidelity to their vocation and *Rule*. We also intend to introduce other Marians, bring to light the little-known, pious individuals who were

faithful followers of the Founder, and depict periods of spiritual revival, development, achievements, struggles for fidelity to the monastic ideals, as well as periods of stagnation, decline, crisis, but also efforts to overcome them.

Thanks to the beatification process (1767-1775) of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and the work of Marian scholars such as Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, Fr. Juozas Vaišnora, Fr. Stefan Sydry, Fr. Wacław Makoś, and Fr. Tadeusz Rogalewski on his legacy, the difficult years of the Marian Order from 1670 to 1701, its formative period, are known in considerable detail. Particularly valuable is the work written by the Marian historian, Fr. Stefan Sydry, titled “Organizacja marianów w XVIII wieku” (The Structure of the Marians in the 18th Century), defended as his doctoral thesis in 1930. It has a legal character and reveals Marian institutions, legislation, formation, monastic observance, and the care of the Marians for their development and evolution, including the significant reform by Fr. Raymond Nowicki. Another work related specifically to the 18th century is a ten-page article authored by a Marian, Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, titled *Stabilizacja i rozwój zakonu w XVIII wieku* (Stabilization and Development of the Order in the 18th Century).¹ Due to the article’s brevity, important issues concerning the development of the Order, ideological conflicts, and the long struggles to establish the Order’s own line of action and charism were only briefly touched upon. Some conclusions, such as the idea that the Order “did not develop due to its plebeian character,” were found to be incorrect. It’s also worth mentioning the contributions of the Lithuanian historian Fr. Jonas Totoraitis, although his research mainly focused on monasteries in Marijampole and Mirosław.

In the second half of the 18th century, the Marian Fathers also initiated the beatification process of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, which was a strong impetus for collecting testimonies from his life, any memories of his activities, and the graces experienced. It also provided a blessed opportunity to use these materials to document not only the life of Fr. Casimir, his fruitful, creative work within the Congregation, but also the general history of the Order from 1725-1755, the years during which he worked and contributed, revitalizing the Congregation and guiding it to broader horizons. Based on the documentation acquired

¹ All the works and documents discussed in the Introduction are listed in the *Bibliography*.

at that time and partially processed, Marian historians in the 20th century, such as Boleslaus Jakimowicz, Juozas Vaišnora, and Zygmunt Proczek, conducted new biographical studies of Fr. Casimir and published various articles related to his person, especially his apostolic and Marian activities. Additionally, various biographical and contributory works depict Fr. Casimir within the context of his era and contribute to a deeper understanding of the Congregation's history.²

The lack of comprehensive historical studies of the first century of the Marian Order can be attributed to various reasons, perhaps the most significant being the shortage of adequately prepared researchers. Another crucial factor was the tragic fate of Marian archives, which were affected by the suppression of monasteries in the Russian partition in 1864. As a result, many of these archives were plundered and destroyed. The Marian Fathers were the only religious order with all its monasteries in the Russian partition. After the suppression, only the monastery in Marijampole, Lithuania, remained active, where Marian priests from other monasteries were transferred, except those deported to Siberia. Various archival materials were also gathered there. Unfortunately, with the suppression of the last Marian monastery in 1904 and the complete takeover of the monastery buildings by the Soviets in 1940, they were almost entirely lost. Tremendous efforts were made to painstakingly search, collect, and reconstruct the documentation, which led to the reorganization of the archives in Marijampole and Warsaw.

During the Nazi occupation, the Marians' collections suffered destruction once again. During the Warsaw Uprising, the Marian archives stored in the Warsaw Archdiocesan Archive, the Treasury Archive, and the Marian archive in Bielany were destroyed by fire. The collections held in Marijampole also suffered partial damage. After World War II, the Marian Fathers in Poland again began the painstaking search for documents, reconstructing the archives and organizing them in the Marian center in Bielany, Warsaw. However, in 1954, officials from the Security Office (UB — Urząd Bezpieczeństwa) took over the entire Marian monastery in Bielany and secretly transported the religious to Gietrzwałd. All movable and immovable assets were taken from the Marians, and the library and archives were severely damaged.

² See *Bibliography*.

Much effort and dedication were required to locate, recover, and reconstruct many important lost documents. Some of them were irretrievably lost. It's important to emphasize the effort and commitment of two Marian historians, Fr. Jan Bukowicz and Fr. Tadeusz Górski, who saved Marians' documentation and organized a scholarly, albeit modest, archive.

The resumption of the beatification processes for Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and Fr. Casimir Wyszyński by the Marian Fathers in 1953, which had been interrupted during the partitions, provided a new impetus for extensive archival research focused on the periods in which these two Fathers lived, i.e., the 17th and 18th centuries. The majority of documents were found in the Vilnius archives. The Vilnius University Library (BUViL) holds approximately forty volumes of various documents from the Marian archive in Raśna, brought in 1864. Most of them pertain to the economic and financial affairs of the Raśna monastery. Many documents related to the history of the entire Congregation can be found in the Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA). These include records of Marian parish visitations, erection documents for monasteries and parishes, and *Protocollum*. A few documents have been discovered in the Wróblewski Library in Vilnius. Extensive documentation can be found in the Lithuanian Central Historical Archive (LVIA). It contains biographies of many Marian priests, documents related to pastoral matters, economics, the political involvement of the Marian Fathers, and extensive reports, particularly from the January Uprising period. The results of an inquiry conducted in the Historical Archive in Minsk, Belarus, and the archive in Vitebsk were not very productive. Various sources of ecclesiastical provenance can be found in the archives of the Diocese of Łomża (formerly of Sejny) and the Diocese of Podlasie in Siedlce, in the areas where Marian monasteries were located. Many important documents used in this work come from the Vatican archives (ASV). These include papal bulls and briefs granting successive approvals for the Marian Order and various privileges, indulgences, dispensations, and reservations given to the Marians. Several significant documents relate to the controversies with Fr. Józef Stefan Turczynowicz and his neophyte *Mariavites*, the separation from the Reformed Franciscans, the acquisition of the church and monastery of St. Vitus in Rome, as well as

correspondence with the nunciature. The primary source material used in this work is the collection of resolutions, Chapter decrees, privileges of the Apostolic See, and letters from the superiors general, as found in the *Capitula generalia 1702-1999*. Another vital document is the *Protocollum Ordinis*, spanning 460 pages, which contains documentation regarding the beginnings of the Congregation, legal issues, the obtained diocesan and papal approvals, as well as a detailed history of

DECRETA - ORDINATIONES

CAPITULORUM CONGREGATIONUMQUE GENERALIUM M.I.C. 1702-1999

Item connexae nonnullae LITTERAE ALIAQUE DOCUMENTA

**Edidit
Wacław Makoś MIC**

Puszcza Mariańska 2001

the establishment of institutions in the Korabiew Forest, New Jerusalem, Goźlin, and Skórzec. Here, we find an interesting description of the controversial generalate of Fr. Matthew Krajewski, who, as the first to break with the eremitic tradition of the Marians, sent several of them on a mission to Lithuania and allowed for pastoral work in the country. Unfortunately, the *Protocollum Ordinis* was kept up only to the year 1744. It's worth noting that each monastery maintained its own *Protocollum*, in which the most important documents and decrees related to the entire Order were recorded, along with acts specific to each monastery. Eight such protocols from individual monasteries in the 18th century have survived.³ A vital resource is the *Leges Marianae*, a collection of Marian legislation compiled by Fr. Wacław Makoś in 1999. It brings together various editions of the Marian Rule, Marian Constitutions, and several significant generals' letters. The mentioned collections of documents, mainly Constitutions, Rules, resolutions, decrees, orders from Chapters, and the superiors general, have a legal and legislative character. They set the congregation's institutional framework and indicated the directions for its activities. Unfortunately, very few testimonies and documents that would provide insights into the daily functioning of individual monasteries, the monastic life, or the interactions with the surrounding community have been preserved. Reconstructing even a portion of this Marian reality required meticulous, thorough research, detailed analysis, comparisons drawn from documentation fragments, and critical scrutiny and caution when evaluating private, subjective letters sent to Rome, many of which have been preserved.

The beginnings and 18th-century history of the Marian community are closely linked to the history of Poland. For the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, this period marked the increasing political and military dominance of neighboring and emerging powers such as Prussia, Russia, and Austria, which were already attempting to negotiate the partitions of Polish territories among themselves. They enticed Polish elites with various promises to gain support and pull them to their side. During this time, the hidden goal of hostile empires was to push the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into institutional chaos and military weakness by blocking any reforms that could potentially strengthen the

³ See *Bibliography*.

In Nomine Domini Jesu Christi
 Protocolum

Ordinis Beatae Mariae Virginis
 Immaculatae Conceptionis Congre-
 gationis Polonae. Deprecatorum &
 Parochorum Suffragatrix
 sub Regula Imitationis Decem Virtutum
 seu Decem Beneplacitorum B. Mariae V.

In quo
 Origo, Erectio, Admissio, Approbatio, Le-
 gitima Superiorum Electiones, Regula,
 Statuta, Ordinarium, Fundationes, ac
 insignes Benefactores, nonnullaq; alia
 scitu digna

Ad Consolationem huius Congrega-
 tionis R. P. Patrum ac Fratrum
 futurarum, & hanc perpetuam memo-
 riam

Connotantur
 Cum Consensu & supplicatione totius
 Congregationis per Ad. Adm. Reveren-
 d. Patrem Joachimum a S. Anna
 Praepositum Generalem

state. They sought to gain the support of ambitious and arrogant magnates and a corrupt part of the nobility to oppose any attempts to repair Poland. Nevertheless, many secular and religious people were aware of the threat facing the state and the need for reforms. Among them were numerous clergy, including bishops, priests, monks, and, notably, the Marian Fathers, who tried to counteract these efforts.

In the first half of the 18th century, the Marian Congregation was in a state of stagnation. The congregation, entangled in disputes over charism, identity, strict dependency on the Reformed Franciscans, the "Rostkovian dispersion," and embroiled in painful controversies with Józef Turczynowicz's Mariavites, who sought to take over the Marian legacy and call themselves Marians, did not thrive. A turning point in this dire situation was the activity of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, who initiated a positive impulse that served as a prelude to significant changes and the consolidation of the Marian charism in line with the ideals of the Founder.

The second half of the 18th century was a period of expansion and development for the Marians. Successive superiors general who took office after Fr. Casimir Wyszynski were his disciples, dedicated and pious religious. This led to the initiation of beatification processes and new monasteries and foundations, including the Marian mission in Portugal and the St. Vitus monastery and church in Rome. It also involved extensive pastoral work, evident in the creation of the first Marian parishes, the opening of parish schools, and the establishment of small hospitals for the poor.

This work also demonstrates how the Marians engaged in significant matters concerning Poland, defending the Church, culture, and Christian traditions. We want to show how they responded to the educational, religious, social, and national needs of the homeland and how they took a leading role in defending these values and putting them into practice.

For methodological reasons, the Marian history discussed here has been divided into three 40-year periods, which clearly differ in prerogatives, tasks, and the course and dynamics of the Order's development. The first period covers 1670-1710, the years marked by the authority and activity of Fr. Papczyński and his brethren. During this time, the charism takes shape, traditions are established, and the character of the Order is

defined. It is also when the first four Marian establishments are founded: the Korabiew Forest (1673), New Jerusalem (1677), Goźlin (1699), and Skórzec (1710-1711).

The second period encompasses the years 1710-1749, marked by significant controversies and disputes over the fidelity to the ideals of Father Founder that plagued the Order, threatening its destruction. They resulted in stagnation, a standstill, and a lack of new foundations. For forty years, no new ones were established. The turning point was initiated by the actions of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, which led to overcoming the concept imposed by the Reformed Franciscans, spiritual and moral renewal, stability, and growth.

The third period spans from 1749 to 1788. It is characterized by renewal and growth due to the reforms by Fr. Wyszyński, the efforts of Fr. Raymond Nowicki and Fr. Candide Spourne, and several zealous brethren. The Marians demonstrated strong, multifaceted expansion despite challenging political conditions, as these were the times of the Saxon rule, followed by the First Partition of Poland. They established nine new institutions in Poland, three in Portugal, and one in Rome. Their activities go beyond pastoral work, engaging in education, running elementary schools, establishing hospitals for the poor, and organizing missions and retreats. This stage concludes with their independence from the Reformed Franciscans, a return to the legacy of Fr. Papczyński, the publication of reformed Constitutions, and the choice of their own religious path within the order.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Archdiocesan Archives in Poznan: collection APS 10 (Acta Processuum Sacrorum). The present book uses Latin text transcribed by Father Wacław Makoś.
ACPR	Archives of St. Stanislaus Polish Church in Rome.
ADS	Archdiocesan Archives in Siedlce.
AGM	General Archives of the Marian Fathers in Rome.
<i>Album mortuorum</i>	<i>Patrum ac Fratrum Marianorum.</i>
APPM	Archives of the Marian Fathers' Polish Province in Warsaw. APPM, VII A 4, Puszcza Korabiewska [Korabiew Forest], Regesta perceptarum [...], 1742–1788. APPM, VII A 23, Rejestra perceptarum et expensarum [...], Conv. Goslinensis A.D. 1770–1803.
Arch. Nunz. Vars.	Archives of the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw.
Arch. Nunz. Vien.	Archives of the Apostolic Nunciature in Vienna.
ASV	Secret Vatican Archives.
AZakS	Archives of the Marian religious house in Skórzec.
BUViL	Library of the University of Vilnius. Department of manuscripts. Used as signature: ABUV — Archives of Library of the University of Vilnius.
Cap. Gen.	Decreta — Ordinationes Capitulorum Congregationumque Generalium M.I.C. 1702–1999, Puszcza Mariańska 2001.
Doc. Viln.	Documenta Vilnensia I-II (two volumes without pagination). (BUViL).
<i>Dokumenty mariańskie</i>	<i>Dokumenty mariańskie z XVII i XVIII wieku</i> [Documents of the Marians from the 17 th and 18 th Centuries], compiled by Frs. S. Sydry and J. Bukowicz [Ed.], Puszcza Mariańska, 2004. This is a collection of valuable

- documents from the Treasury Archives in Warsaw, which burned down in 1944.
- EL *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, I-VI, Boston, 1970–1978.
- El. Alph. *Elenchus Alphabeticus Marianorum ab initio Congregationis usque ad renovationem*, Romae, 1961.
- Enc. Kość. *Encyklopedia Kościelna* (Nowodworskiego) [Nowodworski's Church Encyclopedia], Warszawa — Płock — Włocławek, 1873–1933 [33 volumes].
- Enc. Katol. *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, [Catholic Encyclopedia], Lublin, 1973–2014 [22 volumes].
- LCVA Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybinis Archyvas [Lithuanian Central Academic Archives] [4/4].
- LVIA Litewskie Państwowe Archiwum Historyczne [Lithuanian State Historical Archives].
- Index alphabeticus* *Index alphabeticus nominum et Cognominum Religiosorum et specificatio Conventum PP. Marianorum*, LCVA 1676, Ap. 1, 7.
- Leporini Leporini M., *Vita Fundatoris Congregationis Polonae Ordinis Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis synoptice elucidatur, Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 634-650.
- Listy Collection of 23 extensive significant letters written by the Marians from the Procure in Rome regarding the Order's independence from the Reformed Franciscans and the functioning of the Marians' Roman house and St. Vitus Church. The documents are in poor condition, with no pagination and frequently no date; thus, we assigned them consecutive numbers. Some letters represent extensive official missives addressed to the Order superiors, such as Fr. Spourny's letter No. 4. Its printed version contains approximately 100,000 printer's characters. The letters are preserved in: Prot. Wet. (BUViL), F4-A4559.
- MIC Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary (title of the community used since its reform in 1909).

Navikevicius	Navikevicius G. A., <i>Stanisław di Gesù Maria Papczyński 1631-1701. Scolopio e Fondatore della Congregazione dei Padri Mariani</i> , Roma, 1960.
OIC	Ordo Immaculae Coceptionis Beatae Virginis Mariae Clericorum Regularium Marianorum (the community's full title used prior to its reform in 1909).
PAPW	Processus Apostolica Auctoritate in Curia Posnaniensi constructi super Virtutibus et Miraculis in specie Servi Dei Casimiri a S. Joseph Wyszyński, Sac. Prof. Congregationis Clericorum Regularium Marianorum Immaculae Conceptionis B.V.M.
<i>Pisma zebrane</i>	Św. Stanisław Papczyński, <i>Pisma zebrane</i> [Collected Works], 2 nd edition, Warszawa, 2016.
<i>Positio</i> , Papczyński	Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, Officium Historicum, Poznaniensis Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Stanislai a Jesu Maria Papczyński, Fundatoris Clericorum Regularium Immaculae Conceptionis B.V.M. (+1701), <i>Positio super Introductione Causae et super virtutibus ex officio concinnata</i> , Romae, 1977.
<i>Positio</i> , Wyszyński	Mirandensis seu Brigantien. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Casimiri a S. Joseph Wyszyński, sacerdoti professi Cler. Reg. Marianorum Immaculae Conc. B.M.V. (+1755), <i>Positio super Introductione Causae et super virtutibus ex officio concinnata</i> , Romae, 1986.
Prot. Balsam.	Protocollum [Balsamanensis] Ordinis Mariani Immaculae Conceptionis B.V. Mariae [...] conscriptum a P. Father Alexio de Octaviano Fischer [...], Anno Domini 1758 (manuscript AGM).
Prot. Gosł.	Protocollum [Goslinensis] Ordinis Immac. Concep. Congregationis Polonae Defunctorum et Parochorum Suffragatricis sub Regula Imitationis Decem Virtutum seu Decem Beneplacitorum B. Mariae V. [...] per R. P. Carolum a SS. Angelis Praesidentem Goslinensem procuratum Anno a Christo Nato Millesimo Septingentesimo trigesimo primo Die 16 Junij (mns. of the Arch. Dioc. of Lublin A. 235).

Prot. Korab.	Protocolus Conventus Korabieviensis. Ab Anno Domini 1731 usque ad Annum Domini 1752 conscriptus et annotatus (manuscript APPM).
Prot. Mariamp.	Protocollum Conventus Mariampolensis (1783–1862), copy at AGM.
Prot. Ord.	Protocollum Ordinis Beatae Mariae Virginis Immaculatae Conc. Congr. Polonae, Defunctorum et Parochorum Suffragatricis sub Regula Imitationis Decem Virtutum seu Decem Beneplacitorum B. Mariae V. [...] Anno Virginei partus 1705 in Colle Mariano Eremi Corabieviensi die 13 Maii (manuscript AGM).
Prot. Rasn.	Protoculum Conventus Rasnensis Patrum Marianorum Inchoatum ab introductione celebrata Anno 1749 die 8 Junij sub Praesidentia R.ndi P. Isidori Thaut [Taudt] (BUViL, Library of the University of Vilnius F4-A390).
Prot. Rom.	Protocollum Variarum Literarum Romanorum in negotijs ac Causis Ordinis Nostri Clericorum Reg. Marianorum. Datarum sub Praepositum Reverend in Christo P. Raymundi Nowicki, STL. Praepositi, ac Visitoris Generalis [...] ab jus Secretario R. P. Carlo Hondlewski copiatum Anno 1782, compilatum.
Prot. Skórc.	Protocollum Conventus Skórcensis, 1783–1796 (APPM-VII A 6/1 i ASM).
Prot. Wet.	Protocullum triennale Admodum Reverendi Patris Cajetani Wetycky, [...] Incoeptum Anno 1750 Praepositurae nostrae Anno primo die 28 Novembris, 1750-1778 (BUViL, Library of Vilnius University F4-A4559).
PSB	Polski Słownik Biograficzny [Polish Dictionary of Biographies], vols. 1–51, 1935–.
Sł. Geogr.	Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich [Dictionary of Geography of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries], F. Sulimierski, B. Chlebowski, W. Walewski, and J. Krzywicki [Ed.], vols. I–XIV, Warszawa, 1880–1895.
<i>Tabula generalis</i>	Tabula generalis Patrum ac Fratrum vivorum Ordinis Clericorum Regularium Marianorum sub Titulo

- Immac. Conceptionis B. V. Mariae cum annotatione [...] per AVP., Carolum Hondlewski secretarium Ordinis Anno 1786, die 3 Iulij conscripta [LCVA, Lithuanian Central Academic Archives — 1676, Ap. 1, 7].
- Wyszyński, *Diariusz* *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii* [Diary of Activities in Rome and Portugal], in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów. Wybór pism o. Casimira Wyszyńskiego* [Guardian of the Marians' Spiritual Heritage. Selected Letters of Father Casimir Wyszyński], Z. Proczek [Transl. and Ed.], Warszawa — Stockbridge, 2004.
- Wyszyński, *Żywot* *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego* [Life of the Venerable Servant of God Father Stanislaus Papczyński], in: Zygmunta Proczeck [Transl. and Ed.], [Guardian of the Marians' Spiritual Heritage. Selected Letters of Father Casimir Wyszyński], Warszawa — Stockbridge, 2004, 46–167.
- n.d. No date.

1

BEGINNINGS:

1670-1677

From a Shepherd Boy to the Shepherd of the People of God

Many works have been written about the life and works of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. The oldest biography was written four years after he died in 1705, based on eyewitness accounts by Fr. Manseuto Leporini, a Reformed Franciscan.¹ Another valuable biography was written in 1754 by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński in Portugal, relying also on witness testimonies.² Numerous detailed studies have been conducted on the life and work of the Founder of the Marian Fathers, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, especially in recent decades. His beatification in 2007 and subsequent canonization in 2016 inspired research in this area, leading to extensive archival inquiries and in-depth studies.

The subject of this chapter will not be another extensive biography of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, especially since, as mentioned earlier, this topic has been thoroughly covered in several significant contemporary scholarly works.³ Instead, I would like to focus on particular circumstances of his life that profoundly influenced his later choices and decisions.

¹ Mansueto Leporini, *Vita Fundatoris Congregationis Polonae Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, (ca 1705), Prot. Ord., 3-16, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, doc. XVII, pp. 624-650, [afterwards: Leporini].

² Casimir (Casimir) Wyszyński, *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanisłai a Jesu Maria Papczyński*, manuscript of 1754; In Polish: *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego* in: Zygmunt Proczek [transl. and ed.], *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów. Wybór pism o. Casimira Wyszyńskiego*, Warszawa — Stockbridge 2004, pp. 49-167, [afterwards: Wyszyński, *Stróż*].

³ Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, Officium Historicum, *Poznaniensis Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Stanisłai a Jesu Maria Papczyński, Fundatoris Clericorum Regularium Immaculae Conceptionis B. V. M. (†1701) Positio super Introductione Causae et super virtutibus ex officio concinnata*, Romae 1977, [afterwards: *Positio*, Papczyński]; Janusz Kumala, *Błogosławiony Stanisław Papczyński Założyciel Zgromadzenia Księża Marianów. Przewodnik bibliograficzny*, in: *Ephemerides Marianorum. Studia historyczno-teologiczne*, t. 2, (2013), pp. 605-615; Tadeusz Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński (1631-1701). Założyciel Zgromadzenia Księża Marianów. Inspirator mariańskiej szkoły duchowości*, Lublin — Warszawa 2001 [in English translation: Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701). Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. Inspirer of the Marian School of Spirituality]. These works contain both the bibliography of works on the subject as well as of related studies. It should be emphasized that as a

In every person's life, significant existential events act as if they were opening a gateway to another reality. They bring us closer to what is intangible in our daily hustle and influence our future path, which we now view differently. In the life of Stanislaus Papczyński, one of these harrowing experiences was his time spent in Lviv, which his biographer, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, referred to as the "Lviv Cross."

Young John Papczyński arrived in Lviv in 1646, intending to dedicate himself to his studies.⁴ However, after a few months of various misfortunes, he fell ill with a disease that led to a high fever, nearly costing him his life. This debilitating illness lasted for 15 weeks, leaving the patient in a lamentable condition with his body covered in a loathsome rash. The owners of the house where he was staying at the time, fearing that he had contracted leprosy and driven by dread of this terrible disease, heartlessly cast him out onto the street.⁵ John sought refuge in a shelter but was not allowed to stay there. Suddenly, he became a homeless beggar, sick and suffering, without human help, known only to God. In this dire state, a harsh winter arrived, bringing snow and bitter cold, making his situation even more tragic. Helpless in the face of overwhelming circumstances, alone, he wandered the streets of Lviv, sleeping under the open sky or seeking shelter from the cold in haystacks outside the city. He survived on what he could beg, often in the company of some mysterious young man. On Christmas Eve, his symptoms worsened, leaving him completely drained. Utterly forsaken, buried in a haystack, John contemplated the Savior, who was born in a stable for our redemption, and had was His

result of the beatification, three volumes of testimonies, conferences, and catechesis dedicated to Fr. Papczyński were compiled at the initiative of Fr. Jan Rokosz, the superior general. They are: *And that Your Fruit Would Remain. Materials of the General Committee on Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Father Stanislaus Papczyński, Founder of the Marians*, Rome — Warsaw, 2008; *Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński — Father and Guide of the Marian Vocation*, Warsaw — Rome, 2009; and *Nasz Ojciec. Marianie o swym Założycielu i jego beatyfikacji*, Warszawa 2010. Upon the initiative and under the direction of Father Andrzej Pakuła, a book containing all the preserved works and letters of Father Papczyński was released under the title of *Pisma zebrane*, Warszawa 2007.

⁴ João Teixeira assessed his decision to travel to Lviv as follows: "It was God's will for Stanislaus, as a young soldier, to train himself in distant lands in enduring the sufferings and hardships that awaited him in Lviv." See João Teixeira, *Vida do Veneravel Servo de Deos, o. Padre Estanislao de Jesus Maria, Fundador da Congregaam e Ordem dos Religiosos*, Lisboa 1757, translated into Polish by M. Wiśniewski, MIC, Stockbridge, 1962, p. 16, [afterwards: Teixeira].

⁵ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 60. Casimir Wyszyński states that the fever lasted for 15 weeks, while João Teixeira mentions a period of as long as 15 months. Cf. Teixeira, n. 19.

cradle.⁶ In this terrible illness and isolation, he resembled the biblical Job and the beggar Lazarus, covered in sores and festering wounds. After several days, he crawled out of the haystack and returned to the city. When he reached the first house, he managed to crawl into the hallway but then collapsed, completely exhausted. The family living there showed him mercy and allowed him to stay. He became like the biblical Lazarus in this place: household dogs would come to him meekly, licking his wounds and relieving his suffering. According to Teixeira, “God, who puts to death and gives life to His servants, who punishes and heals for His glory and our benefit, came to [John’s] extraordinary rescue in the unique manner proper to Him alone.”⁷ On the threshold of his religious life, Stanislaus Papczyński also recalled this event and gratefully praised God for delivering him from his numerous misfortunes: “May You be forever blessed, O Lord, and grant that, after [doing] so many evil deeds, I may do good deeds in my vocation, since I truly recognize that, of myself, I am not capable of doing anything that is good. You, though, who read this, do not be surprised by the things I have presented, since I considered it unworthy to hide the goodness of God, and I wanted to encourage you to praise God’s omnipotence and His care for us.”⁸

He experienced the mystery of death and approached the threshold of death. He suffered rejection and exile from people, complete deprivation, poverty, and solitude. Still, he survived, which precisely led him to the conviction that above all is the Almighty God, His mercy, and Divine Providence. From then on, he saw the hidden presence of God in every suffering and cross. In these dramatic events, Fr. Wyszynski also recognized God’s unfathomable plan: “The most gracious and merciful God taught and primed the young man to become the Founder of an Institute bringing help to souls suffering in Purgatory. He shaped the future architect of that assistance through patience and pain so that he would learn — after being personally subjected to sufferings and trials — to empathize with souls in their extremely hard torments and to show them

⁶ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 61.

⁷ Teixeira, n. 25.

⁸ S. Papczyński, *Secrets of Conscience*, in: Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, *Selected Writings*, Warsaw-Stockbridge, 2021, p. 853.

greater love since he also suffered and knew compassion.”⁹ João Teixeira also believed that God had healed young John because of his destiny “to found in the Church of God the Order of His Most Blessed Mother.”¹⁰ On the other hand, Georgio Navikevicius claimed that Papczyński didn’t try to explain or justify the “Lviv Cross” to himself: neither the illness nor the healing, but once healed, he dedicated his entire life to the Most Blessed Mother of God.¹¹

After learning of his son’s severe fate and fearing contagion, John’s father, Jan, brought him back from Lviv to their home in Podegrodzie in mid-May 1650. However, this man who [...] *gratis victum non dabat* (did not give food away for free)¹² — as Casimir Wyszynski remarked — decided that his son would tend sheep. Being a shepherd was not an honorable occupation, especially since John Papczyński was already a well-traveled and relatively educated sixteen-year-old then. João Teixeira noted, “[Papczyński] found himself condemned by his father to guard the sheep on the mountainside as some punishment and scorn. His father, discouraged by many adversities, grew reluctant to support him.”¹³ This event may seem trivial, but for young John Papczyński, the new occupation and the solitude with God and nature proved crucial in his life. It also became a true lesson in humility for him. In everything, he saw the will of God, as evidenced by his confession in the *Secrets of Conscience*, which he wrote immediately after recounting the “Lviv Cross.” Praising God and thanking Divine Providence for guiding him through his parents, he wrote: “Thus do I thank God, that by His Will, I was then required by my parents to pasture sheep (I dare to admit this with a peaceful conscience), since while I was in the pastures amid the flock, I kept my conscience pure and holy! O Lord! I humbly ask this of You, that this, the Providence of Your Majesty — which I expect [to guide me] in the future and in which I trust — guide me until the end of my life, that You may be praised in all of my deeds, thoughts, and words. Amen.”¹⁴

⁹ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 62.

¹⁰ Teixeira, n. 25.

¹¹ Georgio A. Navikevicius, *Stanislao di Gesù Maria Papczyński (1631-1701). Scolopio e Fondatore della Congregazione dei Padri Mariani*, Roma 1960, p. 63, [afterwards: Navikevicius].

¹² Introduction to *Secrets of Conscience*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 853.

¹³ Teixeira, n. 30.

¹⁴ S. Papczyński, *Secrets of Conscience*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 853-854.

Worthy of pause and reflection is another event in John Papczyński's life, which serves as a testament to his heroic defense of faith and profound conviction that Divine Providence watches over him and his calling while also pointing the way to the future. One day, while already a cleric, he was walking the streets of Warsaw with a confrère when he was unexpectedly attacked by a Swedish soldier stationed there along with the occupying troops of King Charles Gustav.¹⁵ The Swedish soldier, a Protestant, filled with hatred for the young cleric defending the dogmas of the Catholic faith, drew his saber to take his life. John "ferreently wishing to shed his blood in the defense of the Faith, knelt and bowed his head to receive the blow."¹⁶ For young Papczyński, this was such a profound experience and important testimony that, despite many later dramatic events, it did not fade from his memory. After forty-five years, he described it in his will: "I depart from this earthly life in the Roman Catholic faith, for which I was ready to shed my blood during the Swedish War. When I was going from the [Old] City with my companion near [the church of] the Dominican Fathers, a heretical soldier attacked me with an unsheathed sword. Meanwhile, my companion (although he was German) fled, [as] I, having knelt down, presented my neck to be cut [through] but by Divine Providence, it so happened that I was not wounded at all, even though I was quite strongly struck three times. However, for about an hour and a half, I experienced enormous pain."¹⁷ The willingness to martyrdom in defense of faith and the honor of the Most Blessed Mother was an extraordinary act of heroism and an expression of his most profound beliefs and values that he cherished more than life itself. Casimir Krzyżanowski, a researcher of his life, summarized this event as follows: "This zeal, readiness, and submission, with which the novice Stanislaus accepted the chance to give his own life in defense of true Faith are worthy of admiration."¹⁸ At that time, he was ready to

¹⁵ It was the year 1656. Warsaw was occupied by Swedish troops, who engaged in looting and committed numerous crimes. Cf. Władysław Czapliński, "Zarys dziejów Polski do roku 1864," Kraków, 1985, pp. 285-289. For information about the behaviors and abuses of Swedish soldiers in Warsaw, see: Jan Wegner, "Warszawa w latach Potopu Szwedzkiego 1655-1657," Wrocław, 1957, pp. 48-60.

¹⁶ Teixeira, n. 40; Leporini, n. 23.

¹⁷ S. Papczyński, *Second Testament*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 934.

¹⁸ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 31.

sacrifice his life to defend the true faith. In the future, he desired that the Order he founded would embrace the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary as its foundation and a special sign of the religious community; that it would be a constant source of strength and true joy.

Analyzing these crucial events from the life of Stanislaus Papczyński, about which he himself provided significant testimony, one can reiterate, as João Teixeira did, that the Almighty God tested him as if in fire, shaped him, and preserved him in His Providence for more outstanding tasks in his monastic service.¹⁹ All the painful experiences from which he emerged victorious and more mature, thanks to God's care and assistance, made God incredibly close to him, present in his daily life, a friend worthy of complete trust and supreme love. His spiritual maturation and transformation were perfectly presented by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone in the sermon delivered during the beatification Mass in Licheń: "Gradually the Lord transformed the little shepherd-boy, who found it so hard to study and was physically so frail, into a preacher who drew crowds through his wisdom filled with erudition and profound mysticism; into a confessor whose spiritual counsel was sought after even by the great men of Church and State; into a well-prepared teacher and an author of various works published in numerous editions; into the founder of the first Polish religious institute for men, the Congregation of the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary."²⁰

The psycho-physical, intellectual, and spiritual maturation of the young man up to his self-offering to God was happening in the challenging 17th century. These were times marked by "fire and sword," and the most tragic period, known as the "Deluge," truly deserved that biblical designation. The historical context included three devastating Russo-Polish wars, Cossack uprisings, the Khmelnytsky Uprising, ruinous Swedish invasions, wars with the Ottomans, and the first instance of *liberum veto*²¹ in 1652. In incredibly evocative and accurate words,

¹⁹ Teixeira, n. 40.

²⁰ Tarcisio Bertone, *Homily delivered in Licheń (Poland) during the Mass of beatification of the Servant of God Father Stanislaus Papczyński on Sept. 16, 2007*, at: www.stanislawpapczynski.org/beatification/homilies

²¹ Cf. Adam Zamoyski, *Własną drogą. Osobliwe dzieje Polaków i ich kultury*, Kraków 2002, p. 189; in: W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, p. 309. *Liberum veto*, in Polish history, the legal right of each member of the Sejm (legislature) to defeat by his vote alone any measure

Henryk Sienkiewicz depicted this historical landscape in his novel *With Fire and Sword*: “Wolves howled on the ruins of former towns, and the once flourishing lands became a mighty graveyard.”²² The 17th century was also a period of fratricidal conflicts among Poles and Lithuanians, marked by events like the Zebrzydowski and Lubomirski Rebellions. It was a time of power struggles, rivalries for authority, precedence, wealth, and the number of peasant souls. Poland, plagued by anarchy, alcoholism, and magnates’ self-interest, was torn apart by numerous wars and pandemics (in the 17th century, plagues struck the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as many as sixteen times, sometimes lasting for several years).²³ The country sank deeper into chaos and poverty, and foreign armies hostile to Catholicism frequently crossed the land, sowing destruction, devastating towns and villages, destroying crops, and plundering human wealth. “These were people who knew no divine or human laws. [...] They adorned themselves with [church] vestments. They drank from chalices and committed cruel murders. They roasted and killed priests, nobles, and common folk. [...] The Kalmyks came from distant lands, for they dwell in Asia. This Kalmyk onslaught [...] their path was marked because there was not a single windowpane left intact there.”²⁴

The devastation of the country, the death of people, ruined cities, destroyed villages and fields — a harbinger of the impending doom of the Commonwealth. This reality shaped the personality and sensitivity of Stanislaus Papczyński, leaving a distinct mark on his psyche and later mission. In the future, he would become involved in providing spiritual assistance to those who perished in wars and succumbed to epidemics.

Stanislaus Papczyński, witnessing the tragedy and humiliation of the people, material poverty, and the devastation of the country, experienced this very painfully. But even more so, he was pained by the moral deprivation of the people, by evil, corruption, the violation of God’s and human rights, by the terrible oppression of the ordinary people, by the

under consideration or to dissolve the Sejm and nullify all acts passed during its session (www.britannica.com).

²² Henryk Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword*, transl. by Jeremiah Curtin; Little, Brown, and Company, Boston, 1904.

²³ Franciszek Giedroyc, *Mór w Polsce w wiekach ubiegłych*, Warszawa 1899, pp. 53-58.

²⁴ Paweł Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*, Part III, *Dzieje agonii*, Warszawa 1982, p. 90.

drunkenness and excesses of the nobility. Faced with internal discord about these injustices and abuses, a man of great social sensitivity was born within him. In the future, as a monk, he will become a warrior for God who will vigorously oppose these abuses. The love of God will compel him to proclaim the Gospel primarily to simple, poor, socially disadvantaged, spiritually neglected, and those in danger of death. He will do this armed with humility, patience, kindness, wisdom, an insightful and educated mind, love for his neighbors, trust in God's mercy and the power of Divine Providence, and an immense, unwavering devotion to the Blessed Mother to whom he was entrusted even in his mother's womb. His mission, which became the reform of society's customs under the banner of the Immaculate, arose from deep faith. The fruit of his Marian devotion, shaped first by his mother and family, then by the Church and the nation, would be his total dedication to God and service to Mary, the Immaculate Mother of Christ.

Stanislaus Papczyński received a solid education and experience in various schools: parish schools, Jesuit and Piarist institutions, which he attended in different places, including Podegrodzie, Stary Sącz, Podoliniec, Lviv, Jarosław, Rawa Mazowiecka, and Warsaw. This led some to accuse him of being a wanderer, but such a movement was often due to various disasters, epidemics, and wars that forced teachers to close schools and relocate students from one place to another. After completing his philosophical studies, the twenty-three-year-old John was already a mature and fully formed individual. According to Casimir Krzyżanowski, his vocation to religious life finally took shape in 1649-1650 during his time at the Piarist College in Podolińec.²⁵ Mansueto Leporini states that even then, "most notable by spiritual qualities: he was profoundly charismatic, capable of mortification, and a lover of prayer."²⁶ After completing his studies in June 1654, John returned to his parental home, where he spent about ten days "leading a monastic life."²⁷ In Podegrodzie, to dissuade him from the idea of joining a monastery, (his parents) "found him a suitable bride with [a] rich dowry."²⁸ However, the family's persistence

²⁵ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. XXXI, 24-27.

²⁶ Leporini, n. 15.

²⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 26.

²⁸ Stefan Sydry, *O. Stanisław Papczyński i jego dzieło w świetle dokumentów*, Warszawa 1937, p. 33.

in this matter only accelerated his decision to leave the village and join the Piarist order. Leporini recorded: "Following the example of St. Peter of Alcantara and passionately desiring a higher perfection, he [John] decided to serve exclusively God and His Most Blessed Mother."²⁹

On July 2, 1654, John Papczyński entered the novitiate of the Piarists in Podoliniec, donned the religious habit, and took the name Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. It isn't easy to pinpoint what led him to choose this particular order. He stated that "the author of his vocation" was Fr. Wacław Opatowski. Yet, as defined by its name, the Order of Clerics Regular of the Poor of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools, the Order's charism may have played a more significant role in his choice. This charism encompassed what was dear and close to him: devotion to Mary, teaching children and youth, and a life of poverty.

On July 22, 1656, Stanislaus Papczyński took his religious vows. On March 12, 1661, in Brzozów near Rzeszów, he received the long-awaited priestly ordination from the hands of Bishop Stanislaus Sarnowski of Przemyśl.³⁰ In the Piarist congregation, Fr. Stanislaus spent fourteen years fulfilling various honorable duties. He held this vocation in high regard: "Many know that I was in the Congregation of Pious Schools — more dear to me than my life — in that sweetest Society of the Poor of the Mother of God. It is quite difficult to explain how much I valued my vocation, roused by God Himself. Even more, I remained in this holiest company, bound not only by the bonds of love."³¹ As a professor of rhetoric, he wrote a textbook called *Prodromus Reginae Artium*,³² which was published four times within nine years due to its value and demand. In it, he emphasized the education of young people to become good Catholics and citizens while also guiding his students: "I fervently wish that you, while learning from my *Prodromus* the art of beautiful speechifying, would also embrace the art of proper conduct [...], a good and noble

²⁹ Cf. Leporini, n. 17. "Supernarum rerum contemplationi, attento sic animo adhaerere coepit, postrocinante S. Petro de Alcantara, ut in Deo totus absorptus, altioris perfectionis flamma succensus, soli Deo, eiusque Sacratissimae Matri Servire disponens."

³⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 47-53.

³¹ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollection*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 901.

³² S. Papczyński, *Prodromus Reginae Artium sive Informatio Tyronum Eloquentiae, auctore P. Stanislawo a Iesu Maria Papczyński, Piarum Scholarum*; in Polish translation: *Zwiasztun Królowej sztuk, czyli kształcenie adeptów kunsztownego przemawiania, autorstwa Stanisława od Jezusa i Maryi ze Szkół Pobożnych*, in: *Pisma zebrane*, pp. 77-594.

life.”³³ Due to his abilities and thorough preparation, he also received the office of a preacher, which is an official permit to deliver sermons. Many clergy members didn’t obtain such permission due to their inadequate preparation. Stanislaus Papczyński was renowned for his sermons in the Piarist Church in Warsaw, the Dominican Church, and other religious orders’ churches. Their content, style, form, the person delivering them, his intellect, and humility earned him a reputation among the faithful as “the most zealous” and a “famous preacher.”³⁴ Mansueto Leporini quoted the praise given to Fr. Stanislaus by the Camaldolese Order: “As a preacher in his Order of Pious Schools and also as a valued professor or rhetoric, he became famous in the royal city of Warsaw, and even [was regarded] as an unshakable pillar and particular ornament of his Order — in Poland.”³⁵

It’s worth noting that the Piarist order recognized the virtues and knowledge of Fr. Stanislaus, who led a profound inner life while serving and contributing in many important aspects of the religious life. He served as an educator in Piarist schools, prefect, and mentor of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Grace in Warsaw, as well as vice-postulator in the beatification process of the Piarist founder, Joseph Calasanz. According to biographers, Stanisław Papczyński was highly esteemed as a confessor with his sound theological knowledge, extensive erudition, eloquence, and many other virtues. “Many bishops, prelates, princes, and senators; and many distinguished people, men, and women, chose him, this extraordinary man of God, as their spiritual director and guide of conscience.”³⁶ Mansueto Leporini wrote that Fr. Stanislaus “was for three years the confessor of the apostolic nuncio, later Pope Innocent XII, and a spiritual director of many, many others.”³⁷

In 1664, a painful conflict between Fr. Stanislaus and his superiors began. The dispute revolved around religious discipline and the ideal of extreme poverty. Initially, it concerned the election of the leader of the Polish Province and his assistants, who had previously been appointed

³³ S. Papczyński, *Dedication* from the 2nd edition, in: *Pisma zebrane*, pp. 96-97.

³⁴ S. Sydry, O. *Stanisław*, p. 51.

³⁵ Leporini, n. 29.

³⁶ Teixeira, n. 43.

³⁷ Leporini, n. 26; APS f. 360, evidence given by Father Isidore Taudt; APS f. 168 n., evidence given by Father Cyprian Fijałkowski.

in Rome by the general government.³⁸ Fr. Stanislaus believed that the provisions of Pope Alexander VII allowed for the election of superiors within their own province. Therefore, he argued that the Provincial Chapter of the Polish Province should occur in Poland rather than Rome. He emphasized that the superior general was unfamiliar with the conditions in a particular country and did not know the people well enough to make these appointments. However, his actions in this matter faced opposition “among the older Fathers.”³⁹ National tensions also compounded the conflict since the province, established in 1662, included two nationalities: Polish and German. In addition to Germans, it also included Slovaks, Czechs, and Hungarians, not all of whom were always on good terms with each other. A few religious, unfriendly toward Fr. Stanislaus began to falsely accuse him, misinterpreting his zeal for strict adherence to the rules of the order, as prescribed by the Founder, especially those related to poverty, silence, and the organization of the monastery. Consequently, allegations of incendiarism were brought against Fr. Stanislaus before the Piarist general, Fr. Cosmas Chiara, who summoned him to Rome.⁴⁰ The news of his forced journey to Rome mobilized his friends to defend him. Before he embarked on this incredibly thorny path, he received numerous commendations and letters of recommendation from various orders and personalities.⁴¹ At that time, the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland, Cardinal Galeazzo Marescotti, after examining the matter, demanded that the Piarists themselves investigate it. An investigation was initiated, and after its conclusion, the main accuser of Fr. Stanislaus, Fr. Wacław (Wenceslaus) Opatowski, stated that Fr. Papczyński’s conduct was “was more zeal than troublemaking [...], that Fr. Stanislaus neither was or actually is a troublemaker or a traitor, nor that he ever plotted against

³⁸ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 86-143

³⁹ S. Papczyński, *Declaration of the one departing for Rome*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 857-862; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 68-60.

⁴⁰ APS 10 f.121. Evidence of Father Benedykt Hoenig; f. 147, evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski; *Apologia for his departure from the Order of Pious Schools*, nn. 1-5, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 875-877; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 99-104

⁴¹ “Verum fuit, quo dum Servus Dei Stanislaus Romam vocatus iter arripere, multi eum suis Literis commendatitijs munierunt, quas etami Epistolas originales ego Testis legi, et vidi, et quo plures homines Servum Dei noscentes summopere indolebant, cum Dei Servus Romam divergentes Eos relinqueret”, APS 10, f. 147, evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski. Also see: Leporini, n. 29; Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 68; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 61-63; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 102-104.

the Order. Whoever dared call him a troublemaker shall be severely punished.”⁴² However, these were just empty words that had no practical consequences. Wacław Opatowski, who had a strong dislike for Fr. Papczyński, did not make any effort to follow through with these statements. It did not improve the relationship between Stanislaus Papczyński and his superiors. At that time, to “ensure peace in the province,” Father Papczyński decided to leave the Piarist Congregation. On August 15, 1669, he sent a request to the general for his release from the vows and the promise to persevere in the Piarist Order.⁴³ He explained his decision in *Apologia*: “Although I considered that I am neither a firebrand nor an instigator nor a betrayer, nevertheless — surmising that on my account such disturbances arose — whereas those ill-disposed [toward me] arose and conspired my destruction and ruin, those favorable [toward me] defended and protected me. From this arose among them numerous conflicts and arguments; so I decided finally to depart from the Congregation of Pious Schools, for the good of peace and for the tranquility of the Province.”⁴⁴ It was an expression of true love for the Congregation and his brethren. To better explain this conflict, it’s worth mentioning the opinion of Mansueto Leporini: “This remarkable defender and guardian of the evangelical poverty safely returned to Poland from Rome. His desire to strictly observe poverty exposed him to many and frequent insults, which he bore with unshakable good spirits. He prayed for God’s forgiveness for his slanderers and foes. He was wonderfully patient in the face of his slanderers and remained unfaltering in adversities. For this reason, he zealously abided by the Constitution of the Venerable Founder and endured much injustice, hatred, and turmoil.”⁴⁵ On October 23, 1669, Pope Clement IX initiated a reform that had significant implications for the future of the Piarist congregation. Through a papal *breve*, he restored the Piarists’ former rights and privileges and elevated them to the status of a religious order with solemn vows. Each Piarist who wanted to remain in the order had to re-take solemn vows, but no one was obligated to do so. Fr. Stanislaus chose not to make a solemn

⁴² *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 118-119, 142-143; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 65.

⁴³ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 144-147.

⁴⁴ S. Papczyński, *Apologia...*, n. 48, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 895.

⁴⁵ Leporini, n. 30.

profession and, to protect himself from the Piarists who had imprisoned him twice before, he moved under the jurisdiction of Bishop Andrzej Trzebicki in December 1669, residing within his diocese in Kazimierz near Kraków.⁴⁶ There, he served as the chaplain of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.⁴⁷

From Oblatio to Fundatio Domus Recollectionis

After leaving the Piarists, Papczyński, a renowned speaker, respected lecturer, confessor, educator of young people, and zealous and righteous priest, received numerous highly lucrative offers for ecclesiastical positions. Mikołaj Oborski and Andrzej Trzebicki — the bishops of Kraków — as well as Stefan Wierzbowski, the Bishop of Poznań, all “wanted to have in their dioceses a man of profound knowledge and outstanding holiness to support and shape the clergy and the faithful. Yet, Fr. Stanislaus, mindful of his promise to God and led by divine inspiration, heroically rejected all honors and prelatures. He focused fully on founding the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary”⁴⁸ because — as he himself wrote — “[...] divine vision, which had been engraved upon my soul regarding the foundation of this Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., impelled me to this goal.”⁴⁹ Devoting himself to the Congregation that promoted the honor of the Immaculate Conception was the culmination and synthesis of Fr. Stanislaus’s entire life.⁵⁰ He declined invitations from several bishops and religious orders asking him to join them because his thoughts and heart were preoccupied with the vision of the Society of the Immaculate Lady, which he wished to bring into being as soon as possible. According to Father Andrzej Pakuła, by at least the middle of 1669, he

⁴⁶ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 153-162; APS 10 f. 194r. Evidence of Father Dionysius Kisieliński.

⁴⁷ Tadeusz Rogalewski, *Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701). Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers and Inspirer of the Marian School of Spirituality*, Stockbridge, MA, 2002, p. 162.

⁴⁸ APS 10 f. 194r-v. Evidence of Father Dionysius Kisieliński; Wyszynski, *Stróż*, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁹ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 6, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 903-904.

⁵⁰ Cf. Andrzej Pakuła, *Duchowość zakonna według Stanisława Papczyńskiego i wczesnej tradycji Zgromadzenia Księżąt Marianów*, Warszawa - Lublin 2010, pp. 158-173.

already carried within himself the idea of a new community to which he wanted to dedicate himself entirely after leaving the Piarists.⁵¹ And now, the path to realizing these inspirations, which he was sure he had received from God, opens up. "This vision concerning the founding, despite everything, [...] of this congregation of the Immaculate Conception — he wrote later — was sent from God, and it entered my soul, urging me to follow."⁵²

On December 11, 1670, the day he was released from the Pious Schools Order, Fr. Papczyński, in the presence of the Vice-Provincial Father Michał Kraus, made his *Oblatio*, consecrating and dedicating himself to "to God the Father Almighty, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, and also to the Mother of God the Ever-Virgin Mary, Conceived without original sin." Next, he made a profession of faith and what was called a blood vow, by which he promised to spread the honor of the Immaculately Conceived Mary and to defend her even at the cost of his own life.⁵³ By making this *Oblatio*, Fr. Stanislaus wished to bind himself spiritually through these new vows until he could make them in the Order he intended to found. Fr. Papczyński was formally released from religious vows and the oath of perseverance in the Piarist Congregation according to Canon Law's prescripts. His status was officially changed from a member of a religious order to a diocesan priest. However, he so greatly valued the religious life, which he regarded as "greater perfection,"⁵⁴ that — although released from vows — he did not want to live a single day or moment as a non-member.⁵⁵ Even in his testament, composed much later, he merely mentioned "having been dispensed from the oath of perseverance in the Congregation of Pious Schools by the authority of the brief of Clement X"⁵⁶ and said nothing about exemption from vows. It should be emphasized that *Oblatio* is essentially a formula for religious profession, which — as Fr. Andrzej Pakuła stated:

⁵¹ See Andrzej Pakuła, *Błogosławiony Stanisław Papczyński jako zakonodawca*, in: *Błogosławiony Stanisław Papczyński. Pisma fundacyjne*, Warszawa 2007, p. 8.

⁵² S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, p. 68.

⁵³ T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, p. 162.

⁵⁴ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 6, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 903.

⁵⁵ Cf. Michał Kozak, "Oblatio" jako klucz hermeneutyczny do duchowości Ojca Stanisława Papczyńskiego, in: *Immaculata* (2016), No. 6, pp. 47-55.

⁵⁶ S. Papczyński, *Second Testament (Last Will)*, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 935.

“Father Stanislaus made on December 11, 1670, in anticipation of the founding of the Congregation of the Marians, unconfirmed at that time by the relevant church authority.”⁵⁷ In this way, the long and arduous journey of establishing and forming the Society of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, declared in the *Oblatio*, began. Soon after, the first candidate for the new community, Stanislaus Krajewski, also made his *Oblatio* as a formula for the monastic profession.

Fr. Papczyński, being an experienced and responsible religious, was aware of the difficulties and challenges that could accompany the establishment of a new congregation. He understood that such a foundation required deep reflection, great prudence, hard work, and constant prayer. Therefore, he consulted with learned, devout, and experienced individuals numerous times.⁵⁸ As for himself, he humbly confessed that he was “the most wretched, most despicable sinner, most inadequate, most unfit instrument for founding” this Congregation, but he placed his trust in the goodness of God and Providence, which “despite innumerable difficulties that stand in the way — begin and complete what they desire, even when the means — according to human judgment are inadequate.”⁵⁹ Leaving the Piarists, he wanted to don the white habit in honor of the Immaculate Mary as soon as possible, with the permission of Bishop Mikołaj Oborski. Unfortunately, the ceremony scheduled for taking the habit was canceled. He then returned to Warsaw, where he had worked for several years as a Piarist under the jurisdiction of Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski.⁶⁰ Fr. Stanislaus encountered great kindness from the bishop in Warsaw and, therefore, renewed his request for permission to introduce the new white habit. He believed that the white habit, which he had chosen for himself and the future members of the Society of the Immaculate Conception, was the most appropriate and best expressed the Immaculate Virgin’s purity. The bishop granted him permission with a promise of assistance in founding the new institute,⁶¹ but this was

⁵⁷ A. Pakuła, *Blogosławiony Stanisław Papczyński*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Bishop Jerome Wierzbowski’s letter of recommendation of March 20, 1699, in S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 225-226.

⁵⁹ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 1, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 901.

⁶⁰ Navikevicius, p. 158.

⁶¹ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 333; cf. S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 7, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 904-905.

contingent upon receiving approval from the Holy See. The bishop later pressured Fr. Stanislaus in this matter on multiple occasions.

On September 15, 1671, having apprised the Apostolic Nuncio Angelo Ranuti of his intent, Stanislaus Papczyński put on the white habit before the miraculous image of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Lubocza.⁶² In early September 1671, at the advice of his confessors, Fr. Papczyński moved to Lubocza to the estate of James Karski, a nobleman. He served as a chaplain there. During this time, he made efforts through a certain procurator to obtain the necessary permissions from the Apostolic See, which, as he revealed, "I unceasingly endeavored to obtain this permission for two years, and this matter cost me many difficulties, exposing me to certain expenses. But [...] the Procurator — treacherous and cunning — fed me with promises while not making any effort to resolve this matter."⁶³ As a chaplain in the Karski family, he devoted much time to personal prayer and had already enjoyed a reputation for holiness. He also dedicated himself to theological studies and writing. In Lubocza, he authored two valuable works: *Mystical Temple of God*, an ascetical manual primarily intended for laypeople, and the *Rule of Life*, which was a monastic rule for future Marian Fathers.⁶⁴

His time in Lubocza was not easy, as news of his efforts as a founder of the new religious order gathered many opponents. False accusations were thrown at him, satirical writings were penned, and slanderous rumors were fabricated. "[...] there were some who looked upon me as a crazy man. Others persecuted me, because the beginnings [of this work] must be founded upon suffering."⁶⁵ These attacks, as well as the false interpretation of his departure from the Piarists, motivated him — "in order to remove any error of human judgment" — to write his *Apologia for the Departure from the Institute of Pious Schools*, in which he presented actual reasons for his decision along with the circumstances of

⁶² Leporini, n. 36. "Thanks to the will of God and the Apostolic Nuncio, as well as the Bishop of Poznań, his great benefactor, he donned the white habit during the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and went to the Korabiew Hermitage." Cf. S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 7, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 904-905; *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 333.

⁶³ Cf. S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 10, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 906.

⁶⁴ *Norma Vitae*, Varsaviae 1687. This was the first printed version of *The Rule of Life*.

⁶⁵ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 8, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 905.

his departure from the Order.⁶⁶ Despite these difficulties and obstacles, Fr. Stanislaus did not waver from his intention to establish the Society of the Immaculate Conception. He firmly believed that Divine Providence was watching over the entire endeavor and that the Holy Spirit had shaped the idea in his mind; thus, it was of Divine inspiration. Although he received significant support from well-wishers who “praised this intention and wished him the best of luck,” including the apostolic nuncio, a certain bishop, and renowned religious, he still encountered numerous challenges. He couldn’t find a suitable place to live with his brethren, and there was a lack of tested candidates willing to join him in this venture. Although both lay and clergy candidates applied, Fr. Stanislaus did not accept them, the reason being — as he admitted — “I feared joining them to myself on account of their untested virtue as well as on account of the lack of a sufficient place [for the foundation].”⁶⁷ The lack of ecclesiastical approval was also an obstacle because, as mentioned earlier, Bishop Wierzbowski was making his acceptance contingent on the approval of the Apostolic See. At that time, Father Franciszek Wilga, the superior of the Camaldolese Order, suggested to him that, while awaiting diocesan approval, he should follow the example of other saintly founders and, with a suitable place, gather a few candidates who would begin monastic life with him. This was how the Jesuits, Carthusians, Camaldolese, Cistercians, and others came into existence. Following this idea, Fr. Stanislaus turned his attention to a hermitage in the Korabiew Forest, where a twenty-nine-year-old Stanislaus Krajewski, a cleric in lower orders, resided with a few companions. Approached by Fr. Stanislaus, Krajewski responded positively: “he wholeheartedly agreed to the plan, and offered me both his place and himself. He also convinced a second man, his companion, to [join in] this plan.”⁶⁸ Soon after, Krajewski came to Lubocza, and there, on July 4, 1673, he put on a white habit, and Fr. Stanislaus “received from him his *Oblatio*

⁶⁶ *Apologia* was written around 1671, See *Selected Writings*.

⁶⁷ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 9, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 905; cf. *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 333.

⁶⁸ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 11, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 906; APS 10 f. 339r-340r. evidence of Father Isydor Taudt.

for the Society of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.,⁶⁹ made according to the formula contained in the *Oblatio*. In preparation for residing in the hermitage in the Korabiew Forest and assuming the role of the spiritual director of the hermits, Fr. Papczyński had already considered — aside from *The Rule of Life* — certain legal and ascetic norms, a daily schedule, and although they were pretty strict rules, they were accepted by Krajewski.⁷⁰ Fr. Stanislaus arrived in the Korabiew Forest on September 30, 1673. However, after a few days, it became apparent that the hermits were not pleased with the new, strict regulations and orders. Grumbling, complaints, and grievances began to arise. In this situation, Fr. Papczyński abandoned the idea of creating the first foundation of his institute based on the hermits and embarked on a different project. He decided to establish a Casa Recollectionis, a House of Recollection with a chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and St. Michael the Archangel, which would serve as an independent material base for his undertaking. In pursuit of this goal, he asked Krajewski to donate a small piece of land in that wilderness so he could build a house and gather new candidates. Krajewski agreed to donate the ground and was willing to join the emerging community. He renewed his previous *Oblatio* and promised to diligently and faithfully fulfill the duty of the provider of the house. The above act was presented to the local ordinary and approved by him.⁷¹ The initial obstacles to Father Stanisław's plans had been removed. Full of optimism, he noted: "Having obtained this, I was already thinking about other, even more zealous companions, with whom I could begin the [common] life and found, in this place, the Congregation, beginning with the House of Recollection."⁷²

⁶⁹ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 14, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 908; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 336-337; cf. T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, p. 202.

⁷⁰ Navikevicius, p. 161; S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 18-23, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 909-912.

⁷¹ Cessio Kraiewsciana, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 336-339. Krajewski wrote: "Once again I confirm my oblation, which I made before the Superior, Father Stanislaus, [...]. Also, this land, which I own [...] I freely offer and give for the House of Recollection to be established there by the same Father Stanislaus, in futurae Societati Beatae Mariae sine Macula Conceptae, and I wish to remain there. [...] I accept the same Father Stanislaus as my Superior and director and resolve to remain under his supervision out of love of God, fulfilling diligently, faithfully and steadily the duties of the Procurator of the house.

⁷² S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 18, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 910.

Establishing the House of Recollection in the Korabiew Forest: Hopes and Difficulties

Various attacks and slanders against Fr. Papczyński failed to mar his reputation as a virtuous, prudent, and spiritual man.⁷³ The sanctity of his life attracted candidates for his community. Many clergymen and laypeople wishing to join the Congregation contacted him while he stayed in Lubocza. Still more arrived at the Korabiew Forest and — as he himself recorded — “I would not neglect the laws of the Church which are usually observed in respect to such constructions. If on the other hand I would like to proceed in founding the Congregation, without complying with what should be observed, in these two years [1674-1675] I would already have both several houses and many companions.”⁷⁴ This happy change of circumstances gave hope for an earlier realization of his intention, “inspired by God,” to found a Marian Institute, as well as for its future stability and development.

On October 24, 1673, after completing a visitation of the parish church in Jeruzal, Bishop Stanisław Jacek Świącicki⁷⁵ unexpectedly arrived at the Korabiew Forest. He was there on the orders of his bishop, Stefan Wierzbowski, to conduct a visitation of the Korabiew hermitage. Various reports about the hermits’ too-lax lifestyle had reached the bishop. After his visit, Bishop Świącicki blessed the hermitage and approved the Marian Institute,⁷⁶ but he believed that Krajewski and the hermits should be removed from the hermitage. At the request of Fr. Papczyński, Bishop Świącicki decided to leave them there but subject them to a trial.⁷⁷ To achieve this, he ordered the hermits to adhere to

⁷³ APS 10 f. 220v-222r. Evidence of Father Dionysius Kisieliński. APS 10 f. 148v. Evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski. See the opinion of Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 150.

⁷⁴ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 26, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 913.

⁷⁵ Bishop Stanisław Jacek Świącicki was born around 1630. After receiving episcopal consecration, he was appointed as the Archdeacon and Official of Warsaw. He belonged to the Order of Canons Regular. In 1677, he was transferred to the Diocese of Chełm. He was known as a zealous pastor. See Piotr Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła w Polsce (966-1999)*. *Słownik biograficzny*, Warszawa 2000, p. 440.

⁷⁶ Navikevicius, pp. 166-168.

⁷⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 339-345. In addition to Krajewski, there were three other hermits in the hermitage. Cf. APS 10 f. 148. Evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski.

the *Rule of Life*, composed by Fr. Stanislaus for the future Marians, and established specific norms specified in directives and defined by statutes that they were to commit to under oath. The bishop's regulations were extremely strict. They required strict fasting on Wednesday and Friday, strict silence on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, public flogging daily, and a prohibition on leaving the enclosure.⁷⁸ The rule established by the bishop for the emerging congregation emphasized rigorous penance and required the hermits to perform continuous retreats. Their reaction was predictable. Unaccustomed to the strict penitential discipline, "They were astounded and did not accept the laws. Rather, they left the hermitage."⁷⁹ Only Krajewski remained, but he rebelled, did not follow the prescribed rules, "behaved as he felt like," and accused Fr. Papczyński before the bishop of being too strict. At the end of 1675, during the night, breaking all rules and commitments, he fled quietly from the Korabiew hermitage.⁸⁰

The strict instructions imposed by the bishop-visitor were not entirely in line with Fr. Papczyński's apostolic plans and his vision of the Society of the Immaculate, which, as he declared, he had clearly outlined in his soul. His original intention was to organize the hermits' life according to his religious life concept. However, after the visitation, he had to start with the imposed rule, focused on eremitical and contemplative life, excluding active apostolate. Therefore, Fr. Stanislaus had to adjust his statutes, recommendations, and *Rule of Life* (in Latin, *Norma Vitae*) to the Bishop Święcicki's visitation directives. Nevertheless, being a person of deep faith, he trusted that God would send the best solution at the right time, even if he had to suffer and atone for much. He certainly did not want to become a hermit because, as explained by Stefan Sydry, if that were the case, with perfect contact with the Camaldolese hermitage in Bielany, he would not have to seek undisciplined hermits in the Korabiew Forest.⁸¹ While the documents issued by Bishops Święcicki and Wierzbowski referred to the institute founded by Fr. Stanislaus using terms like "Marian hermit companions" or "the hermitage of the

⁷⁸ Ibid. Minutes of inspection on Oct. 24, 1673.

⁷⁹ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 21, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 911.

⁸⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 371, footnote 7.

⁸¹ S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, pp. 90-91.

Most Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without stain” or “the house of recollection,” Stefan Sydry warns against using these designations to make judgments about the character of the new religious institute. The appearance of these terms in the early episcopal documents was more of a translation of the inadequate description of the life led in the Korabiew Forest by Krajewski and his companions, who called it hermit life, albeit inaccurately. Fr. Papczyński obligated Krajewski to accept *Norma Vitae* and adapt to the new way of life. However, Bishop Świącicki’s regulations were taken more out of obedience, considering them a temporary necessity because he never intended to establish a contemplative religious community.⁸² This is evident from the fact that from the beginning of his stay in the Forest, Fr. Papczyński led an active apostolic life. Just two weeks after the bishop’s visitation, on November 11, 1673, he went to Chojnata to preach sermons at the indulgence celebration.⁸³

A few days after the canonical visitation by Bishop Świącicki, Fr. Papczyński went to the consistory in Warsaw to request the issuance of the necessary documents. After several months, on June 15, 1674, Bishop Świącicki issued a document that allowed Papczyński to expand the already initiated chapel and the House of Recollection, which was the first Marian monastery,⁸⁴ and granted permission “to celebrate devotions in the chapel mentioned above or rather an oratory [...], to keep there the Holy Sacrament for the needs of the sick companions and local laborers, to administer the sacrament of penance and of the Eucharist to the companions as mentioned earlier and laborers, and generally to everyone else.”⁸⁵ The phrase “and generally to everyone else,” in the document left the door open for various types of pastoral work. The document was a softened version of the bishop’s directives issued during the canonical visitation in 1673.

⁸² Ibid, p. 91.

⁸³ Leporini, n. 66; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 645, 827. Chojnata was a village in Mazovia region approximately 23 kilometers (14.4 miles) away from Korabiew Forest.

⁸⁴ *Facultas pro extruenda capella in Eremo Korabieviensi Eremitis ibidem manentibus, Anno 1674: Veneris 15 mensis Junii*, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 347-350.

⁸⁵ Prot. Ord., pp. 31-33, transl. by S. Sydry, in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 110; Cf. T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, pp. 209-210.

Fr. Isidore Taudt⁸⁶ testified during the beatification process that Fr. Papczyński and his confrères worked, prayed, and fasted a lot during this time. He made many efforts to prepare the cradle for the new congregation. The first step was to “elevate the Cross and to make steps and fences around it.”⁸⁷ The next step was the construction of a larch chapel, to which a monastery was soon added. After expanding the small church in 1755, the chapel became its presbytery. From the information provided by Fr. Taudt, we also learn that the hermits worked on constructing the chapel and the house. This likely refers to the aspirants who arrived in the Forest after the departure of the first three hermits. In this context, the above-mentioned reiterated opinion that attacks on Fr. Stanislaus, coming from both laypeople and clergy, led to the point where, in 1676, he was left alone seems enigmatic.⁸⁸

All the more surprising, it is astonishing that just a year later, the Marian Fathers embarked on an expansion. There were so many of them that they could establish a new mission in New Jerusalem and take on pastoral responsibilities there, even though their formation, novitiate, and studies undoubtedly required time. It should also be noted here that on April 30, 1677, Fr. Papczyński acquired the chapel of St. Martin in that city for the Marian Fathers.⁸⁹ In 1676, he may have experienced some internal conflict, as evidenced by his request to the Piarists to readmit him to their Order during that time. Perhaps this was meant to test whether God truly wanted him to establish his own congregation. However, the Piarists refused his request, as their Chapters prohibited the re-admission of those who had previously left the Order. Fr. Stanislaus interpreted this as a clear sign of God blessing his initiative,⁹⁰ and he was not mistaken.

⁸⁶ Father Isidore Taudt was born in 1716. He was an outstanding Marian, actively involved in the beatification processes of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and Fr. Casimir Wyszynski. He was highly esteemed by the apostolic nuncio, bishops, and magnates. From 1770 to 1792, he served as a chaplain at the court of Prince Michael Czartoryski. He passed away on November 22, 1792.

⁸⁷ APS 10 f. 339r-340r. Cf. Navikevicius, p. 168; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 110.

⁸⁸ Leporini, n. 39. “However, right from the start, he was persecuted from all sides: by the laity and clergy from outside, and by his deceitful confrères from inside. In the end, he was brought to ruin and left alone with only Father Joseph of All Saints.” On the other hand, T. Rogalewski, in his *Stanisław Papczyński*, pp. 216-219, claimed that Papczyński was left alone, but said in another place that, probably, Brother John of St. Mary also stayed with him, but then left in the spring of 1676.

⁸⁹ *Decretum Inter Eremitas Korabievienses Dissensionum*, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 372.

⁹⁰ Navikevicius, pp. 168-170.

The year 1677 marked a turning point for the very young Marian community. The Marian Fathers received a new establishment, the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle. Fresh, zealous candidates joined the Order. The Marian Institute and the House of Recollection, founded by Fr. Stanislaus, were recognized and approved by the Church authorities. The only remaining task was obtaining the required approval from the state authorities. Thanks to Fr. Stanislaus' efforts, on April 23, 1677, the Sejm (Polish parliament) approved the Marian foundation in the Korabiew Forest by decree.⁹¹ This fundamental legal act secured its existence for the future. The nobility, concerned about transferring lands and material wealth to religious orders and their exemption from taxes and other obligations to the state, had effectively hindered the creation of new foundations and the donation of gifts to monasteries. Three years earlier, in 1674, the Sejm, following the spirit of this concern, passed a law stating that "it is forbidden to establish new foundations and make bequests under pain of nullity"⁹² without the consent of the Commonwealth. The year 1677 filled Fr. Stanislaus with optimism and hope for the successful continuation of the work of God that had been started. Successfully concluding such complicated matters was like a clear light in the still-dark tunnel, as persecutions from enemies and various obstacles were constantly part of the fate of the young Order.

Being aware of this, Fr. Stanislaus prepared his brethren for present and future difficult experiences. He also foresaw the Order's future crisis, but — as God's visionary, that is, one who receives from God the gift of seeing things to come — he assured the brethren of a positive outcome. The symbolic names "Korab" or "Noah's Ark,"⁹³ given to the monastery and evoking the biblical image of the ark that the floodwaters did not sink, were an expression of Fr. Papczyński's deep conviction that all unjust accusations, persecutions, and troubles, like floodwaters, would eventually descend upon this "Ark" but would not destroy it. He believed there would come a time when the ominous waters would recede, and

⁹¹ *Approbacja fundacji pustelników w Puszczy Korabiewskiej*, in: *Volumina Legum*. Przedruk Zbioru Praw, staraniem XX. Pijarów w Warszawie od 1732 do 1782 roku wydanego, Petersburg V, 1860, 241, P. 118; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp.376-378.

⁹² *Volumina Legum*, IV, 488.

⁹³ Navikevicius, p. 170; *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 709.

the Order, like the ark, would continue to sail safely. He encouraged his brethren to take refuge from their tribulations in this boat under the protection of Mary Immaculate.⁹⁴ The first image on the Order's seal was a dove holding a green olive branch in its beak, as a definite sign of liberation and also of the strong hope and conviction of Father Founder that his brethren, like the biblical passengers on Noah's Ark, would be saved from destruction.

⁹⁴ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 134. Father Wyszynski described this situation as follows: "This place was called the 'Noah's Ark' as if to protect it from the flood waters of infernal persecution. And although the Congregation was founded under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he wanted much to protect his Order with the seal showing a dove carrying a green branch, thus expressing the hope of surviving the dangers." It should be noted that the hermitage was located in the town of Korabiewice, while the grounds were called the Korabiew Forest [both words have the Polish word for "ark" as their root — note of the translator]. Father Papczyński believed that the name of the place had a prophetic meaning because it referred to the biblical Ark, so he trustingly adopted the name "Korab" or "Noah's Ark".

2

APOSTOLATE
OR CONTEMPLATION:
1677-1723

The Establishment in New Jerusalem¹

News of the holy and ascetic life, pious deeds, and apostolic works carried out by Fr. Papczyński echoed widely across Mazovia. This is confirmed by the testimonies of many witnesses and researchers of his life. Fr. Casimir Wyszyński² wrote about this in his *Diariusz* (Diary): “The fame of the Servant of God’s sanctity has spread far and wide, and many pious people who came to him [in the Korabiew Forest] joined his Institute, took the habit and entrusted their salvation to Father Stanislaus’s direction. For he was their shining example [who] distinguished himself by extraordinary penance.”³ To the humble hermitage in the wilderness, not only pilgrims came, but also valuable candidates, attracted by the fame of Fr. Stanisław’s holiness. Under his guidance, they aspired to grow in holiness, spreading the devotion to the Immaculate Mary and supporting the deceased through prayers and penances undertaken on their behalf. In this regard, the year 1677 was exceptionally favorable to the small community in the Forest. During this year, several candidates of great spiritual, moral, and intellectual qualities approached the Marian Fathers. As witnesses testified in the beatification process, they were drawn by Fr. Stanislaus’ zealous devotion to the religious life and the growing reputation of his holiness, which — spreading forth still farther and broader — brought ever more *virī piissimi ac doctissimi* to the

¹ About the history and development of the Cenacle of the Lord in New Jerusalem see: Jan Kosmowski, *Wieczernik na Mazowszu. Łaskami słynące sanktuarium świętego ojca Stanisława Papczyńskiego*, Marianum 2019.

² January Francis Wyszyński was born on August 19, 1720, in the village of Jeziora Wielka near Grójec. His parents were Jan and Jadwiga Zawadzka. From 1708 to 1718, he studied at the Piarist school in Góra Kalwaria. In 1723, he received the Marian habit and took the religious name Casimir at the Church of St. Stanislaus in Rome. In 1726, he was ordained as a priest. He held various positions within the Order, including serving as the procurator general in Rome and being elected as the superior general twice. He was a zealous devotee of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and collected documentation for his beatification process. He made significant contributions to the spiritual renewal of the Order and transplanted the Order to Portugal, where he passed away on October 21, 1755, in the monastery of Balsamão, with a reputation for holiness.

³ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 73.

Marians. A crucial testimony on this matter came from Sister Otolia, a Dominican nun who was a penitent of Fr. Stanislaus and had known him personally for many years: "Attracted by the fame of his holiness, many troubled people in need of spiritual assistance came to him for salvific counsel and departed, having received desired spiritual benefits."⁴ Stefan Sydry wrote about the tremendous impact of Fr. Papczyński's sanctity: "The repute of his actions drew the attention of Stefan Wierzbowski, the bishop of the diocese of Poznań, who decided to employ that hermit's extraordinary qualities for his own projects"⁵ and invited Papczyński to New Jerusalem. We have testimonies *ex auditu* of six witnesses who took part in the information gathering process conducted in 1767-1779 when they spoke about the life, virtues, and sanctity of Fr. Stanislaus and declared that his holiness was precisely the main motive that inspired Bishop Wierzbowski to invite him and the Marians to settle at the Passion Sanctuary complex, which was then emerging in New Jerusalem.⁶

The second stimulus promoting the growth of the Order was the approval of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's Sejm, granted in 1677 to the Marian foundation in the Korabiew Forest and thus to the entire Order. It read: "We approve the foundation [called] *Domus Recollectionis Clericorum BVM sine macula conceptae* [...] established in the Korabiew Forest, [...] and we take this Congregation under ours and the Commonwealth's perpetual protection."⁷ The growing community of Marian Fathers in the Forest and the legal approval of the Congregation allowed the Marian Fathers to undertake new pastoral work in the sanctuary in New Jerusalem. They were invited there by Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski. Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński was known to Bishop Wierzbowski for many years, even when he worked as a Piarist in Warsaw and carried out apostolic work in the bishop's diocese throughout Mazovia. The bishop highly valued his apostolic zeal and his ascetic and saintly

⁴ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁶ *Summarium super dubio...*, [Romae 1771]; cf. *Animadversiones fidei promotoris super dubio in casu beatificationis et canonisationis servi Dei Stanislai Papczynski*, 1775, Poznań [ca. 1960].

⁷ *Aprobacya Fundacyi Pustelników w Puszczy Korabiewskiej*, in: *Volumina Legum*, przedruk Zbioru Praw staraniem XX. Pijarów w Warszawie od r. 1732 do r. 1782 wydanego, [Collection of Law documents from 1732 to 1782 re-printed and published through effort of the Piarist Fathers] vol. V, Petersburg 1860, p. 241 a, n. 118.

way of life. It was from him that Fr. Stanislaus received a kind permission to don the white habit, as the latter recollected, "I easily obtained from him permission to wear a new habit. For he is an upright and virtuous man, quite zealous in promoting the glory of God. Wherefore, having given up the position [offered by] the Bishop of Płock, upon the counsel and recommendation of my confessors, I went — upon a request — to the manor of a certain nobleman, James Karski, an excellent man. After finally settling matters with the Institute of the Pious Schools, though this was not without a certain injustice against me, with the knowledge of the holy Apostolic Nunciature, during the Octave of the Birth of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, I offered myself, already dressed in white, in perpetual slavery as a new candidate to this Mother."⁸ Initially, like many other clergies, Bishop Wierzbowski was not favorably disposed toward Fr. Papczyński's legislative initiative, which was understandable given the general Church policy and the Polish context at the time.

However, as he got to know him better, he changed his opinion and adopted a friendly and supportive stance. He made Fr. Papczyński his chief advisor and source of inspiration in implementing his plans for the sanctuary, as noted by the 19th-century historian Ludwik Górski, who wrote: "Father Papczyński was the main assistant and advisor in [the] bishop's work and dedication."⁹ The Bishop considered himself a co-founder of the Marian Order. On October 26, 1689, his family took the Congregation under their protection, justifying this patronage with words of recognition: "We accept this saintly Congregation, as begun with our House [sic], under ours and our entire House's eternal protection. And we shall shield and support it by our founding grace [...]. God forbid [us] to ruin this Congregation. We promise to stand by it."¹⁰ In 1687, the bishop, while explaining the reasons for inviting the Marians to the sanctuary in New Jerusalem, expressed the following opinion

⁸ S. Papczyński, *Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 8, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 904. Father Cyprian Fiałkowski testified: "Servus Dei coram Imagine Virginis Mariae habitum nigrum deposuit albumque in honorem Beatissimae Virginis indult, et benedictionem a Nuntio Apostolico Varsaviae obtinuit, dumque in eodem habitu albo per civitatem Varsaviensem incederet, plures adversarij eum persequendo, contra eum repetebant hunc versiculum «Ecce mox Cygnus, qui ante Corvus errat quae omnia Servus Dei patienter tulit»". APS 10.

⁹ Ludwik Górski, *Krótką wiadomość historyczna o założeniu Zakonu Księży Marianów w Polsce i o życiu ks. Stanisława Papczyńskiego*, in: *Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny*, t. V, (1843), p. 301.

¹⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 430-433.

about Fr. Papczyński: "About 18 years ago, a religious order priest named Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary departed from the Piarists on the strength of an apostolic brief. He humbly refused the offers of various prelatures by friendly bishops but let himself be guided into the wilderness by the Spirit of God [...]. There, by the power of the decree of our Warsaw Consistory, he erected the church at his own expense under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M. and St. Michael the Archangel. Having welcomed a few companions, he led such a strict and exemplary life that we felt inclined to transfer him to our hereditary city of New Jerusalem."¹¹ The Dominican nun mentioned above, Sister Otolia, gave a similar testimony: "Knowing the holiness of this man of God secluded in the dark forest and upon hearing about him still more and more, His Excellency Bishop of Poznan [...] called him forth from the Forest to Góra to show the world exemplary holiness and to choose freely from the churches established there."¹²

In his efforts to establish the Passion Sanctuary in Góra, Bishop Wierzbowski brought together seven different religious orders, each with its own unique charism and spirituality. Among them were the Marians, known for their distinctive charism. They promoted the veneration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, engaged in various forms of penance and prayers for the souls suffering in Purgatory, and lived a penitential and ascetic way of life. In a decree dated April 30, 1677, Bishop Wierzbowski entrusted Fr. Papczyński with a small monastery and the chapel of St. Martin, and he also gave the Dominican Sisters the church of the Last Supper, known as the Cenacle, along with their monastery constructed in 1674.¹³ According to Bishop Wierzbowski's original plans, Dominicans were to live near the Sisters, in the House of

¹¹ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 150; also see: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 422-423; Georgio Navikevicius, *Appendix*, pp. 43-44, in: Same Author, *Stanislao di Gesù Maria Papczyński (1631-1701). Scolopio e Fondatore della Congregazione dei Padri Mariani*, Roma 1960, pp. XIX + 244 + *Appendix*, pp. 95 — containing documents, [afterwards: Navikevicius, *Appendix*].

¹² Quoted after: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 150.

¹³ There are scarce accounts regarding the chapel of St. Martin initially given to the Marian Order, but this is mentioned in the document *Seconda erezione ... della Congregazione* of February 21, 1687. See: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 422-424, "Ac Primus quidem sacellum Divi Martini cum certo fundo ei attribueramus, deinde tamen hoc Religiosis Fratribus Ordinis S. Dominici [...] per eum resignato accesso in compensationem eius resignationis ac cessionis Coenaculum Dopmini cum fundo in nostra Intromissione, ac declaratione limitum specificato". See Navikevicius, *Appendix*, pp. 43-44.

Mary, on what was called Zion. However, a change took place following the agreement between the concerned parties, and with the bishop's consent, the Dominican Sisters went to the House of Mary, while the Dominicans settled in the monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the city center; and in November 1677 the Marians took over the poorest church of the Cenacle, located in the marshy area. The foundation act is dated November 22, 1677.¹⁴ In Casimir Wyszyński's opinion, based on witnesses' testimony, Fr. Papczyński had an opportunity to choose other, better sites in Góra. Still, he chose the Cenacle because "this holy place in Jerusalem was closely related to the life of Mary, who remained in the Cenacle in the Holy Land after the death of Christ the Lord, and she fell asleep there."¹⁵

The monastery came with a meager, swampy piece of land. The founding act lists various assets included in this donation: "We generously assign, give and donate to the Clerics mentioned above [Marians] the Church of the Lord's Last Supper along with a lake, extending behind the Cenacle to the Holy Cross Mountain [...], with pieces of land around and near the lake, also the serfs, the farm and the forest, along with all the buildings and the gardens located there."¹⁶ It was a less-than-modest foundation situated amidst marshes, about 1.5 km from the city. This was also why the Dominicans and the Dominican nuns did not accept it. The incomprehensible location in such an unfavorable place resulted from the overall plans, according to which New Jerusalem, intended to be a faithful copy of Jerusalem in the Holy Land, was designed. When planning the sanctuary layout, they relied on a reconstruction of the Holy City from the time of Christ by the Dutch scholar Christian Kruik van Adrichem. The reconstruction included detailed descriptions of sacred places, chapels, stations, and pathways and specified exact distances between them. When founding New Jerusalem, Bishop Wierzbowski tried to closely adhere to the descriptions, dimensions, and spaces provided in the above work, even though they weren't entirely reliable. This explains why the Cenacle was placed in that particular location.

¹⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 378-382; see: T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, pp. 226-227.

¹⁵ *Positio*, Papczyński, s. 379; Wyszyński, *Stróż*, s. 108-109.

¹⁶ Jan Bukowicz [Ed.], *Dokumenty mariańskie XVII i XVIII wieku*, P. 164, Puszca Mariańska 2004, pp. 86-87.

The Marians received holdings in swampy, muddy areas; as a result, the local church building was so severely flooded year after year that it could be reached only by boat in springtime. Fr. Papczyński, whose whole life was holy, evangelical, and poor, paid no heed to the site's drawbacks. Led by the idea that he was working for the glory of God, he hoped to do everything with help from Heaven. Their firm belief in Divine Providence gave them the energy to carry on. Fr. Papczyński engaged in arduous physical labor to drain the swamps alongside his brethren. They dug ponds and ditches and, through immense effort, improved the marshes and wastelands. The land became more accessible, but soon, the local peasants began to assert claims to the organized land. Harassment and persecution of the Marian Fathers started, including several incidents of Fr. Papczyński being physically assaulted. Then Bishop Wierzbowski issued a decree in defense of the Marians, stating that "this swamp is drained through the hard work of the aforesaid Congregation, established at the Cenacle, and therefore no one can claim any right to those grounds except for the said Congregation." Then he added with a certain amount of admiration: "Everything, including the lake and the ponds, was put in order through the strenuous manual labor of the religious as mentioned above, Cleric Recollects."¹⁷

Although the Cenacle in New Jerusalem was a modest foundation, it was like a wide window to the world for the Marian Fathers in the early years of their existence. Numerous religious orders, influential benefactors, and the renowned Passion Sanctuary attracted ordinary pilgrims and many significant figures of the Commonwealth. King John III Sobieski and bishops, senators, and writers were among them.¹⁸ This allowed the Marian Fathers to meet with these individuals, promote their Order, and gain benefactors. Witnesses in the beatification process testified that Fr. Papczyński had heard the confessions of King John Sobieski and some bishops and senators. Bishop Wierzbowski, when erecting the Marian Order canonically in 1679, released the institution in Góra from provisions that characterized it as penitential-eremitic, ordering as follows: "We believe and decide that the regulations con-

¹⁷ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 154; Navikevicius, *Appendix*, 26, pp. 41-42.

¹⁸ APS 10 f. 165v. Evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski; f. 251v. Evidence of Father Dionysius Kisieliński.

cerning austerity in eating, preserving silence and communing with people prescribed for the retreat house in the Korabiew Forest [...] shall not apply to other houses.”¹⁹ This was a critical step in Marians’ legislation on the road to the active apostolate. The Bishop also assigned specific duties and pastoral tasks by installing the Marians at the Cenacle in 1677 and giving them particular possessions. They were to support local priests, especially during the intense influx of pilgrims, deliver sermons, set up mystery plays, and lead pilgrims along the sanctuary’s paths.²⁰ They also had the duty of celebrating Mass in the nearby convent of the Dominican sisters and providing them with spiritual guidance. This is described by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński: “Upon [the] bishop’s orders, the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus, held the convent’s permanent spiritual directorship. As the spiritual director and confessor of these Sisters, he cultivated their souls so carefully and prudently, instructing them through spiritual exercises and the word of God, that many of them, edified by his example, lived and died saintly.”²¹ It is also known that one of Father Papczyński’s penitents, Sister Kolumba Potkańska, died with a reputation of sanctity, and the records of her beatification process were submitted to the Nunciature. Numerous pilgrims frequented her grave. Half a century later, this same service to the sisters was provided by Father Wyszyński and other Marian Fathers. In Marian documents, there is often the annotation: “Fr. X, chaplain to the Dominican sisters.” The third task performed by the Marian Fathers in Góra region was pastoral assistance in nearby parishes such as Powsin, Służew, Jazgarzew, Piaseczno, Maciejowice, where they most commonly served as chaplains, vicars, and even administrators of diocesan parishes. This was a kind of apostolic work and a significant source of livelihood.

In the 18th century, the general superiors made significant efforts to establish the monastery at the Cenacle as a formative house for young Marian candidates. This matter was very close to the heart of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński. He believed this place would radiate the holiness of

¹⁹ Navikevicius, *Appendix*, p. 36, cf. Polish language version in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 162.

²⁰ “Iniungimus demum iisdem clericis, ut quoties opus fuerit per vias Passionis Domini pietatis causa deducant a Caenaculo”. Deed of installation of Nov. 22, 1677 in: *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 382.

²¹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 102; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 700, 820.

the Founder and the spirit of the Marian heritage, especially on the young candidates. Therefore, they organized philosophy and moral theology studies at the Cenacle on several occasions. Unfortunately, the surviving documentation from those years regarding the Cenacle and the monastery is minimal. Wars, national uprisings, and fires have damaged the historical Marian legacy. So, we don't know much about the life, work, and spirit of the Marians in Góra, but the swampy terrain, humidity, and miserable conditions did not favor a stable monastic life. The confrères assigned to the Cenacle arrived here with great reluctance and resistance, and on arrival, they suffered from *humiditatem et aegritudinem*.²² After the death of Fr. Papczyński, the once-drained and improved marshes turned back into swampland. Numerous attempts to drain the area and save the deteriorating buildings proved futile. Water inundated the foundations, the church's floor, and Fr. Papczyński's tomb. It hindered communication between the monastery, the church, the farm, and the institutions in the town. During the meetings of the General Chapters, there were repeated urgent directives: to renovate and salvage the monastery and the church. However, the Marians couldn't manage the flooding of the buildings. The state of the Marian institution is evident in the decision of the Chapter in 1734, which appointed Br. Truskolawski to renovate, prepare at least three rooms for habitation, and gather materials for the facility's expansion. In 1737, the General Chapter initiated a fundraising effort to save the Cenacle. Since no progress had been made due to insurmountable difficulties, the then saintly general superior, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, personally arrived at the Cenacle. He voluntarily assumed the role of local superior for this small community and resided there, astonishing even the Marian chronicler, who noted: "Officium presidentis monasterii gorenensis, ipse libenter suscepit."²³ The situation at the site was so catastrophic that the Father General was the only priest who, along with two brethren, Casimir Bonikowski and Nicholas of St. Martin, permanently resided at the Cenacle. This was due to the lack of suitable accommodations and the strong reluctance of the Marians to live in this facility. Fr. Wyszyński, after taking up residence there, initiated, with the help of family funds, fellow brethren, hired laborers,

²² *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 146.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 147; cf. PAPW, f. 57v.



The Church of the Lord's Cenacle from 1674, after the addition of a vestibule.

as well as his effort, a comprehensive work. Initially, this effort focused on thoroughly draining the marshy lands again and renovating the church and the monastery. "God helped to raise this Cenacle from its ultimate ruin,"²⁴ and it was — as Fr. Wyszyński remarked — about time. After the successful completion of these tasks, which had been considered by both brethren and the local townspeople as Sisyphean work impossible to achieve, especially in terms of draining the marshy lands, Fr. Wyszyński enjoyed great prestige and honor among them. Even within the Order, the belief emerged that he had performed a miracle, and everything had been achieved through Divine Providence, the intercession of Fr. Papczyński, and Fr. Wyszyński's prayers.

The Church of Our Lord's Cenacle directed attention to the mystery of Holy Thursday, especially the Eucharist. Together with the nearby House of Mary, it served as a prelude to the experience of the Passion mysteries in New Jerusalem, which, in turn, directed the thoughts and feelings of the faithful towards the mystery of Good Friday. Entrusting the Cenacle to the Marian Fathers, Bishop Wierzbowski also put on

²⁴ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 272.

them an obligation “whenever a need arises, to guide God’s people on the paths of the Lord’s Passion, starting from the Cenacle.”²⁵ The modesty and simplicity of the Cenacle, often derogatorily referred to as a barn, along with its adjacent farm, were so evident, especially in comparison to the grandeur of other churches and buildings, that it is surprising that out of the entire grand Passion Sanctuary, only this humble church remained. It raises the question of whether Divine Providence preserved it despite its turbulent history to provide a sanctuary for the relics of St. Stanislaus Papczyński, the founder of the Cenacle and the Marian order. This amazing fact was noted by a contemporary researcher of the history of Góra Kalwaria: “Out of the entire complex, consisting of about 35 chapels, six churches, and five monasteries, one church — the Cenacle — has survived to this day in its original state.”²⁶ Małgorzata Borkowska, who specializes in the history of New Jerusalem, has even proposed the hypothesis that it might have been a provisional structure to be replaced with something more substantial and beautiful.²⁷ However, we only learn about the true appearance of this foundation from 19th-century descriptions, and even then, there isn’t much information available. A description from 1822 reports: “The Church of Our Lord’s Cenacle [...] measured 40 feet long and 36 wide; the church has brick walls, a wooden ceiling, a shingled roof with a turret in the middle holding a small bell, three humble altars and a small organ, eleven small windows, a large main door and a second small door leading to the monastery.”²⁸ Several later renovations allowed the discovery of the foundations of the former monastery, its layout, and the remnants of walls. A description made by Fr. Eugeniusz Makulski presents them as follows: “After removing the turf, the perfectly preserved foundations of the destroyed monastery were uncovered. The foundation walls were 60 cm in width, made of fieldstones and bricks, [...] inferior quality. The walls supported by such a foundation had to be very light. The excavations showed

²⁵ “Iniungimus demum iisdem clericis, ut quoties opus fuerit per vias Passionis Domini pietatis causa deducant a Caenaculo”, *Deed of Istallation*, of Nov. 22 XI 1677, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 382.

²⁶ Andrzej Liczbiński, *Góra Kalwaria — lokacja i układ przestrzenny miasta*, in: *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, t. 2 (1957), P. 3/4, p. 207.

²⁷ Małgorzata Borkowska, *Dzieje Góry Kalwarii*, Kraków 2009, p. 176.

²⁸ S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, p. 151.

that the monastery surrounded the church on three sides and leaned on it.²⁹ Right next to the church wall was a hallway measuring 1 meter and a half in width, which led to individual cells measuring 3 meters by 3 meters. The monastery building was probably very low because the church windows looked over the monastery roof, leaning against the wall.” On the right hand, looking from the altar (where the sarcophagus is today), was the altar of St. Raphael, with the altar of St. Michael the Archangel on the left. These were the saints especially venerated by Fr. Stanislaus, who brought their paintings from Rome to be placed in this church. A large marble table in the middle of the shrine stood holding the “Crucifix, which represents the Lord’s Passion.”³⁰ At about 15 meters from the north side of the church, that is, behind the sacristy, there was a second monastery. Nothing is known about when it was built, its size, or when it collapsed. The question also arises about which of the two monasteries was first: the one surrounding the church or the one located behind the sacristy. We know that Bishop Wierzbowski gave the Marian Fathers a church with a monastery. Oskar Flatt, who visited the Cenacle in 1854, described it as follows: “It is located outside the town on the southwest side, near the settlement called Wyględówka; it presents today only a sad picture of desolation. It is a rectangular brick church roofed with shingles; if not for the cross above it, it could easily be taken for some farm building. Up until the present year, there were some monastery buildings on its southern wall, which — as one can notice — were built originally with little effort. They were torn down upon the order of a Marian presently in residence at this church, and their remains were used to build lodgings at the farm for his improved comfort.”³¹ Fr. Makulski, who supervised the general renovation of the Cenacle in 1962, reported: “About 15 meters away from the north side of the church, just above the now-filled-in pond, we discovered the foundations of some other building. It was built more solidly than the other one [the one around the church] with the use of large, partially hewn

²⁹ Eugeniusz Makulski, *Dziedzictwo. Odbudowa kościoła Wieczerzy Pańskiej w Górze Kalwarii*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 58-59.

³⁰ Oskar Flatt, *Góra Kalwarya czyli Nowe Jeruzalem*, Warszawa 1854, p. 68.

³¹ Ibid.

stones, placed at a greater depth; more solid craft.”³² Teixeira recalled that the Cenacle walls were adorned with frescoes and paintings “which accurately depicted the Mysteries that took place in the Lord’s Upper Room; in their splendor, appearance and perfection those images befitted the House of God so much sanctified and venerated.”³³ However, as reported by Oskar Flatt, both monasteries had already fallen into ruin by 1854. The walls saw frescoes and paintings peeling off. The flooding and moisture, which plagued the Cenacle, proved to be a destructive force that the Marian Fathers couldn’t contend with. General Chapters repeatedly called for the preservation of the church, especially the tomb of the Founder, which was replaced six times in the 18th century, and six times efforts had to be made to obtain permission for the exhumation of Father Papczyński’s remains. The number of members in the monastery changed like a kaleidoscope and depended on the condition of the buildings. In 1760, there probably wasn’t any Marian Father living in the Cenacle, as the General Chapter that year obligated the superior general to appoint one Marian to be the guardian of the relics of Fr. Stanislaus and the confessor of the Dominican sisters.³⁴

There were years when only one religious resided in Wieczernik, but their number significantly increased after renovations. Sometimes, albeit briefly, there were even a dozen or more of them. In 1776, the convent had twelve brethren, and the auditors noted that it was in great poverty and that “the resources of residing priests came only through Divine Providence, *ex pura elleemosina* and services they rendered in parish churches. Therefore, they testified that the monastery was unable to pay taxes.”³⁵ The highest number of Marians, sixteen of them including fathers, clerics, and brothers, resided in the Cenacle in 1782. In 1795, after the third partition of Poland, Góra came under Prussian rule. The hostile policies of this government contributed to the decline of the Passion Sanctuary in New Jerusalem and worsened the situation

³² Eugeniusz Makulski, *Dziedzictwo*, p. 59.

³³ Teixeira, n. 59.

³⁴ Cap. Gen., 1760/11. The decree stated: “Recommendatur A. R. Patri Praeposito Generali, ut aliquis Pater qualificatus maneat Górae propter custodiam corporis Venerabilis Patris Institutoris, tum ut idem sit cconfessarius monialium.”

³⁵ *Dokumenty mariańskie*, pp. 105-106; cf. ASV, Arch. Nunt. Varsaviae, vol. 120, fol. 32. Synopsis Domorum ac Religiosorum Ordinis Marianorum, die 19 Decembris 1773.

for local religious orders, including the Marians.³⁶ In the 19th century, due to political changes, the monastery's position, both in material and pastoral terms, became dire. An official report from 1818 portrays the disastrous state of the institution: "The church and the monastery, which are timber-framed, shingle-roofed, are in danger of collapsing. Three religious — two priests and one brother — are in residence. The usefulness of the monastery is limited to performing the monastery's and — occasionally — some parish duties."³⁷ Unable to see realistic solutions to the difficult personal and economic situation, from 1822, the Marians of Góra Kalwaria aimed to leave the Cenacle and take over another institution. However, the stance of the then superior general, Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski, a devotee of the Servant of God Fr. Papczyński and defender of the Cenacle, who personally resided in this ruined institution, prevented these plans.

Extinct Foundations from the Time of Father Papczyński

The 17th century was a time of intensive development for religious orders. Although it was briefly interrupted by various military conflicts like the Cossack wars, the Swedish invasion, famine, and plagues, which caused significant human and material losses, each time, monasteries were rebuilt, and new ones were established in response to the growing number of vocations, both for men and women. Religious orders, especially those focused on practical activities such as pastoral work, missions, running schools, hospitals, and shelters, saw significant growth during this period.³⁸

However, this period was not good for the Marian Order with its strict rule, although the scant notes in various documents tell us that — in addition to the Korabiew Forest, New Jerusalem, and Goźlin — Fr. Papczyński opened some other establishments, among them one

³⁶ In fact, the Prussian occupation lasted only until 1807, as from 1807 to 1815 the Duchy of Warsaw was established, which was dependent on and subordinated to the French Empire and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

³⁷ *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 108.

³⁸ Jerzy Kłoczowski, *Średniowiecze i Rzeczpospolita*, in: Jerzy Kłoczowski i inni, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Kraków 1986, pp. 118-131.

in Volhynia (now Ukraine) and another in Lithuania. The words of Fr. Stanislaus from his *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis* are worth recalling. He stated in 1674-1675: "I would already — in these two years — have both a few houses and many companions."³⁹ Yet — since he always scrupulously observed all rules and "Church customs" — he was careful in accepting new foundations. Some light on the unknown foundations is shed by request made by Fr. Papczyński in a letter to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious, asking "that the said Congregation would be able to own movable and immovable property, with confirmation of ownership of the land and foundations which its members currently own, namely in Góra, in the Korabiew Forest and in Woraszczce as well as in others that exist during the specific time."⁴⁰ He repeated a similar request in a letter to Pope Innocent XII. The letter contains information about the Marian Order and eight serious spiritual requests, including one for the confirmation of "the ownership rights to lands and facilities in possession by the Order's members in Góra, the Korabiew Forest and Woraszczce as well as the others existing at a given time."⁴¹ From the above documents, it appears that the Marian Order possessed a monastery in Volhynia in 1692, with at least three monks, as required by Church regulations. Even more intriguing is the information provided by the Voivode of Rawa, Alexander Załuski.⁴² This voivodeship included the Korabiew Forest along with the Marian monastery. In 1699, Alexander Załuski, in support of the Marian Order's efforts to obtain papal approval, wrote three letters of recommendation to the Holy See.⁴³ In these letters, he

³⁹ St. Papczyński, *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis*, 26, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 913.

⁴⁰ St. Papczyński, Second petition addressed to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious, on Aug. 22, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 953.

⁴¹ St. Papczyński, Petition to the Holy Father Pope Innocent on Sept. 13, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 956.

⁴² Alexander Załuski was a high-ranking official in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and his relatives held important positions in the government. His son, Andrzej Chryzostom Załuski (1650-1711), was appointed as the Bishop of Kyiv in 1683. See: Piotr Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła w Polsce w latach 965-1999*, Warszawa 2000, p. 505.

⁴³ See Prot. Ord., 143-145. The first letter, dated March 22, 1699 stated: "Praeterea horum Religiosorum [marianorum] ea est modestia, exemplaritas, Recollectio, Zelus in ferenda ope Parochis circa animarum chram, et Divinae gloriae promovendae studium, ut ardenissime ad novas Fundationes expetantur, quas acceptare illi nolunt, imo et binas dimiserunt, cum magno animarum detrimento, in Russia et Lituania (ubi inter Schismaticos egregie rem Catholicam promovere caeperant) propterea quo S. Sedis Apostolicae non dum habeant Confirmationem

provided testimony about the exceptionally devout monastic life of the Marian Order and their apostolic zeal. He emphasized their assistance to parish priests, intercession for the deceased, modesty, exceptional devotion, and poverty. He particularly highlighted their pastoral work *inter Schismaticos*, among the Eastern Orthodox. He also mentioned that they had foundations in Ruthenia and Lithuania, where they worked with great benefit to the faithful. He requested their approval to allow them to grow and work in areas inhabited by the Eastern Orthodox. The mention of these institutions in distant lands, their pastoral work, and missionary activities among the Orthodox, sheds new light on the first thirty years of the Congregation's development. It's worth noting some facts. For example, Fr. Papczyński, while in a hermit order, personally conducted extensive apostolic work throughout Mazovia. Similarly, the Marian Fathers in the Cenacle undertook various pastoral activities mandated by Bishop Wierzbowski's decree. During the same period, on the eastern borders of the Commonwealth, Fr. Papczyński established a missionary institution (one or maybe two) intended for work among the Eastern Orthodox. These facts testify to the Congregation's pastoral charism already during the Founder's lifetime. The eremitical "inclination" started only in 1702, following the inspiration of the Reformed Franciscans and Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. We know very little about the abovementioned foundations. Likely, they weren't widely publicized to avoid attracting the attention of the enemies who saw the Marian Fathers solely as hermits. However, many questions arise: How were such distant foundations established? How did they manage the complex administrative and legal procedures, both civil and ecclesiastical? Who acted as intermediaries in these negotiations? How was the missionary and apostolic work in those places reconciled with the eremitical character of the Order? And what led to the dissolution of these institutions? Hypothetically, one could assume that these foundations might have been established through the Załuski family's influence, as Alexander Załuski, the voivode of Rawa, had connections with the Marians from the Forest. His son, Andrzej Chryzostom Załuski, held significant influence as the Bishop of Kyiv, which allowed him to assist in establishing these

et pietatem suam illi placituras diffident ab adversariis non paucis circumventi". Cf. *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 534-537.

foundations. In 1651-1654, Fr. Papczyński studied in Rawa and, as a Marian, made several pastoral visits there. He had friendly relations with the Załuski family and the Trzeciński castellans of Rawa.⁴⁴ Certainly, in creating these foundations, the Marians must have overcome many difficulties that were likely impassable without the support of an influential patron with significant influence in both the Church and political elites. This hypothesis is supported by Alexander Załuski's clear understanding of the charism and work of the local Marians, as well as his knowledge of their activities on the eastern borders of Poland. The information about the Marian foundation in Lithuania is confirmed by the records of the Chapter of the Diocese of Vilnius, which, among various other orders and one hundred and one monasteries operating there in 1690, also lists the Marians, additionally identified as "Stanisłaiti."⁴⁵ During Fr. Stanislaus's lifetime, the Marians also had a house in the suburbs of Warsaw. The time and manner in which they took possession of this house are unknown, but it is a fact that in 1679, the house was already their property. This is mentioned in a document of King John III Sobieski, by which he took the Congregation of Marians under his protection, granted them privileges, and freed "a little house in the suburbs of Warsaw, burdened with a pious foundation for the dead" from all state obligations, charges, and taxes."⁴⁶ This house remained among the Marian Order's properties into the 18th century, as evidenced by the records in the expense ledger from the Korabiew Forest.⁴⁷ The Marijampole chronicle preserved a decree of 1773, by which "it was ordered that the Marijampole monastery should supply 4,000 zlotys for a property in Warsaw [...] to accommodate our religious."⁴⁸ The cooperation and friendship between Fr. Papczyński

⁴⁴ APS 10, *passim*. Six witnesses testified in the beatification process about the close and friendly relationship between Fr. Papczyński, the Marian Order, and the Trzeciński family. Witnesses in the beatification process also provided testimony about his service in Rawa. See S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 183, 186-187, 189-197. Father Dionysius Kisieliński, a Marian archivist, testified in the beatification process that various people sought his advice and counsel. Among them, he mentioned: Mr. Jarzyna, the chamberlain of Rawa, Waclaw and Felicjan Trzeciński, both castellans of Rawa, and others. See: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 179.

⁴⁵ *Wileńskie biskupstwo*, in: *Enc. Kość.*, t. 31, p. 303.

⁴⁶ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 402-404; its Polish-language version is in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ APPM, VII A 4, Puszczka Korab., Regesta perceptarum.

⁴⁸ Prot. Mariamp., entry of June 20, 1773.

and Bishop Wierzbowski resulted in the latter granting permission to establish the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Warsaw. However, this plan was not realized due to the prevailing plague and various wars at the time.⁴⁹ As an expression of the bishop's goodwill, protection, and concern for the development of the Marian Order, his official letter dated May 22, 1681, granted them support and privileges. He also consented to the foundation of a church and monastery in Warsaw at Leszno, Grzybów, or Solec. Additionally, he allowed them to administer sacraments (except for Baptism and Marriage), preach sermons, teach, and conduct fund-raising.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, many of these possibilities were not realized. The obstacles were a lack of approval of the Order, external enemies, internal opponents, poverty, and strong competition from new and active religious orders settling in Warsaw.

Canonical Erection of the Congregation of Marian Fathers; Efforts to Obtain Approval from the Holy See

The year 1677, as we have already discussed, was very favorable for the congregation. The approval of the Marian Order by the Sejm, new holy vocations, and the opening a new establishment in Góra strengthened Father Papczyński's conviction of the chosen path's righteousness. He interpreted these facts as God's blessing for the Order and the works undertaken. Consequently, he initiated efforts to obtain the canonical erection of the Marian Order, a cause that Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski also urged. By accepting the Marian Fathers, he obligated them to seek the approval of the institute from the Holy See.⁵¹ He also wanted to ensure that Fr. Papczyński's activities were inspired by the Holy Spirit

⁴⁹ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, 7, p. 158. "From this unwavering conviction of the holiness of Father Stanislaus, it also follows the permission of the local ordinary to establish the chapel of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Warsaw, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland, as attested in the records of the Warsaw Consistory. However, Casimir Wyszynski did not specify the year in which this permission was granted.

⁵⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 410-411.

⁵¹ "Quos tamen obligamus, ut Instituti Sui Confirmationem quantocius a Sancta Sede Apostolica postulent, quatenus, quod a Nobis agitur, a Spiritu Sancto profectum esse censeatur, neque plus nobis arogasse, quam Autoritas Nostra valeat, iudicemur". *Erezione della Casa al. Cenacolo In Góra — 1677; Navikevicius, Appendix*, 34.

and that he possessed the necessary competence to obtain approval for the new order. On the other hand, Fr. Papczyński knew that only a canonical erection would provide solid legal foundations for the Order to establish itself within the Church. Along with his intention to found the Order, he initiated negotiations with Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski regarding its canonical erection, which initially failed. At that time, Fr. Papczyński made a similar request to the Holy See. According to Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, this supplication was sent to Pope Clement X in 1674/1675.⁵² The matter was given official consideration, which means that the document was sent from the Holy See to the Papal Nuncio Francesco Buonvisi in Warsaw, and the Nuncio passed it on to Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski with a request for detailed information and explanations. On December 23, 1675, Nuncio Francesco Buonvisi concluded his mission in Poland, and the matters related to the erection of the Marian Order likely took a negative turn.

Erection on a diocesan level: April 21, 1679

The difficulties in obtaining approval from the Holy See led Father Papczyński to change his approach. He decided not to seek recognition of the Congregation as a new religious institute (which required approval from the Holy See), but rather as an institute “*Secundi generis Eremitarum, iam alias ab Ecclesia admissorum et iurisdictioni Ordinariae subiectorum*.”⁵³ He soon convinced Bishop Wierzbowski of his project, and in the middle of 1678, the legal procedure for the canonical erection of the Marian Fathers was initiated.

In the first days of June 1678, Bishop Wierzbowski issued an official decree summoning all those interested in the canonical erection of the new congregation to appear for a hearing within two weeks and submit their objections. Since the judicial hearing, which took place on June 17, 1677, was presided over by Bishop Święcicki, opponents requested that it be postponed until the arrival of the Ordinary, Stefan Wierzbowski.

⁵² *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 384.

⁵³ Protocol from the second court session regarding the approval of the Marian Order on November 16, 1678. *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 390.

This request was granted. When Bishop Wierzbowski returned to New Jerusalem, Fr. Papczyński resumed his efforts for the canonical installation of the Marians. The Bishop announced a summons to a new trial scheduled for November 16, 1678. This time, the Bishop appeared at the hearing, but not the opponents, i.e., representatives of the Dominican Order and Dominican Sisters from Góra, who raised certain property claims, which began, according to them, after the Chapel of St. Martin had been exchanged for the Cenacle.⁵⁴ The court session concluded with the issuance of a letter that discussed the progress of the case and provided the Dominican side with the opportunity to present any objections related to the erection of the Marians at the Cenacle.⁵⁵ To avoid any future accusations and ambiguities, Bishop Wierzbowski once again postponed the trial. New summonses were announced the following day, on November 17. They were posted on the doors of the churches in Góra and the Korabiew Forest and read from the pulpit. The bishop explained that the final steps for the canonical foundation of the Marian Congregation in the Poznań diocese were already being taken and urged his priests to present their objections and suggestions. The trial was scheduled for two weeks later. The summons called for the participation of “all and anyone who believes that they have the right to object, or are interested in any way [...] to consider and hear the case of the installation of the Congregation of the Clerics Recollect of the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without the stain [...], and to recognize and raise this Congregation to the rank of the Institute of Hermits of the Second Degree.”⁵⁶ For unclear reasons, the trial took place only after five months. Probably, the bishop needed time to find experts, theologians, and canon lawyers and familiarize himself with their opinions to avoid making mistakes. After all, it was an unprecedented event in the Polish Church. The Marian order was the first male order founded in Poland, and that too, by a Pole. Fr. Julian Kałowski, an expert in legal matters concerning religious orders in the 17th century, wrote: “Not even the

⁵⁴ See the Chapter: *Opening of a Post in New Jerusalem*, p. 52.

⁵⁵ Georgio Navikevicius, *Stanisław di Gesù Maria Papczyński 1631-1701. Scolopio e Fondatore della Congregazione dei Padri Mariani*, Roma 1960, pp. 173-177, [afterwards: Navikevicius]; *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 104, P. 185, pp. 108-109, n. 191.

⁵⁶ Letter summoning participation in the process of the canonical erection of the Congregation, dated November 17, 1678, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 391-392.

bishops were always well acquainted with the procedure of establishing and approving the newly founded institutes for living out the evangelical counsels.”⁵⁷ No one had experience in this matter. Despite the opponents not showing up, the trial took place on April 21, 1679, and Bishop Wierzbowski, without any further obstacles, performed the canonical erection of the congregation. In the issued decree, he defined the Marian Order as “Congregatio Clericorum Recollectorum Beatissime Virginis Mariae sine macula conceptae [...] sub nomine Eremitarum secundi Generis,”⁵⁸ that is, as hermits of the second degree. The document was of immense importance to the Marian Order. It was a day of joy for Fr. Papczyński and his confrères. The Congregation obtained a strong legal foundation for its existence and growth within the Church. All of Fr. Papczyński’s proposals were considered. The bishop took the Marian Order under his own protection and the protection of his successors in the Poznań diocese. He approved the Marian statutes and appointed Father Papczyński as the lifelong General Superior. By the same decree, he also ordered that the Marians who wished to be dispensed from the vows mentioned above, even though they only made simple vows and were under his jurisdiction, had to obtain a dispensation from the Holy See through their general superior. The document clearly and strongly emphasizes the main purpose of the Order, which was to assist the deceased suffering in Purgatory: “Above all, the Order’s goal is to provide assistance to the souls in Purgatory. [...] Also, it must embrace with particular care all those who perished during continuous wars, frequent epidemics, and various disasters, as well as those who are completely devoid of any help from the faithful.”⁵⁹ The Bishop praised Fr. Stanislaus for dedicating himself and his religious family, the Marians, to a goal as important as the subtle *opus misericordiae*, assisting the most unfortunate. The document also highlights the bishop’s desire for the Marian Fathers to offer spiritual assistance to those condemned to the death penalty. He instructs them to comfort and support the condemned, pray for them, and be with them on the path of execution; “to stay with those sentenced by the law

⁵⁷ Julian Kałowski, *Początki mariańskiego prawodawstwa*, in: *Błogosławiony Stanisław Papczyński. Pisma fundacyjne*, Warszawa 2007, p. 18.

⁵⁸ *Positio*, Papczyński. Document of establishing dated April 21, 1679, pp. 394-400; Cf. Navikevicius, *Appendix*, I, pp. 34-38.

⁵⁹ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 395.



Collection of rights and privileges granted by Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski to New Jerusalem.

to execution and to support them at their last moments not only with fervent prayer but also with saintly admonition.” By the above document, Bishop Wierzbowski erected a house in the Cenacle, confirmed the approval of the monastery in the Korabiew Forest, and merged both foundations into one congregation. He expressed his hope to see the community “growing and expanding for the greater glory of God and the most reliable help for the faithful departed.”⁶⁰ As part of his kindness, the bishop approved “already established houses as well those that will be established [sic], along with all their rights and privileges.” The document doesn’t mention the apostolic activities of the Marians. The bishop’s favor towards the Marians filled Fr. Stanislaus with hope and provided a strong foundation for the development of the Marians. However, it appears that differences in monastic discipline and observance between the house in the Forest and the newly erected one in Góra would become the cause of future disputes and misunderstandings.

Privileges Granted to the Marians by King John Sobieski: June 2, 1679

Another success of the young congregation was the privileges received from King John III Sobieski. In Marian tradition, there is a strong belief in Fr. Papczyński’s acquaintance with the king and the close bonds that connected them. According to this tradition, Papczyński was the confessor and even an advisor to the king on some issues.⁶¹ Fr. Louis Zapalkiewicz, testifying during the beatification process, declared that Fr. Papczyński “was so well versed in theology that King John III Sobieski did not hesitate to have him for his theologian [...], the king was most kind and friendly with the Servant of God, whom he believed to be very saintly.”⁶² Other Marians corroborated this opinion. It is difficult to say

⁶⁰ All the quotes were taken from the erection document.

⁶¹ APS 10, f. 130. Testimony of Fr. Benedict Hoenig; testimony of Fr. Dionysus Kisieliński, who stated that he personally saw and read in the archive in the Forest the documents issued by King John III, containing various privileges for the Marian Order. Cf. *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 809-810. Testimonies of witnesses about the relationships with the king; also see: T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, pp. 243-247; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 165-177.

⁶² APS 10, f. 120r. Father Benedict Hoenig testified: “De hoc non solum legi, sed etiam audivi a Patribus nostris, quo Rex Joannes Tertius Sobieski Servum Dei pro suo Theologo

today with complete certainty if Fr. Stanislaus was indeed *addictissimus et familiarissimus* with King John III. However, it's certain that they knew each other personally and met on multiple occasions. The fruit of this acquaintance and mutual respect was, to a large extent, the privilege granted to the Marian Fathers just six weeks after the canonical erection of the Congregation. While in Góra, on June 2, 1679, the king issued a document confirming all the previous privileges granted to the Marians and added new ones. He exempted the Marians from all fees and taxes to the state. He significantly expanded their land holdings in the Korabiew Forest and took the Congregation under his protection, expressing his wish that the "Institute grow and establish new houses in other localities throughout our Kingdom."⁶³ For the Marians, it was a significant achievement: in addition to securing the legal protection of the Church, they acquired secular royal guarantees.

Papal Brief *Cum Sicut Accepimus*: March 20, 1681

Bishop Wierzbowski, wanting to observe all formalities and avoid ambiguity when erecting the Marian Fathers, informed the Holy See about the entire action. In response, Pope Innocent XI issued a *breve* to the bishop, granting numerous privileges to the Marian Fathers.⁶⁴ It's important to emphasize that this is the first papal document addressed to the Marian Fathers. In this document, the Marians were named: "Confraternitas sive Congregatio Clericorum Recollectorum [...], sub titulo Conceptionis B.M.V. Immaculatae in suffragium animarum fidelium defunctorum canonice erecta."⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the term "confraternitas," repeated several times in the document, was misinterpreted as permission from the Holy See to establish a Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Marian Order. This

assumpserit, atque Praesul Pignatelli Nuntius pro tunc in Polonia eumdem in Confessarium suum elegerit". Similarly, Fr. Dionysius Kisieliński testified that he had read and heard from several fathers that Fr. Papczyński was the confessor of the king and the nuncio. See f. 192r; cf. S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 168.

⁶³ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 402-404.

⁶⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 406-409.

⁶⁵ ASV: Sec. Brev., Indulg. Perp., vol. 5: Innoc. XI - Pro ConFater ab An. 1676 ad An. 1689.

interpretation was promoted by Bishop Wierzbowski and adopted by Fr. Papczyński.⁶⁶ Most Marian historians in the 20th century also accepted the theory that the Marian Order received approval to erect the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception in 1681.⁶⁷ From the documents, it appears that it was Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, while in Rome, who obtained permission to promote the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception and establish the Confraternity. The Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception was first introduced in the church of the Korabiew Forest on June 26, 1734.⁶⁸ Although the papal *breve* was not an approval, the Congregation's status was raised by its very citation in the papal document and by the bestowal of numerous privileges on its members. On the day of their joining the Congregation, the Marians received permission to grant a plenary indulgence to people who would utter the name of Jesus at the hour of their death as well as to give it annually on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception; the Marians could also grant partial indulgences on holidays, at holy ceremonies, and for corporal and spiritual works of mercy toward body and soul.⁶⁹ Having received the apostolic brief, on May 22, 1681, Bishop Wierzbowski proclaimed a special rescript, by which he confirmed the authoritativeness of this document, apprised the clergy and the faithful in his diocese of its contents, and expressed his heartfelt joy on receiving the apostolic letter:⁷⁰ "Great joy filled us when we received from the Holy See [...] this latest document."⁷¹ His sentiment is not surprising: Bishop Wierzbowski regarded himself as a co-founder of the Marians, was in close contact with the Cenacle and its inhabitants, frequently visited

⁶⁶ Fr. Papczyński, concerning this confraternity, decreed in *Norma Vitae*, VII, 8, as follows: "The Superior [General] will assign to each house a promoter of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception assisting the souls of the faithful departed. Let the Confraternity be erected in your churches, if not already done, on the basis of the permission granted by Pope Innocent XI on March 20, 1681, and on the basis of the admission of this document on the part of the Ordinary" [Bishop Wierzbowski].

⁶⁷ Jan Kosmowski, *Marianie w latach 1787-1864*, Warszawa — Lublin, 2004, pp. 206-211.

⁶⁸ AGM, Prot. Gosł., s. 243-244, Introductio ConFater Immaculatae Conc. Ecclesiam Corab., die 26 Junii 1734.

⁶⁹ Breve *Cum sicut accepimus* of March 20, 1681. *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 406-409.

⁷⁰ Letter of Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski of May 22, 1681, *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 410-411.

⁷¹ Ibid, "Laetari Nos vehementer fatemur cum Sancta Sede Apostolica quam a S. Spiritu indubitenter credimus gubernari, hoc recentissimum documentum recepimus."

them, and felt responsible for the destiny of the Order.⁷² Even if he had reservations or doubts about the legal basis for approving the Marians or about the need to establish a new religious order, they all disappeared with the arrival of the papal *breve*. Now, he had the assurance that God Himself called this Order, and he supported it in various ways until his death. The bishop promoted it, proposed the foundation of a church and monastery in Warsaw, and gave his consent for the establishment of institutions in other dioceses, encouraging their creation. His words of remarkable goodwill expressed in a letter are worth mentioning: "We graciously accept this Congregation again and again both in our and in our successors' protection, solemnly promising on our behalf and that of our successors to keep its peace, provision, inviolability and perfect condition."⁷³ During Fr. Papczyński's lifetime, the Marian Order did not accept the offer to establish institutions in Warsaw or other dioceses. In this matter, it's necessary to consider the explanations provided by Fr. Wyszyński, who asserted that numerous epidemics, significant wartime destruction, and the country's resulting poverty, diseases, and depopulation were severe obstacles.

Second Canonical Erection of the Marians on a diocesan level: February 21, 1687

Despite the strong support and involvement of Bishop Wierzbowski in the Marian matters and the goodwill of King John III Sobieski, the Marian Order did not flourish. They constantly faced various difficulties and obstacles, along with numerous attacks on Fr. Papczyński and the Order itself.

There were several reasons for the attacks and misconceptions. First, there was a widespread and deep conviction among the nobility and clergy that religious orders could be created only in the countries of the Romance languages and that such orders were only transplanted to Poland. A religious order founded in Poland and by a Pole seemed unacceptable. Therefore, initially, they ridiculed the concept and slandered its

⁷² L. Górski, *Krótką wiadomość*, pp. 310-312; J. Kosmowski, *Wieczernik na Mazowszu*, pp. 21-23.

⁷³ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 411.

originator. Fr. Papczyński confessed: “[...] there were some who looked upon me as a crazy man. Others persecuted me.”⁷⁴ Secondly, Stanislaus Papczyński, being convinced that the establishment of the Order of the Immaculate Conception was God’s will, considered obtaining its legal erection to be the most crucial. Therefore, he agreed to the strict penitential and eremitic rule imposed by Bishop Świącicki. At that time, this was the only way for the Order to come into existence at all. According to the research of Professor Jerzy Kłoczowski, at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, such orders were no longer popular in the Church. They were considered unnecessary and parasitic, and this was how the Marian Order was also perceived. Thirdly, many negative opinions and hostilities were caused by disputes and conflicts, both in Góra and the Forest, regarding boundary disputes between the Marian Order and the local peasants. To defend their material foundation, the Marian Order was forced to engage in both ecclesiastical and secular legal proceedings, which raised the resentment of some representatives of the local, often impoverished, nobility. The boundaries of the lands, especially the forests and meadows surrounding both monasteries and the rights to their property, were not precisely defined in the endowment documents. For example, a document specifying the boundaries of the property in the Cenacle stated that: “The property line goes [...] next to the river and the fence, in a straight line along the willows, up to the mound [border marker] near the plow land [...] [of someone] called Śledź. From the south [it] goes in a straight line, near the lofty Czerski forest [...] up to the corner of the baker’s fence.”⁷⁵ In those days, however, it was a common practice to move border markers, cut down marked trees, and infringe on a neighbor’s land. Numerous documents of court hearings testify to this, as does the fact that it happened even more often when the religious orders’ grounds were concerned. This practice did not spare the Marians: their orderly and ameliorated lands were eyed greedily by the local gentry, who usurped property rights. Fr. Papczyński’s first biographer, Fr. Mansueto Leporini, wrote in 1705: “He suffered persecution and many vexations from the common citizens of Góra; he heard many insulting, contemptuous and jeering words. One of them even shoved

⁷⁴ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollection*, in: *Selected Writings*, 8, p. 905.

⁷⁵ S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, p. 152.

him.”⁷⁶ Bishop Wierzbowski took numerous actions to support the Marian Order. He issued judgments, redefined the boundaries of the foundations, and sent his commissioners to settle disputes. However, even these measures proved insufficient. In a document addressed to the residents of Góra Kalwaria, he wrote with bitterness: “Certain contrary opinions surfaced concerning the boundaries of the Lord’s Cenacle and its heirloom between the townspeople of New Jerusalem and certain persons, and even between the Marian Clerics Recollect themselves. Wishing to remedy with love this evil, damage [and] confusion, almost bordering on desperation [...] we issued by Our authority certain written orders.”⁷⁷ Another reason for the aversion towards the Marian Order was the lack of papal approval. This fact, as perceived by hostile citizens who argued that “such an order has no right to exist,” was considered a pretext for its dissolution. Moreover, based on a misinterpretation of the Church law, it was believed to provide an opportunity for easy dispensation from solemn vows by ordinary confessors. Fr. Papczyński particularly cautioned against these abuses in *Norma Vitae*: “The one who has embraced this [eremitical] status, especially in some Congregation of Hermits approved at least by a Bishop, and has made the profession [of the vows] in it, may not change this status, unless he has been dispensed by the Roman Pontiff.”⁷⁸ Meanwhile, confessors too easily granted dispensations to Marians from their religious vows. Those who, alarmed by the strict rules of Marian life, asceticism, lengthy nocturnal prayers, and penitential practices, left the Order, often blackened its reputation by spreading false information to justify their own fickleness before the public. Father Papczyński, “to inform those who feel and speak unfavorably about the present Institute, partly because of ignorance, partly due to bad information,”⁷⁹ cautioned against them. Bishop Wierzbowski, concerned about the future of the Order and alarmed by the departures, admonished confessors and warned Marians who wanted to leave the Order: “The Holy See may free them from these ordinary vows and the

⁷⁶ Leporini, n. 74. “Ab infimae conditionis Civibus Gorensibus multas persecutiones, vexationes, verba contumeliosa, contemptus, sibillos perpressus, ab uno forum trusus.”

⁷⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 425-426.

⁷⁸ S. Papczyński, *Norma Vitae, Informative Preface*, 2, in: St. Stanislaus Papczyński, *Selected Writings*, p. 54.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 3.

oath, in some fair and lawful time, and only upon the petition of [the] superior of the entire Congregation.”⁸⁰ Mansueto Leporini describes this critical situation of Fr. Papczyński and the Order: “From the very beginning he suffered persecution from all sides: on the outside from laity and clergy, on the inside from false brethren. Ultimately, he was brought to ruin, so he and Father Joseph were left alone.”⁸¹ This likely refers to the initial years of their residence in the Forest when candidates had difficulty accepting the strict rules imposed by Bishop Świącicki. In the cited biography by Leporini, it is not specified when exactly this occurred.

All this in the first years of the Order’s existence weighed on its development. The peasant origins of the founder, Fr. Stanislaus, and the admission of candidates from the peasant class were also obstacles to some extent. In those times, peasants had no rights and were demeaned, exploited, and burdened with numerous taxes and obligations to the state and landowners. Therefore, Fr. Papczyński, in developing the foundation within this social reality, constantly encountered obstacles related to the division of society into classes. On his part, he held great love for the representatives of the lowest classes and encouraged the Marians to do the same, both in their attitude and service to the poorest, setting a personal example. The Constitutions also included this issue as “instructing the simplest folk in Christian doctrine.”⁸² Fr. Papczyński’s stance and work ethos was met with great misapprehension, especially by the privileged classes, for the gentry scorned work and working people. By contrast, in his *Rule of Life*, Fr. Papczyński directly stated that the religious had an obligation to work: “It would be suitable for preserving the spirit of humility if, as much as possible, the priests themselves would sweep out the church, clean the linens and vessels, and attend to the decoration and maintenance of the churches and their furniture. Nor should they pompously push themselves ahead of others.”⁸³ Although very evangelical, these instructions were unimaginable for many and were ridiculed by them. There are testimonies about Góra Kalwaria

⁸⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 426.

⁸¹ Leporini, P. 39. The author of the biography mistakenly confused the names, as the only one who remained with Fr. Papczyński at that time was Stanislaus Krajewski.

⁸² *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, cap. VI, Warszawa 1750.

⁸³ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, VIII, 4, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 84.

burghers who, seeing the Marians doing manual labor, mocked them in verse: “Stanislaus garbed in white sackcloth founded the community of worthy farmhands.”⁸⁴

When analyzing the available documents, it is surprising to see so many attacks on the Order, threats, slander, and accusations from external sources and within the Order itself. Bishop Wierzbowski, who felt deeply responsible for the congregation, had serious concerns about its fate and survival, and he defended it by all means possible.

Episcopal Committee and Its Decrees: June 14, 1685

There was no peace in the small congregation. João Teixeira even claimed that: “Satan [...] began to inflame the minds of many outsiders and even of some cloistered [Marian] brethren devoid of [a] real calling, pushing them to initiate persecution and destroy this holy Congregation. The destroyer of peace has succeeded in achieving his evil intentions because all the confrères have abandoned their former calling, left the cloister, and returned into the world.”⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, this information from the devout Portuguese, who had no means of verifying it, relates to the years 1674-1676. These were the years of testing the fidelity to the strict rigors of the eremitic-penitential vocation imposed by Bishop Świącicki, which some confrères couldn’t endure. During the period when the Marians already had two monasteries, the Order had at least a dozen members and several clerics and novices.⁸⁶ There were also some significant misunderstandings during that time, especially in the Cenacle, although minimal information is available about them. One of the documents tells about some differences of opinion (*differentiae*), which arose between Fr. Papczyński — who left the monastery in the Forest and took up a long-term residence at the Cenacle to have more opportunities for apostolic work — and his confrères. The document

⁸⁴ That’s how the witnesses testified in the beatification process of Father Stanislaus. See: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 192.

⁸⁵ Teixeira, n. 56. Leporini made the same note, n. 39.

⁸⁶ Navikevicius, pp. 182-183. Based on the available documents, he provided the number of Marians in the Cenacle in 1690, excluding Fr. Stanislaus, who was then going to Rome: there were 4 fathers, 3 subdeacons, and several clerics. In the Forest, there were at least 5 fathers and some novices.

also speaks of ongoing turmoil and confusion.⁸⁷ Bishop Wierzbowski, Fr. Papczyński's friend, lamented the situation and appointed — possibly, at Fr. Stanislaus's request — a committee composed of a priest, an apostolic notary from the Apostolic Union of Secular Priests, and two Piarists. Their task was to restore religious discipline, to bring peace and order to the monastery, to establish proper relations between subordinates and superiors, and to resolve specific contradictory and inflammatory issues between them. It seems highly probable that the problem lay in the dispute over the nature of the new Institute — whether it should be apostolic or contemplative. This dispute arose after Bishop Wierzbowski had established the monastery in Góra and had released it from the strict regulations imposed by Bishop Święcicki, a step he did not take for the monastery in the Forest. In this way, two active monasteries within the same Order had different observances, asceticism, lifestyles, daily routines, and even formation. Thus, as the first young Marians came to the Cenacle in 1677 after completing their novitiate and their spiritual and intellectual formation at the strict eremitical monastery in the Forest, and having embraced the lifestyle of a strict cloister — asceticism without apostolate — some of them began to rebel when they observed Fr. Papczyński devoting himself to pastoral work, encouraging others to do the same, and creating various opportunities for such a work. They refused to accept “the new apostolic version of the Order.” This caused divisions and confusion within the community.

The episcopal committee formulated its ordinances in 15 articles, which reminded the religious of their primary obligations. The decrees strengthened Fr. Papczyński's authority, which was expressed especially clearly and firmly in the first article: “All the priests and brothers of the entire Congregation will acknowledge and honor the Most Reverend Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and they will show him complete, willing and faithful obedience in the Lord, needing no explanations. Until another house is founded, he will reside at the Lord's Cenacle.”⁸⁸ The tone of the point concerning the admonition of the superior is no less decisive. It was probably created due to abuses in this area. “Let no one dare to reprimand [him] in public [...], to use harsh words and accusations,

⁸⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 412-417. Decrees of the Episcopal Committee of June 14, 1685.

⁸⁸ Decrees of the Episcopal Committee, Nos. 1-3, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 414.

to undermine his authority; the subordinate should deliver his observations on his knees.”⁸⁹

The committee appointed Fr. James of St. Thomas as the lifelong superior of the Cenacle, clearly emphasizing that Fr. Papczyński was Fr. James’s superior. Other articles of this decree called for fraternal love, zeal, and courtesy in mutual relations. It is known that one of the Marians who was causing trouble left the Order after being admonished by name. The last point urges the Marian Fathers, “upon learning about someone being condemned to death, to visit him to give comfort and strengthen him, and to accompany him in [the] final struggle (as he goes to execution), being well prepared.”⁹⁰ This was Bishop Wierzbowski’s wish, who had already entrusted this task to the Marian Fathers in the erection document in 1679.

The decrees issued by the episcopal committee did not fully calm the situation. There were still some misunderstandings⁹¹ and controversies among the Marian Fathers, and disputes and property conflicts between the townspeople of Góra and the religious continued. The documents do not specify the exact nature of these conflicts. Worried about the situation, the Bishop once again defended the Marian Fathers. On November 19, 1685, he issued a document protecting the Marians and confirming their rights without any restrictions to the granted lands and properties, excluding claims by various usurpers. He also clearly defined the boundaries of the Marian estate at the Cenacle. He reaffirmed the establishment of the congregation in 1679. He also reminded the Marian Fathers that Fr. Papczyński was their lifelong superior, “*totius Congregationis dictae et Coenaculum Domini, et non alium quempiam ad Vita eius tempora existere.*”⁹²

Second Canonical Erection of the Marians: February 21, 1687

In the winter of 1687, Bishop Wierzbowski fell seriously ill and realized that the end of his life was approaching. Therefore, he decided to address

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid, n. 15.

⁹¹ Navikevicius, pp. 178-179.

⁹² *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 419-420. Deklaration protecting the Marians.

two of the most important matters close to his heart. One was drafting his last will and testament, through which he made decisions about his foundations. The other pressing issue that greatly occupied him before his death was securing the future of his beloved work, the Congregation of Marian Fathers, which, as he explained, “was constantly exposed to malicious attacks.”⁹³ He left an extensive decree to address this matter and wanted to dispel any doubts that people from the outside or even the Marian Fathers themselves might have in the future. In the decree, he described a brief history of the life of Fr. Stanislaus, outlined a concise historical overview of the Congregation, its privileges, received documents, and canonical approvals, emphasizing the value of Pope Innocent XI’s brief *Cum Sicut Accepimus*. He also expressed immense respect for Fr. Papczyński for his extraordinary life and his fervent zeal in caring for the deceased, the poor, and his apostolate. To avoid any future opportunities for disputes with the townspeople, he clarified various doubts and, to eliminate any grounds or claims to the Marian properties, he decreed: “We then declare that no one else but the aforementioned Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary together with his Congregation is the true and legal owner and heir of the Lord’s Cenacle in New Jerusalem and of all its movable and immovable goods, thanks to our generous donation [...] and his effort; he contributed several thousand Polish zlotys to build a hermitage, that is [monastic] cells, near the said Cenacle of the Lord.”⁹⁴ The Bishop also obliged the religious communities of New Jerusalem and its inhabitants to respect the rights and privileges of the Marians under the threat of legal and divine punishment. This decree aimed to stabilize the material and spiritual situation of the Marians. It contained a statement that the Congregation had all canonical rights, approved and in accordance with the legislation of the Holy See. No Marian could leave it without its consent and only through their own superior, in this case, Fr. Papczyński. It explicitly pointed out that Fr. Papczyński is the lifelong legal superior of the entire Congregation, and the approval of his rule, *Norma vitae*, and its publication in 1687 emphasized his role and merits in shaping the Marians.⁹⁵ *Norma Vitae* was a wise and balanced

⁹³ *Positio*, Papczyński. *Seconda erezione dei PP. Mariani*, 21 febbraio 1687, pp. 422-430.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 427.

⁹⁵ Stepen Wierzbowski, *Norma Vitae Clericorum Recollectorum alias Marianorum, defunctis*

program that emphasized brotherly love and placed less emphasis on discipline. It was well-suited for the formation of the Marians and the observance of their religious rules. Unfortunately, at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* was considered more important, while *Norma Vitae* became a secondary document.



Tombstone portrait of Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski, Founder and sponsor of Góra Kalwaria.



Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski's present place of rest in the crypt of the Church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in Góra Kalwaria.

In the history of Bishop Wierzbowski's relationship with the Marians, what is truly remarkable is his genuine concern for the Order and his efforts to secure both its material and spiritual well-being. Of course, a significant factor in this was the bishop's friendship with Fr. Papczyński and his deep respect for him and his fellow Marians. But an equally important motive for the continuous support of the Marians was their charisma, repeatedly emphasized by the Bishop, i.e., devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and, even more

praecipue militibus et peste sublati suffragantium, Varsaviae 1687. Karol Estreicher mistakenly attributed the authorship of *Norma Vitae* to Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski instead of Father Papczyński. According to the custom, the name of the author was not included on the title page of the constitution. However, the name of Wierzbowski appeared on the title page, as he approved and authorized *Norma Vitae* for publication. K. Estreicher wanted to verify the authorship but could not find any copies of *Norma Vitae*, so he accepted the suggested authorship of Bishop Wierzbowski. Karol Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, Series I-III, vol. 32, Kraków 1938, p. 186. *Norma Vitae* was likely published in 1687 in a small edition, and to this day, no copies have been preserved.

so, the help for souls in Purgatory. About the latter, the bishop wrote: "It is necessary to remember particularly all those who were killed in wars or perished during various epidemics and disasters [...], let them be required to stay at the side of those sentenced by law to execution (death)."⁹⁶ He repeatedly mentioned this duty entrusted to the Marians in his documents. He believed it to be a noble, beautiful, and merciful command, flowing solely from pure mercy, as earthly gratitude could not be expected from those most forgotten in death. Such an attitude was very close to his spirituality.

Bishop Wierzbowski bade farewell to the clergy, friends, and family in his testament. He died on March 6, 1687. As his last will specified, a very modest funeral was held three days after his death. The body was laid to rest under sandstone in the church on Calvary Hill. Humble words, which the bishop had personally ordered, were carved on the stone: "Lord, You forgave the thief who was hanged near You. Please forgive me who is buried here."⁹⁷

An important event in the history of the Marian Order worth mentioning is the visit of Fr. Papczyński to Bishop Wierzbowski shortly before his death. When Fr. Stanislaus asked the bishop for his blessing for the Order, the Bishop, while giving it, said that he was leaving them to the Divine Providence.⁹⁸ From that moment, the pious practice of prayers to Divine Providence became a permanent part of Marian spirituality, and Fr. Wyszynski applied for the erection of the Confraternity of Divine Providence at the church of the Cenacle.⁹⁹

The Marians on the Papal Law: November 24, 1699

With the death of Bishop Wierzbowski, the Marians lost their true defender and protector. Opponents of the Order took advantage of the situation and renewed their accusations against the Marians before the

⁹⁶ Cf. S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 159.

⁹⁷ The tombstone with this inscription is located on the churchyard "On the Hill" (Na Górze).

⁹⁸ Leporini, P. 55. "Hinc ultimate visitans suum Benefactorem Ep. S. Wierzbowski petit ab eo benedictionem paternam, et pro sua Congregatione expostulando inquit: 'Quid etami nobis sua Celsitudo relinquit In testamento? Cui Episcopus: Divinam providentiam.'"

⁹⁹ ASV, Sec. Brev., Indulg. Perp. Vol. 8 (1735-1758). Indulg. pro Confraternitatibus f. 176 r.

new Ordinary of the Diocese of Poznań, Bishop Stanisław Witwicki (1687–1698). They accused the Marians of lacking papal approval and argued that the Congregation's eremitic and seemingly unproductive structure should be dissolved. Both monasteries within the diocese of Poznań were utterly dependent on the bishop, who initially leaned towards the proposed resolution.¹⁰⁰ Internal conflicts within the Order further exacerbated the situation. Many of his fellow Marians, witnessing the mounting difficulties, began to leave the Order in increasing numbers. Despite the prohibition, confessors often granted them dispensations from their simple vows. Faced with these significant challenges, Fr. Papczyński began to doubt whether his actions aligned with God's will. He wondered if these troubles were a sign that God did not wish for the continued existence of the Marians. To dispel this uncertainty, he wrote a humble letter to the Superior General of the Piarists, asking for a sincere response as to whether he should continue with the Congregation he had founded or seek a return to the Piarist order.¹⁰¹ We do not have information about the specific response of the Superior General. Still, it seems reasonable to assert that the General advised him to stay in his position and lead the Congregation out of its current crisis. One can also infer from Fr. Stanislaus' attitude and commitment to further legislative work that he vigorously sought various ways to overcome the problem. Since he was aware of the content of Bishop Wierzbowski's will, in which the bishop entrusted his family with the care of the Marians, Fr. Stanislaus, at this critical moment, sought the protection of the Wierzbowski family. Three important family members arrived in Góra, and on October 26, 1688, they issued an unambiguous statement in which they accepted the Marians under their protection, speaking very highly of them and warning the enemies of the Marians against causing them harm. "We accept this saintly Congregation, as begun with our House, under ours and our entire House's eternal protection. We promise to cover and support it with our founding grace [...]. We pledge to God to defend this Congregation and stand by its side; God

¹⁰⁰ S. Sydry, *O Stanisław*, p. 208. This deposition was made by witnesses in the beatification process. See: Leporini, P. 40; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 430-431.

¹⁰¹ S. Papczyński, *Letter to Father Alexis Armini, SP, Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools, from New Jerusalem on March 23, 1688*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 915.

forbid anyone to harm it.”¹⁰² The protection of the Wierzbowski family and the dedication of the short Passion work *Christus Patiens* to Bishop Witwicki contributed to gaining his goodwill. In the dedicatory letter placed at the beginning of this work and addressed to Bishop Witwicki, Fr. Papczyński mentioned the slanderers and accusers of the Order, the unjust accusations, and slanders. He entrusted himself to the Bishop’s care with confidence.¹⁰³ Though temporarily somewhat mitigated, the difficulties that threatened even the destruction of the Marian Order made Fr. Papczyński even more aware of the urgent need to obtain papal approval for the Order. This was especially important now, as the Congregation, canonically erected in 1679 solely on the diocesan level, depended entirely on the goodwill of the Bishop of Poznań, in whose jurisdiction both monasteries were located. Experiencing distrust of intermediaries to whom he had previously entrusted the matter and in the face of the congregation’s increasingly complicated canonical and legal situation, Fr. Papczyński decided to go to Rome personally to address this issue. To secure the Marians’ right to the title of the Cenacle, still challenged by opponents in the town of Czersk, before setting out on his trip, on October 30, 1690, Fr. Stanislaus made a testament bequeathing the Cenacle to his brethren.¹⁰⁴ Soon afterward, probably in November of the same year, he set off, traveling to Rome on foot in the company of Subdeacon Joachim of St. Ann Kozłowski.

It was a long and arduous journey, full of nasty surprises, the more so because the religious were making it in winter, in cold and miserable conditions, often begging for bread. Fr. Papczyński, who was sixty years

¹⁰² *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 430-433.

¹⁰³ APS 10, f. 168r. Father Cyprian Fijałkowski testified: “Scio, quo quidam Episcopus Posnaniensis fuerat contrarius Institutis nostris, et conabatur ad persuasiones Inimicorum nostri Ordinis eundem nostrum Ordinem abolere, et extinguere, quo tempore Servus Dei Stanislaus composuit Librum, cui titulus [...] ac dicto Episcopo obtulit, quo perlecto, idem Episcopus factus fuit amicus Servi Dei Stanislai, et Protector nostri Ordinis, et erectionem nos tram roboravit”. S. Papczyński, *Letter of Dedication*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 757-758.

¹⁰⁴ The bequest of the Cenacle to the Marians, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 433-436. The legal contents of this document had a vital importance for the future of the Marians. For a researcher of Marian history, the mentioned names of the religious and their number in 1690, at least ten residing in the Cenacle, are of great importance. This is the only such list from the years 1677-1701. The mentioned Marians are: Fathers Stanislaus Papczyński, priests: Joseph of All Saints, Peter of St. Mary Magdalene, Michael and Ambrose; sub-deacon Joachim of St. Ann; seminarians Anthony of Francis and Andrew, as well as other seminarians, “all true sons and professed”.

old at that time, was seriously ill several times during this trip. On one occasion, he fell into a swampy bog from which his companion, Joachim, couldn't pull him out. According to Papczyński's account, he was saved from the swamp by a saint from the Franciscan Order. Supposedly, it was St. Anthony of Padua, whose sanctuary was nearby.¹⁰⁵ In February 1691, both pilgrims arrived in Rome, where they received the sad news of the death of Pope Alexander VIII on February 1, 1691. While waiting for the election of a new pope, Father Papczyński dealt with various matters and privileges for the Marian order in Rome. He obtained privileges for the Marians to participate in the spiritual goods of several other orders, *the* so-called *affiliation* of the Marian Institute to the Reformed Franciscans, Piarists, Dominicans, and Capuchins. The content of the contracts has been preserved to this day. Eighteenth-century documents mention "aliae Admissiones aliarum Sacrarum Religionum."¹⁰⁶ Having obtained various spiritual privileges, Fr. Papczyński, as Fr. Krzyżanowski suspects, began trying to get papal approval based on the Constitutions he had composed, *Norma Vitae*.¹⁰⁷ However, the Marian Constitutions were an obstacle to obtaining the expected approval. Therefore, Fr. Papczyński decided to search for an order with a rule closest to the Marian institute, and already in 1691, he made efforts to obtain papal approval through the legal incorporation of the Marians into the Order of Nuns of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Conceptionists.¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, he encountered two obstacles to realizing this intention: the Conceptionist rule was unsuitable for male religious orders, and practical considerations pushed the religious to return to their homeland. The papal conclave was prolonged, Roman heat was unfavorable for Fr. Papczyński's fragile health, and their funds ran out. Therefore, both pilgrims decided to return to Poland without

¹⁰⁵ Leporini, n. 41; Navikevicius, p. 184; *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 674.

¹⁰⁶ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, Nos. 87-90, pp. 113-117. Casimir Wyszynski, who was well acquainted with the contents of the Marian archive, wrote: "There are other documents of admission to the spiritual heritage of other holy religious orders, but we do not have them at hand now. They are kept carefully and diligently in the archive of our Marian Congregation." *ibid*.

¹⁰⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 506; cf. Navikevicius, p. 186.

¹⁰⁸ See: S. Papczyński, *Petition to the Holy Congregation for Bishops and Religious, Rome Aug. 22, 1692*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 950-951; *Second Petition to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious, Rome Aug. 22, 1692*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 954-955; *Petition to the Holy Father Pope Innocent, Rome, Sept. 13, 1692*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 957-958.

obtaining the desired canonical papal approval for the Order. They left Rome on the 10th or 11th of July, and Pope Innocent XII was elected on the 12th of July. The return journey to Poland, as the biographer Leporini reported, proved extremely difficult, dangerous, and painful for Fr. Papczyński. His strength was dwindling, and he suffered from illnesses. Fr. Papczyński believed that he survived the journey only thanks to the special protection of St. Raphael, whom he held in great reverence and carried his image with him. He also made a vow in Rome that if he returned safely to Poland, he would build an altar to St. Raphael, which he did upon his return. The image of the Holy Archangel, placed in the side altar of the Cenacle, soon became renowned for granting many graces and miracles.¹⁰⁹

Father Papczyński invested a lot of effort into obtaining papal approval. Still, he didn't neglect the care of the spiritual and numerical growth of the Congregation, which unfortunately was very slow at that time in both of these aspects. Despite the vows and the "irrevocable oath to endure forever in the Congregation, from which one can be exempted by the Holy See only," many Marians, disheartened and disappointed by the strict rules of life, received dispensations from their vows from their confessors and left the Congregation. Some moral theologians even argued that the simple vows made by the Marians were mere promises and, as such, could be dissolved by any confessor. Today, it's impossible to determine how many Marians took advantage of this unlawful loophole, but there appears to have been a considerable number. In light of this situation, Fr. Papczyński wrote a request to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious in 1692, asking them to prohibit such practices and to declare that "the vows of the said Congregation are not dispensable, [...] and those who were dispensed from the vows by some (*sic*) theologians must return to the Congregation,"¹¹⁰ or they would be treated as apostates. In the same year, Fr. Papczyński also submitted a second request to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious, in which he renewed his efforts to obtain papal approval for the Marians

¹⁰⁹ Leporini, n. 45; Teixeira, n. 61.

¹¹⁰ S. Papczyński, *Petition to the Holy Congregation for Bishops and Religious, Rome Aug. 22, 1692*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 950-951. Issues raised in this petition were discussed by T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, p. 283; *Positio*, Papczyński, s. 512-515.

through legal incorporation into the Order of Nuns of the Immaculate Conception.¹¹¹ The document reads: “The superior penitent humbly begs Your Eminences once again to confirm and approve the mentioned Congregation, as well as to unite, incorporate, and join it (*sic*) with the Order [...] Nuns, which was approved by Julius II.”¹¹² The content of the request indicates that Fr. Papczyński decided to continue the matter of papal approval in accordance with the initiative taken the previous year in Rome. How much he cared about obtaining papal approval is further evidenced by another request, this time sent to Pope Innocent XII, “that by special grace and the authority of apostolic power he may deign to confirm and establish the mentioned Congregation, as well as unite, incorporate, and join it with the Order of the Nuns of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”¹¹³ The request was processed through official channels: it was turned over to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious, which then asked the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland for his opinion and information. The appropriate committee of the Congregation dealt with the matter based on the documentation collected in Poland and submitted to Rome. In 1694, Cardinal Leandro Colloredo sent Fr. Papczyński a negative reply, about which Fr. Stanislaus wrote in the introduction to the *Rule of Life*: “[...] The Most Reverend Cardinal replied that it would be sufficient for the Institute to obtain approval from the local ordinary and that the *Rule of life*, which had been carefully arranged and wisely amended by His Eminence, would suffice.”¹¹⁴ Consequently, “the letter has been presented to and accepted by the most distinguished and most venerable Bishop of Poznan [Jan Stanisław Witwicki], currently happily in office,”¹¹⁵ by Fr. Papczyński. The last words of the document suggest that the bishop approved of the legal status of the Marians, as indicated by the Holy See as sufficient, and did not support further efforts to obtain papal approval. Fr. Papczyński had

¹¹¹ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 504-505, 515-517; S. Papczyński, *Petition to the Holy Congregation for Bishops and Religious*, Rome Aug. 22, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 950-951.

¹¹² S. Papczyński, *Second Petition to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious*, Rome Aug. 22, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 954-955; *Positio*, Papczyński pp. 515-517.

¹¹³ S. Papczyński, *Petition to the Holy Father Pope Innocent*, Rome, Sept. 13, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 957-958.

¹¹⁴ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, Informative Preface, 4, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 55.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

to accept this situation, as he saw no other option. The situation changed only after the death of Bishop Witwicki on March 4, 1698.¹¹⁶ Bishop Hieronim Wierzbowski assumed the authority in the Poznań diocese on March 11, 1698. He was a friend of the Marians and the nephew of the deceased Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski. This appointment, the bishop's favor towards the Marians, and his strong support opened new possibilities for pursuing papal approval.

Fr. Papczyński was well aware that the Marians, established in 1679 "sub nomine Eremitarum secundi Generis," had no solid chances for development, apostolate, or even a guaranteed continuous existence, especially because — as Julian Kałowski claims — "In the 17th century eremitism became one of the vanishing [...] forms of living out the evangelical counsels."¹¹⁷ Fr. Papczyński interpreted the events that unfolded as a sign from Divine Providence, and he immediately resumed his efforts. These efforts would provide the Marians with a solid legal foundation through papal approval, remove the "yoke" of eremitism, and open the way for apostolic work. In 1698, the General Chapter of the Order appointed Father Joachim Kozłowski as the Procurator General, granting him full authority to handle Marian matters in Rome.¹¹⁸ The printing of the *Rule of Life*, adapted for the Order on the diocesan right, had been suspended. In the fall of 1698, Fr. Kozłowski and Br. Anthony of St. Martin Ciński set off on a trip to Rome. At the beginning of 1699, Fr. Kozłowski personally submitted to Pope Innocent XII the petition for the approval of the Marian Institute. Unfortunately, the Pope's answer, suggested by the cardinals, was again negative. We have no direct detailed knowledge of Fr. Kozłowski's efforts and actions in this matter, which lasted over a year, but we have the strong testimony of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, who learned of these efforts from the documentation and accounts given by the Marians. It is worth quoting them here: "With God's help and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, thanks to the great kindness of the Pope who had a good opinion of our Founder, he finally received the following answer: 'If he wants the approval of the Marian Congrega-

¹¹⁶ Piotr Nitecki *Biskupi Kościoła w Polsce w latach 965-1999*, in: *Słownik biograficzny*, wyd. 2, Warszawa 2000, pp. 484-485.

¹¹⁷ J. Kałowski, *Początki mariańskiego prawodawstwa*, p. 15.

¹¹⁸ Leporini, n. 85.

tion, he has to choose first a rule from among those already approved, under which this newest Congregation could serve in the Church of God. Yet, the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński did not choose any such rule but wished to have the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary based on his own Constitutions alone.”¹¹⁹ From this, we can deduce that when sending Joachim Kozłowski to Rome, Fr. Papczyński instructed him to obtain approval for the order based on the *Rule of Life*. This is because it contained elements of a religious institute’s rule and constitutions, following the principle *constitutiones pro regula*. Fr. Kozłowski, understanding the importance of this matter, continued his efforts. He asked Fr. Papczyński to collect letters of recommendation and advocacy from “Multorum Magnatum, et Episcoporum, et Magni Nominis Personarum,”¹²⁰ supporting the Marians’ efforts for papal approval. We do not know the total number of collected petitions, but nine survived: three from the Church and six from the civil authorities. The most valuable and extensive among them was the letter of recommendation by Bishop Hieronim Wierzbowski. It seems that the active apostolic character of the Marians was officially emphasized for the first time in his letter to the Holy See. This letter described the Marians as a “Congregation of priests bringing assistance to the deceased and the pastors.”¹²¹ The above recommendation is filled with goodwill, warm praise, and a personal sentiment towards the Marians. Bishop Wierzbowski briefly presented the highly elevated history of the Order. He also portrayed the figure of Fr. Papczyński as “a man filled with the Holy Spirit and knowledge, who despises riches and honors [...], and lives in extraordinary poverty and humility, giving a rare example of priestly life”¹²² and fervently requested the Holy See for the canonical erection of the Marians, arguing that the Order, with its charism, is greatly needed by the Church and that the erection will contribute to the growth in the number of members

¹¹⁹ Casimir Wyszynski, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego*, in: Wyszynski, *Stróż*, n. 91, p. 118.

¹²⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 519-520.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 521-525. “Istanza Alla Santa Sede del vescovo Girolamo Wierzbowski, 20 marzo 1699. The bishop titled the Marians as a “Congregatio Defunctis et Parochis suffragantium.” Cf. Navikevicius, *Appendix* I, n. 35.

¹²² S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 226.

and institutions, as well as the spiritual benefits of the religious. The document, among other things, states: "We wholeheartedly and zealously support and humbly recommend those who tirelessly work to assist the clergy. This Institute of wondrous love serves not only the vast diocese of Poznań but the entire Kingdom, especially in areas where the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, where churches are far apart, and where there are many simple people either infected with new errors or taught by teachers devoid of faith. Therefore, this religious order is highly necessary as it possesses excellent subordinates of noble origin equipped with knowledge, virtues, and exemplary lives. The Diocese of Poznań and the Kingdom of Poland have repeatedly advocated for its approval."¹²³ This letter was of utmost importance for Marians' efforts to obtain papal approval. At that time, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, wanting to fulfill the mission he came to Rome for and guided by the suggestion of the Holy See, began searching for a rule that would already be approved and connected to an existing order. However, it seems accurate to claim that he did not make sufficient efforts to obtain approval for the order based on the *Rule of Life*, as the Jesuits, Piarists, and others had previously received approval for their own constitutions.

Fr. Kozłowski, who was on friendly terms with the Seraphic Order of the Reformed Franciscans and pleased with their spirituality, as well as the mystery of the Immaculate Conception that they cultivated, followed the advice of a Franciscan, Fr. Francis Diaz, and chose the *Rule of Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, which was already adapted for male institutes.¹²⁴ Since this Rule was under the jurisdiction of the Order of Friars Minor, the consent of the authorities of that Order was necessary for its acceptance. On September 21, 1699, the Superior General of the Franciscans, Fr. Matthew of St. Stephen, granted consent, simultaneously aggregating the Marians into the Franciscan Order.¹²⁵ By adopting this rule, the Marians received the right to benefit from "graces, exemptions, indulgences, and privileges, given therein for the followers

¹²³ Navikevicius, *Appendix I*, n. 35; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 522-525.

¹²⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 538.

¹²⁵ *Przylączenie marianów do franciszkanów pod Regulą Dziesięciu Cnót NMP*, in: *Regula Ordinis Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Varsaviae 1723, pp. 36-40; Navikevicius, *Appendix I*, n. 38; Teixeira, n. 204; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 540-542; Feliks Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa partykularnego zakonu OO. Marianów w latach 1670-1910*, manuscript, Warszawa 1967, pp. 27-28.

of the ten pleasures, the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” They were entitled to wear the white habit previously adopted by Fr. Papczyński. This decree of the general of the Franciscans of Observance was crucial for the Marians because it removed them from the authority of the local ordinaries and gave them the privilege of exemption. Joachim Kozłowski presented this document of incorporation with the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* to the Holy See. In response, on November 24, 1699, Pope Innocent XII gave him the rescript *Exponi Nobis Nuper*, addressed to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland.¹²⁶ The rescript informed the nuncio that the Marians had adopted the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* in fraternal unity with the Seraphic Order and that this made the Marians an Order of solemn vows¹²⁷ endowed with the numerous graces and privileges granted to orders making their vows on the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*. The nuncio’s task was to execute the papal decrees, that is, to ascertain the acceptance of the rule by all Marians, as we read in his letter: “We command, first of all, the consent of the priests and brothers wishing to make their profession on this Rule.”¹²⁸ At the Chapter

¹²⁶ The papal rescript was considered by the Marian Order as a legal act approving their existence. However, this belief was challenged by Fr. Julian Kałowski, who clearly stated: “The papal rescript of Innocent XI cannot be considered in any way as a legal act approving the Marian Order. One could only agree that although the Pope does not formally approve the Marian Order in the document, the mere issuance of the document indicates that no obstacles are placed on the execution of the decree of the general of the Friars Minor Observants, and indirectly recognizes the Marian Order.” Julian Kałowski, *The problem of the jurisdictional dependence of the Marian Order from the Friars Minor of Observance*, in: “Prawo Kanoniczne” 27 (1984), n. 1-2, pp. 119-144. In this context, one can understand the intervention of Bishop Rostkowski and Bishop Tarło in the affairs of the Marian Order, as the Marians did not enjoy full “exemption” privileges. This issue was strongly addressed by the Congregation of Bishops and Religious in the years 1785-1786 during the efforts to separate themselves from the Observants, and it caused the Marians a lot of trouble, expenses, and effort. Fr. Gólkowski was told at that time that the original papal approval “was not an approval of the Order but only the acceptance of the Rule and the acceptance of profession by the Nuncio in Poland, and there is evidence of the Nuncio [...], and therefore, *explicite* approval for your Order is necessary.” See *Prot. Rom.*, Norbert Gólkowski to the Superior General, May 20, 1786. In a letter to the general dated September 17, 1785, he complained that in the mentioned Congregation, the Marians were accused of not being true religious order members but only approved as a confraternity by the Nuncio. Some Marians claimed that in 1699 and 1723, only the Rule and Constitutions were approved, not the Order itself.

¹²⁷ Text of the brief *Exponi nobis nuper*, in: *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 544-546; Navikevicius, *Appendix*, I, n. 39; *Regula Ordinis Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Varsaviae 1723, pp. 40-44. For Polish language, see S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 238-239. Commentary: J. Kałowski, *Problem zależności*, pp. 55-76.

¹²⁸ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 242.

convened specifically for this purpose on April 14, 1701, the gathered Marians accepted the *Rule*. They also asked the nuncio to set a date for the profession. Fr. Papczyński was the first to make this profession before the nuncio on June 6, 1701; all the other Marians made their profession before Fr. Papczyński at the Cenacle.

It was crucial for the Marians, who often found themselves under attack, to make the content of the papal rescript public, as was the nuncio's obligation stipulated by the papal document, which read: "We recommend and command you — upon summoning by a public edict all who should be summoned — to announce by the power of Our authority the implementation of the permits of the said [Franciscan] general and everything contained therein [...] and to forbid all opponents to assail these Religious under the threat of punishment for disobedience according to the form of the Council [of] Trent."¹²⁹ This document contains declarations of the purpose and character of the Marian Order, which has the "duty to help the souls in Purgatory and to assist the parish priests in administering the sacraments and teaching the faithful."¹³⁰ It should be made clear here that the rescript was not a legal act of ratifying the Marian Order because this had already taken place after the decree issued by the Franciscan General in 1699. Still, the rescript sanctioned and confirmed everything that resulted from the Order's aggregation into the Franciscans and its acceptance of the *Rule*. Also, the rescript left no doubts about the decisions' legal status. It was an outstanding achievement for the Marians at that time.

In this way, a thirty-year-long effort and relentless endeavors of Fr. Papczyński ended. He secured a legal foundation, permanence, and stability for the small congregation of the Immaculate based on the authority of the Holy See. After settling all matters, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski returned to Poland and handed the received documents to Fr. Papczyński. According to Fr. Wszyński, "The Servant of God [Fr. Papczyński] found that the *Rule of Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* was exactly adapted for the Marians. [...] Filled with great joy for such extraordinary and benevolent news, he thanked the Most High God and His Most Glorious Mother Mary for letting him

¹²⁹ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 545.

¹³⁰ *Regula Ordinis B. V. Mariae*, pp. 40-41.

live to see this *Rule*. He held it in his hands and kissed it with great love. [...] When he learned from Father Joachim that the latter [had] failed to obtain the approval of his Constitutions [*Norma Vitae*] — for he deemed the *Rule* quite sufficient, although he could, perhaps, have tried to do both: to accept the Rule and to get the Constitutions of his Order confirmed upon that *Rule* — the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus, was a little worried and hurt.”¹³¹ Unfortunately, the lack of approval for the Marian Constitutions soon brought many problems, misunderstandings, and conflicts.

“Lest You Remain without Work in the Vineyard of the Lord”: Towards the Apostolate

There is no doubt that Fr. Papczyński wanted to establish an active apostolic order, which he referred to as the “Marian Society” or the “Society of the Immaculate Conception.”¹³² Witold Nieciecki explained that it also was “in accordance with [his own] disposition and practice of a diligent pastoral life,”¹³³ referring to Fr. Papczyński’s sixteen years of active apostolic life in the Piarist Order and three years of service as a chaplain in various places and circumstances from 1671 to 1673. It was meant to be a Marian counterpart, perhaps even a complement, to the Society of Jesus.¹³⁴ However, serious difficulties that emerged at the beginning of the Order’s formation left no option but to adopt the eremitic and rigorous formula imposed by Bishop Świącicki in 1673 for the emerging establishment in the Korabiew Forest. Fr. Papczyński was aware that the severity of the bishop’s decrees made it very challenging to realize his vision for the Congregation. He wrote: “I gladly accepted and intend to keep the laws given by him (although I already had the *Norma Vitae* written for me and approved by [my] spiritual fathers).

¹³¹ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 123.

¹³² S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollection*, 11, 13, 14, 18, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 908-910. The title “Society” is frequently repeated.

¹³³ Witold Nieciecki, *Główne cechy duchowości Zgromadzenia Księży Marianów*, Rzym 1965, p. 16.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Although, in a certain respect, they seemed to be quite strict, I will not strive for anything else beyond the salvation of my soul.”¹³⁵ He believed that if the Congregation followed God’s will, then Divine Providence would lead this work to its completion, even through suffering and penance. Fr. Stanislaus sincerely believed and professed, concerning the beginning of Marians’ emergence, that: “Divine goodness and wisdom, despite countless obstacles, initiate and carry out what they desire, even when the means, according to human judgment, may seem inadequate for the task.”¹³⁶ Fr. Papczyński obeyed the Church and its representatives’ directives, so he adjusted his regulations to the strict orders of Bishop Świącicki. While in the Forest, he strictly adhered to them because, as he confessed: “it indeed befits a Superior of hermits to behave properly, according to the Rule prescribed for them.”¹³⁷ He was sure that the time would come to bring about “the Society of the Immaculate Conception, which the Divine Spirit had already formed in my mind,”¹³⁸ that is, an active, apostolic congregation. And such a time did come when Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski invited Fr. Papczyński and a few Marians to the newly emerging New Jerusalem. The Bishop “did not want [...] a man, so holy and useful for the Church, [to] be locked up in the Forest like the light under a bushel. He wanted to put him on a lampstand to enlighten everyone, so he called him from the Forest as an apostolic man to preach the word of God in Kalwaria”¹³⁹.¹⁴⁰ While staying at the Cenacle, Papczyński met with the bishop and informed him about the works of the community, its goals, and its legal status.¹⁴¹ There is no doubt that he influenced the content of the document regarding the first erection. Although the erection document refers to the Marians as hermits and mentions only two purposes: prayer for the deceased and the adoration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, without addressing the issue of apostolate at all, in the bishop’s decree he orders the Marians to visit, console, and accompany those condemned to

¹³⁵ S. Papczyński, *The Foundation of the House of Recollection*, 24, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 912.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 1, p. 901.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 25, p. 912.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 9, p. 905.

¹³⁹ * Translator’s note: Calvary in English

¹⁴⁰ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 158.

¹⁴¹ Navikevicius, p. 176.

death. In New Jerusalem, Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski imposed various pastoral duties on the Marians. In addition to occasional confessions of arriving pilgrims, delivering sermons to them, and guiding them along the paths of the sanctuary, so “whenever necessary, the priests would lead the people along the paths of the Lord’s Passion [starting] from the Cenacle,”¹⁴² the Marians also had specific and permanent tasks assigned. On Holy Thursday, following the invocation of the sanctuary, they were obliged to prepare and exhibit the mystery of the Lord’s Supper for the pilgrims. On Pentecost Sunday and Corpus Christi, they organized the main celebrations and processions in the Cenacle for all the residents of Góra and the arriving pilgrims.¹⁴³ The Marians were also obligated to celebrate Mass at the nearby convent of the Dominican Sisters and serve as their spiritual directors. Casimir Wyszyński reported: “Upon [the] bishop’s orders, the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus, held the convent’s permanent spiritual directorship. As the spiritual director and confessor of these Sisters, he cultivated their souls so carefully and prudently, instructing them through spiritual exercises and the Word of God, that many of them, edified by his example, lived and died saintly.”¹⁴⁴ Such was, incidentally, the case with Sister Kolumba Potkańska, of whom it was said that she had died in the opinion of sanctity and whose tomb was visited by numerous pilgrims.¹⁴⁵ Serving the Dominican Sisters as chaplains and confessors was also entrusted to the Marians in the 18th century.

In addition to the mentioned activities, the Marians of Góra, as needed, also provided pastoral care in the surrounding parishes. It is important to emphasize again that it was through the inspiration of Fr. Papczyński that Bishop Wierzbowski introduced the decision to free the Cenacle and future houses from the strict rigors of eremitical life imposed on the establishment in the Forest in the act of erecting the Marian community in 1679. Especially significant here was the sentence:

¹⁴² Iniungimus demum iisdem clericis, ut quoties opus fuerit populum per vias Passionis Domini pietatis causa deducant a Caenaculo”. Founding document of Nov. 22, 1677. *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 382.

¹⁴³ List of celebrations held in the shrine with the participation of pilgrims, in: M. Borkowska, *Dzieje Góry Kalwarii*, pp. 380-381.

¹⁴⁴ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 101-102.

“As for the regulations that were prescribed for the retreat house in the Korabiew Forest, [...] which pertained to [...] the observance of silence and interaction with strangers, we consider and decree that they should not apply to other houses.”¹⁴⁶ The bishop was also close to the idea of a congregation with a more apostolic charism. Therefore, in the discussed document, in addition to Bishop Święcicki’s decree from 1673, he also approved *Norma Vitae* as legally binding for the Marians, which in its content contained many passages talking about apostolic work, the need to preach the Gospel, and bear witness to it through one’s own holy life, also included in *Foundation of the House of Recollections*. Thanks to the preserved documentation, we can trace how, from the very beginning, Fr. Papczyński aimed to free himself and his confrères from the restrictions imposed on their apostolic activities by the legal status of hermits. We see the evolution of the Congregation, its purpose, observance, and charism. Without wanting to jeopardize their first legal guardian, Bishop Święcicki, Fr. Papczyński discreetly conveyed his intuition of the apostolic charism of the order to the Marians, indicating that when there was a need, they should not avoid apostolic work. In the introduction to *Norma Vitae*, he directed encouraging words to his brethren: “Although this Congregation is erected in the public status of Hermits, it does not insist so much on solitude as to consider unmeritorious for itself to sometimes engage also in spiritual services for the neighbors — as far as it is lawful — without harming anybody else.”¹⁴⁷ The Chapter about the aim of the community contains even stronger encouragement for undertaking apostolic work. However, it is worded somewhat cautiously: “Since the contemplative life is not binding you so strictly, although you are founded in the eremitical status, those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work if they would be called upon by pastors, and have previously obtained faculties from the ordinaries and the superiors.”¹⁴⁸ Aware that, from a legal point of view, the Marians are still hermits, he realizes that too bold an exhortation to apostolate could lead to increased attacks from opponents. This text was written after difficult and painful experiences

¹⁴⁶ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁷ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life, Informative Preface*, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 54-55.

¹⁴⁸ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life* I, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 57.

of murmurs and disputes regarding the principles of apostolate or contemplation. Some believed that eremitism was a more perfect way of practicing the evangelical counsels, while others thought it was apostolic activity. Papczyński repeatedly emphasized, especially as we read in the *Examination of the Heart*, that what matters most is the love of God and neighbor: "He blesses with the same reward of His vision both the hermits given to contemplation and the husbandmen active in his vineyard." Also: "From this, learn that Saints are not only those who, given to solitude, attend only to their salvation. Truly, the righteous are also those who, leading an active life, cooperate with Christ to save souls."¹⁴⁹ It is evident how much care Fr. Papczyński put into motivating and encouraging the Marians, some of whom, out of piety or comfort, had accepted the hermit state and were undertaking apostolic tasks with difficulty and reluctance. He reminded them that everyone in the Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel, for if there is a lack of zealous preachers, then millions of people wandering in faith, to whom the Gospel truths have not been explained, will be led astray by someone else, as it happened in the past with figures like Muhammad, Luther, or Calvin. "Consider that you should not omit any occasion of gaining your neighbor."¹⁵⁰ However, it appears that these instructions were written more with future Marians in mind, as during the first fifty years of the 18th century, only two to three monks were residing at the Cenacle, and sometimes only the superior general and his secretary.

Fr. Papczyński, in addition to his fervent words of encouragement, also set a vivid example of zealous apostolic work throughout his entire life. That's why the faithful rightfully called him the "Apostle of Mazovia." His dedication to apostolic work and the range of pastoral tasks he undertook in various areas are astonishing. His first biographer, Mansueto Leporini, based on the testimonies of many witnesses, wrote: "For nearly 30 years he traveled on foot to parish churches, preaching the Word of God and hearing confessions of the faithful who were poorly informed in Christian doctrine. He instructed the simple folk, especially the poor and the fearful, remarkably comprehensibly and engagingly. In this apostolic manner, he endeavored to save souls in the

¹⁴⁹ S. Papczyński, *Inspectio cordis* [Examination of the heart], in: *Selected Writings*, p. 412-413.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

dioceses of Poznań, Kraków, and Chełm. He extended his apostolate of proclaiming the Word of God to Lewiczyn, Góra, Warsaw, and the entire Duchy of Mazovia, where he was regarded as the spiritual director.¹⁵¹ The bishop of Poznań [Stefan Wierzbowski] appointed him his delegate to conduct visitations and organize parish missions as well as the visitator of the entire vast Warsaw Archdeaconate, which had at that time 138 parishes. [...] How many benefits were brought by the missions carried out jointly with Father A. Gołkowski, how much work undertaken, how many hatreds were averted, it is known only to God Himself.”¹⁵² Witnesses in the beatification process testified that, while staying at the Cenacle, Fr. Stanislaus tirelessly proclaimed the Word of God either there or in other churches. He also heard confessions diligently. He traveled on foot to proclaim God’s truths in other towns, including Wiskitki, Mszczonów, Stara Rawa, Czersk, Jerusalem, Chojnata, Studzianna, Jasieniec, Lewiczyn, Góra, Warsaw, and some other parishes farther away.¹⁵³

His work was not limited to delivering sermons and hearing confessions alone. He sought to strengthen the faith that had been ignited with fervent words, contributing to the organization of communal life in parishes. This was achieved by establishing Marian Confraternities and the Confraternity of St. Isidore in several of them. He also obtained appropriate indulgences for these confraternities from the Holy See.¹⁵⁴ In Jasieniec, he fervently encouraged the faithful to be generous and set an example with a substantial donation for the construction of the local church. Although he lived a humble and ascetic life, wherever he encountered human suffering, he provided alms to the poor and cared for orphans. It is unknown whether other brethren also engaged in apostolic work because we have no documents or references. However, one thing is sure: Fr. Stanislaus set a clear example and encouraged them to undertake such activities. Fr. Wyszyński stated: “Following in the footsteps of Mary, he would frequently leave the Cenacle with a companion or the faithful to visit holy places [...]. He showed his brethren

¹⁵¹ APS 10 f. 279v-280r., deposition of Adalbert Magnuszewski; APS 10 f. 341, testimony of Father Isidore Taudt.

¹⁵² Leporini, n. 50.

¹⁵³ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 183.

¹⁵⁴ Leporini, nn. 49, 51; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 183-184.

the way to heaven by word and example. He was the first to do what later he taught them to do.”¹⁵⁵ In a letter addressed to the Marians in the Korabiew Forest, he ordered all of them, including seminarians studying moral theology, to preach a short sermon in the church on Saturdays. Should the superior deem a sermon appropriate, “on the following Sunday in the small church, standing by the altar and not by the ambo, they will fruitfully repeat [it] to the people, if they be present.”¹⁵⁶ It should be noted that this letter was addressed to the hermitage in the Forest, where the eremitic-penitential regulations were still in force. In *Norma Vitae*, he instructed the superiors to select and encourage “such ones who have been instructed in the necessary doctrine and who have virtuous qualities, so that their preaching may bring salutary fruit to the listeners, [...] just as in their own churches they will not preach without the mandate of the Superior, so in other churches they will not preach without the blessing of the Ordinary.”¹⁵⁷ According to a preserved testimony, he encouraged his brethren to deliver sermons, hear confessions, console the discouraged and those broken in spirit, support the poor, and strengthen the faith of those in doubt.¹⁵⁸ He put in a lot of effort and made many diplomatic efforts to discreetly indicate to the Marians their duty to engage in apostolate without discrediting the erection decree of Bishop Świącicki, which could have offended him. In *Norma Vitae*, he emphasized this: “Since the contemplative life is not binding you so strictly, [...] those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work.”¹⁵⁹ For the first time, the Congregation’s third goal appears here: assisting pastors. Since 1692, the Marians were defined as those bringing help to souls in Purgatory and assisting parish priests. In his petition to the Holy See in 1692, Fr. Papczyński called the Marians the Congregation, founded “to support the souls of the faithful departed who are deprived of help and to help parish priests in their pastoral care.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, n. 86, p. 112.

¹⁵⁶ S. Papczyński, *Letter to the Marians in the Korabiew Hermitage*, 7, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 921.

¹⁵⁷ The same, *The Rule of Life*, VII, 5, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 74-75.

¹⁵⁸ Navikevicius, p. 189.

¹⁵⁹ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, I, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁰ S. Papczyński, *First Petition to the Holy Congregation of Bishops and Religious*, Rome, Aug. 22, 1692, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 951; *Positio*, Papczyński pp. 515-517.

In the legislation concerning the Marians, the apostolic element is becoming increasingly evident. Following the example of Fr. Stanislaus, the Marians gradually became increasingly involved in pastoral and missionary work.¹⁶¹ Three preserved testimonies from the years 1690, 1692, and 1699 provide valuable information about the missionary work of the Marians at that time in two locations on the eastern outskirts of Poland.¹⁶² Bishop Hieronim Wierzbowski left the best testimony of their work in a recommendation letter addressed to the Holy See in 1699.¹⁶³ In incredibly commendable words, he listed the merits of the Marian Fathers who vigorously worked in the extensive Poznań diocese and other parts of the Kingdom, especially among the simple people unfamiliar with the truths of faith. He emphasized that they were necessary and valuable, “equipped with the knowledge, virtues and exemplary life.”¹⁶⁴ The above document, emphasizing Fr. Papczyński’s merits in forming the Congregation and sanctifying its members, clearly and explicitly highlights the active nature of the Order, expressed in assisting parish priests in pastoral work, especially in teaching the simple people the basics of faith. Ultimately, this Marian charism was confirmed in Pope Innocent XII’s November 24, 1699 rescript, which referred to the Marians as the “Order of Marian Fathers providing help to the deceased and parish priests.”¹⁶⁵ The decree underlined their obligation to provide pious assistance to the souls in Purgatory and help parish priests cooperate with them in administering the Sacraments and teaching the faithful the truths of the faith.

¹⁶¹ S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, I, note 2, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 57.

¹⁶² See the chapter *Lost Foundations from the Times of Father Papczyński*.

¹⁶³ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 522- 525. Bishop Jerome Wierzbowski was appointed as the administrator of the Poznań Diocese on March 11, 1699. He had a close relationship with Father Papczyński and other Marians. He supported the Congregation in obtaining papal approval.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 525.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 544-546. “Et cum honore, seu exercitio exhibendi pia suffragia pro animabus in purgatorio existentibus, ac praestandi Parochis subsidium et iuvamentum In administratione Sacramentorum, quam instructionem Christi Fidelium.”

New Foundations: Goźlin and Skórzec

The founders of the Marian church and monastery in Goźlin were John and Cecylia Lasocki. They had been preparing for this foundation for many years, as indicated by the will made by Cecylia Lasocka in 1689. In it, we find the following provision regarding the church of the Marian Fathers: "... which Fathers my husband and I promised to settle on the Goźlin Estate."¹⁶⁶ In the document of installation of the monastery and the deed of gift, drawn up legally in the town of Czersk on October 15, 1699, John Lasocki expressed his idea, declaring that "moved only by the pure objective of the glory of God and the honor of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary, he sponsored [...] for Religious of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary for bringing salvation to souls devoid of all help." As a source of livelihood, he designated land, meadows, and pastures for them, granted logging rights and fishing privileges, and bestowed others. In return, the Marian Fathers were obliged to celebrate two Holy Masses weekly for the rest of the founders' lives — one for the oppressed and persecuted and the other for the sinners. After their death, two Holy Masses per week were to be offered for the suffering souls in Purgatory.¹⁶⁷ The fulfillment of the promise made in 1689 was delayed due to the costly legal proceedings on behalf of Cecylia Lasocka against her enemies, who were raiding her estates. Allegedly, as she confessed, she became so poor that if it were not for her future husband lending her money, "she would have had to go to the wedding with him in mourning attire [...], and she would have had neither the means to live nor to sow."¹⁶⁸ Only after winning the lawsuit against their adversaries did Jan and Cecylia fulfilled their pious foundation promises.

John of Glew Lasocki, the cupbearer of Łuków,¹⁶⁹ a pious nobleman of moderate wealth, was a proprietor of several villages: Goźlin, Zalesie,

¹⁶⁶ Prot. Ord., p. 98. Oblata testamenti ultimae voluntatis Generosae Rongiuszowa seu Lasocka.

¹⁶⁷ Prot. Ord., pp. 87-93. "Erectio Domus Goslinensis"; *Dokumenty mariańskie*, pp. 63-69.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 95-98. Cecylia Lasocka was initially married to Constantine Paris, the cupbearer of Czersk. After his death, she married John Lasocki of Glew. According to testimonies, after Paris' death, his family denied Cecylia her inheritance, and neighbors looted her property.

¹⁶⁹ Cupbearer was a former court office. The duty of the cupbearer was to present cups of wine to the king. In later centuries, it became an honorary title bestowed upon the nobility. Each land and county had its own cupbearer, hence the term "land cupbearer". See: Zygmunt Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska*, t. I, Warszawa 1978, p. 291.

Ostrybor, and Cyganka, located within the parishes of Wilga and Radwanków.¹⁷⁰ The Marians residing in Góra, several kilometers away, were highly esteemed by the Lasocki family. The Lasockis knew Fr. Papczyński well and valued him as a saintly and fervent Marian, rightfully called the “Apostle of Mazovia,” who conducted active apostolic work in southern Mazovia. They held a particular affinity for the fervently promoted Marian idea of prayerful concern for the souls suffering in Purgatory,¹⁷¹ as was emphasized in various Lasocki family documents¹⁷² and Cecilia Lasocka’s testament. The benefactress recalls in it that, along with her husband, they made a commitment to the foundation in Goźlin in 1689 and handed over to the Marians “4,000 Polish zlotys, which sum had to insure the usual sustenance for them in perpetuity, [...] so that they pray for the souls of that married couple after their death.”¹⁷³ Her testament also contains a request for her body to be placed after her death at “the church of the Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., who pray for the dead.”¹⁷⁴

In 1696, John Lasocki promised Fr. Papczyński to build a church and monastery in Goźlin. In the same year, all the necessary construction materials were delivered. On September 11, 1698, the Church authorities of the Poznań diocese accepted the foundation and the conditions of the agreement between the Marians and John Lasocki. According to this agreement, at least five religious were to reside in the monastery, and a chapel (*sacellum*) was to be annexed. The Church authorities directly subordinated the new foundation to the Superior General, Fr. Papczyński.¹⁷⁵ The Church’s approval became a call to implement the plans related to this foundation. However, decisive resistance arose from Fr. Mateusz Broliński, the pastor in Wilga.¹⁷⁶ He was a well-educated,

¹⁷⁰ ADS, Visitatio gen. Ecclesiae Parochialis ac Monasterij Goslinensis Marianorum per Illustr. Et Excell. et Reverend Dominum Adalbertum Leszczyc Skarszewski Episcopum Lublinensem. Die 16 Sept. A. d. 1818, 146/III, 10.

¹⁷¹ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 331.

¹⁷² *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 93-94, “Fundatio Goslinensis in Arce Cernensi”; *ibid*, pp. 94-95, “Intromissio fundos Goslinensis in Arce Cernesi”, Anno 1699.

¹⁷³ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 95-98, “Oblata testamenti ultimae voluntatis Generosae Rongiuszowa seu Lasocka.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 84-85, Domus Goslinensis sub Titulo Matris Dolorsae novae Foundationis cum Iuribus et Consensu Illustrissimi et Reverend Domini Loci Ordinarii.

¹⁷⁶ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pps. 102-105; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 694-696, 791.



Church in Gozlin (present-day view).



Interior view of the church in Gozlin (polychrome).

wealthy, and influential man who, in his capacity as secretary to King John Sobieski, was capable of opposing even Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski's decision. Fr. Broliński, although a devotee of the Virgin Mary, did not accept the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, which the Marian Fathers revered and proclaimed before the Church officially declared it a dogma.¹⁷⁷ For this reason, as he claimed, he also opposed the Marian Order. However, it seems that he disagreed with the foundation of the Marian Fathers in Goźlin not so much because of the Immaculate Conception but rather because he did not want — usually a cause of disputes between diocesan priests and religious orders — for any monks to appear in his parish and undertake various apostolic works, attract the faithful, hear confessions, and preach sermons. His resistance and hostility towards the Marian Fathers were so unyielding that only divine intervention could break them. And so it happened. On the night of June 30, 1699, Fr. Broliński had a rather strange, painful, and terrifying mystical experience, during which he was made aware that it was a punishment for his attitude towards the mystery of the Immaculate Conception and his hostility towards the Marian Fathers.¹⁷⁸ This mystical experience was so profound and powerful that from being an opponent of the Immaculate Conception, he instantly became its supporter and worshipper. He also changed his attitude towards the Marian Fathers, transforming from their foe into their supporter. However, before that, in the Marian church on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, he confessed that he had undergone a great transformation and delivered a sermon on the Immaculate Conception. He subsequently wrote down this sermon and an account of his mystical experience as a testimony of his conversion and faith in the Immaculate Conception and warning to others. He placed it in the Marian archives and promised to publish it.¹⁷⁹ The credibility of this information was confirmed by witnesses who testified that they had personally seen and read the document in the archives.¹⁸⁰

This incident removed all difficulties and was an impulse to start extensive construction work on the church, monastery, and farm

¹⁷⁷ This was claimed by S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 223; cf. *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 332.

¹⁷⁸ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 102-104; S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 223-224.

¹⁷⁹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 102-104; APS 10, f. 352r-352v. Testimony of Father Isidore Taudt.

¹⁸⁰ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 104. The conversion of Fr. Broliński and his transformation were

buildings. This time, Fr. Broliński supported the Marians eagerly, so everything went smoothly and quickly. On October 23, 1699, the *Intromissio* (introduction) was issued in the administrative office in Czersk. By this document, Fr. Papczyński (and the Marians as his future legal successors) was officially introduced into the perpetual possession of the foundation's goods.¹⁸¹ On December 5, 1699, Gianantonio Davia, the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, granted Fr. Papczyński permission to celebrate Holy Mass in the Goźlin chapel at — as the document states — *super altari portatili*, i.e., a portable altar, but subject to the consent of the local ordinary. On October 29, Bishop Hieronim Wierzbowski issued the necessary license for the church and monastery in Goźlin at Fr. Papczyński's request. According to the license, the Marians had the right to preach, hear confessions, conduct funeral services, especially the funerals of distinguished figures, and lay those who had requested it in the church catacombs.¹⁸²

Initially, Marian buildings in Goźlin were very humble. The building pompously called the church was a small wooden chapel intended as a place for the Marians and the residents of the court to pray. It was connected to a wooden monastery with four simple cells as humble lodgings for the religious. The construction of sacred buildings was carried out smoothly. It seems that in just a few months after Fr. Broliński's terrifying vision of evil spirits, i.e., from June 30, 1699, the buildings, or at least their exteriors, were probably completed, because, on December 5, 1699, Nuncio Gianantonio Davia granted Fr. Papczyński permission to celebrate Mass in Goźlin at the *noviter extructa*, or newly built church.

In addition to land and generous privileges, allowing the use of lakes, forests, and meadows within the borders of his family estate, John Lasocki also bequeathed to the Marians certain sums of money, invested "perpetually" in various land estates, including 9,000 zlotys, from which they were to collect interest perpetually. Soon after the act of donation, the benefactor passed away. Unfortunately, after his death, his widow Cecylia and two brothers of the deceased refused to pay the due amount to the monastery. Fr. Papczyński's attempts to amicably

attributed to the prayers of Fr. Papczyński.

¹⁸¹ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 94-95, "Intromissio Fundos Goslinensis In Arce Cernensi," Anno 1699.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86, "Licentia celebrandi Missas in nova Ecclesia Goslinensi."

resolve the dispute failed, leading the Marian Fathers to appeal to the court, where they won the case.¹⁸³

Also noteworthy is the gift made to the Goźlin foundation on March 26, 1710, by Marcjanna and Marcin Brucki, a childless couple who bequeathed all their movable and immovable property and the sum of 4,000 thalers, “reckoning a thaler at six złoty,” to the Marian Fathers under the condition that “every week, one Mass be celebrated for our souls, and another for those souls without hope, for all eternity.” Additionally, Marcin Brucki stipulated “that both my and my wife’s bodies be buried in the same Goźlin church, by these revered Goźlin Fathers. [...] The parish priest of Radwanków is requested not to obstruct or hinder the aforementioned venerable Fathers of Goźlin in burying us in the Goźlin church.”¹⁸⁴

In addition to these donations, the protocol of the diocesan visitation lists other sums donated to the Marian Fathers of Goźlin in the first half of the 18th century.¹⁸⁵ Apart from the registered amounts, the monastery also received donations from patrons not recorded in official financial books. This suggests that while reports indicated the modesty and poverty of the Marian establishment in Goźlin, it wasn’t as impoverished as depicted.

The small wooden church primarily served the liturgy and Marian devotions. Their pastoral work extended to the manor’s inhabitants, including the Lasocki family and the household staff. The monastery was cramped and uncomfortable, particularly during various monastic assemblies when the Fathers had to utilize the farm buildings. Despite these modest conditions, General Chapters were held in Goźlin in 1706, 1710, 1722, 1728, and 1743.¹⁸⁶ For instance, in the 1728 Chapter, as many as thirteen fathers participated, accompanied by several carters, and finding accommodation for everyone over eight days was quite a challenging

¹⁸³ *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 62, n. 138; Navikevicius, p. 199.

¹⁸⁴ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 99. The testament of Marcjanna and Marcin Brucki from March 26, 1710. Is difficult to determine if it was executed. After all, it was a significant sum of 24,000 złotys. However, there is no mention of these funds in any documents or in the income and expenditure books.

¹⁸⁵ In 1708, B. Ostrowski donated 1,000 złotys to the Marists. In 1719, Konstanty Lasocki donated 4,000, in 1725 Izidor Grzybowski offered 3,000, and in 1741 Franciszek Magnuszewski contributed 1,000 złotys. ADS, 146/III, Visit. Gen., 1810, Goźlin.

¹⁸⁶ *Cap. Gen.*, *passim*.



The cross erected at the site of the remaining foundations of the first
Marian Fathers' church in Goźlin.

task.¹⁸⁷ It's difficult to explain why they didn't attempt to solve this tough situation by expanding the monastery. Perhaps it was due to the indecisiveness of the general superiors or the entrenched belief in the "poor Marian hermits," which they were cautious to challenge.

Between 1750 and 1757, the general's office was held by Fr. Cajetan Wetycki. He was a pupil of Fr. Wyszyński, a fervent religious and one of the most distinguished leaders of the Marian Order. On the very first day after his election, he ordered renovations to be carried out for the convenience of the Fathers in the monastery and the cloister in Goźlin.¹⁸⁸ It's difficult to ascertain today whether the renovations took place and what their impact was, but the conditions didn't change significantly. Three years later, in 1753, he issued another order to the superior in Goźlin to renovate the cells he specified, especially the library and study room.¹⁸⁹ Probably, the Father General's requests didn't yield the expected result. In 1754, under his leadership, the General Chapter issued two more official decrees, one concerning Góra and the other concerning Goźlin. The first ordered the relocation of the toilets from the farm area to the cloister courtyard for the convenience of the religious and to maintain enclosure, especially during the night.¹⁹⁰ The second decree categorically ordered the expansion of the monastery in Goźlin because the Fathers were experiencing significant discomfort living three or four in a small cell, and the lack of proper living conditions was deemed unfair to them. The Chapter also ordered the construction of eight small cells with access to the garden, especially intended for studying clerics and religious brothers, and *loca secreta* (toilets). Having learned from the limited effectiveness of previous decrees on this matter, this time, they decreed that in case of task non-compliance, the superior would be removed from office and receive a penalty of suspension.¹⁹¹ The acting superior was to gather all necessary materials in that same year and complete the construction the following year.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 1728, pp. 78-79.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 1750/43.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 1753/13.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 1754/20.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 1754/21.

On May 16, 1769, a severe fire broke out in Goźlin, abruptly halting the vibrant development of the foundation. The fire completely consumed the church, monastery, and part of the farm buildings. At that time, the monastery housed eight religious, including six priests and two brothers. Tragically, during the fire, Fr. Alexander Mraas lost his life. After the fire, several Marians moved to adapted farm buildings. Immediately, they began collecting funds from neighboring manors and parishes and seeking devout benefactors to support the reconstruction of the church and the monastery. A new, substantial church and a brick-built monastery were completed in 1776. These structures were erected at quite a distance from the original burnt church, moving away from marshy, flood-prone areas near the Vistula River. Despite these challenging times, the Marian Order didn't cease their pastoral work.

The Marians in Skórzec

The last foundation in Mazovia and the fourth in the Poznań diocese was the church and monastery in Skórzec. The precise circumstances surrounding its establishment are not known. It's worth noting that at that time, alongside these four mentioned monasteries, there were two other institutions in the Eastern borderlands of Poland, about which only brief mentions have been preserved.¹⁹² However, it wasn't a

¹⁹² It is possible that the origin of the foundation in Skórzec is connected to two Marian establishments about which we have no information. One was said to exist in Ruthenia (present-day Ukraine), and the other in Lithuania. Father Papczyński mentions the Woraszczce foundation in a letter dated August 22, 1692, as well as in a letter to Pope Innocent XII dated September 13, 1692. See *Selected Writings*, pp. 951. Alexander Załuski, the castellan of the Rawa region, mentioned two Marian establishments in a letter of intercession to the Roman Curia dated March 22, 1699. These establishments were located in Lithuania and Ruthenia, where the Marians were said to be zealously working *inter schismaticos*. The records of the Chapter of the Vilnius Diocese also list the Marian monastery in the inventory of 101 monasteries existing in 1690. See *Wileńskie biskupstwo*, in: *Enc. Kość.*, Vol. 31, p. 303. Woraszczce, located in the Diocese of Lutsk in Ruthenia, was under the jurisdiction of the same diocese where Fr. John Przygodzki worked. Hence, it is possible that he knew the Marians. Both monasteries ceased to exist after the death of Fr. Papczyński. It is unknown what happened to the Marians working there, whether they left or joined the three small monasteries with eremitic cloister that had already been established. The question also arises as to whether they found spiritual fulfillment in those monasteries. They served pastorally and missionarily *inter schismaticos* in the borderlands. Perhaps it was with them in mind that Skórzec, a pastoral and formational establishment, was erected in 1711. The fact that three Marians were sent to Lithuania in 1715 for pastoral and missionary work, despite existing prohibitions, could serve as some confirmation of this concept. See *Prot. Ord.*, p. 273.



The church and the monastery in Skórzec (present-day view).

favorable time for opening new Marian foundations. At the 1702 Chapter, Fr. Ludwik Borzewski, a Reformed Franciscan, due to the small number of Marians, even forbade the establishment of new foundations. This decree was faithfully followed by Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, associated with the Franciscans, which is why Goźlin was established even during his time in Rome. It can be assumed that the number of Marians in 1710 did not exceed twenty religious, around ten of whom were priests. In 1715, twenty-five Marians were recorded, including thirteen priests, and the rest were brothers and clerics.¹⁹³ In 1710, the office of superior general was held by Fr. Constantine of St. Casimir,¹⁹⁴ who that same year began negotiations with Fr. John Przygodzki, pastor of Suchożebry in the Diocese of Łuck in Podlasie and the canon of Kamieniec, about a new foundation and the Marians' taking over the site in Skórzec.

¹⁹³ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 272-273.

¹⁹⁴ Fr. Constantine of St. Casimir was a pious and esteemed religious, highly regarded by Fr. Papczyński. He is mentioned in the informational process among six Marians who, drawn by the fame of holiness of Fr. Papczyński as *virii piissimi ac doctissimi* entered the Marian Order. See *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 807. The same priest was among the six other Marians who signed their consent to accept the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. See *ibid*, p. 552.

Fr. Przygodzki was born around 1650 in Przygody, in the house of the village and the estate owners. Apart from Przygody, they also owned estates in Krześlin and Wyszomierz. In 1690, Fr. Przygodzki was appointed parish priest in Suchożebry, a role he dedicatedly and zealously carried out for thirty years. It's important to note that the period during which he worked in the Suchożebry parish was one of the most challenging times in Poland's history. The discovered chronicle he wrote portrays him as a devout man, a founder of several chapels, and a benefactor supporting various charitable works.¹⁹⁵ He derived the funds for his philanthropic works from paternal estates, and after his father's passing, he allocated everything to the poor and the parish of Suchożebry. He began acquiring fragmented parcels from the impoverished local gentry to establish a religious institution. Preserved documents mention such transactions in 1701, 1704, 1706, 1708, 1710, and later. Subsequently, he created a relatively cohesive estate in Skórzec, Stany, and Grala villages through land consolidation and exchanges.¹⁹⁶ On July 14, 1710, in the town of Liw, a legal confirmation was made regarding the transfer of the lands to the Marian Order, stipulated with a legal decision for the swift construction of a church and monastery. On October 13, 1710, the General Superior, Fr. Constantine, passed away. The project was already advanced, and the final agreements were being formalized by the new government led by Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. The site review was necessary to complete the required procedure, affirming the necessity of establishing such a foundation in that specific location. Bishop Michał Bartłomiej Tarło of Poznań formed a commission comprising clergy and twenty-three representatives of the local gentry to confirm the legitimacy of this foundation and ascertain whether there was any opposition from the local gentry or any infringement on the interests of neighboring parishes.¹⁹⁷ Members of this committee, who convened in Skórzec on October 5, 1711, composed a document in which they first expressed gratitude to Fr. Przygodzki for his "noble deed of gift for such a pious objective" and then declared: "We faithfully attest that we have seen the designated

¹⁹⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 272-273.

¹⁹⁶ AZakS, Inventory of lands, forests and meadows in the villages of Skórzec, Ług and Wólka Jagodzińska [...], and belonging to the monastery of Marian Fathers. Skórzec [1803?].

¹⁹⁷ AZakS, *Erectio Ecclesiae ac Conventus Skoricensis*, October 5, 1711.

location for the church and monastery foundation of the Marian Fathers, and with all seriousness, we affirm that the establishment of this foundation is highly necessary and beneficial to the highest degree due to the considerable distance from the parish church (in Niwiska) [...], in order to facilitate the salvation of souls from the surrounding areas.”¹⁹⁸ After completing the legal formalities, the construction of the church and monastery proceeded remarkably swiftly. It can be assumed that both structures were completed by the end of 1713.¹⁹⁹ This is confirmed by the testimony of Anna Cieciszowska, née Siennicka, of Ozorów, the wife of the Liw pantler (a royal court office). On the sixth day after Easter, she bequeathed 3,000 florins to the Marians of Skórzec, obligating them to “celebrate Holy Mass every Saturday of every week, at the altar of the miraculous crucified Jesus Christ, and to recite *Hail, Mary* on every feast day, after the sermon, together with the people.”²⁰⁰ If the altar was already completed, it further supports that the church must have been standing.

Marians’ accounts noted that the legacy is tied to a beautiful and true story. About 10 kilometers from Skórzec, in Ozorów, was the Cieciszowski manor house,²⁰¹ with a chapel containing a crucifix renowned as miraculous.²⁰² After witnessing a certain mystical event,

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Casimir Wyszynski, in his memoirs about the Founder, recorded that the church and monastery in Skórzec were built in 1718. Cf. K. Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 139; Prot. Conv. Skor., p. 3, 38. This error was repeated by Krzysztof Trojan in *W cieniu krzyża*, Licheń Stary 2007, p. 15, and by many others.

²⁰⁰ Prot. Conv. Skor. of 1714. “Feria Quinta post festa Solennia Paschae Inscriptionem [...] per Annam de Sienickie Cieciszowska, subdapiferam Livense viduam in rem Conventus Skórcensis, super summam 3,000 Polish florins, pro absolvenda qualbet feria sexta, qualibet septimana ad altare Crucifixi Jesu Christi Domini Sacrificii missa, et tribus Salutationibus Evangelicis, post concionem quolibet die festivo cum populo dicendis”.

²⁰¹ The Cieciszowski family was known and respected in the Mazovia and Podlasie regions. During the discussed period, Wojciech Cieciszowski was the owner of Ozorów and Kłódzie, and he held the position of castellan of Liw in the years 1716-1718.

²⁰² The events related to the “miraculous cross” were described by Fr. Casimir Wyszynski: “Castellan Cieciszowski had a miraculous Crucifix in his private chapel, which was said to have been restored by an angelic hand. It was an old sculpture, already darkened and covered with candle wax, yet renowned for its many graces. The castellan had been contemplating restoring the Cross if he could find a skilled painter. However, at that time, there was no mention of any painter in the area. One day, an unknown monk, neither recognized by appearance nor habit, came to his palace. The castellan received the guest warmly and brought him to his chapel to see the crucifix. He confided in the monk his desire to restore the cross and sought

**FUNDACJA KOŚCIOŁA I KLASZTORU
W SKÓRCU**

14 Augusti 1710

„Protocollum Domus Skorecensis” f. 2v–3r.

Actum in Castro Livensi feria 5-ta in Vigilia festi Assumptionis in coelum B-e V-s M-ae Anno Domini 1710 coram Officio et alteris presentibus. Coram Capitaneatu Livensem comparsens Perillustis et admodum Reverendus Josephus in Przygody Przygodzki Canonicus Cathedralis Kamenecensis Podoliae, praepositus Suchożebrensis, sanus existens mente et corpore. Iurisdictione sua quavis propria et competenti comissa, praesentibus autem Officiis Iurisdictionis Capitaneatu Livensi, qua ad hunc actum attinet, incorporatione facta, publice, libere ac per expressum regivit [?] verbis, quia ipse, in augmentum gloriae DEI et honorem Immaculae Conceptionis BVM et auxilium Defunctorum, carentium suffragio ac salutem Proximorum. Bona sua hereditaria Skorc, Ług, Wolka et Dąbrowka Stara in Ducatu Mazoviae et terra praesente Livensi, necnon bona item hereditaria et obligatoria [?] Wyszomierz in Pal[latina]tu Podlachiae, Terra vero Droh[iciniensis], a quibuscumque personis modo quovis sibi servientia, una cum areis, hortis, agris, pratis, campis, pomariis, sepibus, sepimentis, silvis, borris, gais, nemoribus, indaginibus, fluviis, fluminibus, aquis torrentibus, lambis, piscinis, stagnis, curiis, aedificiis, [... 3r] hortulanis, inquilinis, eorumque uxoris, pueris, pecoribus, pecudibus, censibus, datijs, dationibus, podvodis, dierum laboribus, custodiis nocturnis et diurnis nunc in eiusdem bonis existentibus ac de eiusque profugis, Conventui Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis B-ae V-is M-ae Patrum Marianorum, defunctis et parochijs in cura animarum suffragantibus, per eundem Perillustrem recognoscentis, de nova radice in bonis Skorc, Ług, Dąbrowka superius expositis, tam monasterij quam ecclesiae proprio sumptu recognoscente aedificandis, una cum eorumque bonis, superius recensitis, utilitatibus, usibus, fructibus, proventibus, commodis et emolumentis, prout eorumque bonis, ex antiquo granities in secum plectuntur, eodem Conventui dat, donat, confert, resignat et inscribit, puraque, mera, vera, sincera et irrevocabili donatione inscribit, perpetuum et uni [?] donum. Salvis oneribus Reipublicae et Ecclesiae, quae praefati Conventus stante ex parte sua exolvere tenebitur.”

**EREKCJA KOŚCIOŁA I KLASZTORU
5 Octobris 1711**

„Protocollum Domus Skorecensis” f. 2r

“Anno D[omi]ni 1711-mo die vero quinta mensis Octobris Varsaviae, coram Perillustri et Rev[erendissim]o D[omi]no Nicolao Tomisławski, Canonico Vladislaviensi, Decano, Vicario in spiritualibus et Officiali Varsaviensi ac per Ducatum Mazoviae Generali, comparuit personaliter Excellens Joannes Naskowic, Philosophiae doctor, Perillustis et Adm. Rev.mi Josephi Przygodzki, Canonici Kamenecensis, Prepositi Suchożebrensis [...] producto instrumento authentico fundationis perpetuae Religiosorum Patrum Marianorum a Conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis, erectionisque Ecclesiae et Conventus praedictorum Patrum in Skorzec [?] Conventum ac Ecclesiam pro praedictis Patribus Marianis in praedicto loco villae Skorzec, intra limites parochialis ecclesiae Nivisensis consistentibus, Auctoritatis Ordinaria de novo erigi, Fundationem una cum officiosa designatione praefatorum bonorum approbari et ad observantiam et adimplentionem onerum in eadem Fundatione praescriptorum Religiosos Patres Marianos obligari, fundum cum omnibus latitudinibus et circumferentiis pro erigendo Monasterio et Ecclesia immunitati et libertati ecclesiasticae adscribi et incorporari et inviscerari. Litterasque approbationis et erectionis et alia desuper necessaria et opportuna decerni et in forma solita extradi mandari debita cum instantia.”

Decrees establishing the church and the monastery in Skórzec.

°A kiedy[m] był jeszcze klerikiem w r[oku] 1751 w Goźlinie na studiach° tu następującą rzecz uwagi i pamięci godną która mi zawsze w żywej pamięci trwała, czując się być krótkiego życia dla wiadomości w przyszłe czasy innym zakonnikom następującym [przekazuję]: że ja będąc jeszcze klerikiem na studiach w Goźlinie za ks. Kuleszy prezydencji, a brat Bazyli nieboszczyk miał woźnicę mającego koło lat pięćdziesiąt, który jeździł z tym bratem po kweście, jednego razu spytałem czyli był kiedy w Skórcu aż on osobliwszą rzecz i cud mi powiedział z płaczem: jakże nie jaż to doznałem takiego cudu przy wprowadzeniu tegoż Pana Jezusa, jak rzadko w świecie. Kiedy ja z matki mojej kalekom się urodził i tak rostem mający nogi przyrosłe do udów aż po same pięty, gdzie za ogłoszeniem niemal po wszystkich kościołach ten odpust wprowadzenia Pa[na] Jezusa z kapliczki jadąc do Ozorowa do kościoła skórczeckiego O.O. Marianów na który odpust ofiarowali mnie rodzice do tegoż pana Jezusa i przywieźli do Skórcza już na końcu Nieszporów po wprowadzeniu do kościoła modlili się moi rodzice szczerze prosząc pana Jezusa aby uczynił nade mną miłosierdzie ledwie co nie przez całą noc, nazajutrz wyspowiadała się matka a ojciec mnie pilnował potem ojciec wyspowiadał się i księdza uprosił żeby mnie z daleka od cmentarza będącego spowiedzi wysłuchał gdyż ludzi była straszna moc na kilkanaście tysięcy także około cmentarza dawano komunię a do mnie przyszedł ksiądz z najświętszym sakramentem i dał mi komunię boby mnie ludzie zagnietli w tak wielkiej ciżbie, tylko dawano znać z chóru jak msze się odprawiały zaś osobliwie jak wyszła wotywa pierwsza do Pana Jezusa wszędzie oznajmiono ludziom, aby nabożnie słuchać. Otóż po podniesieniu Ciała i krwi najświętszej Pana Jezusa poczułem w sobie wielką radość i moc osobliwszą tak jakbym nie był kaleką porwałem się i zdrów całe na nogi i w tymże momencie –prawie po wierzchu przez ludzi – wierzchem wpadłem do kościoła. Wołałem na cały głos, że mnie Pan Jezus uzdrowił skąd powszechna radość nie tylko moim rodzicom ale i okolicznie rozeszła się i zapisali [to] O.O. Marianie.

the Cieciszowski family decided — with great sadness — to entrust the crucifix to the care of the Marian Fathers at their new little church in Skórzec. The crucifix was delivered in a solemn procession, attended by a large group of the faithful. In the two-day celebration that followed, a paralyzed teenage boy²⁰³ was healed during the Holy Mass. The Marians carefully recorded this event and others in the *Book of Miracles*. Only the third volume of that book has survived because the first two were burned along with the church and monastery during two great fires.

Skórzec was located in the Liw area, in the parish of Niwiska, one of the largest in the Poznań diocese, in the sparsely populated Mazovia region. Amidst the forests, new settlements were emerging far from churches, thus lacking constant religious care. The Marian priests, with the title of “Order providing assistance to the deceased and supporting parish priests,” having established themselves in an area devoid of other monasteries, seamlessly integrated into the local environment and the

his advice on finding a painter. The monk declared that he himself would gladly undertake the restoration of the Crucifix. Although there was no sign that he had paints or any other necessary tools for the restoration, he told the castellan that he needed nothing except for the castellan to go to his palace. The castellan left, leaving the monk alone in the chapel for prayer. As the dinner hour approached, the castellan sent a servant to invite the guest to the table. When the servant entered the chapel, he found the Crucifix already restored, but the monk was nowhere to be found. When he reported this to the castellan, all the household members gathered to admire the meticulously and perfectly restored Crucifix. They searched everywhere for the monk to invite him to the meal and reward him appropriately, but there was no trace of him. From that moment on, a growing reverence and devotion towards the Cross emerged, and as a result, miracles began to happen, more than one. After a priest [J. Przygodzki], the canon of the Kamieniec cathedral, built a monastery and a church for us in Skórzec, not far away, perhaps a mile from the castellan's manor and when the foundation was completely finished in 1718 [a mistake: it should be 1713], the crucifix in the castellan's chapel began to cry. Everyone, disturbed by this miracle, asked various priests and our religious brothers to pray fervently for God's Mercy, lest this crying foretell some misfortune. When this strange sign repeated itself from time to time, and the tears flowed one after another, our and other important personalities convinced the castellan that perhaps Christ the Lord wanted His image to be transferred to the Marian church [in Skórzec]. Indeed, these tears continued until the castellan, urged by Christ, decided to transfer very solemnly the Crucifix to our church. When the cross was placed in our specially prepared church, it began to be renowned for great miracles and continues to be renowned, attracting a large number of people. It is now venerated not through tears but by for wiping away the tears of all tormented people. Evidently, Christ has chosen to dwell with the religious of His dearest Mother, Mary.” *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 714, [transl. from Latin by Father Cz. Fajkowski]; see Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 139-140.

²⁰³ ASD, Description of miracles of Our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified at the church of Marian Fathers in Skórzec, 1791; cf. Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 138-140.

community's needs, accurately finding their place here. Supporting the local parish priests was one of the more significant tasks of the Marians in Skórzec. In the first twenty years of the institution's existence, there were usually two to three fathers and one religious brother residing there.²⁰⁴ From around 1730, after the expansion of the monastery, Skórzec became an important center for formation. In 1733, seven clerics studied there. In 1735, there were eight, and in 1743, there were eleven,²⁰⁵ under the spiritual and academic guidance of a carefully chosen Marian faculty. Thanks to this arrangement, when they were not teaching classes, Marians from Skórzec were able to engage more actively in pastoral work in neighboring parishes, especially during Christmas, Lent, and important Church and local holidays and associated Church fairs. The Skórzec monastery played a crucial role for the local population and clergy. Moreover, the general superiors of the Order often chose it as their headquarters, further enhancing the prestige of the place. In 1737, 1741, 1744, and 1750, General Chapters²⁰⁶ were celebrated in Skórzec. It was the most important monastery of the Marian Order in the second half of the 18th century and in the 19th century. Unfortunately, in 1769 and 1789, two massive fires completely consumed the wooden church and monastery, turning them into ruins. However, thanks to the generous assistance of donors and the diligent work of the Marians, a new brick church was erected along with a monastery after the last fire, creating an extensive complex of buildings adapted for various tasks and activities in the future. Space was also allocated for the general government, the convent, the novitiate, and a parish school.

Crisis of Identity and Charism: Reformed Franciscans in Relation to the Marians

The history of the Marians holds many unresolved issues. One of the more controversial and difficult to explain is the jurisdictional dependence of the Marians on the Friars of the Minor Observance. Fr.

²⁰⁴ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 272.

²⁰⁵ *Prot. Conv. Corab.*, 1743 [b. p.].

²⁰⁶ *Prot. Ord.*, passim.

Papczyński, while in Rome in 1691, sought what is called *affiliatio*, which is the admission of the Marians to participate in the spiritual goods of the Capuchins, Piarists, Dominicans, and Reformed Franciscans. The content of the affiliation documents issued at that time was similar. The Minister General of the Capuchins stated: "By this document, we accept you as spiritual sons of our Order, and we make you participants of all Masses, sacrifices, devotions, prayers, acts of obedience, vigils, penances, mortifications, and pilgrimages."²⁰⁷ Similar are the words of the act issued by Carlo Francesco de Varesio, the Vicar General of the Reformed Franciscans: "By the power of our privileges, we admit you and include you among the brethren of our branching-out Order, so that both in this life and after death you may fully share in all its merits [...] through good deeds, Masses, prayers, meditations, chastisements, fasts, pilgrimages, and penances [...]"²⁰⁸ The documents of the Piarists and Dominicans are similar in content. Yet, only the Reformed Franciscans imposed their authority over the Marians. A difficult question that remains unanswered has repeatedly arisen among Marian historians: how did the Marian Order become so closely dependent on the Reformed Franciscans, with such widespread jurisdiction over the Marian Order? Were any legally binding decrees issued? Were there individuals behind this dependence? The dominant view among Marian historians was that the dependency of the Marians on the Friars Minor of Observance resulted from the Marians' acceptance of the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* and their subsequent aggregation into the Order of the Reformates.²⁰⁹ Georgio Navikevicius claimed that the adoption of the *Rule* infringed on the Marians' charism, making them more like Reformates; in addition, by making solemn vows on this *Rule*, the Marians quasi-confirmed their dependency on the Reformates, which had an impact on their spirit and discipline.²¹⁰ The external sign of this

²⁰⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 445; cf. Prot. Ord.

²⁰⁸ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 446-447.

²⁰⁹ S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, p. 239; Navikevicius, p. 208; W. Nieciecki, *Główne cechy*, pp. 18-19.

²¹⁰ Navikevicius, p. 208. "La Congregazione accettando la Regola delle Dieci Virtù, veniva in qualche modo ad essere riformata; i suoi membri, infatti, dovevano ora fare la professione solenne, ed essa stessa veniva a dipendere dall'Ordine Francescano, che avrebbe potuto interferire nella sua disciplina e nel suo spirito. Inoltre i suoi membri dovevano portare il cordone francescap. "

dependence was the obligation to wear the Franciscan cord and adopt the Franciscan breviary. However, the belief that by accepting the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, the Reformed Franciscans gained jurisdiction over the Marian Order is erroneous, as argued by the legal expert and researcher of Marian history, Julian Kałowski.²¹¹ Father Papczyński accepted this *Rule* with some reservations. He was aware of its insufficiency and generality, which might have opened the way for future differing interpretations and visions of the Order. Therefore, when making his solemn profession using its formula, he added and explained: "I promise and vow [...] that during the entirety of my life I will observe the Rule of the Imitation of the Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in that which is not contrary to our religious Institute."²¹² In this way, he emphasized that the Order, even when accepting this Rule approved by the Holy See, desires to remain faithful to the spirit, charism, and guiding idea of the Marians, their designated tasks, and their legislation. The matter of fidelity to the original Marian charism was emphasized even more clearly by *Uwagi niektóre na Regulę* (Some Remarks on the *Rule*), which explained: "This *Rule* is accepted only in those points by the Founder and the first general of this order, which are not contrary to our regulations, to avoid meticulous doubts."²¹³ It is worth noting the words: "the Founder and the first general." The author of the introduction to the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* wished to emphasize that Fr. Papczyński was the first general and Founder of the Order because Fr. Joachim Kozłowski wanted to promote himself as such and had his supporters.

Accepting the *Rule* led to new relationships that had a lasting impact on the history of the Marian Order, its development, and its charism. Although the *Rule* itself did not in any way make the Marian Order dependent on the Friars Minor of Observance, from that moment on, through various legal acts, petitions from the Marians, responses, and orders from the Franciscans, the Marians partially lost their charism established and cultivated by the Founder. This dependence has steadily grown in juridical, liturgical, disciplinary, and ascetical dimensions. It also contributed to inhibiting the development of the spirituality specific

²¹¹ J. Kałowski, *Problem zależności*, p. 70.

²¹² S. Papczyński, *Profession of Solemn Vows*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 942.

²¹³ *Uwagi niektóre na Regulę naśladowania cnót Najświętszej Panny*, in: *Reguła Braci*.

to the Marians, which they could not freely deepen. This is how Stefan Sydry, a researcher of Marian history, summed up the dependency: "The weakness of such a decision lay in the fact that the Marians lost their separate, sovereign character, which was one of the reasons for their lack of internal cohesion, which became so prominent after the death of the Founder and lasted until 1782."²¹⁴ After Fr. Papczyński's death, the Marians divided into two factions. Some stayed faithful to the spirit and legacy of Father Founder and called Fr. Kozłowski a traitor who had sold the Marians to the Reformates; others leaned toward Joachim Kozłowski and the Reformates. In their books, Frs. Casimir Wyszyński and João Teixeira²¹⁵ vehemently blamed Fr. Kozłowski for this state of affairs, and such blame is expressed far more harshly in the letters of John Niezabkowski and Candide Spourny.²¹⁶

The point is that the Marians' strong dependency on the Reformates occurred under some circumstances that are still unexplained. Many believed, and still believe, that it was legally accomplished by *affiliatio*, *aggregatio*, or *incorporatio* in 1691 and 1699. Yet this opinion is based on misinterpreting these words, often used interchangeably. Based on religious legislation, Julian Kałowski explained that the term *aggregatio* did not signify the dependency of an aggregated legal person on the aggregator.²¹⁷ The aggregation did not give any jurisdiction over the aggregated institute, in this case, over the Marians.²¹⁸ Aggregation only entailed granting privileges to the aggregated institutions. "An essential element inherent in the aggregation is the right to use the liturgical calendar and to share in the spiritual benefits and indulgences enjoyed

²¹⁴ Stefan Sydry, *Zgromadzenie Księży Marianów od założenia do odnowienia*, Puszca Mariańska 2004, p. 62. In 1782, under the initiative and leadership of Fr. General Raymond Nowicki, a General Chapter of the Marians took place without the participation of the Reformates. During this Chapter, significant reforms were implemented.

²¹⁵ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 126, 143-144, 135, 162-164; Teixeira, Nos. 207, 209, 229-230.

²¹⁶ Letters, *passim*. In many places, Fr. Kozłowski is accused of betrayal, of "selling out" the Marians to the Reformates.

²¹⁷ J. Kałowski, *Problem zależności*, p. 73.

²¹⁸ Franciszek Bogdan, *Agregacja*, In: *Enc. Katol.*, t. I, col. 192-193: "In current canon law, aggregation refers to the joining of one church organization to another related organization so that it can participate in its privileges. [...] Through the act of aggregation, the main religious order does not acquire jurisdiction over the affiliated group." Cf. V. Macca, *Aggregazione*, in: *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, Roma 1974, I, col. 150-152.

by the aggregating order.”²¹⁹ Therefore, everything indicates that the main architect of the Marian dependency on the Reformed Franciscans was Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. It should be accepted that Fr. Casimir Wyszyński is a credible source because he knew Fr. Kozłowski. They were together in Rome, and he lived in the Marian Order under his leadership for seven years. According to him, Fr. Kozłowski dreamed of being recognized as a “Marian patriarch” and “Founder of the Order.” Fr. Wyszyński wrote unfavorably about him: “He opposed our Founder in many ways. He did not always act according to his ordinances. Also, he changed the Founder’s decisions [...] and would not agree to his [beatification] process.”²²⁰ Fr. Teixeira assessed Joachim Kozłowski in even harsher words, accusing him of despotism in leading the Congregation, hiding the virtues and merits of Fr. Papczyński, and blocking the beatification process so that these virtues would not come to light. He also left the body of the Founder Father in damp soil, despite the request of fellow brethren, to hasten its decay.²²¹ His confrères also accused him of a lack of effort to obtain the approval of the *Norma Vitae*, although, according to Julian Kałowski, there were strong grounds for it.²²² Certain facts support the above interpretation: first, the repeated strong warnings directed towards Joachim Kozłowski in the testament of Father Papczyński, who wrote: “I oblige him, by the awful judgment of God, that he would not innovate anything in regard to the habit I have prescribed, or to the name of the Order; nor may he dare to impiously abolish the veneration of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.” In the same document, he warned Fr. Kozłowski: “I declare [him] to be [my] successor as well, obliging his conscience, by the severe judgment of God, to be as strict as possible in ensuring that the religious Rule imprinted by God be observed.”²²³ Second, there is the testimony of Fr. Wyszyński about Joachim Kozłowski: “When he was sent to Rome to get the approval of the Constitutions, he did not endeavor for it [...], he intended

²¹⁹ J. Kałowski, *Problem zależności*, p. 73.

²²⁰ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 162-163.

²²¹ Teixeira, P. 234. When Joachim Kozłowski drowned in the Vistula River in 1730, João Teixeira considered it as God’s intervention and commented, “This misfortune was deemed a just punishment for his foolish recklessness and vain conceit.”

²²² J. Kałowski, *Problem zależności*, pp. 62-63.

²²³ S. Papczyński, *Second Testament*, 12, 15, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 937. 939.

to transform our Order [...], this disobedient and stubborn confrère.”²²⁴ Third, there is the astonishing initiative displayed by Joachim Kozłowski in subordinating the Marians to the Reformates in all important matters. Analyzing this meager preserved documentation, the hypothesis that Joachim Kozłowski, while in Rome in 1699, had a well-thought-out, far-reaching plan to declare himself the founder of the Marian Order and to stay in the position of the general superior for as long as possible seems possible. According to the testimony of Fr. Isidore Taudt, Kozłowski, while seeking approval for the Marian order in 1699, not only did not seek approval for Fr. Papczyński's *Rule of Life* but even concealed its existence.²²⁵ Georgio Navikevicius claimed that Joachim Kozłowski, while in Rome, probably had his own opinion on the choice of a rule, which was inconsistent with Father Papczyński's program.²²⁶ While staying in Rome for over a year, Fr. Kozłowski established close contact with several Reformed Franciscans and, at their suggestion, adopted *The Rule of the Ten Virtues*. In 1702, for the first Chapter after the death of Fr. Papczyński, he asked the Nunciature to appoint a Reformed Franciscan as a delegate and chairman, something not practiced during the Founder's lifetime.²²⁷ In 1703, Fr. Kozłowski asked the Reformed Franciscans to send the Marians a novice master and a professor of philosophy and theology,²²⁸ functions that had previously been carried out by the Marians themselves. It seems that in this way, he wanted to eliminate the influence of the “faithful sons” of the Founder on the Marian formation and management of the Order. Only three months before his death, in a letter to the confrères in the Korabiew Forest, Fr. Papczyński mentioned the novices, Gabriel and Paul, recommending to them the proper use of

²²⁴ Wyszyński *Stróż*, pp. 88, 126, 135.

²²⁵ “Al contrario, P. Taudt dichiara che P. Gioacchino, richiesto quale regola avesse scelto il Fondatore, rispose che non ne aveva portato nessuna, e così il Papa gli insegno la Regola delle Dieci Virtu Della BVM.” Navikevicius, p. 204.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 264-265.

²²⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, 164-165; Aleksy Koralewicz, *Additament do Kronik Braci Mniejszych S. Franciszka*, Warszawa 1722, p. 175.

²²⁸ A. Koralewicz, *Additament*, p. 176. “The letters of the Minister General were also read, in which he announced the acceptance of the Marian Fathers In Consodalitium of our Seraphic Order. He recommended them for affection, brotherly love, and protection from this Province, which their own praepositus Generalis, Father Joachim a S. Ann [Kozłowski], also requested. In order to assist them in their religious life and studies, he asked for a master of novitiorum and a lecturer in filosofiae and theologiae moralis.”

their time in the novitiate.²²⁹ During this period in the Order, there was no shortage of devout and learned Marians, drawn to the Order by the fame of the holiness of Fr. Stanislaus.²³⁰ Documents of the informative process of 1751 contain testimony by witnesses naming six Marians who were formed under the direction of Father Founder and who died in the opinion of holiness during the administration of Joachim Kozłowski. One witness to the life of the Marians of that time gave them such a remarkable testimony: "These were the men of excellent morals, of exemplary lives and perfect virtues; they were taught by the example of the Servant of God Stanislaus, while they were living under his administration."²³¹ Bishop Hieronim Wierzbowski gave a favorable opinion of these Marians in 1699: "Moreover, this Institute of admirable love [...] has excellent members of noble origin, endowed with knowledge, virtues and an exemplary life."²³² It is difficult to assume that within three years, they all passed away. The Provincial Minister of the Reformates, Fr. Bonaventure Klein, stated in a letter of 1705 that Fr. Kozłowski had entrusted himself and his Congregation to their "leadership and care."²³³ In the Franciscan chronicles, there are requests from the years 1702, 1703, 1704, 1709, 1715, and 1716 addressed to their Order" authorities by Fr. Kozłowski, asking for the appointment of a Franciscan visitor and vicar to preside over the proceedings of the Marian Chapters.²³⁴ In

²²⁹ *Pisma fundacyjne. Praecepta*, series: "Źródła Mariańskie", t. 2, introduction by A. Pakuła, J. Kałowski, Warszawa 2007, pp. 181-183.

²³⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, s. 807. "Eius sanctitatis fama commoti nonnulli piissimi ac doctissimi viri in dictum eremum ad pedes Servi Dei convolarunt, sese illius Regimini atque Instituto submittendo, eoque Duce adeo in via spiritus profecerunt, ut omnes ferme primi huius Congregationis Patres cum Sanctitatis fama decesserint, veluti alter pater Stanislaus, pater Josephus, pater Cyprianus, pater Constatinus ac pater [frater] Antonius Cinski."

²³¹ *Ibid.*, art. 15. Similar information about Father Papczyński's spiritual sons comes from another article: "Viri optime morati, exemplares in vita sua, omnique perfectione virtutum praediti, qui Patres huiusmodi exemplaritate a Servo Dei Stanislaio, cum sub eius gubernio viverent, imbuti erant [...] optime novi Patres istos... fuisse vitae exemplaris viros, et In hac Religione Marianorum Sancte occubuisse", *Positio*, Papczyński, footnote. 10.

²³² S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 228.

²³³ *Cap. Gen.*, 18-19.

²³⁴ A. Koralewicz, *Additament*, pp. 175, 176, 180, 181, 190, 191, 223. To illustrate, in 1702: "[...] at that time, from the letters of Father Vicar General Cherub, the Province was fully aware of the aggregation and acceptance *ad Consodalitium* by the entire Seraphic Order of Fathers in Poland, previously known as Stanislaite, and now named Mariani, after making profession on the Rule of the Order of *Decem placitorum* [...]. These Fathers, under the title of Immaculae Conceptionie V. Mariae, are admitted to this brotherhood of our Order. That year, after the

several instances, the requests specifically mention particular individuals. For example, in 1706, Fr. Norbert Dziewierski confessed: "My humble person was suggested and invited to fulfill the task and the office of president of the forthcoming Chapter of the said Congregation of yours by Most Reverend Father and Brother Joachim of St. Ann [Kozłowski], Superior General."²³⁵ Responding to the request, the Vicar General, Br. Antoni of Panormo, gave his consent, stipulating: "... as long as he acts in accordance with this role and without the active voice."²³⁶ Despite having their own general superiors and government, the powers of the Franciscan vicars increased systematically. This can also be observed in the procedure for convening and conducting Chapters. For the first Chapters in 1702, 1706, 1710, and 1712, the Marians requested the Apostolic Nunciature's consent and appointment of a chairman. However, starting from the Chapter in 1715, the Reformed Franciscans convened, organized, and presided over them. If the general minister reminded the vicar delegated to the Marians in 1706 that he had "no right to vote," the vicar sent in 1725 already claimed an extensive scope of authority, including a "consultative, elective, and decisive vote."²³⁷ Decades later, in Rome, the Marian Procurator Fr. Candide Spourny, a Bohemian, spoke sharply against this dependency: "I cannot possibly understand why we would need these Friars [the Reformates] for visitations or Chapters." And he wrote to the Marian general: "I cannot get my head around the fact that our superior general has to kiss the hand of the curate from Pakość, who — a Reformat — has been appointed for the Marians as vicar and visitor."²³⁸ He reported that even Church dignitaries in Rome expressed great surprise at seeing the unlawful dependency of the Marians — an Order enjoying the privilege of exemplification — from the Order of the Reformed Franciscans.

death of their Founder, Father Stanislaus of Jesu Maria, Praepositi Generali, these Fathers asked the Apostolic Nuncio, F. Pignatelli, to let them celebrate a Chapter for the election of a [new] Superior. At their request, he appointed them one of ours — Father Ludwik Borzewski — a president for this Chapter."

²³⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, 173.

²³⁶ *Capitula Generalia Marianorum*, Puszca Mariańska 2001, p. 18. *Facultas Reverendissimi Commissarii Generalis Ordinis Minorum*, Romae 18 aprilis 1706.

²³⁷ *Cap. Gen.*, pp. 327-330. An extensive letter of June 29, 1766 by Dionysius Sydry, a Reformates' delegate.

²³⁸ *Listy*, b.d. [1779?], letter of Candide Spourny to Father General Raymond Nowicki.

Stefan Sydry also expressed criticism; in his opinion, this dependency “was a barrier to the free growth [of the Marians]. The Marians realized this and endeavored to oppose it, but they could do nothing about it as long as they were weak and few.”²³⁹

Today, it is difficult to assess the actions of Fr. Kozłowski impartially: whether in making the Marians dependent on the Reformates, he wished to provide them with the protection and security of that powerful Order or whether, as the meager testimonies indicate, he made specific reforms with the support of their Order and agreed to their implementation by the Reformates to “to be recognized as the founder” of the already slightly altered new Marian Order. Here are some facts. In 1702, a year after the death of Fr. Papczyński, the General Chapter of the Marians, presided over by Fr. Kozłowski and the Franciscan vicar Ludwik Borzewski, made several substantial alterations in the Marians’ legislation. Some parts of Father Papczyński’s testament were annulled as incompatible with the vows of poverty and obedience.²⁴⁰ The decree read: “During the first conference in the afternoon, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the following laws regarding obedience and poverty were proposed since it seemed as if certain Fathers had been assigned to houses by the testament of their [*sic*] Father Founder of holy memory [the word ‘their’ here suggests that the author of the decree is a Franciscan vicar, for a Marian would have written ‘our Founder’], along with the specific provisions also created by this Deceased. Both these matters are contrary to his solemn profession. The first is against the vow of

²³⁹ S. Sydry, *Zgromadzenie*, pp. 62-63.

²⁴⁰ The following content of the testament regarding obedience caused controversy: “I leave and resign the maintenance of the [Korabiew] Hermitage and the Cenacle of the Lord to those fathers and brothers who bound themselves in their consciences to never leave these houses until death. Father Joachim of St. Ann, elected as my coadjutor, by permission of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord [Bishop] Administrator, I declare to be [my] successor as well, obliging his conscience, by the severe judgment of God, to be as strict as possible in ensuring that the religious Rule imprinted by God be observed. But as he is now abroad, I therefore entrust the direction of this tiny Congregation to my Assistants: to Father Joseph of All Saints and to Father Cipriano of St. Stanislaus.” As to the poverty: “Mindful of the vow of poverty, I ought not to command anything as regards the other matters, because while many things often do not turn out as they ought, so by the Divine Will I distribute unspecified sums [of money] [...]: a thousand florins [...] and also the one thousand, five hundred I inscribed to the Cenacle of the Lord and to my [confrères] here, serving God (and not anyone else), particularly to Fathers Joseph and Cyprian.” St. Papczyński, *Second Testament*, in: *Selected Writings*, Warszawa-Stockbridge, 2021, pp. 936-937.

obedience, and the second is against the vow of poverty.”²⁴¹ The decree cast a shadow on Fr. Papczyński as a member of the Order. It provided the Promoter of the Faith with a basis for raising serious charges in the beatification process.²⁴² John Niezabitowski, a zealous Marian and advocate for breaking ties with the Franciscans, evaluated their activities at the above-mentioned Chapter: “What was it that had wrecked the cause of our Patriarch [Fr. Papczyński] in such a way that his return should never be likely, if not the cunning of our protectors, presiding for the first time after the death of S[tanislus] P[apczyński], our Father. During the first Chapter, he, his holy works and praiseworthy decrees was criticized under the guise of rigor, lest we rejoice from this treasure, which they did not have. They knew well enough that the great virtues of the Order were to be the ornament of the Kingdom, and therefore, right at the beginning of their reign, their great endeavor was to keep our forefathers in the dark as much as possible.”²⁴³ Fr. Papczyński made specific provisions in his will regarding filling positions in Marian monasteries and the funds deposited in his name, a right he held as the current superior. However, Fr. Ludwik Borzowski, a Reformat, believed Fr. Papczyński did not have such a right and violated the vows of poverty and obedience in issuing the above provisions. The same Chapter changed the electoral regulations established by Fr. Stanislaus, shortening the term of office of the superiors general from six to three years and the term of local superiors from three years to one year. The same Chapter prohibited founding new institutions, citing the small number of members. The actions of Fr. Kozłowski caused anxiety among the “faithful sons” of Fr. Papczyński. The Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński wrote about Joachim Kozłowski: “Having assumed power [...] he concealed all the merits, virtues and holiness of the Founder and, instead of dutifully supporting his process out of obligation, he attributed everything to himself. Though my brethren and I urged him to support the process of such a great Servant of God, he absolutely would not consent to it.”²⁴⁴ Some Marians began to rebel and murmur against departing from the

²⁴¹ Cap. Gen., 1702, Introduction and decrees 1702/1/2.

²⁴² *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 496, footnote 27.

²⁴³ *Listy*, letter of John Niezabitowski to the Marians, Romae 14 sept. 1777.

²⁴⁴ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p.135, n. 10; Teixeira, nn. 233, 234.

legacy of Fr. Papczyński. The response from the Franciscan vicars was punitive decrees. For example, the General Chapter of 1710, presided over by the Franciscan Fr. Bonaventure Klein, passed thirteen decrees, seven of which threatened the Marians with severe penalties: solitary confinement for up to six months, flogging, and fasting on bread and water. The other six also had a punitive nature, though less severe.

The punitive decrees spoke of rebellion, disobedience, and *malitiosi conspiratores*, a definition under which various accusations and opinions of confrères could fall.²⁴⁵ The penalties were intended to silence the murmurs of Fr. Papczyński's supporters. As a result of these measures, both the discord among the Marians and their dependence on the Franciscans deepened. For instance, in 1725, the Chapter led by the Reformat, James Wolski, issued a decree prohibiting any changes in Marian legislation without the consent of the minister general of the Reformed Franciscans. According to some preserved opinions, the Reformates treated the Marian Order as a Franciscan province or "as if the Third Franciscan Order." The Chapter in 1712, under the leadership of Fr. Klein, despite the Marian title "the Order assisting parish priests," prohibited, under the penalty of suspension, the superior from sending Marians for any pastoral work outside, except for missions and that for a maximum of two to three weeks.²⁴⁶ *The Rule of the Ten Virtues* commanded: "The Superiors are bound to ask the Holy Father for one of the cardinals of the Roman Church to be the Protector of this Order. The members will owe obedience and reverence to him."²⁴⁷ However, until 1785, the Marians did not have their own cardinal-protector because Fr. Kozłowski, in collaboration with the Reformates, introduced the following sentence into the Constitutions: "[...] the Congregation (not an Order) should have the same cardinal-protector as the Seraphic Order."²⁴⁸ Father Spourny explained this decision: "He did this so that we would always be unknown to the Holy See and the entire Church and so that our Order would not have support and protection in its affairs. Thus, if we were to approach

²⁴⁵ Cap. Gen., Decreta-Ordinationes 1710/1-13.

²⁴⁶ Cap. Gen., 1712/1.

²⁴⁷ *The Rule of Ten Virtues*, chapt. 4, p. 50, in: [padrimariani.org/resources/ MIC_library](http://padrimariani.org/resources/MIC_library)

²⁴⁸ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis BMV*, Warszawa 1750, Chapt. IX/3. "Quae Congregatio habere debet eundem Protectorem Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem, quem Ordo Seraphicus de Observantia habet, eiusque protectione semper gaudere debet."

the Seraphic Order's cardinal-protector with our Order's needs, we would not be able to receive anything for our Order through him unless it pleased those friars and they themselves allowed it."²⁴⁹ The Franciscans strongly discouraged the Marians from installing a Marian procurator in Rome, making it difficult for them to handle serious matters concerning the Order at the Apostolic See. They even demanded that the Marians obtain permission from the general of the Reformates for the departure of a Marian delegate to Rome.²⁵⁰ This practice resulted in the Marians being unknown in Rome in the 18th century, as personally experienced by Fr. Wyszynski.²⁵¹ The authority over the Marians belonged to the Order of Reformates. Their vicar had real and full power over them. Both the general and the Chapter were subordinate to him. The general's authority was limited and weak; for example, he did not have the power to remove local superiors, even in criminal matters.²⁵² In internal documents, he was often oddly titled as the *General Pastor of the Order* or simply *praepositus*, the Reformates' tactical move to avoid using the title "Father General." Some resolutions of the Chapters are referred to as decisions of the vicar, and the decrees established in 1702-1725 are called "Vicar's directives."²⁵³ The vicars set the dates for Chapters and visitations, approved the election of the general and Chapter resolutions, arbitrarily changed their content, and added their own regulations. Some Chapter decrees ended with the note: "Unless otherwise ordered by the Father Vicar." Such dual authority did not foster a sense of security, the development of the Order, or apostolate. These were two distinct entities with separate spirituality, formation, discipline, and asceticism. Father Spourny believed that the Marian Fathers in the first half of the 18th century were insecure, a sentiment reinforced by the Reformates, who suppressed and treated them as their Third Order.²⁵⁴ He wrote: "What propitious advice can they give us since they neither know nor would possibly learn our Constitutions, obligations, and shortcomings? Their

²⁴⁹ *Listy*, letter of Candido Spourny, 1.

²⁵⁰ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, pp. 305-306.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 374.

²⁵² *Cap. Gen.*, 1747/7; 1788/10.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 1725/7.

²⁵⁴ *Listy*, letter of Candido Spourny.

visits to our Order have never been of any use to us but brought us into an ever-greater darkness so that we would not discern what could help us to develop our Order. The articles they establish during the Chapters are harmful [...]. This is how they treat us.”²⁵⁵ The vicars interfered with the novitiate and priestly formation, making it more aligned with the Reformates than the Marian spirit. They imposed their distinctions, titles, the Franciscan breviary, customs, and patrons. In the liturgy, the Reformates’ Directorium from Wielkopolska province was enforced. In monastic discipline, strict and demeaning Reformat penalties and regulations were imposed, contrary to the spirit of the Founder and his legislation. For example, they included licking the floor, licking a cross drawn in chalk throughout the refectory, flogging a monk by servants, putting horse bits on the mouths of those breaking the *silentiums*, participating in a public procession with a bit placed on the mouth, and many others.²⁵⁶ The power of the vicars was not strictly defined. It depended on the development of the Marians and the general superior’s position and personality. Generally, however, the Reformat vicars displayed a lot of tact during their visitations. They received reasonable remuneration for their services from the Marians,²⁵⁷ although their interference sometimes exceeded the bounds of decency. For example, one of the Marians complained that “Fr. Kowalski [a Reformat], during visitations in every convent, when he found any pillow or featherbed, ripped everything apart and scattered it in the air and organized many other indecencies in a Muscovite-style manner.”²⁵⁸ His decrees exuded severity and rigor. The visitation took place in a “heavy atmosphere.”²⁵⁹

It was a time when the Marians were not flourishing. The decree from 1702 prohibiting the creation of new foundations and the 1712 one forbidding the Marians to be sent to any pastoral work were still in force. This situation was assessed by the researcher of 18th-century Marian

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ S. Sydry, *Organizacja Zgromadzenia Księży Marianów w XVIII wieku*, Stocbridge 1965., pp. 283-287; *Listy*, 1. Letter 1 is a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the situation in the Order. It has about 30 typescript pages (1779 ?).

²⁵⁷ S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 218, n. 3, 229.

²⁵⁸ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 4.

²⁵⁹ Bolesław Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja i rozwój zakonu w XVIII wieku*, in: Jan Bukowicz, Tadeusz Górski [red.], *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, p. 45.

history, Fr. Bolesław Jakimowicz: “As the Marians reached stabilization, the control over their independent actions exercised by the Reformates’ vicars and visitators became a hindrance in the development of their independent thinking and blocked their initiative.”²⁶⁰ Forty years after the Founder’s death, they possessed only four modest little monasteries, four simple wooden churches often called chapels, and about forty religious. The Marians were aware of the burden of this dependence, but some were convinced that it had to be this way and there was no other way. Others were intimidated. Fr. Spourny brilliantly depicted this helplessness: “I remember the many instances when I heard these worthy and honest words from our brethren. Some Fathers [said] how good it would be to get rid of the Franciscans’ protection over us. Some other one would claim that it was possible, so did the third and the tenth, and I doubt there was even one man among us (unless an enemy of our Order) who would not want to free the Order from under this yoke. Indeed, some other members did not consider this adjunction to the Reformates a great harm. I, too, was educated in my Order, which was still in similar obscurity and errors.”²⁶¹ Today, the doubts quoted by Fr. Candide Spourny, which some Marians allegedly expressed at the time — “Am I still a Marian or already a Reformat?”²⁶² or, “Who am I, what Order do I belong to?” — cannot be confirmed. The documents tell us that some refused to make vows, others wanted to leave the Order, and a few did, explaining their decision by saying that this was not the same Order they had joined. Some Marians wanted to return to Fr. Papczyński’s spiritual heritage and rejected the decision of Joachim Kozłowski and *The Rule of Ten Virtues*, stating that this rule *contra formam et mentem primi Stanislai est*.²⁶³ “In the twenty-three preserved letters of John Niezabitowski and Candide Spourny, there is a warm reverence and filial respect for Fr. Papczyński, as well as recognition and praise for the vision of the Order he outlined. At the same time, there is a lot of bitterness and accusations against the Reformates, who were said to have destroyed this vision

²⁶⁰ Bolesław Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja i rozwój zakonu w XVIII wieku*, in: Jan Bukowicz, Tadeusz Górski [Ed.], *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, p. 45.

²⁶¹ *Listy*, letter to the General, Father Raymond Nowicki.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ BUViL, Doc. Viln., F4-A 166.

and the entire “holy” legacy of Father Founder. John Niezabitowski lamented to the general of the Marians: “This was not the outcome, nor the intentions of Our Patriarch, for us to be friars. His thought was never to degrade his sons in this way; after all, he wrote and left laws, which the malice of secretaries overturned, and we are innocent of that. May God not remember the one who [...], condemning the Father’s laws, sowed discord among us.”²⁶⁴ Fr. Spourny also presented evidence of manipulation with the Marian Statutes and “other manuscripts of the Venerable Father Founder.” He claimed that while in Rome, he came across a booklet containing “the text of our Constitutions” and other writings, in which there was not even the slightest mention of the dependency of the Marian Order on the minister of the Seraphic Order.”²⁶⁵ He believed that Fr. Bonaventure Klein and Fr. Mansueto Leporini, having “fabricated” Constitutions with Fr. Kozłowski, prepared a petition requesting incorporation of the Marians into the Reformates. This was agreed upon in the name of all the Marians and presented to their minister general.²⁶⁶ Meanwhile, none of the Marians were aware of the sent petition. Some texts are so strong that quoting them is not even appropriate. Sorrow, anger, and bitterness for the lost noble ideal shine through them. Therefore, the question arises: did the Marians try to free themselves from this guardianship? Some thought it had to be that way, while others feared the wide range of punishments imposed by the vicars. Fr. Spourny wrote that there would be more zealous defenders of independence “if only they did not fear their revenge,” meaning the Reformates. Similarly, Fr. John Niezabitowski strengthened the Marians: “There is no need to fear Rome, for we already know it [...], nor the multitude of our guardians, for one episcopal authority weighs more.”²⁶⁷ It seems, however, that the

²⁶⁴ *Listy*, letter of John Niezabitowski to Father General. The act of aggregating the Marians into the Order of Reformed Franciscans, published in *Regula Ordinis*, Warszawa, 1723, pp. 36-40 differs from the one in *Regula Imitationis*, Romae, 1778, pp. VII-IX. In this second edition, the content referring to the aggregation of the Marians to the Franciscans and the jurisdictional dependence on their Order was removed, claiming that it is precisely this “sown darnel,” meaning the insertions made by Fr. Kozłowski in agreement with the Reformates. See, *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 538-540, and footnote 13.

²⁶⁵ *Listy*, Letter of Father Candide Spourny, 1.

²⁶⁶ *Prot. Ord.*

²⁶⁷ *Listy*, Letter of Candide Spourny of 1777 to the Marians; letter of John Niezabitowski to Father General Raymond Nowicki of Aug. 16, 1777.

Marians were generally submissive to the Reformates' vicars and their authority, accepting their orders without opposition. The Reformed Franciscans regarded them as part of their heritage, in the development of which they had a significant role and for which they felt responsible. Despite the numerous critical accounts provided by source documents, it should be noted that the Franciscans tried to see both the positive and negative aspects of Marians' life. Numerous Chapter decrees indicate that they had an insight into all its manifestations and endeavored to remedy the deficiencies they perceived. They made sure that the Marians led dignified lives and observed religious discipline. It is also important to emphasize that the Order of Reformed Franciscans enjoyed great popularity in Poland. In 1772, it had about 2,500 members residing in Polish territories. In what has been said above, one should not look for his overall criticism but rather an assessment of a strict policy applied to the Marians, although it seems it was often done in good faith. However, there were too serious differences between the Marians and the Reformates regarding spirituality, apostolate, charisms, asceticism, discipline, and heritage. On these very levels, uncertainties, misunderstandings, and antagonisms arose, hindering the development of the Marian Order.

The 18th century was a time of a general crisis of religious life in Poland. It affected the Reformates, but it did not spare the Marians either.²⁶⁸ Contrary to the Founder's prohibition, there were instances of drinking, desertion, and laxity in morals among the Marians. In other words, amid this situation, the Marians were not without fault. Wacław Makoś, a historian of the life and times of Fr. Papczyński, largely attributed the blame for this to Fr. Kozłowski. According to him, "the price he paid for his promotion was the abandonment of essential charismatic values and a lowering of monastic observance in everyday life. In this way, he quickly gained popularity among members with weaker monastic spirits and was effortlessly elected to various offices. He was elected to the position of general three times and twice completed the term due to the premature death of his predecessor. In pursuit of his goal, he raised new members with similar ambitions, disregarding the Marian charism."²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Albin Bronisław Sroka OFMRef., *Prawo i życie polskich reformatów*, Kraków 1975, pp. 92-94.

²⁶⁹ Wacław Makoś, *O. Stanisław od Jezusa Maryi Papczyński. Badania i refleksje*, Warszawa, 1998, pp. 218-219.

3

STRIVING TO FOLLOW
THEIR OWN PATH:
THE “ROSTKOVIAN DISPERSION”

Religious and Political Situation in Poland in the 18th Century; Political and Social-Economic Relations

After the unsuccessful and ineffectual reign of King Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669-1673), the monarchical power in Poland was taken over by a Piast [a Pole]. The throne of Poland was occupied not only by an outstanding military leader but also by an exceptional statesman. The reign of King John III Sobieski (1674-1696) marks the last shining period in the history of the Commonwealth, which was slowly heading towards decline. Unfortunately, the king's plans and efforts to strengthen central authority, implement internal reforms, and abolish the destructive *liberum veto* collapsed. The cause of this failure was the absurd ideology and practice of the nobility's "golden liberty," its uncompromising defense by the noblemen, and the hostile activities of foreign courts.¹ Fr. Papczyński wholeheartedly supported the reformist aspirations of King John Sobieski, with whom he had a close acquaintance. In sermons, teachings, and especially in his work *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, he condemned the turmoil and division in the nation, the arbitrariness of the nobility, and the privileges of the "golden liberty," making him a courageous precursor in this regard. He wrote: "Poland is in turmoil, becoming a field of upheaval for every audacious individual. Conspiracies and rebellions arise against it, and wealth is acquired from the blood of human suffering, lacking the spirit of love and virtue. Instead, there is repentance before the enemy. The Senate stains itself with treason."² These were strong words, speaking the truth, but also dangerous for their author.

¹ Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan III Sobieski*, in: *Poczet królów i książąt polskich*, Warszawa, 1978, pp. 399-410.

² Jan Kosmowski, *Człowiek wrażliwości społecznej*, in: *Mąż Boży. Szkice teologiczno-duszpasterskie o ojcu Stanisławie Papczyńskim*, Warszawa, 2007, p. 54. In the proclaimed reformatory theses, it is worth emphasizing the courage and uncompromising attitude of Fr. Papczyński. Stanislaus Papczyński himself recalls that his writings stirred up a storm and provoked

The king's efforts to implement reforms and his immense rise in authority after the "Vienna triumph" intensified the hostile action against him by the unfriendly magnates. The country teetered on the brink of civil war. Out of hatred for the king and opposition to the state reform, a ruthless and fierce battle began against him. "There was no slander or lie they would not use in the attempt to hurt the king."³ Helpless, full of bitterness, capitulating before his enemies, in 1688, the king delivered a speech full of tragedy, in which he prophetically cried out: "In forty days, Nineveh will be destroyed!"⁴ On June 17, 1696, John Sobieski passed away, which led to an interregnum, a time of magnate disputes, intrigues, bribery, and conflicts. Two serious candidates vied for the throne: the Saxon elector Frederick August, supported by Russia and Germany, and the French prince Louis de Bourbon Conti, enjoying the support of most nobility. In the political turmoil, on June 27, 1697, both were proclaimed kings of the Commonwealth. However, August demonstrated greater activity, "did not forget the jingling arguments, scattered money, and entered Poland with the Saxon army."⁵ The distinguished historian Władysław Konopczyński unequivocally assessed the election of August II: "The interregnum of 1696-1697, the longest and most immoral in our history, revealed complete political disorientation among foreign intrigues, a deep decline in public spirit [...], and gave the nation a king who was to corrupt it even worse."⁶ Paweł Jasienica rightfully called the times of the Saxon rule (1697-1763) "the history of agony."⁷

Augustus II, a Protestant, converted to Catholicism to ascend the Polish throne. It is worth mentioning a particular testimony. After his

serious threats against him. That is why in the fourth edition of *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, he removed passages containing criticism of "the most harmful institutions leading Poland to ruin," *Prodromus*, Cracoviae, Ed. Quarta, [b. d.]. See: *Pisma zebrane*, pp. 81-594. According to P. Jasienica, even radical political writers did not have the courage to challenge the worst of the noble fetishes, namely the *liberum veto*. It was only in 1730 and 1732 that two treatises attacking the *liberum veto* were published, sixty years after the work of Father Papczyński. See: P. Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*, Part III, *Dzieje agonii*, Warszawa, 1982, pp. 232-237 [after: P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*].

³ Z. Wójcik, *Jan III Sobieski*, in: *Poczet królów*, p. 408.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁵ Andrzej Zahorski, *August II*, in: *Poczet królów*, p. 413.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁷ P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*.

coronation in Kraków on September 15, 1697, on his way to Warsaw, King Augustus II stopped at New Jerusalem (today Góra Kalwaria), and there he met Fr. Papczyński, who — in a prophetic vision — foretold the length of his reign.⁸ Augustus II hoped to strengthen his position among the German principalities by accepting the Polish crown. His policy gave priority to the affairs of Saxony but also to his own interests. For this reason, and against the interests of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, he became involved in a major conflict between Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, which evolved into a 21-year-long war (1700-1721) known as the Northern War.⁹ The fight took place mainly on the territories of the Commonwealth, leading to massive destruction of towns and villages, causing impoverishment and depopulation. For instance, the population of Poznań, which was twenty-one thousand in 1640, fell to two thousand by 1710.¹⁰ The Northern War led to the loss of sovereign statehood for Poland, which never recovered from this downfall and was increasingly politically constrained by Prussia and Russia. The war turmoil also provoked a civil war in Lithuania. It provided a pretext for the election on July 13, 1704, under cover of “Swedish muskets” of an “anti-king” in the person of Poznań voivode Stanislaus Leszczyński.¹¹ This fact triggered further internal conflicts and caused a rift within the Commonwealth. After victories over the Saxons, Swedish King Charles XII forced Augustus II to capitulate and renounce the Polish crown on September 24, 1705. The political confusion was compounded by the Russians’ crushing defeat inflicted on the Swedes in 1709. The new balance of power compelled King Stanislaus Leszczyński to seek refuge under the protection of France, whose intrigues further complicated the situation in Poland. The Polish throne was occupied again by Augustus II, the king whose “fondness for feasts, festivities, and inebriation kept him company [...] until the last days of his life. What an insatiable desire he had for women!”¹² His dissolute lifestyle was imitated by both Saxon and Polish dignitaries and magnates associated with the court and infected the Polish gentry. It was

⁸ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 91, 159-160.

⁹ Władysław Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów Polski do roku 1864*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 324-325.

¹⁰ Adam Zamoyski, *Własną drogą. Osobliwe dzieje Polaków i ich kultury*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 216-217.

¹¹ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, pp. 325-326.

¹² A. Zahorski, *August II*, in: *Poczet królów*, p. 411.

said about the reign of Augustus II: "Under [the] Saxon king, eat, drink and loosen your belt."¹³

Swedish, Saxon, and Russian invasions left behind ruin and wastelands. The disaster was deepened by a virulent plague that broke out in 1707 and, within several years, reduced the population of the Commonwealth to the level before 1640. The Northern War devastated the Polish economy, modest industry, and agriculture. As a result, a great famine gripped the country. A Russian envoy reported: "There has never been such hunger in Poland. I have seen that peasants and poor gentry go without bread for weeks, sustaining themselves only on vegetables."¹⁴ The Venetian envoy stated that no pen could describe the misery and misfortune of this country "destroyed by the Swedes, plundered by the Russians, ravaged by the Saxons."¹⁵ In addition to material poverty, there was moral destitution, primarily the scourge of drunkenness, leading to the spiritual decay of the nation, hindering progress in every aspect, and depriving people of their Christian dignity and humanity. In the pursuit of enrichment, bribery began to spread. The nation's spirit was extinguished while the worst national vices flourished.¹⁶ Father Stanislaus Konarski, a Piarist, a wise and learned man, observing the Saxon era and its citizens, summed up the state of affairs: "Some kind of fear, intellectual poverty, and general malice have taken over everything [...], it seems that in us the memory of the Commonwealth and the homeland has extinguished: as if every citizen of the country should think of nothing more than that he should be well, even if everyone else perished."¹⁷ Neighboring absolutist states thwarted attempts at reforms. In 1720, Prussia and Russia entered into a secret agreement not to allow any reforms or improvements in the Commonwealth.¹⁸ The inert Republic, said in Europe to be "ruled by

¹³ This saying perfectly reflected the sentiments prevailing among the nobility and a portion of the magnates, and it was ingrained in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for a long time.

¹⁴ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, p. 328.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Karol Górski, *Od religijności do mistyki. Zarys dziejów życia wewnętrznego w Polsce*, Part I, 966-1795, Lublin, 1962, p. 187.

¹⁷ Stanisław Konarski, *O skutecznym rad sposobie*, quoted after: P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, p. 131.

¹⁸ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów Polski do roku 1864*, Kraków 1985, pp. 330-331; A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, Kraków 2002, p. 214.

debauchery,” became an anachronism in enlightened Europe and a tasty morsel for its neighbors: an object of haggling, political games, pressure, and armed interventions.

After a period of excessive drinking and “agonizing torment,” on February 1, 1733, King Augustus II ended his life. Shortly before dying, the king delivered, in German, something like a general confession: “My entire life has been one continual sin. Lord, have mercy on me.”¹⁹ “The European courts had officially inherited his established program for the partition of the Commonwealth.”²⁰ After 35 years of unfortunate rule under Augustus, patriotic sentiments began to awaken and grow. Fears of the reign of another foreign monarch intensified. Concerned about this, Poland’s neighbors entered the “Treaty of the Three Black Eagles” in 1732, aiming to maintain stagnation and anarchy in Poland. In 1733, during the Convocation Sejm, at the suggestion of the patriotically inclined Primate Teodor Potocki, a law was approved excluding foreign candidates from outside Poland from the Polish throne. Simultaneously, it deprived non-Catholics of political rights and removed them from held offices, providing a basis for Russia’s intervention in their defense in the near future. On September 12, 1733, 13,000 noblemen assembled at the electoral Sejm and reelected Stanislaus Leszczyński as the king of Poland. Then, Saxon and Russian troops entered the country. Under the protection of their bayonets, a new, illegal election took place in the Praga district of Warsaw. The son of Augustus II, who, foreseeing the succession after his father, had secretly converted to Catholicism in 1712, as per his father’s instructions, was “chosen” as king. In this way, despite resistance, power in the country was again taken over by the Germanized foreigner, Augustus III. This led to another war from 1733 to 1735, known as the Succession War, in which Russia, Austria, France, Poland, and Saxony were involved. Ruined Poland again became a battleground, subjected to plunder and war-related destruction. The rightful king, Stanislaus Leszczyński, escaped in disguise to France in secrecy while Russian and Saxon forces unleashed havoc in the Commonwealth. The forcefully imposed new king, Augustus III, though not living up to

¹⁹ An interesting account of this final drunken bout and death was given by P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 172-175; cf. A. Zahorski, *August II*, in: *Poczet królów*, pp. 420-421.

²⁰ P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 175-176.

the hopes placed in him, gained widespread recognition and acceptance when a general calm settled in the country from 1736 onward.²¹ Over time, he even gained increasing popularity. Memoirist Jan Chryzostom Pasek expressed an exceptionally positive opinion of him: "Poland never had, and will never have, such a good, splendid, and generous king as Augustus III; and so unfortunate for the Poles that they did not allow him to do anything good for the country, constantly disrupting the Sejm, blaming the innocent king for all the disorder and chaos that ensued."²² This description has a considerable amount of truth because corrupt magnate factions and the bribed gentry sabotaged reform efforts undertaken by reformist factions and the king himself. Out of the fifteen Sejms held during the reign of King Augustus III, only one was successful; all the others were disrupted through the use of the destructive *liberum veto*.²³ The gentry, in turn, viewed the king with sentiment because he never contemplated violating their golden freedom: "He benevolently patronized the prosperity of magnates and gentry, ensuring them the opportunity to enjoy all the pleasures of life and absolving them from any worry about the safety and future of the nation."²⁴ The times of Augustus III marked a period of prolonged peace, only disrupted by the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).²⁵ Many historians, however, accused the king of taking little interest in Poland and gave him the derogatory title "the great parasite of the state." During the thirty years of his rule, he stayed only twenty-four months within the Commonwealth's borders, visiting it only when forced and leaving his favorite Dresden reluctantly.²⁶

The Saxon times marked not only the political decline of the Commonwealth but also the decline of culture and education, a lack of enlightened thought, constant feasting, alcoholism, and backwardness among the

²¹ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, pp. 332-333.

²² Józef Andrzej Gierowski, *August III*, w: *Poczet królów*, s. 433.

²³ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, p. 335.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

²⁵ The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) was a global conflict involving Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia, Sweden, Saxony, and Spain. The battles took place in Europe, North America, and India. Although Poland maintained neutrality, significant damage was inflicted on its territories by passing and stationed foreign armies. Over a million people lost their lives during the war. After the war, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia solidified their positions as major powers. See: Emanuel Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 508-514.

²⁶ A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, p. 215; J. A. Gierowski, *August III*, in: *Poczet królów*, pp. 433, 440.

nobility and the ordinary people. Alcoholism reached monstrous proportions. Adam Zamoyski described this era as follows: “Xenophobia, bigotry, and plain ignorance fused into attitudes that praised anarchy, replacing thinking with revelry.”²⁷ The peasants and the mass of poor serfs and cottagers were hit the most. Foreign armies passing through Polish territory devastated the country, unlawfully imposed heavy levies to feed their soldiers, and forcibly took and conscripted Polish peasants into foreign armies. To avoid this fate, some fled, hiding in the forests and abandoning agriculture, which led to widespread famine and a general shortage of all goods. In addition to serfdom, exploitation, war destruction, and looting, peasants were obligated to purchase a certain amount of alcohol from manor and church taverns.²⁸ The proud advocate for exploited peasants was a Marian, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński. In a memorial addressed to Pope Benedict XIV, he portrayed the difficult situation of the peasants and their exploitation by Church representatives and requested intervention in this matter.²⁹

Augustus III died on October 5, 1763, in Dresden. Despite having eleven children, none succeeded in securing the Polish throne. In 1762, Catherine II ascended the Russian throne, becoming a sophisticated, intelligent, and ruthless ruler. In 1764, she installed her lover Stanislaus August Poniatowski on the Polish throne. In the dispatch to her diplomats in Poland, she wrote: “It is indispensable that we place on the Polish throne a Piast [a Pole] favorable and useful to our interests [...], who would owe his elevation solely to us. In the person of Count Poniatowski, the Lithuanian chamberlain, we find all the necessary conditions to please us. As a result, we have decided to elevate him to the Polish throne.”³⁰ Upon assuming power, the new king, a sincere supporter of systemic reforms, endeavored to carry out the task of repairing the state. However, besieged by Russia, Prussia, and Austria and attacked by internal adversaries “ready to do anything just to get rid of the upstart,” he had minimal leeway.³¹

²⁷ A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, p. 222.

²⁸ E. Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna*, pp. 75-79.

²⁹ Casimir Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii*, in: Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 219, 369-340; Zygmunt Proczek, *Obrońca ludu wiejskiego*, in: *Powołanie i misja. Sługa Boży o. Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755)*, Licheń 2005, pp. 183-195.

³⁰ Jerzy Michalski, *Stanisław August Poniatowski*, in: *Poczet królów*, p. 444.

³¹ A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, p. 228.

After three years of reign, the king faced the threat of dethronement from his own people. He was saved by Empress Catherine, on behalf of whom the all-powerful envoy, Nicholas Repnin, uttered the sacramental words: "The king shall remain on the throne."³² Frederick II, the Prussian king, also did not wish for any reforms in Poland, as he informed the Russian diplomacy: "Let there be absolutely no changes [in Poland], in the constitution and government, it would only be harmful."³³ Poland should be kept in a state of stagnation. In 1767, the king's enemies organized a confederation in Radom, where so-called cardinal rights were approved.³⁴ Under the influence of Russian diplomacy and military threats, in response to the provocative demand for political equality of non-Catholics, the Sejm approved equal political rights for Orthodox and Protestants. These were the most favorable rights for non-Catholics among all European countries. The enforcement of their observance was entrusted to Empress Catherine and Russian troops, which were to be permanently stationed in Poland.³⁵ These privileges were a pretext for interfering in various Polish affairs. Nikita Panin, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, quite openly stated: "The matter of non-Catholics is not a pretext for promoting the Russian Orthodox faith in Poland, but only an instrument for our acquiring with the aid of our co-believers and the Protestants a strong and friendly party with the right to participate in all Polish affairs."³⁶ The members of the Sejm were obligated to sign these laws. As the chronicler wrote, "all signed the act with a trembling hand."³⁷ After a strong protest by some representatives of the Catholic camp, on the night of October 13 to 14, 1767, Repnin ordered the abduction and deportation to Kaluga in Russia of several protesting deputies, including bishops Kajetan Sołtyk and Józef A. Załuski.³⁸ During that time, Bishop

³² P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, p. 319.

³³ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, pp. 352-352.

³⁴ From then on, the political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was to be determined by the cardinal laws, which included free election of the king, *liberum veto*, the right to refuse obedience to the king, the privilege of the nobility to hold offices, own land, and exercise power over the peasantry. See: W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, pp. 353-355; P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 317-325.

³⁵ A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, pp. 227-228.

³⁶ P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, p. 311.

³⁷ W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, p. 354.

³⁸ Władysław Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski nowożytnej*, t. II, Warszawa, 1986, pp. 186-187.

Załoski was the chairman of the Poznań Tribunal for the beatification Process of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. Therefore, the beatification process led by the Marian Fathers had to be temporarily suspended.³⁹ The reforms, especially the equal rights for non-Catholics, led to an unexpected outbreak of opposition. After “ardent prayers and consultations,” a group of nobles formed a confederation in the town of Bar in Podolia on February 29, 1768, to defend the faith and freedom of the country.⁴⁰ In their founding act, they named themselves the “Confederation of Righteous Roman Catholic Christians.” The Bar Confederation initiated a devastating four-year war with Russia (1768-1772). Adding to the tragedy was the fact that Polish royal regiments fought on the side of Russia. This was because King Stanislaus Poniatowski, deposed by the fierce Bar Confederates, joined the fight against them.⁴¹ The neighboring powers cast their greedy eyes on the vast territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Already on February 17, 1772, the first partition agreement between Russia, Prussia, and Austria was signed due to behind-the-scenes negotiations. The Bar Confederates were losing territories, and the ground was slipping from under their feet. Defeated and seeking to escape Russian captivity, the majority crossed the Turkish border. Some of them emigrated to Western Europe. Around five thousand were exiled to Siberia. The Commonwealth lost 30% of its territory and 35% of its population. The small state of Prussia, a Polish fiefdom a short time ago, gained the most by taking over northern Poland’s rich and economically developed territories. Despite the reforms undertaken, the diminished Commonwealth had little chance of defending itself against the greed of its neighboring powers.

Heralds of the Revival

Despite the significant decline of political thought in Poland in the 18th century, even during the Saxon period, some individuals were aware of the existing problems and saw the necessity of reform. New tendencies of the Enlightenment era began to penetrate Polish society.

³⁹ T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, p. 361.

⁴⁰ W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski*, p. 189.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.

This direction advocated for the rational organization of the state and society, economic development, and the elevation of cultural standards. King Stanislaus Poniatowski, aware that Russian and Prussian intervention hindered political reforms, sought to open Polish minds and break free from rigid thinking and behavior patterns. In 1765, he founded the socio-political weekly magazine *Monitor* to achieve this goal. Its first editor was the distinguished Jesuit Fr. Franciszek Bohomolec (1720-1784), who was valued for defending native cultural values and educational activities.⁴² One of the individuals who played a significant role in education and upbringing was Fr. Stanislaus Konarski (1700-1773), a Piarist, scholar, and great patriot. He promoted the work of Father Papczyński, *Prodromus Reginae Artium*⁴³, as a textbook for learning rhetoric and social issues. His most significant achievement was establishing an elite and modern school called *Collegium Nobilium*⁴⁴ in 1740, where many outstanding patriots were educated. *Collegium Nobilium's* task was to inform the young generation of Poles in a sense of civic responsibility for their country so that they would become the nation's elite in the future.⁴⁵ An important achievement of *Collegium Nobilium* was sharing its teaching and educational principles with Jesuit and Piarist schools. *Collegium Nobilium* was a higher education institution, and the studies lasted eight years. The treatise *O skutecznym rad sposobie* (On Effective Method of Governance) by Stanislaus Konarski was a critique of the detrimental *liberum veto*. However, it is important to remember that almost a hundred years earlier, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński was a precursor in this matter.⁴⁶ In his work *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, he strongly opposed the constitutional principle of *liberum veto*, which paralyzed

⁴² Stanisław Bednarski, *Bohomolec Franciszek*, in: PSB, t. 2.

⁴³ Stanisław Konarski, *Ustawy szkolne*, transl. from Latin into Polish by Wanda Germain, Kraków, 1925, pp. 306, 434, 435, 464. Konarski stated that "as long as there is no better textbook for teaching, it is necessary to teach [...] everything concerning the matters of rethoric from *Prodromus*", p. 306.

⁴⁴ Jan Inocenty Buba, *Collegium Nobilium*, in: Adam Matoga [Ed.] *Pijarzy w kulturze dawnej Polski*, Kraków, 1982, pp. 83-103. In the curriculum, the teaching of Latin was limited in favor of Polish and modern languages. Also, classes on geography, history, natural science, economics and science were introduced.

⁴⁵ Ibid; cf. Juliusz Nowak-Dłużewski, *Stanisław Konarski*, Warszawa 1951; Zofia Zielińska, *Walka "Familii" o reformę Rzeczypospolitej 1743-1752*, Warszawa, 1983.

⁴⁶ See: S. Papczyński, *Zwiastun Królowej Sztuki*, in: *Pisma zebrane*, pp. 101-589, *passim*.

the legislative institution of the Sejm and hindered any reforms. He considered it unworthy and warned: "Who can label our way of life as 'freedom' when we live more recklessly than barbarians? What could be said when one dishonest citizen, hostile to the homeland, may oppose the introduction of even the most necessary law by crying out 'I forbid'? Oh, Poland [...] you are oppressed by some treacherous scoundrel by use of just one word [...]; the world will refute that you are free but will say that you are a servant or a harlot, which is even more shameful."⁴⁷ Among the Enlightenment figures striving for political and social reforms, we must also mention the Załuski brothers, who were bishops: Andrzej Stanisław Załuski, the Grand Chancellor of the Crown, and Józef Andrzej Załuski, the Bishop of Kyiv. Both of them laid the foundations for the development of modern science. They established the renowned Załuski Library in Warsaw, where they organized the Scientific Society.⁴⁸ In 1795, the Załuski Library had over 500,000 volumes and tens of thousands of manuscripts. After the Kościuszko Uprising, on the orders of Catherine II, the collections were plundered by the Russians (1794-1795) and taken to St. Petersburg, where they were used to establish the renowned Imperial Library.⁴⁹

King Stanislaus Poniatowski contributed to establishing the highly beneficial School of Chivalry, founded in Warsaw in 1765. He aimed to educate young nobility who would help rebuild the homeland in the future and contribute to its development. *The School of Chivalry* was a modern educational institution based on English models. The School emphasized military engineering, legal subjects, civic education, and foreign languages. Its first commandant, Prince Adam Casimir Czartoryski, believed that a school cadet should have a noble soul, a patriotic love for the homeland, and a deep reverence and love for God.⁵⁰ *The School of Chivalry* educated and nurtured many outstanding individuals for the benefit of the motherland.⁵¹ The most significant achievement of King Stanislaus Poniatowski was the establishment of the Commission

⁴⁷ J. Kosmowski, *Człowiek wrażliwości społecznej*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁸ P. Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła*, c. 505-506; A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, p. 224.

⁴⁹ A. Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, p. 224.

⁵⁰ Kamilla Mrozowska, *Szkoła Rycerska Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego 1765-1794*, Wrocław, 1961.

⁵¹ Ibid.

of National Education (1773-1794). It was the first ministry of education in Europe. With the approval of the Sejm, the Commission took over the assets of the Jesuit Order that had been dissolved by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. The Commission of National Education's mission was to provide widespread and modern education to the extent possible. For this purpose, a network of parish schools, which were accessible to every student, was established. In response to the appeal of the Commission, the Marian Order also opened elementary schools at their monasteries.⁵² The Commission had broad powers. It developed the curriculum and textbooks and appointed inspectors to oversee the work of teachers.⁵³ It also carried out a comprehensive reform of the Jagiellonian and Vilnius Universities, giving them international stature.

Fr. Hugo Kołłątaj, a writer, educator, and statesman, made immense contributions to educational reform and political and cultural activities. A group of scholars, politicians, and artists revolved around him, continuing the difficult work of reforms. Thanks to these enlightened individuals, in 1776, the Sejm entrusted Andrzej Zamoyski with preparing a new legal code for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Sejm abolished torture and the death penalty in witchcraft trials, addressed some abuses and bad laws from the Partition Sejm (1773-1775) and paved the way for further reforms.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, despite such modest state reforms, the external powers exerted their *veto* power against other repairs to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Despite this, an extraordinary revival occurred in Poland's public and economic life. The process of economic regeneration gained momentum thanks to the initiative and activities of many enlightened activists.

The reign of King Stanislaus also witnessed an intense development of commercial and economic activities, as well as the enrichment of magnates and nobility who eagerly participated in various initiatives to stimulate the economy. Here are a few examples: the Royal Mint was established in Warsaw (1764-1768). Prince Michał Ogiński initiated the

⁵² J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 223-233; Teodor Wierzbowski, *Szkoły parafialne w Polsce i na Litwie za czasów KEN (1773-1794)*, Kraków, 1921, pp. 175, 181, 216, 221.

⁵³ Tadeusz Mizia, *Szkolnictwo parafialne w czasach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Wrocław, 1964.

⁵⁴ P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 363, 369.

construction of a canal connecting the Neman River with the Dnieper River, ultimately linking the Baltic Sea with the Black Sea. In 1775, the king initiated the construction of a canal connecting the Bug River with the Prypiat River. This opened up a pathway to new markets. It is also worth mentioning the impressive manufactories of Antoni Tyzenhauz, the Czartoryski porcelain factory in Korchev, the bell foundry in Warsaw, ironworks and forges in Końskie, a weapons factory in Kozienice, copper and salt mines, and many others. These were significant industrial enterprises that contributed to the country's economic development during that time.⁵⁵ The Commonwealth was recovering, modernizing, and emerging from the malaise of the Saxon times. It was reforming degenerate institutions and developing at an accelerated pace. Unfortunately, this raised great concerns for Russia and Prussia.

The Religious Situation

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a multiethnic state during the Enlightenment, but it gradually became less multiconfessional. In the 18th century, the idea of peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths, which had been strong in the previous period, slowly but systematically eroded. The growing lack of tolerance in Polish society was primarily a result of an increasing sense of threat from neighboring powers representing different religions who, for various reasons not necessarily favorable to the Polish cause, viewed Polish Catholicism with growing hostility. Sweden and Prussia represented a militant form of Protestantism, which often became a weapon against Poland. Orthodox Russia was a constant threat, while from the southeast, the Polish Commonwealth bordered the Muslim Ottoman Empire, a culture foreign to Catholicism. In 1658, under the pretext of aiding the Swedish invader, the Polish Brethren (*Bracia Polscy*) were expelled from Poland by legislative acts of the Sejm.⁵⁶ In 1717, the Sejm banned the construction of Protestant prayer houses in royal cities. Then, in 1733, non-Catholic senators and deputies were excluded from participating in Sejm sessions, tribunals, and all

⁵⁵ W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski*, t. II. pp. 220-221; Zamoyski, *Własną drogą*, pp. 238-241.

⁵⁶ See: Konrad Górski, *Bracia polscy, arianie, antytrynitarze, unitarianie, socynianie*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 2, col. 1001-1005.

governmental offices.⁵⁷ The growing lack of tolerance led non-Catholics to seek support from non-Catholic powers, especially Russia and Prussia. In Poland during this period, the position and authority of the Catholic Church were strengthened. The awareness that our enemies, who inflicted so many defeats and harm upon Poland, belonged to different faiths reinforced the society's sense of national distinctiveness. It elevated the significance of the Catholic religion.⁵⁸ Increasingly, the notions of "Catholic equals Polish," "Protestant equals German or Swedish," and "Orthodox equals Russian" became commonly accepted. This conviction gained particular strength due to the immense destruction and devastation during the Great Northern War (1700-1721) waged by Russia, Prussia, and Sweden. These countries deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed Polish churches and parishes, leaving impoverished priests without means of subsistence and closing seminaries. The dramatic and sad state of the Church in the Commonwealth is vividly conveyed in the report sent to Rome in 1712 by Bishop Bartłomiej Tarło of Poznań: "Due to the lack of clergy, the state of my diocese is unfortunate, and the administration of the diocese is not only difficult but practically impossible. Numerous priests died during the plague that lasted for four years. [...] I have ordained only six or seven priests within two years of receiving episcopal consecration. This situation prevails not only in my diocese but throughout Poland. I have heard from trustworthy people that over 140 parishes in the Gniezno Diocese remain unoccupied. In the Samogitia Diocese in Lithuania, only five priests remain in the diocese. There is also no shortage of priests who, due to lack of education or corrupt behavior, should not be tolerated, but the bishops cannot remove them because there is no one to replace them. This shortage of clergy is primarily caused by the fact that, due to the plague that lasted for almost four years in Poland, all schools were closed, and the youth were directed to the military or noble courts. Furthermore, benefices were completely destroyed, and parishes were ruined. Moreover, even the working priests are burdened with taxes beyond their means."⁵⁹ There was a similar

⁵⁷ Wawrzyniec Miller, *Trudne stulecie (1648-1750)*, in: Jerzy Kłoczowski [Ed.], *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce. Zarys przemian 966-1945*, Lublin, 1980, pp. 147-148.

⁵⁸ Cf. Janusz Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka w Polsce*, Warszawa, 1978, pp. 96-102.

⁵⁹ ASV-S.C. del Concilio, Relationes ad Limina Posnaniensis (1612-1819), N 6. Bartholomaeus

situation in the Płock diocese, where around fifty churches were deprived of priests and left abandoned after the Great Northern War. It is worth mentioning that the Marian Order, despite its eremitic character at that time, responded to this difficult situation of the Church by sending three religious on a mission to the Samogitian Diocese.⁶⁰

The Northern War significantly reduced the number of clergy, but it also led to a stronger bond between the faithful and the Church, as they sought support and care within it. According to Stanisław Mackiewicz, "in the 18th century, it is noticeable that the majority of Poles will easily sacrifice an unpopular king, allow the dissolution of the Sejm, and tolerate any harm to the state organization, but they will not yield in one, single matter, which is religious affairs."⁶¹ In the first half of the 18th century, secular and monastic clergy were generally poorly educated due to the widespread difficult financial situation following the war's destruction, the lack of an adequate number of seminaries, and a shortage of priests. This forced bishops to ordain students who often had only completed a year of studies in moral theology. The official requirement was a two-year stay in the seminary, but many exceptions were made to this rule. Only a few clerics stayed in the seminary for an entire year, with the majority staying for 3 to 6 months.⁶² After their ordination, they would take up pastoral work and continue their theological studies. For example, in the Lithuanian province of the Bernardines, out of 139 students studying theology, 57 were already ordained priests.⁶³ The intensive development of religious orders had a significant impact on pastoral work. In the 17th century alone, eleven new orders settled in Poland (Carmelites, Piarists, Missionaries, Sisters of the Visitation, Sisters of the Presentation of the

Tarło (1712); per canonicum Gaspar Rugia; quoted after: Bolesław Jakimowicz, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży Casimir Wyszyński*, in: Joachim R. Bar [Ed.], *Polscy święci*, t. 9, Warszawa, 1986, pp. 131-132.

⁶⁰ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 271-272, Chapter of 1715.

⁶¹ P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, p. 378.

⁶² Bolesław Kumor, *Wyższe szkolnictwo kościelne. Seminaria duchowne*, in: Bolesław Kumor, Zdzisław Obertyński [Ed.], *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, t. I, Part 2, Poznań — Warszawa, 1974, pp. 454-455.

⁶³ Jerzy Flaga, *Kształt formacji intelektualnej oraz przejawy działalności duszpasterskiej zakonów w Rzeczypospolitej w XVII i XVIII*, in: *Patrimonium marianorum. Ojciec Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755) w kontekście swej epoki*, Warszawa - Lublin, 2003, p. 47. It is worth noting that the Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński took his religious vows on March 19, 1725, and was ordained a priest on April 29, 1726, after just one year of studying moral theology.

Blessed Virgin Mary, Theatines, Oratorians, Capuchins, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Pauline Fathers, Trinitarians), and a twelfth order, a Polish one, the Marian Order, was established.⁶⁴ No new religious order appeared for the next hundred years, and it was only in 1787 that the Redemptorists, also known as the Benonites,⁶⁵ settled in Warsaw. The weaknesses of Polish society, with the powerful nobility at the forefront, were concentrated like in a lens within the religious orders. The nobility brought greed, mental stagnation, the decline of monastic discipline, a social lifestyle, and highly valued hospitality to the orders.⁶⁶ In the second half of the 18th century, the religious orders, under attack from “enlightened Catholics,” undertook challenging and significant reforms to avoid giving reasons for criticism. Despite these efforts, around 1760, projects were developed that envisaged the partial liquidation of both monasteries and orders and the limitation of the number of religious.⁶⁷ The leading proponents of these reforms were prominent bishops: Primate Gabriel Podoski (1719-1777),⁶⁸ known for his Russophile views, as well as bishops Ignacy Massalski (1729-1794) and Andrzej Młodziejewski (1717-1780). King Stanislaus Poniatowski also believed that most religious orders were useless and harmful to society.⁶⁹ A significant portion of the magnates shared a similar opinion.

During the reign of King Stanislaus August in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, strong tendencies emerged to weaken the relationship between the Polish Church and Rome. These tendencies originated from political and ecclesiastical spheres and were supported by anti-clerical individuals and Freemasonry. Their goal was to achieve far-reaching autonomy for the Church in Poland, including the position of the

⁶⁴ Adam Chruszczewski, *Zestawienie chronologiczne*, w: *Zarys dziejów Kościoła*, pp. 422-424.

⁶⁵ Stanisław Litak, *Kościół w Polsce w okresie Oświecenia do 1795 roku*, in: *Historia Kościoła*, L. J. Rogier, R. Aubert, M. D. Knowles [Ed.], t. 4, 1715-1848, pp. 421-423; W. Miller, *Trudne stulecie 1648-1750*, in: Jerzy Kłoczowski [Ed.], *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, pp. 162-165.

⁶⁶ J. Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka*, s. 116.

⁶⁷ Jan Wysocki, *Dzieje Kościoła w Rzeczypospolitej w okresie stanisławowskim*, in: Bolesław Kumor, Zdzisław Obertyński [Ed.], *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, t. 2, Part 1, Poznań — Warszawa, 1079, pp. 73-80.

⁶⁸ Emanuel Rostworowski, *Podoski Gabriel Jan h. Junosza (1719-1777)*, PSB, t. 27, Wrocław — Warszawa — Kraków — Gdańsk — Łódź, 1983, pp. 149-161.

⁶⁹ Jan Śrutwa, *Oświecenie w Polsce i jego wpływ na życie kościelne*, in: *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, t. 2, Part 1, Poznań—Warszawa 1979, p. 35.

Primate and bishops. The king and the ruling elites supported this. The most radical proponent of these ideas was Primate Gabriel Podoski, who even sought complete rupture with Rome but was considered “a uniquely contemptible character and a Russian agent.”⁷⁰ Several other bishops supported Podoski’s demands because, although they distinguished themselves as activists and reformers, some were on the Russian payroll.⁷¹ Amidst the anti-Roman sentiment, the bishops also demanded that the religious orders be subjected to their authority.⁷² However, the orders, supported by the papal nuncio and enjoying a solid position among the nobility and the ordinary people, opposed the proposed reforms. Due to widespread resistance from many bishops, the nobility, and the papal nuncio, the prepared laws were withdrawn. The bishops of the Enlightenment, although better educated than their predecessors and showing more concern for pastoral matters and the education of the clergy, were still distant from the broad masses of the population due to their immense wealth and princely lifestyles. Three Polish bishops even held princely titles,⁷³ further highlighting the divide between them and the common people.

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 18th century, until the time of the First Partition in 1772, there was an intensive growth in the number of religious orders. In 1700, twenty-seven male religious orders with approximately ten thousand members were recorded. However, by 1772, the number of orders remained the same, but the number of members had increased to around fourteen and a half thousand, including nearly twelve thousand priests.⁷⁴ Since most monasteries were located within the Crown, while there were fewer in the eastern

⁷⁰ Jan Skarbek, *Kościół katolicki w dobie “Oświecenia”*, in: *Zarys dziejów Kościoła*, pp. 152–153. See the Jasienica’s opinion of Podoski: an “utter scoundrel,” “atheist and blackguard,” in: *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 317, 319; cf. P. Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła*, c. 354: “Podoski [...] led a scandalous lifestyle; a faithful ally of Russia, [...] he showed no interest in Church life, supported non-Catholics and strove for the [Polish] Church independence from the Holy See; he was a man of the Masonic Lodge.”

⁷¹ For example, two bishops known as Russophiles, Ignacy J. Massalski and Józef K. Kossakowski, were hanged by the revolutionary crowd in Warsaw during the Kościuszko Uprising for “betraying the country.” See P. Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła*, c. 217, 285.

⁷² J. Kłoczowski, *Dzieje polskiego chrześcijaństwa*, t. 1, Paryż 1987, p. 233.

⁷³ S. Litak, *Kościół w Polsce*, pp. 427–428.

⁷⁴ J. Kłoczowski, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła*, pp. 120–124.

territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the main expansion of the religious orders was directed towards the Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands. During 1750-1780, the Marian Order opened eight monasteries in that region.⁷⁵ During this period, the religious orders had two important tasks: pastoral work and education, which included the upbringing and education of secular youth and those preparing for priesthood. In the field of priestly formation, the missionaries played a significant role. In 1772, out of the thirty-four seminaries, eighteen were run by missionaries. Jesuits and the Apostolic Union of Secular Priests (known in Poland as Bartolomici)⁷⁶ ran several seminaries. Since the number of diocesan clergy was not increasing, the religious orders became involved in parish ministry. The religious worked as parish priests, confessors, chaplains, parish administrators, preachers, retreat directors, teachers, and more. The religious orders also made significant efforts to catechize the broadest possible classes of the population, in which the Marian Order actively participated. A characteristic feature of the religious practices of that time was the emphasis on caring for the sick and homeless by establishing hospitals near the monasteries. The Marian Order also contributed to this noble cause by opening infirmaries for the ill and abandoned at all of their monasteries.⁷⁷

In the 18th century, the religious orders made a significant effort in secondary education, crowned with great success. The Jesuits, in particular, took the lead in this area, significantly increasing the number of colleges from forty-seven in 1700 to sixty-six in 1772. They were closely followed by the Piarists, who had seventeen colleges in 1700 and twenty-seven in 1772. Both orders played a crucial role in providing quality education at the secondary level.⁷⁸ The Basilians, Theatines, and The Apostolic Union of Secular Priests also opened their colleges. In 1772, approximately thirty thousand students were studying in these colleges.⁷⁹ The influence of Piarist schools was particularly significant in society. Thanks to the reforms introduced by Stanislaus Konarski, these

⁷⁵ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 30-35.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-223.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, cf. Jan Koceniak, *Zakony*, in: *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, t. 1, Part 2, Poznań– Warszawa 1979, pp. 442-443.

⁷⁹ J. Kłoczowski, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła*, p. 132.

schools became centers of quality education and patriotic upbringing. They played a crucial role in promoting knowledge and fostering a sense of patriotism. Władysław Konopczyński described one of the ceremonies that took place at the Piarist school in Warsaw: “A numerous group of magnates, who had turned the state into a tavern for foreign armies through their quarrels, took their seats in the audience of the Collegium Nobilium. [...] The young students spoke [...] about trade, cities, the monarch, the criminal practice of disrupting the Sejm, and the harsh and inhumane serfdom of peasants. [...] The somber noble brethren listened to these fresh voices, as did the gentlemen, ladies, and families.”⁸⁰ The Jesuits, who competed with the Piarists, also carried out significant reforms in their colleges, from which soon emerged luminaries such as Franciszek Bohomolec (1720-1784), Marcin Poczubutt (1728-1810), Adam Naruszewicz (1733-1796), and many others.⁸¹ A new era was unfolding. It is worth noting that the Church, for the most part, was not just a passive witness to these changes. The clergy, religious orders, and the episcopate actively engaged in the revival of the Homeland and the Church.

Two Factions within the Marian Order; the Rift and Origin of the “Rostkopian Dispersion”

After the death of Fr. Papczyński, the leadership of the Congregation rested in the hands of one man, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, for seventeen years (1702-1728), with two short interruptions when Fr. Cyprian of St. Stanislaus (from February 8 to March 10, 1706) and Fr. Constantine of St. Casimir (from February 18 to October 13, 1710) temporarily managed the Order. Both of them died with a reputation for holiness.⁸² The rule of Joachim Kozłowski, as previously mentioned, was despotic and aimed at diminishing the role of the Founder. During this time, Marian students’ spiritual and intellectual formation was neglected. While the opinion of Wacław Makoś about Joachim Kozłowski “leading the Order

⁸⁰ P. Jasienica, *Czas agonii*, pp. 250-251.

⁸¹ Maciej Janowski, *Narodziny inteligencji 1750-1831*, Warszawa 2008, passim.

⁸² LCVA, Tabula, biographies.

to the edge of the abyss” may seem too radical and exaggerated,⁸³ the Order was still torn apart by two factions.⁸⁴ Some Marians, though not all, rebelled against the dominance of the Reformates and the policies of Fr. Kozłowski. At the Chapter held on September 23, 1715, Fr. Matthew Krajewski was elected as the superior general in the hope that he would oppose Kozłowski’s pro-reform actions. It was a vital Chapter preceding the crisis that soon followed, and it is worth examining its course.

On August 29, 1715, by a circular letter, the General Vicar, Father Mansueto Leporini, announced the convocation of the Chapter for September 23 of the same year. On September 9, he arrived at the monastery in the Forest with his secretary, Brother Bonaventure. He began discussions and visitation of the monastery, after which he himself prepared the Chapter decrees.⁸⁵ There were only seven decrees, which were not as strict as in previous Chapters. They dealt with disciplinary and ascetic matters. The anti-Franciscan opposition seemed to come to the fore, and Leporini did not want to provoke further tensions. On September 23, the General Chapter gathered eleven delegates with voting rights. Fr. Paul of Purification received two votes, while Fr. Matthew of St. Casimir Krajewski received votes from nine delegates. This was a sign of the changing direction of the religious order, departing from the path followed by Fr. Kozłowski and the Reformates.

Fr. Matthew Krajewski was a young and energetic Marian around whom a group of supporters for reforms gathered. They emphasized the need for dynamic development of the Order and sought opportunities for broader apostolic work. They referred to the title of the Marians as “Marians [...] bringing assistance to pastors.” They criticized their opponents, accusing them of “only engaging in meditation and spending time in the choir,” while the people needed priests for pastoral ministry.”⁸⁶ As Fr. Kozłowski still held a strong position during this time, the reform advocates sought support from secular and ecclesiastical authorities to achieve their goals. The scale tipped in favor of the reform advocates only when Matthew Krajewski became the superior general, despite

⁸³ W. Makoś, *O. Stanisław*, p. 210.

⁸⁴ ABViL, F4-A 166, 1733 (single documents), fasc. 7.

⁸⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, 190. Ordinances of the Chapter of 1715.

⁸⁶ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny (1777 ?).

facing strong opposition from a group of Marians who supported the traditional way of life and observance.

The Chapter lasted only one day, at least according to the minutes.⁸⁷ On the same day, the relocation of the Marians to their respective monasteries took place. Among the mere twenty-five of them in 1715, there were fourteen priests, six brothers, two clerics, and three novices. The first bold and innovative decision made by Fr. Krajewski on the day of the Chapter was to send three Marians, two priests, and one brother on a mission to the Samogitian Diocese in Lithuania,⁸⁸ which suffered a severe shortage of priests at the time. This decision demonstrates the new general's strong independence in action, as it contradicted the 1712 Chapter's decision, which Fr. Klein, a Reformat, influenced. The decision prohibited engaging in pastoral work in parishes. In the view of some Marians, the eremitic-contemplative form of the Order, which the Marians represented at that time, was also unsuitable. The superior general had to demonstrate great strength of will to persuade opponents to accept new forms of work and observance within the Order.

Due to a terrible epidemic in 1709-1710 and the prolonged wars, Poland had a severe shortage of priests. As a result, Bishop Adam Rostkowski of Lutsk, also the Provost of St. John's Collegiate Church in Warsaw, yielded to the efforts of the Marian reformers. In 1717, he allowed willing Marians to engage in parish pastoral work. George Navikevicius suggests that it may not have just been permission, but in the case of some religious, even an order.⁸⁹ Approximately half of the twenty-five Marians relocated to parish positions during that time. Between 1717 and 1722, amid the disputes and tensions, an unexplained event, still unresolved today and known in the Marian historiography as the "Rostkopian dispersion"⁹⁰ after Bishop Rostkowski's name, occurred. In the Marian sources, no documents have been preserved that would reveal the reasons behind the Rostkopian dispersion, the circumstances surrounding it, the status of the Marians leaving the monasteries, when it occurred, and how long it

⁸⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 270-272.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 272. The following were selected to go to Lithuania: Father Fulgentius of Jesus, Father Ignacio of St. Martin and Br. Francis of St. Valentine.

⁸⁹ Navikevicius, p. 226.

⁹⁰ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 18, 40-41; Navikevicius, pp. 222-226; Wyszynski, *Stróż*, pp. 132-134; S. Sydry, *Zgromadzenie*, pp. 35-36; W. Makoś, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 219-221.

lasted. There is also no surviving decree from Bishop Rostkowski on this matter. According to Wojciech Magnuszewski,⁹¹ a memoirist and friend of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, the “dispersion” lasted for three years. However, Fr. Dionysius Kisieliński, a Marian archivist at that time, maintains that it lasted for six years.⁹²

The “Rostkopian dispersion” is an incredibly difficult and controversial moment in the history of the Marian Order, regarded by some as an attack and an attempt to destroy it. Stefan Sydry likened the events that unfolded during that time to the biblical “floodwaters,” going so far as to claim that Bishop Rostkowski dissolved the Congregation.⁹³ Today, many Marians share this belief. However, it is based on one source, recorded by Fr. Wyszyński, which contains many doubts and serious accusations that are not fully documented.⁹⁴ A similar account can be found in the writings of Fr. Teixeira, but he obtained the information from Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.⁹⁵ Fr. Wyszyński, on the other hand, states that the Superior General, Matthew Krajewski, Joseph Wyszyński, and several other rebellious Marians accused their fellow brethren before bishops and the nuncio. They caused division within the monasteries and sought the dissolution of the Order. According to his account, the apostolic nuncio sent a visitator to the Marians in 1716 or 1717 due to these reports. However, instead of a Reformat, Bishop Rostkowski was appointed the visitator. He closed the novitiate, dispersed the Marians to parishes, and left only “eight elderly men” in the monasteries. The main culprit of this division, according to Fr. Wyszyński’s opinion, was Fr. Matthew Krajewski, to whom he attributed grave accusations, including:

1. He felt a reluctance towards his vocation.
2. He was consumed by the desire to obtain secular prelatures.

⁹¹ Wojciech Magnuszewski was born in 1699 in Magnuszew near Góra Kalwaria. He studied at the Piarist school in Góra alongside Casimir Wyszyński. He was a friend and benefactor of the Marians and visited them frequently in the Cenacle. He had a deep knowledge of the history of the Marians, especially the life and work of Fr. Wyszyński. Magnuszewski also wrote his biography.

⁹² Navikevicius, p. 222.

⁹³ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 268. *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa o Słudze Bożym o. Casimiru Wyszyńskim*, Warszawa - Stockbridge 2005, pp. 31-32,

⁹⁴ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 132-134. Cf. Father Matthew Krajewski’s obituary of March 8, 1750, written by Father Wyszyński, in: *Album zmarłych, 1700-1997*, Warszawa 1997.

⁹⁵ Teixeira, nn. 223- 232.

ADDITAMENTI do KRONIK BRACI MNIEYSZYCH S. FRANCISZKA

álbo
GENEALOGIA
*Reformy do Krolestwa Polskiego zá konsen-
sem Stolicy Apostolskiej wprowadzoney,
y Erekcya dwóch Prowincyi Málo-y
Wielkopolskiej, utwierdzoney*

WYWIEDZIONA

Przez
X. ALEXEGO KORALEWICZA
Zákonu O. S. FRANCISZKA Re-
formátá,
Prowincyi Wielkopolskiej Oycá, y S. Theologij Lek torá.
y
Do druku z pozwoleniem Stárszych
P O D A N A.

Roku Páńskiego 1722.



w W A R S Z A W I E

w Drukárni I. K. M. WW: OO: Scholarum Piarum.

3. He attempted to ruin and destroy the Congregation.
4. He was arrogant and rebellious, inciting the younger members to conspire with him.
5. They went to the Bishop of Poznań and the nuncio, where they falsely accused their fellow brethren.
6. They argued that they would bear better fruit for the Church if given parish positions rather than remaining together in the monasteries and participating in the choir.
7. After removing his habit and abandoning his Marian calling, Krajewski obtained a very wealthy and prestigious benefice, but he wanted to acquire even more.
8. Only eight older men unwilling to abandon their vocations remained in the monasteries.
9. He was satisfied with himself for bringing the Marian Order to ruin.⁹⁶

The severe, incomprehensible, or even unbelievable accusations made by Fr. Wyszyński, a pious and exemplary religious, raise many doubts. However, one thing is sure: Fr. Wyszyński did not lie or falsely accuse anyone. The text was written approximately thirty-five years after the events. The first source of information about them was Joachim Kozłowski, whom Fr. Wyszyński met in Rome in 1723. Fr. Kozłowski accused Fr. Matthew Krajewski and Fr. Joseph Wyszyński, the biological brother of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, of bringing the Order to ruin. Influenced by these accusations, Casimir Wyszyński undertook the spiritual work of compensation for his “prodigal brother” and joined the Marian Order. He was a fervent devotee of Fr. Papczyński, deeply convinced of his holiness. He urged his brethren to emulate his virtues and respect his legacy and spirituality.

Meanwhile, Fr. Kozłowski, who “believed that he had achieved more than the Founder, fell prey to conceit, and — wanting to be regarded as the founder and patriarch, as it were — tried to conceal the virtues and holiness of the Founder [...]. And he gave credit to himself for everything.”⁹⁷ His machinations were diverted by Fr. Matthew Krajewski,

⁹⁶ See: *Rozproszenie rostkowskie*, in: Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 107, 110; *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 53-54.

⁹⁷ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 135-136.

who disagreed with Kozłowski's actions and resisted the interference of the Franciscans in the life of the Marian Order. Also, he supported the broad-range apostolate, in line with the vision of the Founder. An even more significant obstacle to Joachim Kozłowski's actions was Casimir Wyszyński, who, even as a candidate for the Order, confronted him about his selfishness in eating and indulgences. On their journey from Rome to Poland, Kazimierz reproached him: "He [Kozłowski] did not provide [his confrère] with proper meals for which I often rebuked him, saying 'You, Father, do not have charity, without which our Order cannot survive.'"⁹⁸ He did this many times, as he noted: "He insisted firmly that the Constitutions prescribed by the Venerable Founder be observed to the letter. He increasingly asked the elderly Father Superior [Kozłowski] and urged him to be more vigilant in upholding the statutes of their Founder."⁹⁹ Due to these remarks, Fr. Kozłowski harbored a dislike towards Casimir Wyszyński, creating difficulties for him in being admitted to the religious profession and hindering his studies. He appointed him as the master of novices but "obstructed [...] their education" and persecuted him in various ways.¹⁰⁰

All these mentions, written thirty to forty years after the "dispersion," highlight the various options and conflicts over the primacy of charism and observance within the Order. There is no room here for a detailed analysis of these antagonisms and discrepancies. It is known that there were three groups with different perceptions of the overall development vision of the Order. Joachim Kozłowski and his followers constituted one group, while the apostolic group of reformers led by Fr. Krajewski formed another. The monastery in the Forest played a separate role in this conflict, as it retained the character of a hermitage. These factions failed to reach an agreement, leading some to seek the assistance of ecclesiastical authorities. This resulted in Bishop Rosłowski's intervention. Despite the lack of documents on this matter, we can question the severe accusations made by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński against Fr. Matthew Krajewski and Fr. Joseph Wyszyński. According

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 63. *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 55. Fischer reported that Kozłowski secretly managed to eat better and indulge himself in various ways.

⁹⁹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 163-164; *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, 56-57.

to Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, as mentioned earlier, Bishop Rostkowski, in response to reports from several brethren, closed the novitiate and dispersed the fathers to parishes, leaving only eight elderly religious in the monasteries. Meanwhile, Fr. Krajewski allegedly abandoned the Order and took a lucrative prebend. However, in light of other documents, these accusations appear unbelievable. On May 11, 1719, a cleric, Br. Peter of the Friars Minor approached the Marian Fathers and requested admission into the Order. In the presence of Bishop Rostkowski, the Marian delegates, led by Superior General Matthew Krajewski, gathered to resolve doubts regarding the candidate. The issue of opening the novitiate, which, according to Fr. Wyszyński, was already closed, was not discussed, nor was the question of who would be the master, as everything indicates that both the novitiate and the position of novice master were functioning. Otherwise, they would not have accepted a novice; if they did, they would have considered appointing a master. The Chapter decided to admit the cleric Peter and set conditions for him “to complete the novitiate in [illegible word] months, not under some strict regulations, but according to the superior’s judgment. Let him take the last seat and do various jobs [humble jobs?]. To which the Cleric Peter agreed.”¹⁰¹

The fate of Cleric Peter is unknown, but from the description of this event, we can infer that there was a novitiate in existence at that time, to which a new candidate was admitted. Furthermore, Fr. Matthew Krajewski is present, and he not only does not rejoice in the fact that, as Casimir Wyszyński wrote, “the Order is being led to ruin,” but he also cares about the future of the Order and its development. From the above document, we can draw another conclusion: Fr. Matthew Krajewski and Bishop Rostkowski acted together and in agreement against the interference of the Reformates. The anti-Franciscan opposition became evident as early as the Chapter in 1715. It is worth noting that neither at the mentioned meeting in 1719 nor in the Marian formation were any Reformates present. However, Bishop Rostkowski participated in it, fulfilling the role of vicar and visitator. According to the requirements of Marian legislation, when requesting the appointment of a vicar from the

¹⁰¹ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 273. Actum in Conventu Corabieviensis die 11 Maii 1719 in praesentia Ill. Et Reverend Adami Rostkowski Episc.

Nunciature, the Marian superior general could suggest a candidate for that position. In the 18th-century Chapters, one of the Reformates held this office. Another clear indication of the new faction was the absence of Fr. Joachim Kozłowski from the Chapters in 1719 and 1720. The version of “dispersion” presented by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński is also contradicted by the Chapter held in the Forest on August 23, 1720, presided over by Fr. Matthew Krajewski. This Chapter considered the request of Fr. Gabriel, “who had been with the Marian Fathers for almost twenty years and then joined the Conventual Franciscans in Kraków. He later returned to the Marian Fathers, wearing the Marian habit [...], and requested admission [...] and awaits a decision.”¹⁰² After a heated discussion and receiving permission from the apostolic vicar, Bishop Rostkowski, to make their own independent decision, the Marian Fathers *capitulariter Congregati* accepted the candidate into the religious community after setting several conditions for him. Fr. Gabriel agreed to fulfill the requirements presented to him.¹⁰³ It seems logical that if the Order were in a state of “disarray and ruin,” Fr. Gabriel would not have transitioned from the Franciscans to the Marian Fathers. Instead, it is more likely that new currents emerged within the Order: the possibility of pastoral work, a departure from strict eremitism, and an attempt to lead the Order in a way that remained faithful to the spirit of Fr. Papczyński. Even in these challenging times for the Marian Fathers, this proposition was attractive to some candidates.

The claim made by Fr. Wyszyński that “eight religious (elderly man) who did not want to renounce their vocation remained in the four monasteries” is also not credible. The Chapter of 1719 specifically names five Marians, but they were only the authorized members allowed to participate in the Chapter: the superior general, the Order’s procurator, and three superiors. The Chapter of 1720 mentions the names of four Marian superiors and the *aliorum capitulariter Congregatorum Fratrum*.¹⁰⁴ It is true that during the so-called “dispersion,” approximately five monks were residing in the monastery in the Korabiew Forest. Therefore, it

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 273-274.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

can be assumed that at least thirteen Marian Fathers remained in the monasteries, with the majority of them under the age of forty.¹⁰⁵

Persons Responsible for the “Rostkovian Dispersion”

Father Joachim of St. Ann Kozłowski

Father Joachim is a controversial figure who has received extreme opinions and assessments. For some, he was a providential and deserving person who “laid lasting foundations for building the future of the Order.”¹⁰⁶ For others, he was a traitor who, through his actions, destroyed the Marian Order and subjected the Marian Fathers to the authority of the Reformates and their jurisdiction.¹⁰⁷ Undoubtedly, through his actions and activities, he undermined the legacy and merits of Fr. Papczyński and tarnished his honor. Fr. Wyszynski admonished him, saying, “[You], the most beloved Father, are not the legislator and the first Marian, but the Venerable Father Stanislaus Papczyński, who undoubtedly has been counted among the saints in heaven. This is due to his life, performed miracles, and prophecies.”¹⁰⁸ Wojciech Magnuszewski also mentioned the attribution of the title of the founder to Kozłowski, stating, “I know that in this congregation [Marian Fathers], some attributed the title of the founder to that Father [Kozłowski], while others advocated for the Venerable Servant of God Father Stanislaus Papczyński as the Founder. This matter was first brought to the Holy Nunciature and later to Rome.”¹⁰⁹ Due to the limited and often controversial documentation that has been preserved, it isn’t easy to assess the unconventional figure that Fr. Joachim Kozłowski was. He was born in 1658 and was one of the early Marians. It is unknown when he joined the Congregation, but received priestly ordination in 1691. In

¹⁰⁵ Data were obtained by analyzing the following: *Dokumenty mariańskie*, passim; *Album zmarłych*, *Prot. Ord.*

¹⁰⁶ B. Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja i rozwój zakonu*, p. 41; see: T. Rogalewski, *Stanisław Papczyński*, pp. 292-296; Navikevicius, pp. 202-204, 207-208, 209-214.

¹⁰⁷ *Doc. Vilnen.*, F4-A 166, (single documents), fasc. 7: *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 1; Teixeira, n. 233-234.

¹⁰⁸ *Świadectwo Wojciecha Magnuszewskiego o przyjacielu*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 45.

documents from 1690, he is already mentioned as a subdeacon appointed by Fr. Papczyński as an “instructor” and directed to undergo formation in the Korabiew Forest.¹¹⁰ Joachim’s competencies and entrusted tasks were extensive. Fr. Papczyński introduced him as follows: “[...] we appoint and designate — for two years as an instructor in the true and solid spirit and religious perfection, as well as in humanistic studies and exercises in moral theology and philosophy — our dearest brother in the Lord, Joachim of St. Ann, subdeacon of our Congregation.”¹¹¹ The passage proves that Joachim Kozłowski — who was not yet a deacon — enjoyed such great trust as to be entrusted with the Marians’ religious, intellectual and spiritual formation. At the end of 1690, he accompanied Fr. Papczyński on a trip to Rome, which the latter undertook to seek papal approval of the Congregation.¹¹²

He was undoubtedly capable and enterprising, possessing great ease in establishing contacts. Judging by his responsibilities, he was well-educated and enjoyed authority. In 1695, he was elected as the vicar and successor of Fr. Papczyński by the Marian Chapter. He was approved for this position by Fr. Papczyński himself: “Because we cannot be everywhere and always serve you [...] we receive the brother, dearly beloved to us in Christ, Joachim of St. Ann, elected by you as our Vicar and successor.”¹¹³ In 1698, at the General Chapter, he was elected as the coadjutor of the Founder and appointed procurator general. He was sent to Rome to obtain papal approval for the Marian Institute.¹¹⁴ He was a resourceful and enterprising individual who, during his year-long stay in Rome, established numerous contacts with prominent figures, bishops, magnates, and officials of the Roman Curia. Thanks to these connections, he achieved the goal of obtaining papal approval for the Marian Institute. It seems that from 1695, when the Chapter entrusted him with almost full authority and the right of succession to the position of general, excessive ambitions began to awaken in him, especially after obtaining approval from the Holy See. These ambitions caused concern

¹¹⁰ See: *A Letter to the Marians in Korabiew Hermitage, in: Selected Writings* p. 920.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Navikevicius, p. 184; Leporini, n. 149.

¹¹³ S. Papczyński, *Letter to Marian Confrères, in: Selected Writings*, p. 930.

¹¹⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 537-538, 543, 617; Leporini, n. 58; Navikevicius, 200-210.

in the heart of the Founder, which is evident in many warnings and cautions directed towards Joachim Kozłowski. As early as 1695, after accepting his election as his vicar, Fr. Stanislaus ordered the confrères to “be candidly and honestly obedient in all things, to his [Fr. Kozłowski’s] devout exhortations and just decrees, as well as whatever sort of ordinances that do not oppose our own.”¹¹⁵

It also warned Fr. Kozłowski not to oppose the decisions of Superior General Fr. Stanislaus. Joachim Kozłowski was known to be a rebellious man and had difficulties in keeping the vow of obedience, as also noted by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński: “He often opposed many [of Fr. Stanislaus’s] orders and rules that he prescribed, and even introduced contrary customs. The Servant of God often rebuked him, but he persisted in his opinions, upheld them, and refused to accept any salutary exhortation from the Servant of God.”¹¹⁶ Father Papczyński included a firm warning to Joachim Kozłowski in his testament, admonishing him three times and threatening him with God’s judgment, urging him not to introduce any innovations in the Order: neither in the habit, nor in the title, nor devotional and ascetic practices, nor in the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He wrote that he obliged “him [Fr. Joachim] with the severe judgment of God, to be as strict as possible in ensuring that the religious Rule imprinted by God be observed.”¹¹⁷ Anticipating unlawful and innovative attempts that he or other successors could undertake as superiors, he commanded: “But, if they should desire to introduce something new, may they [confrères] oppose it with the help of God and of the Nunciature.”¹¹⁸ In the same testament, Fr. Stanislaus reminds everyone, especially Fr. Kozłowski, of the categorical prohibition of drinking vodka for all Marian Fathers.: “Let him [Kozłowski] be aware that this is forbidden to him and all because that drink, by the hidden mercy of God, is foreign to our Congregation.”¹¹⁹ This statement has provided some authors with a basis to suggest that Joachim Kozłowski consumed vodka. Fr. Kozłowski was an active and intelligent religious, but according to

¹¹⁵ S. Papczyński, *Letter to Marian Confrères*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 930.

¹¹⁶ Wyszyński, *Stróż* 83, p. 107.

¹¹⁷ S. Papczyński, *Second Testament*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 937.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 940.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 939.

Fr. Wyszyński, he was also arrogant with unchecked and unhealthy ambitions. These ambitions grew significantly after he obtained papal approval for the Marian Fathers. He felt his worth and believed he had achieved more for the Order than the Founder himself. Full of vanity, he wanted to make himself the founder and patriarch."¹²⁰ To some Marians, this opinion about him seemed justified. Even Georgio Navikevicius stated in his biography: "It must be admitted that Father Joachim was, in a way, a co-founder of the Marian Order."¹²¹ It was he who, it was argued, traveled to Rome three times on behalf of the Order, not Fr. Papczyński. He chose and accepted the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* for the Marian Fathers and ultimately obtained papal approval for the Order in Rome.

Joachim Kozłowski, with the help of several friendly Reformates, initiated a reform of the Order by introducing elements of the Reformates' spiritual life, formation, and discipline. Just one year after the death of the Founder, at the Chapter in 1702, he implemented significant changes in Marian legislation and contributed to questioning parts of Fr. Papczyński's testament. In the discussed matter, the testimonies of Fr. Wyszyński are crucial. Having a good knowledge of Kozłowski's actions, he stated that Kozłowski did not care about the spiritual and intellectual formation of Marian novices and clerics and engaged in various suspicious machinations to the detriment of the Order. "In seeing, finally," he wrote, "that he intends to transform our Order and make himself its founder while hiding the memory of the true founder, I had to go to Rome to counteract all these innovations. Although he tried in every way to hinder me."¹²² Since there was a group of zealous religious and true devotees of Fr. Stanislaus among the Marians who did not accept Kozłowski's actions and even strongly opposed him, he sought support among the Reformates, upon whom he increasingly relied for the Order's affairs.¹²³ Thanks to their support and that of their vicars presiding

¹²⁰ *Positio*, Papczyński, n. 110, p. 710 "Quapropter cum haec effecisset, videbatur illi quo plus quam Institutor consequeretur. Et sic vane glorians, cupiens semetipsum quasi institutorum facere et Patriarcham, accipiens regimen Congregationis Marianae, celabat omnia merita, virtutes et sanctitatem sui Institutoris..." Cf. Wyszyński, *Stróż*, n. 110, p. 135.

¹²¹ Navikevicius, pp. 213-214.

¹²² Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 164.

¹²³ A. Koralewicz, *Additament*. Various requests made to the Reformates to send a master, lecturer, and vicar: pp. 175, 176, 180, 190, 192, 199; Cf. Cap. Gen., passim of 1702-1734.

over the Chapters, he held the office of superior general five times. In the Marian records, there are many requests from Fr. Kozłowski to the Reformates, asking them to send one of their members to preside over the Chapter. Such was the case in 1705, as reported by the minister general of the Reformates, Fr. Bonaventure Klein: "The most venerable Superior General of the Order of the Immaculate Conception [...] who entrusted himself and his Congregation to our guidance, asked [me] to send a man from our Province to preside over the Chapter and direct voters."¹²⁴ Another document states: "Father Joachim [Kozłowski] arrived in Warsaw, at the monastery of the Friars Minor Reformed, and invited Father Leporini to take the office of vicar and inspector."¹²⁵ There were more such requests that Fr. Kozłowski made on behalf of the Marians. The problem, according to Fr. Spourny, was that the Marian Fathers were unaware of these requests.¹²⁶ According to their law, they were not obligated to request a vicar and a president, as they had their own superior general, Rule, and Constitutions and enjoyed the privilege of exemption. Fr. Kozłowski's actions led to the spread of the spirit of the Reformates, which encompassed broader aspects of Marian religious life and eliminated the elements that distinguished the Marian Fathers from other religious institutes. He violated Fr. Papczyński's testament. The brethren resisted the innovations he introduced, although not all of them. Fr. Kozłowski sought support among the Marians through various methods, not always proper, by lowering the observance and religious discipline. Some willingly accepted these measures.¹²⁷ At the Chapter in 1710, despite strong support from the Reformat Vicar Fr. Leporini, Joachim Kozłowski received only one vote as a candidate for the position of general of the Order. Furthermore, at the Chapter in 1715, in which three Reformates who were in favor of him participated, he did not receive a single vote.¹²⁸ Supporters of a return to the full legacy of Fr. Papczyński took over the initiative. The division within the Order

¹²⁴ *Prot. Ord.*, 172; *Cap. Gen.*, 18-19.

¹²⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, 187; *Cap. Gen.*, p. 39. The minister general of the Reformates responded to Father Leporini that since he was chosen by the superior general of the Marians, it was necessary to comply with the rightful request.

¹²⁶ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 1.

¹²⁷ W. Makoś, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 218-219.

¹²⁸ *Prot. Ord.*, 180, 191.

was growing. Some candidates who joined the Marians left the Order, explaining they did not want to be Franciscans.¹²⁹ In 1717, Bishop Adam Rostkowski arrived to visit the Marian Fathers. It is unknown at whose request this visitation occurred or who lodged a complaint with the Nunciature. Clues suggest that it was requested by Fr. Matthew Krajewski, elected as superior general in 1715, as he obtained the Bishop's support for his new apostolic actions. Fr. Krajewski and Bishop Rostkowski also participated in the Marian Chapters in 1719 and 1720, while Fr. Kozłowski and the Reformates were absent. This period was called the "Rostkopian dispersion" and lasted until 1722, as discussed above.¹³⁰

Bishop Adam Rostkowski, Suffragan of Lutsk

According to the majority of Marian historians, the decisions made by Adam Rostkowski, the Bishop and suffragan of Lutsk, regarding the Marian Order were decidedly negative. As a result of these decisions, the so-called "Rostkopian dispersion" occurred, which is all the more surprising considering that — it is worth emphasizing — religious life, its structures, and issues at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries were not unfamiliar to him.

Adam Ksawery Francis Rostkowski (1660-1738) was one of the most enlightened, educated, and prudent bishops of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a true man of the Enlightenment era. He received his education in Jesuit colleges and studied theology under the Missionary Fathers, whom he joined in 1684. After his ordination, he left the Missionary Fathers to continue his theology, philosophy, and canon law studies. He studied at four foreign universities,¹³¹ obtaining doctorates in these fields. He was actively involved in the reform of the Commonwealth and was a fervent advocate of social, political, and ecclesiastical reforms. He worked on the reform of the Church, particularly in introducing discipline into ecclesiastical and religious life.¹³² He conducted

¹²⁹ Doc. Viln., F4-A 166.

¹³⁰ See II/5. Cf. W. Makoś, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 218-219.

¹³¹ PSB, pp. 160-161.

¹³² Maria Dębowska, *Rostkowski Adam bp*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, Lublin 2012, t. 17, c. 361-362.

exhaustive visitations of parishes in ten deaneries, eliminating various abuses and shortcomings. Bishop Rostkowski was an opponent of noble anarchy and published a work called *Żale za grzechy* [Repentance for Sins], in which he thoroughly criticized the widespread misdeeds of the nobility.¹³³ He printed it at his own expense in an edition of 1,500 copies and distributed it as a gift to male and female monasteries. "He was a learned man, virtuous, and greatly merciful. In Warsaw, he established an orphanage and a correctional facility for both genders."¹³⁴ In 1700, he was appointed suffragan of Luts'k.

He resided almost constantly in his Komorniki residence near Tarczyn, twenty kilometers from the Korabiew Forest. Although no documents confirm it, we can reasonably assume that he knew Fr. Papczyński. Fr. Stanislaus, traveling from Góra to the Korabiew Forest, would have passed through Komorniki on multiple occasions. Considering Fr. Papczyński's decency and respect for ecclesiastical authority, he likely visited the bishop. Undoubtedly, the bishop, who had a keen interest in the life of the Church, would have closely observed the emerging institute, which had two establishments near his residence at the end of the 17th century, namely The Forest and Góra. Having examined the profile of this zealous bishop and priest, who showed great concern for the spiritual life of the clergy, it is difficult to suspect him of ill will towards the Marian Fathers, especially since — as we assume — he knew Fr. Papczyński, the Marians, and their monastic situation in the 18th century. This can be inferred from the proximity of the Marian monasteries and the bishop's residence, as well as his genuine interest in religious life, particularly evident in the visitations to the Marian monasteries he conducted as a delegate of Bishop Krzysztof Antoni Szembek (1667-1748) in 1716.¹³⁵ Therefore, the conflicts and divisions within the Marian Order were not unfamiliar to him. Bishop Peter Tarło also mentioned them in the justification of his intervention,

¹³³ Ibid; also see: Rostkowski Adam, in: *Encyklopedia Powszechna*, Warszawa 2009, t. 22, p. 342.

¹³⁴ Rostkowski Adam, in: *Encyklopedia Powszechna*, p. 342.

¹³⁵ Teixeira, n. 227; Wyszynski, *Stróż*, s. 151. Casimir Wyszynski, who was unfavourably disposed towards Bishop Adam Rostkowski, wrote about his visitation in Skórzec: "This bishop did the same with our crucifix in Skórzec: he went up to the altar to examine whether it was miraculous. However, he himself, compelled by the power of God, had to testify that the cross was miraculous." *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 707-708, 761.

which he undertook “to calm down and preserve [the Congregation of Marians] in good condition, on account of some internal disputes and the dispersion of this Congregation.”¹³⁶ Krzysztof Antoni Szembek, who was transferred to the Diocese of Poznań in 1716, prioritized pastoral activities. He instructed his vicar, Adam Rostkowski, to conduct a visitation among the Marian Fathers. This resulted in a decision granting permission to willing Marian Fathers to undertake parish work in the Warsaw Archdeaconry.¹³⁷ The reason for this decision was the severe lack of parish clergy in the diocese and the request of some Marians who believed that their task was to fulfill what was specified in the title of their Congregation: “Marian Fathers praying for the deceased and assisting the parish priest,” that is, the apostolic work so dear to their Father Founder. We do not know how the Marians of that time assessed this intervention by the Bishop. João Teixeira attempts to justify it: “At that time, the diocese experienced a great shortage of pastors and secular priests for ministering to the faithful because many fell victim to the plague ravaging the Kingdom. [...] Therefore, he ordered [the Marians] to send brethren to parishes.”¹³⁸ Unfortunately, in the *Protocolum Ordinis* from 1715-1722, we come across a complete lack of documents regarding this matter, which is surprising considering that during this time, there were meetings of the general council and the visitation by Bishop Rostkowski. Perhaps Fr. Spourny was correct in asserting that the Reformates, while transcribing the mentioned collection of documents, removed those about the so-called “dispersion” period.¹³⁹ Strangely, the first written record and negative opinion regarding the “Rostkavian dispersion,” which “led the Marian Order to ruin,” emerged almost forty years after the events. Fr. Casimir Wyszyński made this claim around 1754 in Portugal for vocations there.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ *Prot. Ord.*, 197; *Cap. Gen.*, p. 57.

¹³⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, 193.

¹³⁸ Teixeira, n. 227.

¹³⁹ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 45.

Joseph (Alexander) Wyszyński

Another negative figure was associated with the events concerning the “dispersion,” who was said to be partially responsible for the Marian crisis. That person was Joseph Wyszyński, the older brother of Casimir. Casimir Wyszyński learned about his actions in Rome from Joachim Kozłowski. “Father Joachim complained to him [Casimir Wyszyński] about his older brother Joseph [...], who had taken the habit in the Korabiew Forest during his novitiate and had subsequently been the cause of the dispersion.”¹⁴¹ Alexis Fischer provides a more detailed account of Joseph’s harmful activities, citing alcohol as one of the causes. He writes that Joseph, despite being admonished and reprimanded, “incited magnates and bishops against the Order, which was already being persecuted,” and then left the Marian novitiate.¹⁴² Boleslaus Jakimowicz, a researcher of the Wyszyński family history, provided a very negative assessment of the role played by Joseph Wyszyński during his time with the Marian Fathers: “In the world, Joseph was a soldier, and having abandoned his military career, he put on the Marian habit, but then left in 1716, finding it hard to adjust to the religious discipline, especially mortifications and abstinence from alcoholic beverages, expressly forbidden in the Marian Order. Accustomed to a secular lifestyle, he insisted on reforming religious life and incited other brethren to rebel against religious statutes. Together with the Superior General Matthew of St. Casimir Krajewski and other confrères, frustrated by the excessive — as they believed — severity, he went to see the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, the Bishop of Poznań, and secular magnates, demanding the dissolution of the Marian Congregation.”¹⁴³ Despite such a clear account, some doubts arise. In the documents of the Chapter that took place on September 23, 1715, there is a list of all the Marians, including novices. However, this list does not mention Joseph Wyszyński, who took the name Alexander upon entering the Order. It can be inferred

¹⁴¹ *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 23; *Świadectwo Wojciecha Magnuszewskiego*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 31-32; *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁴² *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁴³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 17-18.

that he joined the Order later, but since he left in 1716, he was with the Marian Fathers for less than a year.

The question arises as to whether he would have had enough time in such a short period to familiarize himself with the situation and personally intervene — as a novice — with the nuncio, bishop, and magnates. Another question relates to the purpose of his actions: “He demanded the dissolution of the Order, accusing it of many things.” After all, he was still a novice, had not yet taken his vows, and could have left the Order at any time, which he did after a few months of probation. Resolving these doubts or uncovering the truth about these events is no longer possible today. Joseph Wyszynski’s later life was righteous and noble. In 1720, he made a penitential pilgrimage to holy places in Rome.¹⁴⁴ He was also a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and remained unmarried. When he joined the Marians, he was around thirty years old and willingly gave up a military career that was assured to him as a member of an influential noble family. As a war veteran, he likely struggled to fit into the highly austere, eremitical-penitential lifestyle of the Marian Fathers at that time. In 1716, he was the only novice; his master was a Franciscan. Candide Spourny explained the plight of Joseph Wyszynski as follows: “Mr. Joseph Wyszynski joined our Order to become a Marian, but then he realized that he was subject to the Reformates and was becoming a Reformat himself [...], so he left.”¹⁴⁵

Fr. Casimir Wyszynski wrote about his brother: “My brother left the novitiate and lost his vocation. However, he also altered his attitude; he turned his hatred of the Order into love. He suffered many disappointments in the world. May the Most Merciful Lord forgive him and us all.”¹⁴⁶ Again, it is important to emphasize that all these opinions and severe accusations come from one source. They only differ in interpretation and intensity of description. That source was Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, who did not accept Joseph Wyszynski because he demanded reform of the Congregation, strongly supported the apostolic efforts of Fr. Matthew Krajewski, and criticized Kozłowski’s formation and

¹⁴⁴ ACPR. Conti e ricevute dal 1685 al 1724, t. 33/92, No. 160 (Pilgrims at the St. Stanislaus center in Rome).

¹⁴⁵ *Listy*, Letter of Candide Spourny, 1.

¹⁴⁶ *Album zmarłych*, the entry under March 8, 1750.

activities. Fr. Kozłowski did not support Joseph Wyszyński in obtaining monastic formation. But, he also did not expel him from the Order for fear of the Wyszyński family's reaction. Similarly, he hindered Casimir Wyszyński's novitiate, formation, and admission to profession and ordination, and only the family's intervention forced him to consent.¹⁴⁷ In this context, it becomes easier to understand the negative opinions about Fr. Matthew Krajewski and Joseph Wyszyński that were conveyed to Casimir Wyszyński and reinforced over the years. From Fr. Joachim Kozłowski's perspective, it was a defense against criticizing him Mar-ians and an attempt to discredit inconvenient opponents. Fr. Casimir Wyszyński described these events in Latin only in 1754 in Portugal. Somewhat later, in 1757, they were briefly mentioned in the accounts from 1715-1722 by Michał Wyszyński, Wojciech Magnuszewski, and Alexis Fischer. However, all of them echoed the version provided by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, which persisted until the 20th century and is still shared by many Marians today.

Father Matthew of St. Casimir Krajewski

Stefan Sydry called him a "declared opponent of our [Marian] institute."¹⁴⁸ Fr. Wyszyński accused him of "attempting to ruin and destroy his own mother, the Marian Congregation, which had given him spiritual birth."¹⁴⁹ Considering how much Matthew Krajewski was attacked and accused, we know very little about him today. It can be assumed that he was born around 1680 since he appeared as the superior of the Korabiew hermitage" in the General Chapter in 1710."¹⁵⁰ Since the Marian Constitutions required a Chapter delegate to be "a priest for five years, and have ten years of religious profession,"¹⁵¹ it can be presumed that Matthew Krajewski joined the Order towards the end of the 17th century. He likely knew the Founder of the Order, who instilled in him the apostolic

¹⁴⁷ *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, s. 55-56; Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁴⁸ S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁰ *Cap. Gen.*, 32; *Prot. Ord.*, 183.

¹⁵¹ *Konstytucje Apostolskie Maryanów*, Wilno 1791, IX/III.

spirit. Krajewski was esteemed, especially by the young active confrères who sought the dynamic development of the Order. As early as 1710, he received two votes in the election for the general councilor. In the General Chapter of 1712, he received three votes in the election for the general superior, while Joachim Kozłowski received four votes.¹⁵² Both of them, Matthew Krajewski and Joachim Kozłowski, thus assumed the positions of general councilors. Based on the votes in the Chapters, we can observe how two different options of the Marian model of religious life clashed and how the supporters of Fr. Matthew Krajewski gained the advantage. At the General Chapter on November 23, 1715, out of eleven delegates, nine voted for Fr. Krajewski in the election for the general superior, while a certain Fr. Paul received two votes.¹⁵³ Therefore, Fr. Matthew Krajewski became the general of the Order. In this election, Fr. Kozłowski was disregarded entirely, tantamount to rejecting his pro-Reformate vision for the Order. As the general superior, Fr. Krajewski advocated for a new apostolic program and implemented it despite strong opposition from supporters of Fr. Kozłowski's approach and a group of Marian Fathers who preferred an eremitic-penitential style of life and were unwilling to accept changes. The division within the Order deepened, leading to the aforementioned "dispersion." It seems, however, that if Fr. Krajewski had truly been as cunning a religious as he was attributed to being since the second half of the 18th century, he would have faced some form of punishment for it. However, the documents indicate that he was not considered a traitor, and after the "dispersion" ended, he continued to enjoy significant support from his confrères. This can be evidenced by the fact that at the Chapter in 1722, he was elected as vicar of the newly elected general, Fr. Andrew Deszpot, receiving one more vote than Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. Therefore, the belief expressed by Fr. Wyszyński, as well as by Fr. Teixeira, who wrote, "The General Superior [Krajewski] [...] was pleased to see the Marian Order destroyed,"¹⁵⁴ cannot be considered reliable.

In summary, it can be stated that Fr. Matthew Krajewski was pleased to see the development of the Order and did not lose the trust of his

¹⁵² *Cap. Gen.*, 32; *Prot. Ord.*, 185.

¹⁵³ *Cap. Gen.*, 44-45; *Prot. Ord.*, 191.

¹⁵⁴ Teixeira, n. 227.

confrères. As a result, he was appointed novice master in the Korabiew Forest in 1732, a position reserved for those distinguished by their spiritual and moral virtues. In 1734, he was elected as the vice president of the monastery in Goźlin.¹⁵⁵ He also received the privileged title of “Pater Congregationis,” the highest distinction in the Marian Order. In the last years of his life, Fr. Krajewski suffered from a severe illness, which allowed his enemies to conclude that it was God’s punishment. João Teixeira wrote, “If the brethren treated him kindly and showed mercy [...], then the just God physically punished him for insulting the Most Holy Virgin Mary and for his contempt of Her Marian Congregation.”¹⁵⁶ Fr. Wyszyński, in a similar but more restrained manner, assessed his illness and suffering. In the obituary, he wrote: “Although God keeps for Himself the judgment of people and does not allow anyone to condemn others, yet many believed that God affected him with this disease for persecuting the Order and even causing its destruction.”¹⁵⁷ But the death of Fr. Kozłowski, Fr. Krajewski’s main antagonist, was also assessed in terms of God’s punishment. The opinion about him expressed by his enemies was: “The gross negligence and vain aspirations of this superior [Joachim Kozłowski] lasted ten years to the great sadness of zealous religious [...], but God, the corrector of all evil, remedied it by letting this superior [...] drown while crossing in the currents of Vistula River near Warsaw. This misfortune was perceived as a just punishment for his foolish recklessness and vain arrogance.”¹⁵⁸ The division within the Order, due to two opposing views on its goals and tasks, continued to clash with varying intensity until the 1780s. These differences repeatedly acted as obstacles to the development of the Congregation.

¹⁵⁵ AGM, Protoculus Conventus Corabieviensis. Decrees of the Chapters of 1732 and 1734.

¹⁵⁶ Teixeira, n. 229-230.

¹⁵⁷ *Album zmarłych*, entry of March 8, 1750.

¹⁵⁸ Teixeira, n. 234. Since João Teixeira was not in Poland and was not aware of the aforementioned facts, he could only pass on the news that circulated among the confrères.

The struggle against the “dispersion.”**Reforms and the Renewed Papal****Approval of the Congregation.****September 3, 1723**

The Marian Fathers lamented the division within the Order. It was detrimental to the monastic observance and community life. Various abuses also crept in as a result.¹⁵⁹ The more earnest brethren sought remedies to heal the ailing situation. We do not know who belonged to this group or which option they represented. It seems they were Marians closely associated with Fr. Krajewski because otherwise, they would have sought intervention from the powerful Order of Franciscan Reformates. The Reformates, seemingly understanding the cause and problem of the division, somewhat retreated into the background of Marians' history during this period. We know that an unidentified group of Marians sought help from Bishop Peter (Piotr) Tarło (1672-1722), who assumed the leadership of the Poznań Diocese on January 29, 1721.¹⁶⁰ He was a saintly, zealous man known for his strictness. Several facts motivated him to intervene, including concern for the Marian Order and close kinship with the Wierzbowski family, who had promised at a meeting in New Jerusalem in 1688: “We accept this Congregation, as begun with our House, under our and our entire House's eternal protection. And we shall shield and support it by our founding grace.”¹⁶¹ However, the most significant reason for the intervention was the request made by the Marian Fathers themselves, as the bishop emphasized in the decree, explaining its causes: “At the earnest requests of some religious, zealous in upholding the religious discipline and out of loving care for this small Order [...]. We let you know, Fathers, that we have been asked to kindly approve by our episcopal authority the act of the election of your superior by the Chapter as well as other arrangements and decisions

¹⁵⁹ *Prot. Ord.*, 194.

¹⁶⁰ Józef Nowacki, *Dzieje archidiecezji poznańskiej*, t. I (1959), Poznań 1959, pp. 110-111, 188, 219; P. Nitecki, *Biskupi Kościoła*, c. 445.

¹⁶¹ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 432. Declaration of members of the Wierzbowski's house on behalf of the Marian foundation, Oct. 26, 1688.

regarding the observance.”¹⁶² In response to the Marians’ petition, the bishop took energetic action. On August 1, 1722, he sent a letter to the clergy of the Warsaw Archdeaconate asking them to inform “in person or by mailing a copy of the present letter [...] to each Marian, scattered throughout various parishes so that each one of them present himself at their religious house [...] within a nine days from the date of acquainting themselves with this letter.”¹⁶³

The document shows that the bishop was very keen on returning all Marians to their monasteries. He even threatened the diocesan priests with excommunication should they fail to deliver the “notification letter” to the dispersed Marians. On the same day, he sent a letter “to all together and to each religious, priest and brother of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.¹⁶⁴ [...], we remind each of them to present themselves, within nine days, with their belongings and records of income and expenses, at their respective houses and to settle there in obedience to their superiors and under penalty of excommunication.”¹⁶⁵ In the letter, Bishop Peter Tarło ordered the convocation of a General Chapter at the monastery in Gozlin on August 31, 1722. During the Chapter, the election of the superior general and other officials was to take place. The capitular fathers were also obliged to carry out reforms. The bishop appointed “the enlightened and highly esteemed priest Mikołaj Zachniewicz, canon of Warsaw, provost of the church of St. Mary in Warsaw,” as the vicar and chairman of the Chapter.”¹⁶⁶ He appointed Fr. Tomasz Kamieński, the provost of Kalwaria, as his assistant and secretary. Notably, he bypassed the Reformates, who had consistently held the positions of vicar and chairman at the Chapters since 1702. There is not much information about the course of this vital Chapter, the preparations leading up to it, or the conflicts and factions among the religious. However, according to the number of votes cast, fourteen Marians participated in the Chapter, and they elected Fr. Andrew Deszpot, a Marian of Bohemian nationality, as superior general.

¹⁶² *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 193-194.

¹⁶³ *Cap. Gen.*, p. 47.

¹⁶⁴ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 194.

¹⁶⁵ *Cap. Gen.*, p. 47.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

He was a middle-aged man who was known for his zeal and holiness. He had been admitted to the Order and shaped by the Founder himself.¹⁶⁷ He was likely around forty years old, as the Marian legislation required candidates for the position of superior general to be at least thirty-six years old and have a minimum of ten years of religious profession.¹⁶⁸ His two rivals, Matthew Krajewski and Joachim Kozłowski, received three votes each, while Fr. Joseph and Fr. Bernard received one vote each.¹⁶⁹ It is a valid statement that two diocesan delegates appointed by Bishop Peter Tarło played a significant role in the election of Fr. Deszpot. Their task was to “calm the internal disputes and reunite the Congregation.”¹⁷⁰ The convened Chapter was meant to serve reconciliation and eliminate various factions within the Congregation. Therefore, the delegates could not allow the election of Joachim Kozłowski or Matthew Krajewski. One of the documents that spoke about the role of the vicar, Fr. Mikołaj Zachniewicz, mentioned, in giving him a word of thanks, “that he established (*sic*) [as the general], a Very Reverend Father Andrew.”¹⁷¹

The Chapter, in undertaking a reform program, made many important decisions. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine today whether the decisions were made by the capitular fathers or the sent vicars, as was often the case when the Reformato vicars presided over Chapters. The Chapter passed thirty-eight decrees, most of which pertained to

¹⁶⁷ His extensive biography may be found in: LCVA, 1676, Ap. 1, b. 7, pp. 6-8; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 76, 107, 153, 186; S. Sydry, O. Stanisław, p. 269; *Album zmarłych, entry of Nove*. 22, 1750., Fr. Andrew Deszpot (de Spot) is believed to have joined the Congregation no later than around 1690, as by 1722 he must have been of appropriate age to hold the position of the superior general. Marian Charles Hondlewski, writing his biography in 1786, spoke of him in glowing terms. He emphasized that Fr. Deszpot was an exemplary religious. He worked exceptionally hard to stabilize and spiritually renew the Congregation, strengthening and inspiring his brethren. Having spent several years with the Founder, he absorbed much of his spirituality and Marian charism. He was familiar with the Founder's saintly, zealous, and apostolic life, of which he often spoke inspiringly to the Marians. He served as a local superior in Marian monasteries on at least four occasions. He was elected twice as the superior general (1722-1725; 1744-1747), and in 1743-1744, after the death of General Bernard Ostrowski, he temporarily fulfilled his duties. Intelligent, strong-willed, sensitive, and gentle towards his confrères, he was loved by them. He played a significant role in the renewal and unification of the Order, as well as obtaining papal approval for the Marians and the confirmation of the Marian Statutes in 1723.

¹⁶⁸ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, 1723, *De capitulo electionis superiorum*, IX/2.

¹⁶⁹ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 194-195.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198. Various decrees on legal matters.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

religious discipline.¹⁷² Their content indicates a turn to the Reformates' way and an attempt to bring back the strict lifestyle and the original rule. The first decree declared: "Decrees adopted and ratified by previous Chapters presided over by the Reformat Vicars [...] are to be strictly observed."¹⁷³ The second article obliged every Marian to undergo spiritual exercises under the direction of "one of the priests from the Order of Reformed Franciscans. Make this happen as soon as possible."¹⁷⁴ All the resolutions were short and in the form of commands or prohibitions. It appears that the failure to observe the cloister was a common abuse, as seven decrees were dedicated to this issue, emphasizing the prohibition of leaving the monastery without permission from superiors, the prohibition of receiving guests in cells, and the prohibition of allowing women into the monastery. The Chapter strongly and emphatically addressed the need for communal spiritual exercises and retreats. A novelty was the reduction of meditation time from two hours to one hour per day, half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening. One of the decrees mandated that in all Marian monasteries, superiors should strictly maintain a uniform daily schedule, including meditation, prayers, and activities.¹⁷⁵ Another decree commanded the religious to wear a white habit "girded with the cord of St. Francis" and a cloak of ashen color. Several disciplinary decrees suggest that abuses arose regarding the cloister and monastic observance, disobedience, quarrels, and the "sin of drunkenness." Decree 27 and 28 pertained to missions and pastoral work carried out in parishes, which, with special permission from superiors, could not last longer than three months. In the interest of the development and future of the Marians, decree 35 commanded the "revitalization of the novitiate" and the prompt selection of a novice master from their own ranks or from the Order of the Reformed Franciscans.¹⁷⁶

The Chapter's last decree, concerning the education and formation of clerics, ordered: "At least the course of moral theology must be

¹⁷² Navikevicius, pp. 226-227, cites 36 decrees; F. Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa*, p. 64, mentions 40 decrees. Probably, neither one consulted the sources, because *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 195-197 and *Prot. Ras.*, pp. 44-47, clearly speak of 38 decrees. *Ibid.*, 1722/2.

¹⁷³ *Prot. Ras.*, 1722/1.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1722/2.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1722/4.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1722/35.

organized along with training in choral singing and ecclesiastical ceremonies.”¹⁷⁷ In the summary, Vicar Fr. Mikołaj Zachniewicz “strongly urged the Marians to obtain the approval of their Constitutions, thus raising the status of the Order.”¹⁷⁸ He also ordered that the Rule and Constitutions be printed as soon as possible to make them available to their confrères. It can be assumed that Fr. Zachniewicz acted based on instructions from Bishop Peter Tarło, who subsequently “approved, authorized, and ratified”¹⁷⁹ the formulated decrees. The bishop showed a sincere interest in the Marian Order and ardently desired its strengthening and development rather than its downfall, as evidenced by his caring letters addressed to the Marians. Fr. Mikołaj Zachniewicz had to display a great deal of diplomacy, wisdom, and love for his neighbor to attempt to create a Marian religious community from this diverse group of Marians, consisting of various factions. After seven years of being stationed in diocesan positions, a group of several Marians was forced to return to the monasteries, which some of them did not internally accept.¹⁸⁰ In addition to them, there were supporters of Kozłowski and Krajewski, who were more inclined towards apostolic endeavors. There was also a small group of “true sons” of the Father Founder, who were formed by him and were concerned about the numerical and spiritual growth of the Marians, their future, and the healing of the Order. In this context, the limitation of missionary and parish assignments, both in terms of the number of religious and in duration up to only three months, becomes understandable, especially considering those who returned from parishes and wished to return to them.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Chapter, the Marians started zealously implementing its decrees. Preparations were made to obtain renewed approval of the Order and to develop the Marian Statutes based on the *Norma Vitae*. Superior General Andrew Deszpot played a significant role in the reform and spiritual renewal undertaken, becoming the *spiritus movens* behind the actions. Although the Apostolic See did not

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1722/38.

¹⁷⁸ S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 24. Listy, letter of Candide Spourny, 1; *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 24, 55-56.

¹⁷⁹ *Prot. Ras.*, Chapter of 1722. Approval of Bishop Peter Tarło.

¹⁸⁰ Listy, letter of Candide Spourny, 1; *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 24, 55-56.

approve *Norma Vitae*, it was repeatedly recommended by Fr. Deszpot as a spiritual reading during meals and as a legislative act for the Marians. Bishop Stanislaus Jacek Świącicki also ordered its observance during his visit to the hermitage in the Korabiew Forest in 1673. Fr. Leporini reminded in his biography: "They should have detailed constitutions and adhere to them."¹⁸¹ Fr. Papczyński, in a letter to his confrères in the Forest, emphasized the important role of *Norma Vitae* and decreed, "In place of the *Directory*, let the *Rule of Life* serve."¹⁸² However, the deletion of this paragraph from the Protocollum Ordinis seems to indicate that Fr. Spourny's claim about the Reformates' repeatedly "manipulating" the Marian Constitutions is not without grounds.

The Chapter, convened on August 31, 1722, was concluded in the first days of September. After the election of the general government, further discussions were held by the new authorities. They discussed the reform of the Order, the adaptation of *Norma Vitae* to the new requirements, and the challenging issue of appointing a candidate for the position of procurator and negotiator for Marian affairs in Rome. It was probably not easy for everyone to accept Joachim Kozłowski's candidacy, but there was no suitable person then. He had already been to Rome twice, had established connections and relationships, was fluent in Italian, easily made acquaintances, engaged in social interactions, and was very efficient in his work. The decision to send Fr. Kozłowski to Rome was made during the mentioned Chapter. Superior General Fr. Andrzej Deszpot informed about this decision in a letter of recommendation, at the beginning of which he thanked God and Bishop Peter Tarło as "it pleased God's Mercy to calm down our Congregation, once dispersed as a result of internal disputes (*sic*) and re-united by the authority of the holy memory of [...] Bishop Peter Tarło." In the later part of the letter, he addressed Fr. Kozłowski: "Having recognized, Father, your zeal in promoting the common good of our Order, by the unanimous vote of the capitular fathers, gathered at the Chapter in our Goźlin house, we entrust you, Father, by holy obedience, the task of humbly seeking to obtain in the life-giving city of the Holy See, as well as from the most

¹⁸¹ *Prot. Ord.*, 170 n. 23.

¹⁸² S. Papczyński, *Ordinances for Korabiew Hermitage*, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 945. We know this sentence only from *Prot. Gosl.*

venerable Minister General of the Seraphic Order, [...] new privileges, permissions, graces [...] and other spiritual goods of the Order, necessary for our Polish Congregation and its administration; we grant you the power in these matters and assign our beloved Brother in Christ, Nicholas of St. Martin as your travel companion.”¹⁸³ Fr. Isidore Taudt testified in Fr. Wyszyński’s beatification process that Joachim Kozłowski departed for Rome on March 4, 1723.¹⁸⁴ We should note the short time between the end of the Chapter and Father Kozłowski’s departure for Rome: it took only six months, which were used to collect and prepare the documents, and especially to produce the new constitutions, commonly known as *Statutes*. It is difficult to determine who and when carried out the preparatory work or whether that was already done during the “dispersion” or in this short period just after the Chapter. The *Statutes* were probably altered in Rome during Fr. Joachim’s stay with the Reformates. The document shows the influence of Franciscan legislation, which Fr. Spourny called “sowing tares.”¹⁸⁵ It can be assumed as a certainty that two Reformates, Mansueto Leporini and Bonaventura Klein, who were friends with Fr. Joachim, were involved in the work on the *Statutes*.¹⁸⁶ It isn’t easy to evaluate Fr. Joachim’s role and contribution to the work on the adaptation. However, the *Protocollum Ordinis* includes a collection of documents grouped under the title of *Różne dokumenty prawne* (Various Legal Documents), which are preceded by a note stating that they contain “various documents prepared in Rome (*sic*) for the appeasement and preservation [of the Congregation] by the very revered Father Joachim, the first father of the Order.”¹⁸⁷ This phrase, “the first

¹⁸³ Prot. Ord., 198. *Varia instrumenta iuridica*. Caenaculo Domini die 4 Martii A. D. 1723.

¹⁸⁴ APS/7; I. Taudt, *Notata de Venerabili Patre Casimiro*, p. 1 “Anno 1723 die 4 martii missus fuit Romam Pr. Joachimus a. s. Anna qua Procurator Generalis”. Cf. ASV, Secr. Brev., 2606, ff. 552-556.

¹⁸⁵ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 1. “So, we must, following the example of other religious orders, compose Rules and Constitutions, purging them from any impurities that have been sown within them [...], so that there is nothing unworthy of our state, unnecessary, or completely harmful to us.” In the further part of the letter, Spourny instructed the superior general of the Marians: “Therefore, it is necessary to cleanse our Constitutions from the impurities that those two brothers B. Klein and M. Leporini, through cunning and deceit, dared to disfigure.”

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. Also see: *Statuta Patrum Marianorum* of 1723, VII/5, X/11, which describe the role played by these two Reformates in the Marian Fathers’ matters.

¹⁸⁷ Prot. Ord., pp. 197-198. Caput IV, *Varia instrumenta iuridica*.

father,” is encountered several times in the documents and always refers exclusively to Fr. Joachim, and its meaning is at least ambiguous. The document quoted above clearly states that some papers were written in Rome, and Fr. Joachim was the author of some. The Reformates certainly helped him deal with Marians’ matters in Rome. The Marians asked for this help by sending — through Fr. Joachim — an official letter addressed to the General Chapter of the Reformates members and signed by the nine Marian mandatories. The letter asked for the following assistance: “That the Venerable Father Minister General would kindly support this Congregation [of Marians] with his seraphic protection, that he would confirm the incorporation and approval granted to the Marians, and help to obtain a new approval of the Holy See for this incorporation along with the privilege of exemption from the diocesan authority.”¹⁸⁸ After arriving in Rome, Fr. Kozłowski efficiently and fruitfully handled the matters entrusted to him by the Order. With the probable support of the Reformates, on September 3, 1723, Pope Innocent XIII issued a brief *In Supremo militantis Ecclesiae*, by which he reapproved the Marian Order and approved the *Statutes*, regulations, and decrees of the Chapters, expressing his wishes for their successful governance, observance, and development of the Order.¹⁸⁹

Statuta Marianorum: Marian Constitutions of 1723

Based on Fr. Papczyński’s *Norma Vitae*, the new Constitutions consist of ten chapters. Each one is divided into articles, totaling seventy-three.¹⁹⁰ On the other hand, *Norma Vitae* has nine chapters divided into fifty-five provisions. The full title of the *Statutes* is: *Statuta Ojców Marianów Zakonu Błogosławionej Maryi Dziewicy pod wezwaniem*

¹⁸⁸ Cap. Gen., pp. 58-59. Supplex Libellus porrectus Romae In Capitulo Generalii.

¹⁸⁹ *Leges Marianae. Breve Innocentii Papae XIII, Romae, die tertia Septembris MDCCXXIII.* Approbatio et confirmatio statutorum, “Nobis nuper exponi fecit nonnulla Statuta, Ordinationes, et Decreta pro felici guberni, exactaque regularis disciplinae, alias In Capitulis Generalibus ipsius Congregationis edita, ac tam ordynaria autoritate.”

¹⁹⁰ Teixeira, n. 93, F. Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa*, p. 69. Also see: *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, 1723.

Niepokalanego Poczęcia, zmarłym i proboszczom w duszpasterstwie pomagające, kongregacji polskiej (The Statutes of the Marian Fathers of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the Title of the Immaculate Conception, Helping the Deceased and Pastors in their Pastoral Care, of the Polish Congregation).¹⁹¹ We should note that neither the aforementioned papal *breve* nor the *Statutes* use the term “Marian hermits,” which was repeated by some older documents after the example of Bishop Stanisław Jacek Świączicki’s visitation decrees. Alongside the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, which had a very general character, the *Statutes* encompassed the entirety of religious life. They regulated the daily life within the Congregation, provided organizational regulations for the Order, and clearly defined spiritual exercises, prayers, and external works. The titles and order of the individual articles in the *Statutes* are as follows:

1. On the purpose, admission to the Order, and education of novices.
2. On the vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
3. On mortification, fasting, discipline, fault chapter, religious attire.
4. On prayer, meditation, devotions, offices, and retreats.
5. On receiving the Holy Sacraments.
6. On Christian doctrine and missions.
7. On mutual charity and improvement, care for the sick, admonition, and forgiveness.
8. On assisting the deceased: Holy Masses, prayers.
9. On the Chapters and the election of superiors and other religious officials.
10. The superior general and his council, the local superior and his council.¹⁹²

The new Constitutions, primarily based on the Father Founder’s *Norma Vitae*, were fully adapted to the contemporary requirements of

¹⁹¹ The full Latin title reads: *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis B. M. V. sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis, Defunctis, et Parochis In Cura Animarum suffragantium Congregationis Polonae*, in: *Leges Marianae*, 1723.

¹⁹² *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, Warszawa 1750, pp. 21-42.

canon law. They also took into account the provisions of the Council of Trent and incorporated some regulations from Pope Clement VIII's constitution on religious orders, as well as resolutions from previous General Chapters. The newly introduced decrees were accompanied by the indication of their source of origin. The new Constitutions include three new chapters of great significance for spirituality and the Marian charism. They are on Christian doctrine and missions, assisting the souls of the dead, and prayer. The 1723 Statutes did not contain *De charitate* (Fraternal Love), the second chapter in *Norma Vitae*. This does not mean the topic was abandoned; it was scattered throughout the various chapters. The chapter on bringing help to the deceased contains four extended paragraphs, in which it is commanded to offer numerous daily prayers, Divine Office, rosaries, mortifications, and Holy Masses for all the departed, particularly for benefactors and deceased brethren. This chapter was introduced into the *Statutes* with the support of the Reformates.¹⁹³ The significant expression of evolution and transformation towards apostolate can be found in chapter 6, which focuses on missions. The provisions in this chapter fulfill the intentions and desires of the Founder and the Bishops Stefan Wierzbowski and Hieronim Wierzbowski. They also constitute the fruit of the aspirations of the protagonists of apostolic activity of Fr. Matthew Krajewski, although they also reflect the tensions and divisions of the "dispersion" period. This is an extensive chapter dedicated to a detailed discussion of the duties of pastors, particularly the Marian preachers and missionaries. It calls upon the Marian Fathers to engage in zealous apostolic work, especially among the simple people, making it profoundly pro-apostolic. At the beginning of this chapter, we read: "There are many simple folks, not only in the Kingdom of Poland, but also in other Christian countries, who are unfamiliar with the mysteries of the faith, but there are also few priests who could teach them. Therefore, the Marian Fathers will endeavor not only in their churches but also in parish churches, as well as in villages and towns, to enlighten simple people as often as

¹⁹³ *Statuta, De Suffragis Defunctorum*, VIII/4. "Necnon Suffragis, et orationibus omnium religiosorum commendatur R. mus P. P. Franciscus Diaz a S. Bonaventura totius Ordinis S. Francisci Minorum Discretus, qui apud S. Sedem, studio et eleemosynarum, ac privilegiorum sollicitudine, In initio, et progressu nostri Instituti extitit usque modo singularis Promotor."

the opportunity presents itself, with permission from bishops, to teach Christian doctrine according to the Roman Catechism and the customs of the Holy Fathers in such a simple manner that all may understand, and with such diligence that no one would depart from them without spiritual benefit.”¹⁹⁴ The second paragraph states a crucial principle: for apostolic work to bear fruit, the missionaries and preachers should strive for perfection, humility, patience, and personal holiness. It emphasizes the universality of the call addressed to the Marians. Because the lack of faith and ignorance of its fundamental truths affect the whole world, it is necessary to “give” Christian teachings not only in Poland but also in other countries; they should be proclaimed in cities and villages, not only in Marians’ churches but also in various parishes. The Marian Fathers should primarily focus on the rural areas and particularly reach out to simple people, serf peasants, who were socially disadvantaged and neglected regarding their religious and moral development. This bold and much-needed program addressed the pressing needs of the contemporary Church in Poland. If Bishop Wierzbowski’s directive in 1679, which ordered the cessation of eremitic life in Góra, would be considered as opening the door for the apostolic activities of the Marian Fathers, then this chapter of the Constitutions could be called the opening of the gate. However, according to canonist Fr. Feliks Bartecki, some paragraphs of the Statutes are too extensive and often encompass two or three issues, which can pose difficulties in their application.¹⁹⁵

The Constitutions clearly and strongly emphasize the dependency of the Marian Fathers on the Order of Friars Minor – the Reformates. It is important to note that the terms general superior, general secretary or general councilor are not used in the Constitutions. The Reformates usually referred to a general superior of the Marians as *praepositus*, which means superior, and a superior of a local monastery as *praepositus localis*. However, in the Marian tradition, this terminology was seen as diminishing the dignity and significance of these offices. The chapter on the election of (higher)¹⁹⁶ superiors mandated the Marian superior, six

¹⁹⁴ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, VI/1/2.

¹⁹⁵ F. Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa*, pp. 71–72.

¹⁹⁶ The Reformat documents addressed to the Marians did not use the term superior general or general of the Marians. Instead, the Marian general was usually referred to as the superior,

months before the expiration of his term, to inform the minister general of the Reformates about the upcoming Chapter. The minister general then would appoint the vicar from the Franciscan Order to conduct visitations to the monasteries and hold discussions with individual members of the Congregation before the Chapter.¹⁹⁷ The Chapter also elected the secretary (general), local superiors, novice master, preachers, and lectors, whose election was approved by the Franciscan vicar.¹⁹⁸ This arrangement allowed for pressure, if not manipulation, to select a preferred religious for the position of general superior or other offices. The decree specified that the Marian Fathers should choose the same cardinal protector as the Reformates. It is worth noting that in the synopsis of the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, compiled in 1705 by Fr. Leporini, there is a directive to request the Holy Father for a cardinal from the Roman Church as the protector of the Order, but it did not say that this had to be the same cardinal already appointed for the Reformates.¹⁹⁹ Fr. Spourny explains this issue as follows: "Why did [Fr. Joachim] do this, if not to always keep us unknown to *S. Sedi totiusque Ecclesiae* and to prevent our Order for getting support and protection in our matters [...] while only being able to arrange and receive what those *fratri* liked. As we can see, thus far, this has been greatly impeding and preventing from settling any of our matters."²⁰⁰ Fr. Joachim received resolute and effective support

president, or pastor of the order. Father Spourny described this as a derogation of the office of the Marian general by the Reformates, who wanted to emphasize that there is only one common general, who is their own minister general. "Why did they refuse to use the title *Reverendissimi* [Most Venerable] and call him General when they mentioned the *Praepositum* [superior]? Was it not because they wanted our superiors to feel subordinate to friars [the Reformates]? For, contrary to sound reason, the Superior General of the Order of Regular Clerics could not be subject to the Superior General of another order." See: *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny, 1.

¹⁹⁷ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, IX/3.

¹⁹⁸ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, IX/4. "Secuta electione A. R. P. Praepositi cum Assistantibus in eodem Capitulo eligantur: P. Secretarius, PP. Praesidentes locorum, magister novitiorum, praedicatores, lectores, ac tandem tam Admodum A. R. P. Praepositum [Generalis] neoelectum, Guam totum actum Capituli A. R. P. Commissarius nomine et autoritate sibi delegata R. Patris Ministri Generalis Fratrum Minorum de Observantia confirmabit."

¹⁹⁹ *Prot. Ord.*, 170-171, Synopsis Regulae Imitationis Decem Virtutum B. V. M. „Teneantur autem superiore petere a Domino Papa, unum de Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalibus, qui sit Protector huius Ordinis." On the other hand, the Statutes of 1723, IX/3, stipulated: "Quae Congregatio habere debet Protectore Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem, quem Ordo Seraphicus de Observantia habet, eiusque protectione semper gaudere debet."

²⁰⁰ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter of 1777 to Father Gen. Raymond Nowicki.

three times during his election as the general of the Marian Order for his pro-Franciscan stance. It was incomprehensible and detrimental to the free development of the Congregation to subject all the Marian general superiors directly to the authority and jurisdiction of the minister general of the Reformed Franciscans. The decree about superiors (general) stated that the Congregation was to be governed by the superior (general) and his assistants. On the other hand, the superior general was subject to the jurisdiction of and owed obedience to the minister general of the Franciscans and had to contact that minister in all the important matters of the Congregation.²⁰¹ In the discussed Constitutions, the term *ordo* (order) is never used to describe the Marian Fathers, but rather *congregatio* (congregation). The same can be observed in other Franciscan documents from later dates. However, Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski, Nuncio Francisco Pignatelli, and Bishop Jan Joachim Tarło described the Marian Institute as “Order.” According to Fr. John Niezabitowski, it would have been more difficult to justify the jurisdiction and subordination forced on the Marians if the Franciscans had publicly acknowledged the Marians as an Order of papal rights governed by an independent superior general.²⁰² The dependency on the Franciscans systematically deepened and became legally sanctioned after the introduction of certain stipulations into the Constitutions of the Marian Fathers. We should emphasize that the canonical approval of these Constitutions was signed by — in addition to Nuncio Nicollo Spinola — two Reformed Franciscans: Fr. Bonaventure Klein and Fr. Mansueto Leporini, both the proverbial “grey eminences in the Marian Order.”²⁰³ The two Roman Marians, John Niezabitowski and Candide Spourny, who were well aware of the realities and disputes within the Congregation regarding

²⁰¹ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, X/1. “Universam A. R. P. Praepositus reget Congregationem cum Consilio quorum Assistentium immediate ipse solus subiacens obedientiae R.mi P. Ministri Generalis Ord. Seraphici [...] de Observantia, et ad ipsum In negotiis magni momenti Congregationis recursum facere debet.”

²⁰² Listy, letter of John Niezabitowski, Romae 16 Augusti, an. 1777; Candide Spourny's letter of 1777 to Father Gen. Raymond Nowicki.

²⁰³ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, X/11. “Tandem haec Statuta approbata extant successive, et respective ab Ordinariis loco rum pro tempore existentibus, ab Eminentissimo, et Reverend Card. Spinola tunc temporis In Regno Poloniae Nuntio Apostolico, nec non a Reverendissimis PP. Commissariis, ac Visitatoribus Bonaventura Klein, patre Manseuto Leporini Ordinis s. Francisci [...] de Observantia.”

this matter, explained this behavior as follows: “As to keep his power, on the advice of the Reformates, Fr. Joachim sought the protection of the Minister General of the Seraphic Order, and — despite the unaware and reluctant Marians serving in chaplaincies at the time — he voluntarily surrendered our Order to the Seraphic Order, when — using the private declaration of its Minister General — he incorporated us into his Order [...]. He subjected our Generals and introduced the obligation to bring Franciscan vicars to the Chapter into the Constitutions. To further the ruin of our Order, he even brought a friar (Reformate) to the Chapter to become the Superior again.”²⁰⁴ Today, it is very difficult to objectively assess these harsh accusations made against Fr. Joachim, even though his confrère, Fr. Casimir Wszyński, strongly and sharply criticized him, accusing him of acting to the detriment of the Marian Order in Rome and trying to position himself through various actions as its founder.²⁰⁵

While in Rome, Fr. Kozłowski obtained various privileges for the Marian Fathers. Thanks to his requests, twelve cardinals issued letters of recommendation for the Marians. Several Roman general superiors also delivered similar supporting letters.²⁰⁶ A significant fact is that these letters bear not even the slightest mention of Fr. Papczyński as the Founder of the Order or its existing superior general, Fr. Andrew Deszpot. Also, their presentation of the Marian Order and its beginnings is enigmatic. By contrast, first place is given to Fr. Joachim of *Sancta Anna* and his praise. During his stay in Rome, Joachim Kozłowski sought incorporation into the Order of Reformed Franciscans. This was the third incorporation into the same Order, achieved thirty years after the original one, granted by Br. Laurence, the minister general of the Reformates, on December 13, 1723. The act confirmed spiritual benefits previously given to the Marians. Still, most of all, it called the Marians to “obediently assist [...] the Ministers General of the Seraphic Order in constant obedience through fraternal love, which all their actions should confirm. [...] We also wish that you prove as the time comes, in the face of the father-visitor [...] your obedience due to us.” The

²⁰⁴ Listy, Candide Spourny's letter of 1777 to Father Gen. Raymond Nowicki; cf. letter of John Niezabitowski of Sept. 14, 1777.

²⁰⁵ Wszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 143-144, 163-164.

²⁰⁶ *Prot. Ord.* The said letters were preserved only as part of this document.

content of each subsequent incorporation act was similar, but the Marian Fathers became increasingly dependent on the Reformates with each new incorporation.²⁰⁷ The repeated call for obedience in the act of incorporation and the inclusion of a requirement in the Statutes for the Marian general to consult with the minister general of the Reformates in every important matter stifled many Marian initiatives. This is because, in every innovative matter, the general government had to consider whether they could undertake certain actions and were allowed to do this or that. Such a situation caused turmoil and generated opposition among some Marians. However, any resistance was effectively blocked during Chapters led by the Reformates by promulgating numerous disciplinary decrees. A fundamental and difficult question arises: if this relationship between the two institutions caused so much turmoil, rebellion, and division among the Marian Fathers, why was it so enduring and defended throughout almost the entire 18th century? The preserved archival materials provide little information on this matter. Fr. John Niezabitowski, in his report from Rome, informed the General Father that the Marians lived in fear and were afraid to address these issues officially.²⁰⁸ On the other hand, Fr. Candide Spourny explained this dependency on the Reformates in a broader context. He believed that “the friars [Reformates] have a reason to take pride in our Order, which has far more excellent and, by virtue of its original establishment, more noble goals, namely:

- a. Spreading devotion to the Immaculate Virgin.
- b. Assisting the souls of the faithful departed.
- c. Engaging in missions among the common people.
- d. Supporting the diocesan clergy in their tasks.

By fulfilling these goals, if we desired and could do so, we would be able to recommend our Order far better among the common people and the most important individuals. [...] But because we acknowledge their authority over us, they take pride in being the staunch defenders of the

²⁰⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 198. The first “*Supplex Libellus*” was given to Fr. Papczyński in 1691 by Fr. Charles of Varesio, vicar general. The second incorporation took place during the General Chapter of the Franciscans of Observance in 1699 and it was granted by Father Matthew of St. Stephen, Minister General of the Order. The third incorporation was granted on Dec. 13, 1723.

²⁰⁸ Listy, letters of Candide Spourny, 1, 3, 4, 6.

Immaculate Virgin.”²⁰⁹ From this text, one can infer that the Reformates attributed to themselves the charisms that were the specific goal, *signum distinctionis* of the Marian Order. One should also consider the material aspect, as the Reformat vicars and visitators were fairly compensated for their service. The significant prestige of these positions should not be underestimated, especially when an ordinary Franciscan, such as a guardian of a monastery, would come for a visitation. Even the Marian general government would show exceptional honor and respect, welcoming them on their knees and kissing their hand. However, it must be honestly acknowledged that many of the Franciscan visitators were zealous religious who felt responsible for the Marian Order and showed care for its development, the worthy life of its members, and the preservation of monastic discipline. Therefore, some Marian Fathers sought support from them, considering this dependency obvious, natural, and necessary even though both orders represented distinct spiritual schools, charisms, visions of apostolate, formation, and monastic discipline and observance. Unfortunately, there was a lack of tolerance and understanding of this distinctiveness.

First Steps towards Reforms

The approval of the Marians’ own Constitutions and their overcoming of the “dispersion,” that is, returning all members to their monasteries, followed by some legal, financial, and spiritual stability, filled many Marians with enthusiasm and hope for the development and internal consolidation of the Order. Marian historians expressed similar sentiments, positively assessing the changes. Georgio Navikevicius claimed that with the election of the new General Superior Andrzej Deszpot, “the Marian Order began to flourish.”²¹⁰ Even more optimistically, Stefan Sydry spoke about the rule of Fr. Deszpot, stating: “Truly, like a second Noah in the Ark, he awaited the cessation of the deluge of waters [...] amidst the waves of persecution and persecutors, and he was not ashamed of his hope. [...] And when our Noah [Deszpot] stepped down

²⁰⁹ Ibid, letter 1.

²¹⁰ Navikevicius, p. 228.



Left: the first seal of the Order; right: the Order's present seal.

from the provostry, it was only necessary to calm and expand the Congregation under the protection of the Immaculate Virgin Mary.²¹¹ To commemorate the victorious resolution of the conflict and as an act of dedication to the Mother of God, Andrew Deszpot also ordered a change in the seal of the Order. From then on, it was no longer a symbolic image of a dove with an olive branch but rather the image of the Immaculate Mary as an act of surrendering to her special care. Marians' secretary, Fr. Charles Hondlewski, meticulously recorded this fact.²¹²

In the spring of 1724, Joachim Kozłowski returned to Poland after managing Marian affairs in Rome. The culmination of the overall work

²¹¹ S. Sydry, O. *Stanisław*, p. 269.

²¹² LCVA, *Tabela generalis*, from Andrew Deszot's biographical note composed by Charles Hondlewski: "Cum enim [Deszpot] jam cessasset multorum adversariorum contra nostram Congregationem, tempestates, procellarum, sub sigillo Columbae cum ramo olivae valde est consolatus. Tale enim sigillum impromis datum fuit nostrae Marianae Congregationi a Ven. S. Dei Stanislaw Papczyński nostro Institutore, columba nimi nim cum ramo olivae, idque In signum spei emergendi esse procellis calumniarum hominum, et Se stabiliendi In Monte Sancto sub protectione Imm. Conc. B. V. M., ob. Guam etiam rationem ab hoc (?) tempore Congregatio nostra assumpsit Sigillum Imm. Conc. BVM, quo antierus non utebatur. Siquidem (?) finto officio A. R. P. Andreae Deszpot Praepositi Gen., tamquam post diluvium universale, jam amplius non erat necessaria ccolumba ex arca emittenda, nisi sub Titulo, et Protectione Imm. Conc. BVM. Congregatio nostra erat quiescenda et propaganda". Hondlewski goes on, describing Father Deszpot's merits for the Congregation as well as the prosperous growth of the Marian Order.

of reform and the restoration of unity within the Order was to be the General Chapter convened by the general minister of the Reformates for July 16 and 17, 1725, at the monastery in the Korabiew Forest.²¹³ Previously, the Marian Fathers had always requested the Reformates to send a vicar and visitator for each Chapter. This time, the general minister, in his letter notifying them about the Chapter, first reminded the Marians of “the confirmation of incorporation and subordination to the Seraphic Order of Saint Francis” and then appointed a vicar himself and specified his duties and extensive authority.²¹⁴ He wrote to the appointed vicar, Fr. Jakub Wolski: “We entrust you with full authority [...], so that together with the secretary and companions (*sic*) whom you choose, you may visit the monasteries and brethren. To strengthen those called, correct the erring, initiate processes, send to prison, and render judgments. Finally, to organize and advance everything according to the detailed norms of the *Statutes* recently approved by the Holy See. [...] We grant you an advisory and elective voice and, in important matters, also a decisive vote.” The letter concludes with a warning to the Marians about punishments and an appeal: “Let them also be obedient and submissive to you in all matters.”²¹⁵ It is easy to see that the powers and practical actions of the Reformat vicars and visitators were pervasive. They hindered the initiatives of the Marians and their creativity and left little room for independent Marian activities. Fr. John Niezabitowski bitterly complained in his letters about this excessive interference by the Reformat authorities, which hindered the development of the Marians.²¹⁶ Two days before the actual Chapter, fathers authorized to participate were invited to discuss matters concerning the Congregation. On July 16, following the proposal of Father Vicar and as a reward for the hardships endured and for obtaining the approval of the Marian Order, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski was elected as the superior general.²¹⁷ The Chapter’s main objective was the election of a new government for the Order, the adoption of new *Statutes* by the entire Congregation, and the approval of the reform work

²¹³ *Prot. Ord.*, 206-207 *Litterae*, die 13 Januarii 1725 Romae.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Listy*, J. Niezabitowski’s letter of Sept. 14, 1777.

²¹⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, 214.

undertaken. The Chapter secretary recorded: “All these directives of the Vicar were confirmed and accepted publicly before the community by all the Fathers entitled to vote, as evidenced by their signatures.”²¹⁸ On the orders of Father Vicar, the Chapter gathered all the chapter ordinances from 1702 to 1725. They were then compiled and included in the *Protocolum Ordinis*. For better understanding, the vicar ordered them to be translated into Polish and read aloud during mealtime four times a year. It should be noted that the Chapter decrees of 1725 were prepared by the vicar himself, not by the capitular fathers, as recorded by the secretary: “With the synopsis of assembled ordinances Father Vicar also included his modest directives, as follows [continuation of the decree content].”²¹⁹ The decrees consist of eight points. The first point is an exhortation to obedience to the general minister of the Franciscan Friars Minor and an order that “nothing should be changed, excluded, or diminished” in the *Statutes* without his knowledge and consent.²²⁰ Generally, the decrees can be divided into four ascetic decrees and four disciplinary decrees. They concern matters of poverty, fraternal love, care for the sick, choir prayers, and especially abuses in these disciplines. In these decrees, one can observe the genuine concern of Fr. Jakub Wolski, the vicar, for the Marian community, preserving their observance of religious practices and maintaining a healthy spirit. Also noteworthy is that all the eleven Marians participating in the Chapter signed these documents and added to their surname the title *frater* (brother) — not *pater* (father), as had been customary until then. The Marian Fathers would use this title all through the time of their dependence on the Reformed Franciscans. There is no evidence to establish whether this was done under pressure from the Reformates or as an independent initiative of the Marians in an attempt to please the Reformates.

²¹⁸ *Prot. Ord.*, 215-216. “Has omnes Ordinationes Comissionantes In publica communitate perlectas omnes Patres vocales confirmarunt admiserant In cuius testimonium nomina sua apposuerunt.”

²¹⁹ *Prot. Ord.*, 214. “Unde Villas Sinopticae Collectas mandavit legere quatuor vicibus per Annum tempore mensae communis. Suasque ipsos modicas adiunxit Ordinationes ut sequuntur.”

²²⁰ *Cap. Gen.*, 1725/1.

4

FATHER CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI:
STABILIZATION
AND
STRENGTHENING
OF THE CONGREGATION,
1723–1755

Moderator of the New Generation of Marians: Novice Master, Teacher, Educator; Cooperating with the Grace of Vocation

The ways and implementation of human vocation are quite inexplicable and astonishing. Stanislaus Papczyński and Casimir Wyszyński are very different figures, yet how similar were the beginnings of their Marian service. When Fr. Papczyński left the Piarists, bishops offered him various ecclesiastical offices that could have provided a suitable income. However, he declined, exposing him to the bishops' disapproval. He firmly believed that Divine Providence was pointing him toward a different purpose. He wrote: "[...] that divine vision, which had been engraved upon my soul regarding the foundation of this Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., impelled me to this goal."¹ He chose to be poor, persecuted, and misunderstood rather than comfortable and honored because he trusted that such was God's will for him. Casimir Wyszyński acted similarly. Since he came from a wealthy gentry family, the doors of many affluent, reputable, and prestigious Orders, where his relatives who would undoubtedly support him already were, stood open before him. However, he chose a humble order with only four modest wooden monasteries, which, from a human perspective, was in a state of material and spiritual ruin. He chose the Order of the Marians because he believed that Divine Providence led him on the path of Marian vocation that began with God's extraordinary intervention. He wrote about his inner motivation for joining the Marian Order: "Like a second Saul I came into this Congregation, attacked by my relatives [...] after Our Lady said: 'Francis, why are you persecuting me?' Not daring to resist, I had to accept the habit in Rome."² The road of his Marian vocation, prepared by Divine Providence, began with his meeting with Fr. Joachim Kozłowski.

¹ S. Papczyński, *Foundation of the House of Recollections*, 6, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 904-905.

² Wyszyński, *Stróż*, 322; cf. Zygmunt Proczek, *Testament nadziei ojca Casimira Wyszyńskiego*, in: *Wierny mariańskiej drodze*, Licheń Stary 2007, 15.

Fr. Kozłowski, while attending to the affairs of the Order in Rome, accidentally encountered a young 22-year-old pilgrim named Francis Wyszyński,³ who, due to a severe illness, could not continue his pilgrimage to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela. From the Spanish border, he returned to Rome, where he obtained a papal dispensation from his vow. His pledge to pilgrimage was replaced by an obligation to visit Roman churches and perform works of mercy.⁴ During their encounter, Fr. Kozłowski complained about Francis's brother Joseph, who had caused some trouble for the Marian Order. Moved by this unpleasant account, Francis spontaneously responded: "Indeed, I want to repair what my brother has spoiled; I humbly ask you, Reverend Father, for the habit."⁵ Fr. Kozłowski was not quick to accept even such a willing candidate; he wanted first to discern whether this was a genuine calling or just a momentary exaltation. Therefore, he put Francis on trial for about three months at the Franciscan monastery of *Ara Coeli*. Also, Fr. Kozłowski had to be cautious for personal reasons related to Joseph Wyszyński's departure from the Marians, which had caused some resentment. Besides, the Wyszyńskis were not kindly disposed toward the Marians. Three Marian monasteries were located within a few dozen kilometers of their ancestral residence, so they heard about all the disputes,

³ Casimir Wyszyński has been the subject of numerous popular and scholarly works. A rich source of knowledge is the monumental work by the late Boleslaus Jakimowicz, based on extensive sources, so called *Positio* (Rome, 1986). It was published for the purposes of beatification and deals with the life and virtues of Fr. Wyszyński. Significant contributions in this field have been made by the Marian, Fr. Zygmunt Proczek, whose most important work is the translation and compilation of Casimir Wyszyński's writings called *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów*, [Guardian of the Marian spiritual heritage], Warszawa–Stockbridge 2004. He also wrote *Najstarsze świadectwa o Słudze Bożym o. Casimiru Wyszyńskim* [The oldest testimonies about the Servant of God Father Casimir Wyszyński], Warszawa — Stockbridge 2005; and *Pilgrimage to the ends of the earth*, Stockbridge 2011. Other publications include: Wacław Makoś, Zygmunt Proczek [Editors], *Letters of Father Casimir's of St. Józef Wyszyński, Puszca Mariańska 2002*; Janusz Kumala [ed.], *Vocation and mission. Servant of God Father Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755)*, Licheń 2005; Janusz Kumala [ed.], *Faithful to the Marian Way*, Licheń 2007; The bibliography was prepared by Janusz Kumala, *Bibliography. The life, spirituality and activity of the Servant of God Father Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755)*, in: *Faithful to the Marian Way. Materials from the historical and theological symposium on the 250th anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Father Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755)*, (Balsamão, October 24, 2005) Licheń Stary 2007, pp. 110-115.

⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 32; *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 53-54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie and Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, s. 23. 54.

falling-outs, and turmoil that plagued the Order then. The Wyszyński family, from which three of Francis' uncles, his mother's brothers, and one of his brothers belonged to the Piarists, was concerned about Father Papczyński's stance, as he called for a profound reform of the Order. As Francis himself stated, the reluctance of the Wyszyński family towards Papczyński and the Marians stemmed from their concern and worry for the Piarist Order.⁶

Having recognized Francis' goodwill, piety, and extraordinary zeal, Fr. Kozłowski admitted him to the Order on November 18, 1723, at the church of St. Stanislaus in Rome. He clothed him in the Marian habit and bestowed the name Casimir of St. Joseph upon him.⁷ The attitude of the Wyszyński family toward the Marians underwent a complete transformation, and from then on, they were very well-disposed towards them. Casimir Wyszyński himself noted this change.⁸ "The one who writes this now [Wyszyński] wonders but admits that his whole natural family was very opposed to the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus, impeded his Institute and contested it in various ways. [...] When [Casimir Wyszyński] joined that Institute, his whole family turned into the kindest friends of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, became great advocates of the Venerable Servant of God Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary and supported his cause."⁹ On March 19, 1724, Casimir began his novitiate in the Korabiew Forest. In the novitiate, he stood out for his zeal in observing the Rule and Constitutions and his life of prayer and asceticism. However, this exposed him to mistreatment and harassment from his brethren, who subjected him to various hardships.¹⁰ Casimir also distinguished himself by his courage in addressing Fr. Kozłowski, the superior in the Korabiew Forest, regarding his lack of adherence to the Rule, love for one's neighbor, and a too lax way of life. Witnessing various abuses in the formation of the novices and wanting to eliminate them, he secretly asked his brother Michael Wyszyński to intervene from Rome, which was an audacious

⁶ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 145.

⁷ *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 53n.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 108.

¹⁰ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 46-47.

move.¹¹ In response to the request, Fr. Jakub Wolski, a Reformat, arrived at the Korabiew Forest for a visitation. He established an order in the novitiate and the monastery and appointed two Reformates, one as the novice master and the other as the lecturer for the clerics.¹²

Joachim Kozłowski tried to prevent Casimir from making his profession and remove him from the Marian Order: "Unjustly, he prolonged my admission to the profession [...]. I had my novitiate extended for over half a year. I had to press him to admit me to the profession; I invited my parents and brothers to my profession in the Korabiew Forest. When they arrived and brought what was necessary for the kitchen and cellar for this occasion, Father Joachim, unwillingly, had to accept me into the profession."¹³ Thanks to this maneuver, on March 19, 1725, Casimir Wyszyński made his solemn vows. By inviting important guests whom Joachim Kozłowski did not dare to oppose, he presented Kozłowski with a *fait accompli*. Kozłowski probably sensed a future threat in this novice. He was afraid of competition from a young, educated priest. Casimir Wyszyński was familiar with both the virtues and flaws of Fr. Kozłowski. He spent several months with him in Rome, traveled with him to Poland, and repeatedly admonished him for his selfishness and criticized him for his unfaithfulness. Two weeks after taking his vows, Wyszyński received the four minor orders. He resisted Fr. Kozłowski, who wanted to ordain him as a priest immediately after completing the novitiate. However, under Kozłowski's pressure, after only a year of preparatory studies (*studium domesticum*), Casimir received priestly ordination in Warsaw on April 29, 1726. Unfortunately, Fr. Kozłowski hindered Casimir from pursuing his studies, as Casimir complained: "He wanted to make me an ignoramus and did not think about studies for me and others; he assigned me to ordination. [...] I insisted on them. It is not fitting to be a priest without studies, and it is dangerous to undertake

¹¹ Onufry Mysłkowski, *Dalszy ciąg Przydatku do Kronik Braci Mniejszych św. Franciszka [...] od roku 1772 r. i dalej następne czasy i lata*, Warszawa 1806, p. 3.

¹² *Świadectiono Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 24.

¹³ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 163; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 61. "Ad professionemmittere procrastinabat, quamvis vota favorabilia habebam, ita ut plus quam dimidium anni ultra tempus novitiatus expectabam". According to the testimonies of Fathers Alexis Fischer and Isidore Taudt, they confirmed that Kozłowski did not want to allow Wyszyński to make his profession. See *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 48-49.

hearing confessions without proper knowledge. So, I had to cleverly lead him to organize our studies.”¹⁴

Educator of the New Generation of Marians

Despite numerous responsibilities, the young priest, Fr. Casimir, deepened his theological studies from 1726 to 1728 while residing in the Korabiew Forest. He pursued these studies under the guidance of Marian priests and the theology lecturer, a Reformat, Fr. Felicjan Szadkowski.¹⁵ Since the previous master, Fr. Leporini, recognized great spiritual and intellectual qualities in the young religious, he requested that Fr. Casimir be entrusted with the responsibilities of the novice master and theology lecturer. In 1727, Fr. Kozłowski appointed Wyszynski as the master of novices, and in 1728, the General Chapter entrusted him with this role while also appointing him as the vice-president of the monastery in the Korabiew Forest and the secretary of the Order.¹⁶ His appointment as novice master was unique in the history of the Marians because the Marian Constitutions of 1723 required the novice master to be about 36 years old and at least (*sic*) 10 years into his religious profession, and to be “distinguished by his knowledge, prudence, communal life and religious practices as well as endowed with other virtues.”¹⁷ Yet, Fr. Casimir was only 27 years old and three years into his religious profession. The chapter’s decision was certainly influenced by the small number of religious, especially those prepared to lead the novitiate. However, the more significant reason for this choice, as Fr. Isidore Taudt attested, was its conviction “of Father Casimir’s many virtues and talents as well as his education, sufficient for leading the novices on the spiritual path.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p.163.

¹⁵ O. Mysłowski, *Dalszy ciąg Przydatku do Kronik*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 221.

¹⁷ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, Cap I/5.

¹⁸ Decretum [...] Canonizationis Servi Dei Casimiri a S. Joseph Wyszynski. Sacerdotis Professi Clericorum Regularium Marianorum... (1700-1755). Positio “Super dubbio”, Romae 1779. Isidore Taudt testified: “Electiones [1728] probant abunde Servum Dei Casimirum jam tunc praeditum fuisse praeclaris vitutibus ac sufficiente scientia ad dirigendos in via spirituali novitios”.

Casimir Wyszyński occupied a leading place in the history of the Marian Fathers in the difficult "Saxon times."¹⁹ He was a charismatic and outstanding figure, the main organizer of the religious life within the Marian Order, which was still searching for its path. He initiated an internal reform within the Order. He was a devout and active individual with excellent connections to influential noble families and clergy. He was well aware that it would be difficult to reform the older generation of secularized religious who had succumbed to the negative influences of the Saxon era and had been forced to return from parishes. Their attitudes did not contribute to a good fraternal atmosphere within the Order. Therefore, he emphasized the formation of the younger generation, especially during their novitiate and through their studies, and he diligently ensured their proper education. In shaping the young Marian priests, one can see the realization of a program that he wanted to instill in them, which can be summarized in the following words: things are not good now, but do not be scandalized; let your human ideal and model of behavior be the Founder, and let the Most Holy Virgin Mary be your Patroness and Guide. Through his heroic love and faithfulness to God, as well as by the example of his own life, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński contributed to raising the spiritual life of the Marians. His concern was the spiritual stability and development of the Order, the promotion of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the dissemination of knowledge about the Founder, and efforts towards his beatification. These priorities filled his life and guided his actions. With his whole heart and will, Casimir Wyszyński strived to shape young Marian priests into devoted religious dedicated to Mary and prudent apostles in the Church. He often encountered difficulties and misunderstandings in his formative work. Some of his confrères, who had lost much of the monastic spirit, posed obstacles, especially Fr. Kozłowski, who had a different, more relaxed conception of formation. As a result, Kozłowski often sent Fr. Wyszyński to parish work, diverting him from his duties as novice master.²⁰

¹⁹ The Saxon times (1697-1763) refer to the years of the reign of two kings from the Saxon dynasty, Augustus II and Augustus III. This period marked a political crisis in Poland, which was dominated by Saxon and Russian forces, and the beginning of the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

²⁰ Fr. Wyszyński complained, "After completing my studies, Kozłowski appointed me as the master of novices, but he hindered their education. Instead of overseeing them, I was

Wyszyński had a long-term, well-thought-out, and prepared program for the healing and reform of the Marian Order. Above all, he emphasized providing a solid and comprehensive formation for novices and clerics. He sought to instill and reinforce in them the healthy evangelical principles of monastic life, setting a heroic example himself. He diligently worked to educate at least a few Marian priests who would lead the future formation of Marian youth and be an evangelical leaven of spiritual renewal. His situation within the Order was not easy during that time. He constantly faced insurmountable obstacles. He was not always understood or accepted by his superiors and was not always respected. There were even instances where he faced persecution from those under his authority. Despite these challenges, he remained faithful to his mission of revitalizing and developing the Marian Order, restoring monastic discipline, and upholding the ideals of communal life. Unfortunately, few records about his three-year service in the novitiate have been preserved.

During 1729-1730, the misunderstanding and opposition against Fr. Casimir's program and activities were expressed through solid resistance from some Marian priests, as evidenced in various documents. The most severe testimony was presented by Michael, Fr. Casimir's own brother, who wrote that "outdated evil among the veterans [Marian priests who revolted] came to the fore, and they began to persecute the young priest, seeking ways to deprive him of his life."²¹ However, it should be noted that Michael Wyszyński's statement, in light of the documents and especially Fr. Casimir's own accounts, is not credible. Fr. Casimir, faced with insurmountable obstacles in implementing his reform program, sought help in Rome. He asked his brother Michael to intervene with the minister general of the Reformates to obtain a summons for himself

constantly pulled away by him to work in parishes. I often opposed him in his ventures that were not appropriate for the religious order." Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 163-164.

²¹ *Świadectiono Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 25; Isidore Taudt stated that Father Casimir went to Rome: "propter persecutiones a suis Romam abiit", but also "propter stabilendum Ordinem suum", *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 78; Father Alexis Fischer also testified that the reform of religious life undertaken by Father Casimir was unsuccessful due to the decisive resistance of his confrères. For this reason Father Casimir had to leave Poland. "Cum nec hoc modo [...] desideratae In Religiosis perfectionis intentum consequi posset, et jam pene vitae insidias experiretur, cum dilatandae etiam Religionis arderet zelo, procuratis obedientiis a Ministro Generali Ord. S. Francisci Romam se contulit cum Fratre Hyacyntho." *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 74.

and permission to travel to Rome. In the spring of 1730, Fr. Wyszynski left Poland and, accompanied by his Marian confrère, Br. Hiacynth set out on the journey to Rome.²²

The Time to Repair and Build: Under Control of the Reformed Franciscans

Although the Marians had in their Order's title the phrase *Parochis in cura animarum [...] suffragantium*, the implementation of this task was impeded by both the Reformed Franciscans and some of Marians themselves, who had received their formation in the penitential-eremitic spirit of the Korabiew Forest monastery. Chapter 11 of the Constitutions approved in 1723, *On Christian Doctrine and the Missions*, inspired optimism, as it gave the Marians a wide opportunity for apostolic work, especially in instructing the people: "They shall instruct simple folk, working in their own and parish churches, in villages and cities."²³ However, shortly afterward, the Chapter of 1728, led by Fr. Antoni Rudzieński, a Reformat, passed a decree that negated the chapter *On Missions* and greatly restricted the Marians' opportunities for pastoral work by the Marians in parishes. The duration of postings to chaplaincies and parishes was limited to a maximum of two weeks,²⁴ and every Marian undertaking such ministry was required to adhere to various restrictions, behaviors, and admonitions directed towards him. It is important to emphasize that these limitations were caused by the clear concern of the vicar for the spiritual well-being of the Marians. While serving as chaplains and parish priests, many of them were not observing the monastic observance and were adopting a secular lifestyle, as mentioned in the vicar's decree. According to the analysis of the Chapter's protocols, it was found that only three decrees were developed by the capitular

²² *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 77-80.

²³ *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, VI/1.

²⁴ *Prot. Ord.*, 220, "Licet per Statuta concessum est in subsidium Parochorum missis morari per tres menses, cum tamen ex hoc gravia emergunt mala, proprietates, divagationes, ebrietates, inoboedientiae etc. limitamus ut nisi concedatur in subsidio Parochorum commorari ad duas hebdomadas. Quod si Reverendus Parochus indigerit ulteriori servitio [...] datur illi sacerdos alius tantum ad duas hebdomadas".

fathers, while the vicar prepared fifteen. He demanded their approval, arguing that he “had absolute power in all things and that the renewal [of these decrees] aimed at mending the declining discipline; he announced these decrees at the Chapter session. [...] He insisted on the acceptance of these rulings. To ensure the greater credibility and consolidation of all this, the venerable Father Vicar demanded that all fathers [...] place their hands on these Statutes, which are as follows.”²⁵ The Chapter minutes go on to list his fifteen decrees. Although justifiable, the decree on limiting pastoral work, the development of resolutions, and their imposition by the vicar did not contribute to the reconciliation of the rebellious Marians with the Franciscan authorities. It is worth noting that Fr. Rudzieński, as the vicar, showed great concern for raising the monastic discipline among the Marians and made significant efforts to reconcile conflicts and strengthen the monastic spirit. His decrees called for greater attention to the organization of studies and the proper formation of novices. They urged participation in retreats, care for sick confrères, and care for their own spiritual life. Several times, they address the issue of poverty, especially unfair treatment of the confrères and various abuses in this regard.²⁶

These decrees were overshadowed by the severe penalties the vicar threatened the Marians with for non-compliance. For example, a religious was to be put in a dark cell, flogged, and treated as an apostate for even a brief absence from the monastery²⁷ without the superior’s consent. Drunkenness was punished by a “lengthy, even a year-long, detention in a low, cramped, confined room; with no other sustenance but bread and water.”²⁸ There is also mention of other humiliating punishments. These were drastic measures used in the Franciscan Order to maintain discipline and exercise the friars in humility.²⁹ Fr. Papczyński’s legislation, although he was a zealous man, had nothing to do with a rigorous approach. He appreciated the importance of mortification and penance in subduing the flesh and temptations but advised their prudent

²⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 218. This report is missing from *Prot. Rasn*, pp. 48-49.

²⁶ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 218-220.

²⁷ *Cap. Gen.*, 1728/7.

²⁸ *Cap. Gen.*, 1728/8.

²⁹ A. B. Sroka, *Prawo i życie polskich reformatów*, Kraków 1875.

application. Similarly, the regulations codified by the Marians themselves followed this spirit. On the other hand, the decisions of the Franciscan vicar, while often stemming from his zeal, deepened the Marians' mistrust towards the Reformates and elicited resistance "as not originating from our own source." The opposition of the Marians was based on many factors, sometimes even the Reformates' trivial actions, but also on the lack of dialogue, the treatment of the Marians by the vicars from a position of superiority, their distancing from Marian heritage and the person of the Founder, as well as the Marian past. The Chapters' decrees and the Franciscan vicars' letters from 1702 to 1731 did not mention the Founder or his name. Instead, they frequently referred to Saint Francis and the Franciscan spirituality. When the Reformates spoke about the Marians, they used the term "our Order" to refer to them. The Chapter of 1728 introduced a strict directive: "Under the penalty of mortal sin, may the choir function as it, both in terms of communal prayers and in terms of the canonical hours recited in the choir, day and night."³⁰ Meanwhile, the choir was obligatory in monastic and mendicant orders. As a clerical order, the Marians rebelled against being burdened with choir duties. During meals and recreation time, the Marians were required to engage in reading, which, according to Fr. Papczyński, consisted of excerpts from the Holy Scriptures, the *Rule of Life*, rubrics from the Missal and Breviary, the book *The Imitation of Christ*, and other ascetic works. By contrast, the Reformates assigned for reading the *Franciscan Chronicles*, *Speculum of St. Bonaventure*, *Chronicae s. Francisci*, *Accademia Pietatis*, and other works by Franciscan authors.³¹

These were sometimes trivial matters, but they stirred up turmoil among certain Marians and raised questions about why the Founder's directives were not being considered. They also revealed unresolved controversies before and during the "Rostkovian dispersion." The religious who were dissatisfied with the decision of 1722 by Bishop Peter Tarło concerning the Marians joined the opposition against the Reformates. The internal division in the Order that occurred in 1715-1722 and the

³⁰ Cap. Gen., 1728/1.

³¹ Father Papczyński's recommendations for reading included: *Norma Vitae*, VI/2/5; S. Papczyński, *A Letter to the Marians in Korabiew Hermitage*, 6, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 921; same author, *Ordinances for Korabiew Hermitage*, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 944-945. As to Franciscans' reading see *Horologium marianorum*, pp. 42-43. Cf. S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 84.

problems that had troubled it returned with even greater force in 1728-1733. This time, however, there was no such strong leader as Fr. Matthew Krajewski, the superior general during the Rostkovian dispersion. There was growing confusion and division within the Order. It became apparent that not all Marians accepted the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* or the recently approved Marian Constitutions (1723). It was believed that the changes in this codification were inconsistent with the vision of the Order passed down by the Founder. Strong accusations were made in this regard: "The Rule, recently prepared by a religious, late Fr. Joachim, superior general, and also by other superiors in the Order, is against the form and original intention of Father Stanislaus' Rule, because it conforms rather to the Seraphic Rule and Constitutions of the venerable Reformed Franciscans [...] it incorporated us into them without our involvement."³² On February 11, 1730, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, the main architect of the incorporation with the Reformates, drowned in the Vistula River. Opponents of the incorporation considered his death to be a just punishment from God for his betrayal and selling the Marians out to the Franciscans. Fr. Teixeira interpreted it in the following way: "His [Father Joachim's] death saddened the religious as his brethren, but at the same time, they breathed a sigh of relief, being freed from obstacles to conducting studies on the virtues and true holiness of their founder, Father Stanislaus."³³ Upon completing their novitiate and becoming aware of the state of the Order, some Marians refused to make their vows and decided to leave, stating that they wanted to be Marians, not Reformates. They observed that the institute founded by Fr. Stanislaus no longer existed, and its identity had been removed, "est abrogatum."³⁴ They believed that "the alteration of the very essence and charism of the Institute also altered the responsibilities established by the Father

³² BUViL, Doc. Viln., F4-A166, (1733, loose documents). This is an extensive file that contains many documents and information regarding disputes and misunderstandings among the Marians in the first three decades of the 18th century. The cause of these conflicts is attributed to the subordination to the Reformates and the pro-Reformate attitude of Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. It is a collection of documents (without pagination), chapter reports, statements from Marians within the Order, and the reasons behind these issues.

³³ Teixeira, n. 234; Navikevicius, p. 231; cf. Wyszynski, *Stróż*, p. 135, n. 110.

³⁴ BUViL, Doc. Viln., F4-A166, (1733). "Institutum hoc sub titulo Stanislai primi Fundatoris est abrogatum."

Founder.”³⁵ Some Marians, faithful sons of Fr. Papczyński, greatly desired a return to his legacy, to live following the norms and charism of the Order as indicated by the Founder. Since they couldn’t achieve this, they rebelled. The division was profound and painful. Disputes and unrest affected even the monastery known for its strict way of life in the Korabiew Hermitage. Fr. Taudt writes about this, and it is worth quoting his account: “At that time, in this convent (Korabiew), there was a certain relaxation among some religious, whom the Servant of God (Casimir Wyszyński) [...] forcefully obligated to observe the Statutes of the Order. Because of this, they opposed him and harassed him. The Servant of God, through his brother Michael [sought permission] and went to the Holy See, where he obtained a decree [...] for the correction of irregularities in our Order, which he accomplished.”³⁶ This account referred to those Marians who were compelled to return from chaplaincies to monasteries and expressed their dissatisfaction quite strongly. The dissenting voices also included the Marians, who opposed the incorporation into the Reformates. Hence, disputes arose, spiritual malaise set in, discipline declined, and there was a lack of growth. The number of Marians still did not exceed thirty brethren. Even the superior generals could not overcome the situation. It was then that the young priest Casimir Wyszyński took the initiative.

Father Casimir Wyszyński’s Activities in Rome and Victory over the Crisis: 1730–1733

As mentioned earlier, Fr. Casimir, through his brother Michael, a benefactor of the Marian Order,³⁷ sought an invitation from the minister general of the Reformates to come to Rome.³⁸ In the spring of

³⁵ Ibid: „Mutata substantia Instituti mutatur est obligatio Institutentis.”

³⁶ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 79; see PAPW, f. 98r.

³⁷ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 18–19. Michael Gabriel Raphael Wyszyński, the biological brother of Casimir (the Marian), was the fourth child of Casimir John Wyszyński and Jadwiga née Zawadzka. He was a wealthy man known for his great love and compassion for the poor. After the death of his wife, he resided near the church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw. He provided financial support to Casimir and treated him with special kindness. See *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 17–19.

³⁸ *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 25; *Świadectwo*

1730, Father Casimir, along with Br. Hiacynth Wasilewski traveled to the Eternal City. However, the Marian documents remain silent about this journey, the preparations, permissions, Fr. Casimir's activities in Rome, and his plan for the Congregation's recovery. We only find a brief mention in the *Protocollum [Balsamanensis] Ordinis Marianus*, which speaks of the support given to Fr. Casimir's mission by Fr. Joseph Królikowski, the then superior general, and Fr. Bernard of St. Nicholas Ostrowski, the future general.³⁹ Wyszyński had a well-thought-out plan for his time in Rome and a program of reforms. The following tasks were the primary purpose of his trip:

1. To seek a "remedy for healing the Order from division."
2. To counteract the "schemes and machinations" of Father Kozłowski in Rome.
3. To strive to establish a new monastery and acquire a church in Rome.
4. To aim for the "expansion of the Order," which involved seeking international vocations and opening up this small Marian community to the world.

These tasks were highly beneficial and necessary for the Order, and they all served one overarching goal: healing. Their implementation required zeal, fortitude, numerous connections, diplomacy, and significant financial resources. Unfortunately, the complete lack of information about Fr. Casimir's stay in Rome from 1730 to 1733 poses a great difficulty in delving deeper into this topic. Boleslaus Jakimowicz argues that this silence was an attempt to suppress and cover up the painful years and wounds of the Marian Order.⁴⁰ Indeed, one crucial motive for Fr. Casimir's journey to Rome was the machinations of Fr. Kozłowski, which were causing increasing destruction to the Order. That is how Casimir Wyszyński presented it in the documents: "Seeing

Aleksego Fischera, in: *ibid.*, p. 56; On the other hand, the Marian historian Józef Pietuszek claims that Fr. Casimir Wyszyński prepared his invitation and trip to Rome in complete secrecy, only in agreement with the Reformates, out of fear of strong opposition from the Marians. See Józef Pietuszek, *Wyszyński January Franciszek*, in: Romuald Gustaw [Ed.], *Hagiografia Polska. Słownik bio-bibliograficzny*, t. 2, Poznań 1972, p. 615.

³⁹ *Prot. Bals.*, p. 95.

⁴⁰ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 82.

that [Kozłowski] intended to transform our Order and make himself the founder while concealing the memory of the true Founder, I had to go to Rome to prevent all these novelties. He tried to hinder me in every way, but he did not achieve the intended result. In Rome [...], he secretly tried to arrange documents for our Congregation that would have caused great confusion in the Order [...]. However, God revealed his machinations in Rome, and I thwarted them.”⁴¹ We do not know of any specific efforts made by Fr. Kozłowski toward the transformation of the Marian Order, nor his concept of its transformation, which he wanted to carry out with help from the Reformed Franciscans. The most obvious motive for his actions was to fulfill his desire to become the “Patriarch and Founder of the Order”⁴² and the consequent pursuit of that goal. However, Fr. Casimir thwarted all these plans during his stay in Rome.

One important task for which Casimir Wyszyński had authorization from Fr. General Joseph of Jesus and Mary Królikowski was to obtain a foundation in Rome for the Marians.⁴³ Fr. Casimir Wyszyński was well aware of the importance of this mission. From the moment he arrived in Rome, he sought opportunities to acquire a church where a monastery could be established. This would provide hope for internationalizing the Marians, increasing vocations to the young community, and creating opportunities for formation for prospective candidates. Several Italians and Spaniards were already expressing interest in joining the Order.⁴⁴ Equipped with the document from the Father General authorizing him to take all necessary actions for the good of the Order, Casimir Wyszyński began his search with confidence.⁴⁵ On July 9, 1731, he signed a contract with Marquis Christopher Cenci, granting the Marians the right to take over the chapel of Our Lady “dei Cerchi,” along with the adjacent buildings intended to serve as a monastery. In the contract, Fr.

⁴¹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 164.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 117-119, 123, 125-126, 143-144, 162-165, 227. These texts speak of Fr. Joachim's rebellious attitude towards Fr. Papczyński and his directives, as well as his activities after Fr. Papczyński's death.

⁴³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 82.

⁴⁴ B. Jakimowicz, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 83. [Authorized] “a Superioribus Ordinis ad conficiendum et perficiendum quem cumque contractum nomine et favore ejusdem Ordinis”.

Casimir committed himself to constructing a new church and monastery at his own expense (*propriis expensis*) in that location. On July 16, 1731, in the presence of witnesses, he signed an official notarial deed for the takeover of the chapel of Madonna dei Cerchi⁴⁶ and solemnly took possession of the chapel. He confirmed this act with a symbolic gesture of touching the chapel walls and receiving the keys, with which he opened and closed the main doors.⁴⁷ The concluded contract was highly advantageous for the Marians. The chapel was transferred to them for perpetual use, for which the Marians were to pay the Marquis fifteen Roman scudi annually. However, due to the lack of consent from the general government of the Marians to bear such high costs for leasing the church, as well as the dampness of the place and unhealthy climate, Fr. Wyszyński was obliged by the general council of the Marians in Poland to cancel the agreement with the Marquis after two years.⁴⁸ It appears that another significant reason was the lack of understanding of the importance of this undertaking by the superiors in Poland and the absence of a collaborator on-site in Rome.⁴⁹ Although Br. Hyacinth Wasilewski was with Fr. Wyszyński in Rome, a clergyman was needed to maintain the institution, facilitate its growth, and attract vocations. Due to the lack of a church and monastery in Rome, candidates for the Order decided to withdraw. After the termination of the contract with the chapel's owners, Fr. Casimir turned to Cardinal Albani,⁵⁰ the protector of the Kingdom of Poland at the Holy See, seeking assistance in finding a more suitable location for the Marians. Initially, the Cardinal supported Fr. Wyszyński's efforts. However, as a staunch supporter of the Saxon dynasty on the Polish throne, when, after the death of

⁴⁶ Contratto per l'uso Della Cappella Madonna dei Cerchi In Roma da parte del Servo di Dio 1731-1733, *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 90-96.

⁴⁷ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 59.

⁴⁸ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 84-85, 96-101. In the document canceling the agreement, Christopher Cenci cited two reasons: the lack of payment for two years as stipulated in the contract and the non-ratification of the agreement by the general government, which was supposed to take place within four months of the agreement with Father Casimir. Also see *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 56-57.

⁴⁹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 85.

⁵⁰ Cardinal Anibal Albani, appointed as the protector of the Kingdom of Poland in 1712, was a supporter of the Saxons for the Polish throne, contrary to the position of Pope Clement XII and the majority of the Polish clergy. He promised support to Fr. Wyszyński in settling the Marians in Rome.

Augustus II, most of the electors chose Stanislaus Leszczyński as the King of Poland on September 12, 1733 instead of a Saxon candidate, the Cardinal expressed his immense dissatisfaction towards the Poles and "having incurred the loathing of the Poles, he withdrew his kindness and promises to Father Casimir."⁵¹

The primary goal of Father Casimir's stay in Rome, however, was to "seek a remedy for the division in the Order" (*corrighendas devietates in religious nostra*).⁵² Although he was not a supporter of excessive ties with the Reformates, in his search for healing, he relied on their Order. According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, Fr. Casimir established a course of action with leading members of the Marians, Fr. Andrew Deszpot and Fr. Bernard Ostrowski.⁵³ While in Rome, he met several times with the minister general of the Franciscans and, working out the procedure, asked him to send a visitor with special powers. On March 10, 1731, Fr. Roch Chełchowski, a Reformat, councilor, and superior of the convent in Biała Podlaska, was appointed at the suggestion of Fr. Wyszyński.⁵⁴ He was granted extensive and extraordinary powers *cum plenitudine potestatis*, which meant the power to inspect the Marian religious houses, check brethren in the government and ordinary members of the Marian community, admonish, conduct trials, pass verdicts and penal sentences, and punish the religious by imprisonment, and to issue whatever decrees he deemed suitable and appropriate for the regulation, renewal, and growth of the Congregation.⁵⁵ Roch Chełchowski began his canonical visitation in the Marian Order in May and scheduled the General Chapter in the "Korabiew Hermitage on June 14."⁵⁶ On the first day of the Chapter, Roch Chełchowski imposed a penalty on Fr. Joseph Królikowski, who stepped down as the Marian Order's superior

⁵¹ Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 25.

⁵² *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 77.

⁵³ Wyszyński, *Positio*, p. 79. "De praemissis edoctus fui ex relatione patrum nostrorum nempe Andrea Deszpot et Bernardo Ostrowski, tum ex lectione dicta obedientiae Servo Dei indultae."

⁵⁴ *Prot. Korab.*, p. 3; *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 224-225.

⁵⁵ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 224. "Cum plenitudine potestatis, Conventus ac Domus religiosas, fratrem, tam in capite, quam in membris visistandi, monendi, corrigendi, processus formandi, sententias ferendi, carceribus mancipandi et castigandi, juxta exigentiam commutandi, etc. etiam praestandi et ordinandi quae ad priorem instituti praefatae Congregationis instauratione, conservationem et incrementum necessario iudicaverit."

⁵⁶ *Cap. Gen.*, p. 83.

general. Chelchowski accused Królikowski of allowing several Marians to engage in pastoral work in parishes for nearly a year, contrary to the regulations set by the 1728 Chapter.⁵⁷ It is evident that the vicar, Fr. Roch Chelchowski, had a strong sense of the importance of his office and perhaps did not give much consideration to the Marians, whose discontent was aroused by such excessive use of penalties.

The Chapter passed eight decrees, four of which concerned penalties for various misdemeanors. Other decrees urged the superiors to take greater care of the monasteries' libraries and church equipment. They also imposed on superiors the obligation to obtain seals for each monastery. An important request was made to celebrate a solemn "anniversary service for the deceased confrères because it has not been done thus far."⁵⁸ It seems that despite the title of the Order, "Helping parish priests and the deceased," assistance even to their own deceased confrères was neglected at that time. To achieve "risanamento, pacificazione, e sviluppo" (healing, pacification, and development of the Order), Fr. Roch Chelchowski resorted in the first place to disciplinary measures. Drastic punitive decrees called *Canones paenales*⁵⁹ were prepared. Both

⁵⁷ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 226. The text regarding the punishment is unclear, but it seems that Fr. Joseph Królikowski temporarily lost the right to participate in General Chapters.

⁵⁸ *Prot. Ord.*, p. 227.

⁵⁹ Penal decrees were not included in the documents of the Chapter of 1731, but they were added to the Marian Ritual entitled *Horologium Marianum*, Varsaviae, 1732, pp. 54-58. We provide here a few of the most characteristic severe decrees: 1. Rebelles Praeposito vel superiori locali pertinaciter obediētes eisdem verbum seu conviti malitiose cum scandalo Fratrum et alio proferentes contumeliose Domi, vel extra eosdem laedentes, poena carceris, iuiunii, in aqua et pane, disciplina, suspensiones a Divinis, privatione vocis activae et pasivae vel minus secundum delicta puniantur. 2. Litterarum et sigillorum Ordinis nos tri vel loci falsificatores, Superiorum litteras impediētes per se vel per alios malitiose destruētes, retinētes, intercipientes quocunque modo, vel subditorum ad Superiores ultra casum reservatum poena carceris puniantur. 4. Malitiose conspiratores adversus alium maxime Superiorem, Regulam et Statuta, divisiones, schismata, novitates nocivas Instituto nostro inducere volentes, discordias inter Fratres seminantes privatione officiorum votis activae, suspension a Divinis, poena carceris puniantur, et tanquam perniciosi hostes Ordinis post ternam admonitionum sex mensium stricte carceris, si non respicient, prout incorrigibiles eiciantur. Curent Superiores et officiales suos Regulares exacte observare et in omnibus uniformitatem tenere et ut melius Regula ab omnibus observetur, eadem apud omnes praescripta habeatur et frequenter legatur cum Statutis. 11. Divagationes extra Conventum quocumque pretextu sine obediēcialibus poenis Apostasiae levis vel gravis iuxta morem temporis puniantur nec pernociēt extra Conventum apud exteros in eadem civitate vel loco situm legitima causa sub poena disciplinae vel ieiunii.

Boleslaus Jakimowicz⁶⁰ and the Portuguese edition of *Horologium*⁶¹ suggest that the participants in the Chapter developed these canons under the guidance of Fr. Chelchowski. However, this claim is unsupported because the Chapter lasted less than two days, and the canons contain thirteen extensive decrees that touch upon various aspects of Marians' life. The development of these decrees would have required much more time.

The Chapter also approved and accepted, on the same day, the Marian ritual called *Horologium Marianum*, containing twenty-nine chapters of instructions and regulations regarding the order of devotions, prayers, and liturgical ceremonies.⁶² Two theories arise in connection with the authorship of this ritual. It was likely created in Rome within the Franciscan environment, with the collaboration of Fr. Wszyński. Alternatively, it may have been developed during Fr. Chelkowski's stay in Skórzec, where he arrived at the beginning of May 1731 and stayed for a month. However, even considering that, it can be presumed that the timeframe was too short to develop such a substantial work. It is more reasonable to accept the hypothesis that at least the foundations and outlines of this work were thought out and developed in Rome. It seems right to accept a version of the events according to which the Marians were presented only with a general outline of the *Horologium* and penal canons at the Chapter of 1731 and were obligated to accept them.⁶³ Penal canons provided the Reformates' vicars and the Marian Fathers' superiors with very effective and austere instruments of power. These canons listed an array of offenses and imposed severe penalties on various *rebeldes, conspirators* — those who grumbled, criticized, showed insubordination, or rebelled against the existing state of affairs. The decrees authorized flogging in public, licking the dirt, cen-

⁶⁰ *Positio*, Wszyński, p. 80.

⁶¹ *Livro terceiro que trata do Relógio Mariano*, Lisboa 1757, pp. 120-124, [afterwards: *Relógio Mariano*].

⁶² *Horologium Marianum seu Ordinarium ceremoniale Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis B. V. Mariae Congregationis Polonae In cura animarum Fidelium et coadiutorum parochorum*, Varsaviae 1732.

⁶³ *Horologium Marianum*. Introduction: "Ab Admodum Reverendo Patre Rocho Chelchowski, Commissario Generali praevisum in Capitulo Corabieviensi, A. D. 1731, die 14 Junii, per eundemque Admodum Reverendum Patrem unanimi consensu omnium Vocalium acceptatum et approbatum".

sure by suspension, strict fasting, and even six months of incarceration on bread and water. Fr. Roch Chechłowski obtained approval of these decrees from Nuncio Niccolo Spinola, which gave them a high legal status.⁶⁴ In addition to those severe decrees, the *Horologium* includes five other chapters dedicated to various transgressions of the Marian religious and the types of punishments appropriate for each offense. These have specific titles: "Small offense and applicable penalties; moderate offense, serious offense, grave offense, and the most serious offense (added to each offense) and punishments applicable to each one."⁶⁵ This section contains thirty-eight different offenses and transgressions, each accompanied by a diverse range of punishments. Fr. Chełchowski even intervened in the minutest details of Marians' life. He also developed a Marian ceremonial heavily influenced by elements of the Franciscan rituals.⁶⁶

Calming down and reconciling the quarreling factions in the Marian Order slowly continued. Two factors played an important role in this process: the intimidation of some members and the understanding and acceptance of the jointly developed manner of religious life by others. Naturally, this process took several years. However, this appeasement was marked by fear, apathy, and stagnation and fostered by punishments and strict regulations, making it difficult to undertake pastoral work in parishes and chaplaincy and pushing the Marians toward a monastic and contemplative lifestyle. Many Marian historians have criticized this period of Marian history. Fr. Stefan Sydry claimed that the Reformates carefully watched over the observance of decrees regarding religious discipline. Their vicars visited quite frequently and behaved more like inspectors than spiritual directors of the Marians. They controlled, admonished, and monitored them but did not foster their formation. This control hindered their development, dampened the independent initiatives of the Marians, and created an unhealthy atmosphere.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *Horologium Marianum*, Cap., XVIII. Introduction: "Hic Canones poenales RR. PPatrum Marianorum in Capitulo per eosdem RR. Patres Ordinati, namque ab Eminentissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Nicolao Spinola, Nuntio Apostolico in Regno Poloniae per decretum approbati." Cf. *Religio Mariano*, Cap. XVIII.

⁶⁵ *Religio Mariano*, Cap. XX-XXIV.

⁶⁶ *Ordinarium ceremoniale Ordinis Immac. Conc. B. V. M.*, Varsaviae 1732.

⁶⁷ S. Sydry, *Zgromadzenie*, p. 43; cf. B. Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja*, p. 45; *Listy*, Father Candide Spourney's letter, 1.

Formation: The Novitiate and Higher Education

Despite all efforts and reforms, the Marian community's internal crisis, disagreements, and tension resulted in a lack of spiritual, organizational, and numerical growth. For this reason, the Chapter of 1722, presided over by Fr. Mikołaj Maciej Zachniewicz, a canon from Warsaw, decreed: "... the novitiate should be revived and a novice master appointed as soon as possible, either from among the Marians or from the Order of the Reformed Franciscans."⁶⁸ The same Chapter also resolved: "Let's initiate at least a course of moral theology and a program of choral singing and church ceremonies."⁶⁹ In 1722, the Marian community was tiny, with only nineteen confrères. Until 1795, the novitiate was located at the Korabiew Forest monastery. In 1724, Fr. Kozłowski was appointed the first novice master after the "dispersion"; he was not particularly zealous in performing his duties.⁷⁰ Secretly brought by novice Casimir, the visitor Fr. Jakub Wolski, after discovering disorder and a lack of monastic discipline, dismissed Fr. Joachim from the position of novice master in August 1724. In his place, he appointed two members of his own order: Fr. Mansueto Leporini as the master of novices and Fr. Felician Szadkowski as the theology lecturer.⁷¹ Efforts were made to appoint spiritually mature religious as novice masters, individuals filled with the spirit of God, wisdom, and a deep love for the Order.⁷² The general government of the Marians was aware that a solid foundation for the future monastic life of a novice greatly depends on the novice master. They recognized that the master's example in prayer, living out the Gospel values, faithfulness to the Marian heritage, and maintaining the spirit of Marian legislation were crucial for the novices' formation. Therefore, from 1724 to 1737, this role was entrusted to truly worthy religious. It

⁶⁸ *Prot. Ord.*, Chapter 1722/35. "Magister novitiorum quam primum praevideatur aut ex gremio sui aut ex Ordine Serafico."

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1722/38.

⁷⁰ Wacław Makoś, *O. Stanisław od Jezusa Maryi Papczyński. Badania i refleksje*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 215-219.

⁷¹ O. Myśkowski, *Dalszy ciąg Przydatku do Kronik*, pp. 1, 5; *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 24.

⁷² *Statuta Patrum Marianorum*, Cap. I/5. Novice master and his associate: "Ambo sint doctrina, prudentia, communi vitae et religiosae disciplinae observantia, aliorumque virtutum praesentia ornatı."

is worth noting that among them were four former superior generals of the Order. They were Fathers Bernard Ostrowski, Matthew Krajewski, Joseph Królikowski, and Casimir Wyszyński. During this period, the following fathers served as the novice masters:

1. Joachim Kozłowski: 1724 (five months)
2. Mansueto Leporini, OFM: 1724–1725
3. Bernard Ostrowski: 1725–1727
4. Casimir Wyszyński: 1727–1730
5. Michael Gibler: 1730–1732
6. Matthew Krajewski: 1732–1734 (?)
7. Casimir Wyszyński: 1734–1737
8. Joseph Królikowski: 1737–(?)

In addition to them, it is also important to mention other deserving fathers, such as Andrew Deszpot, Cyprian Fiałkowski, Dionise Kisieliński, and Ladislaus Kanobrocki. The number of novices is unknown since the *Elenchus* indicates only their presence without specifying their number or names. Judging by the number of clerics, it can be assumed that in the 1730s, the number of novices each year was at least five.

In the Order, despite ongoing misunderstandings and disputes, a slow stabilization and calming process began in the early 1930s. At the turn of 1733 and 1734, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński returned from Rome. At his departure in 1730, it seemed as if he was defeated in his struggle to heal the Order and ridiculed as a failure. However, his return can be described as more optimistic. His main opponent, Fr. Kozłowski, had already passed away, and the number of his other adversaries had also decreased. A new generation has come to the forefront, shaped by his zealous and well-planned educational work between 1727 and 1730.

After returning to Poland, Fr. Wyszyński actively engaged in the work of the Order with great zeal and energy. Recognizing his experience in the administration of the Roman Curia, his spiritual maturity, and his active concern for the fate and development of the Order, he was entrusted with multiple roles at the General Chapter in 1734. He was chosen as an assistant general, general secretary, vice-president of the

monastery in the Forest, and novice master.⁷³ He fulfilled these roles for three years while residing in the monastery in the Forest. Seeing his zeal, the authorities of the Order entrusted him with the position of lecturer (professor) of moral theology and spiritual director of the monastery in the Forest the following year. Fr. Casimir devoted the most effort and care to the formation of clerics and novices. He believed that the future of the Order depended on the education, formation, and sanctification of the novices. He was aware that monastic life makes sense only when the monks follow the path of the evangelical counsels. Therefore, in the formation of novices and clerics, he emphasized the development of internal life, stimulating the pursuit of monastic perfection and establishing solid and lasting foundations for religious life.⁷⁴ In this area, Fr. Casimir collaborated with the newly elected general of the Order, Fr. Bernard Ostrowski, a man of great zeal, who made the care for the elevation of internal life and the strengthening of the religious spirit the primary goal of his generalate. He invited Fr. Wyszyński to cooperate closely, finding him the best associate and adviser⁷⁵ because Fr. Casimir confirmed by the example of his life everything that he taught in the monastery and the formation. Juozas Vaišnora said: "From the school of Father Wyszyński, the Marian Order gained exemplary religious who later made significant contributions to its development."⁷⁶

At the Chapter held in the Forest on July 6, 1734, under the influence of Fr. Casimir, a decree was issued that prohibited sending the novice master outside the monastery. According to papal provisions, he was always to be available to the novices on-site. If any exceptional circumstances required him to leave the monastery, a socius or another mature religious should replace him and reside in his cell. Anyone who wished to converse with a novice had to obtain permission from the novice master

⁷³ Cap. Gen., 230-231; *Prot Ord.*, 228-235.

⁷⁴ Cf. Z. Proczek, *Testament nadziei*, p. 24.

⁷⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 106. This is how Marian Father Hadrian Ignatowski testified about the cooperation of these two outstanding religious. Father Bernard Ostrowski: "Potissimum iuvamen habuit a Servo Dei Casimiro, qui ut Assistens Congregationis et magister novitiorum munera tam exemplariter exequabatur, ut in omnibus rebus, regularitas, observantia, obediencia et cultus Divinus servatus extiterit".

⁷⁶ Juozas Vaišnora, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży o. Casimir od św. Józefa Wyszyński*, Stockbridge, Mass. 1962, p. VI.



The Purgatory Souls Chapel in Korabiew Forest (today Puszcza Mariańska).

first.⁷⁷ Some unpleasant experiences during his own time in the novitiate influenced Fr. Casimir's decision

In the Marian novitiate, strict rigor became especially reinforced after Fr. Chelchowski issued the *Horologium* containing disciplinary decrees and regulations. For example, during the formal admission of a candidate to the novitiate, they would receive instructions that during the probationary year, they were not allowed to engage in any conversations with laypeople and were prohibited from receiving or sending letters.⁷⁸ Without the permission of the novice master, conversations between novices and professed members were forbidden. In violating this rule, both parties involved would be subjected to a humiliating punishment. During meals, they would be required to sit at the table with horse bridles placed over their mouths.⁷⁹ Leaving the monastery without permission, even briefly, was considered an act of disobedience. In such cases, the portion of the novitiate already completed was no longer recognized, and the candidate had to start it again from the beginning. However, these and other rigoristic regulations were not always strictly adhered to, as life often operated by its own rules. There were even occasions when a novice would be sent on a several-day-long alm collection due to a lack of brethren.⁸⁰ All the Fathers and Brothers would vote when admitting a novice to the profession. However, there were instances where some religious, driven by selfishness, did not want the number of Marians to increase. As a result, they would vote against the novices. One of the reasons behind this was the cramped conditions in each of the four small monasteries, as well as comfort-seeking and concerns about the overall material situation of the Order. This issue became serious enough that in 1754, the General Chapter addressed it by promulgating a decree. In this decree, the reluctant religious opposed to the novices were reprimanded, and penalties were threatened against them.⁸¹ This was one of

⁷⁷ Cap. Gen., 1734/10. "Magister novitiorum nullatenus mittatur extra conventum sine gravi necessitate et nullus ingerat se in officium Magistri novitiorum, sine ipsius licentia, non alloquatur novitiis"

⁷⁸ *Religio Mariano*, p. 171.

⁷⁹ Cap. Gen., 1736/17.

⁸⁰ S. Sydry, *Organizacja Zgromadzenia*, p. 32.

⁸¹ Cap. Gen., 1754/30. "Sunt autem aliqui religiosi ita malevoli, ut nolint augmentum religionis et saepe dant vota negativa novitii quo maxime probatur In Conversis contra clericos, quod

the reasons for the stagnation in the growth of the Marian Order's membership. It was precisely this growth, new vocations, active recruitment for the novitiate, and the well-being of the entire Marian Order that Fr. Wyszyński worked tirelessly for.

In addition to his administrative and pastoral work, Fr. Wyszyński also engaged in scholarly activities. In 1733, he authored and published a short book on the life and martyrdom of St. Ignatius.⁸² He collected and arranged materials for a work on the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. For this purpose, he translated and adapted Fr. Francisco Arias' work *De Virgo Imitanda*, and divided it into ten chapters, corresponding to the ten virtues of Mary. He titled this work *The Morning Star*. This work was only published in Poland in 1749. In his concern that everyone could benefit more deeply from Marian legislation's sources, he translated the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* into Polish while serving as the novice master.⁸³ He also included his formulation of the rite for the admission of novices into the Marian Order, the ritual for taking religious vows, and the ritual for blessing the Marian habit, scapular, and chaplet.⁸⁴ Only a few documents have survived from the period when Fr. Wyszyński was in charge of the novitiate between 1727-1730 and 1734-1737. However, his work in this field deeply imprinted the Marian consciousness. It yielded remarkable results in reviving the Order through the education of zealous and enlightened religious. He guided them on the path of monastic perfection through both words and the example of his life, presenting and instilling in them the ideal of holiness. This became most evident in the monastery in the Forest, where he resided. Witnesses of his life testified to this during his beatification process.⁸⁵

si hoc reper tum fuerit, privetur auctoritate votandi. Item professi immiscent se ad novitios, illos arguendo, increpando, vexando, ad quo totaliter non pertinent, quapropter praecipitur sub poena disciplinae faciendae per Psal. Miserere."

⁸² *Vestigia aeternae felicitatis Sacris progressibus s. Ignatii Martyris*, Roma 1733.

⁸³ This testimony was given in the beatification process by Frs. Isidore Taudt and John Czermak, who also stated: "Pro intelligentia fratrum et neoprofessorum Ordinis Constitutiones Regulares, ex latino in Polonicum idioma traduxit." This Rule was released in print only in 1750: *Reguła Braci Maryanów Zakonu Niepokalanego Poczęcia Błogosławionej Panny Maryi*, Warszawa 1750.

⁸⁴ *Reguła Braci Maryanów*, See Appendix, pp. 43-53.

⁸⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 107. "Ex eius praefectura non tantum novitatus, sed etiam totus

Religious Studies

Many Marian historians have attempted to ascertain the reasons for the weak numerical growth of the order during that time. Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz mentions two causes: widespread alcoholism in Poland, while the Marians promoted abstinence and temperance, and the significant openness to candidates from the third estate, which ultimately contributed to the plebeian character of the Order. Meanwhile, nearly seventy percent of the members in other religious orders came from noble backgrounds during that time.⁸⁶ However, the explanations provided by Fr. Jakimowicz do not seem credible. The reasons ought to be sought primarily in the drastic rigorism prevailing in the Marian Order and excessive infiltration by the Franciscans. As mentioned earlier, some individuals left the Order, stating, "I wanted to be a Marian, not a Reformaté." A third cause was the previously described reluctance of certain confrères, predominantly lay brothers, to increase the number of Marians. They voted against admitting novices to religious profession, thus blocking the novices' religious path.

The Order's impeded development, particularly noticeable after the "dispersion" of 1722, was viewed with anxiety and concern by Fr. Wyszynski, several other zealous Marians, and some Franciscan vicars. In that same year, 1722, the General Chapter obligated the Marian government to establish "at least" a course of moral theology. The importance of introducing their own studies had been recognized earlier, but the organization of the Order and its recovery after the "dispersion" required some time. The novitiate lasted a year, so a course of moral theology was not organized until the fall of 1725. Fr. Felicjan Szatkowski, a Reformaté, was invited as the theology lecturer. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1727.⁸⁷ Probably, the course was terminated after his death because the Chapter in 1728, chaired by Vicar Fr. Antoni

monasterium vivum habebat exemplum et augmentum in progressu religiosae observantiae ac educatione novitiorum quos in omni genere virtutum summopere exercere curabat, tum verbio tum exemplo illis viam ad perfectionem religiosam demonstrando et hoc officium per triennium administravit."

⁸⁶ B. Jakimowicz, *Rozwój liczebny zakonu*, in: Jan Bukowicz, T. Górski [Ed.], *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, pp. 47-49.

⁸⁷ O. Mysłowski, *Dalszy ciąg Przypadku do Kronik*, p. 5.

Rudzieński, reproved the Marians: "Let the venerable Father Superior [general] make sure that the course is offered."⁸⁸ At the Chapter on June 17, 1728, after the controversial term of General Fr. Joachim Kozłowski had ended, Fr. Joseph Królikowski, a zealous religious heavily involved in the revival and stabilization of the Marian Order, was elected as his successor. He encouraged several Marians to engage in pastoral work as chaplains through his actions. As a result, he was punished by Vicar Fr. Roch Chełchowski, as mentioned before.⁸⁹ Fr. Królikowski appointed a young Marian named Fr. Alexis Gargalski as the philosophy lecturer. Fr. Gargalski was an exceptionally talented and charismatic educator and professor, *vir singularissimi ingenii*. He was the first Marian in the 18th century to fulfill the role of lecturer in philosophy and dogmatic theology for several years, which he pursued with great passion. He was also musically gifted and shared his knowledge in this field with Marian students as part of their education.⁹⁰ Fr. Alexis held the office of superior in the Marian monasteries several times, and in 1741, he was elected assistant general of the Order.⁹¹ He was one of the first moderators to avoid using punishments and flogging in the formation of Marian youth; instead, he promoted openness and dialogue conducted with kindness and fraternal friendship.⁹²

The preserved documents show how Marians' studies were intended to be organized and how they were supposed to function. The Marian

⁸⁸ *Prot. Ord.*, 219. Chapter 1728/10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁹⁰ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Father Charles Hondlewski composed Father Alexis's biographical note: "AdmReverend P. Alexius Gargalski vir erat in Ordine nostro Mariano olim in cunctis praestantissimus dignus omnino quatenus Ejus apud posteros celebretur memoria; non segnem enim, ac otio deditum in Vinea Mariana agebat operarium, pollebat ille ingenua indole prae-ditus erat a Deo seguacissimo ad perscrutanda AA. LL. arcana ingenio, qua talenta, tanquam a Supremo donorum Largitore sibi collatu, non abscondit in agro, neque possuit sub modio, sed super candelabrum, ut luceant omnibus, et lucrum in Vinea Mariana faciant centuplum; excultus etenim apprime sub alienis magistris atrium liberalium studii non sibi soli Vivendi, sed et aliis prospiciendo, ipse prae caeteris primus inventus est, qui in Mariana Palestra dignus est vocari philosophiae profesor ac Sacrae Theologiae speculativae lector". Also see *Album zmarłych* on the date of May 3: Alexis Gargalski was ordained a priest on May 2, 1728. He was an outstanding teacher. He organized the course of philosophy in Skórzec. He was also the first Marian to teach dogmatic theology to seminarians. He also performed many responsible functions in the Order. Unfortunately, he died at an early age on May 3, 1746.

⁹¹ *Prot. Ord.*, 253.

⁹² LCVA, *Tabula generalis*.

Constitutions mentioned this in a general sense. Much of the legislative framework, including comments, guidelines, cautions, daily and yearly schedules, and teaching content, was found in the Chapter legislation. It seems that there was hardly a Chapter where the issue of clerical formation was not discussed. However, very few accounts have been preserved regarding how the studies went. According to the resolutions of the Chapters, courses in philosophy and theology were supposed to last for three years.⁹³ However, it frequently happened that seminarians were ordained as priests after completing only the first year of philosophy. We also recall that Joachim Kozłowski attempted to pressure Fr. Wyszyński into receiving ordination immediately after completing the novitiate. In 1743, at the Skórzec monastery, out of eleven *auditores philosophiae* (philosophy students), four were already priests. Similarly, among the seven students of moral theology at the Forest monastery, two had already been ordained in the same year.⁹⁴ And yet, studies in philosophy were just the beginning of priestly formation. Therefore, those ordained after the novitiate but before or during their studies were unprepared for the important priesthood functions. Apart from continuing their studies, their task was to celebrate Mass for accepted intentions and fulfill their Mass obligations, of which the monasteries had an abundance. In 1743, there were as many as eighteen seminarians, which, considering the overall scarcity of the entire Order, was a significant burden due to the exclusion of teaching lecturers and the costs associated with maintaining and operating the Marian *studium domesticum*. For example, the 1749 *Elenchus* lists as many as five employed lecturers: two designated for teaching moral and dogmatic theology and one for philosophy studies.⁹⁵ This practice continued in the second half of the 18th century. However, because of the costs, the dire state of the monasteries, and personnel shortages, the *studium* was closed several times. As Stefan Sydry reports, "this was followed by the internal decline of quality." Therefore, the Marians always made an effort to overcome these difficulties. A similar situation likely occurred in the early 1750s when, during the Chapter in 1754, the Franciscan

⁹³ S. Sydry, *Organizacja Zgromadzenia*, 39.

⁹⁴ Prot. Korab., 31-32.

⁹⁵ Prot. Korab., 46-48.

vicar, Fr. Antoni Kociński, proposed the opening of a theological course. The capitular fathers unanimously agreed to this proposal.⁹⁶ In the first half of the 18th century, philosophy and theology courses were opened at the monasteries in Korabiew Forest and Skórzec. In 1749, the Marians received a well-endowed foundation in Raśna, in the Podlasie region, established and sponsored by the wealthy Matuszewicz family.⁹⁷ After the fire at the monastery in Skórzec in 1757, the philosophy course was transferred to the large monastery in Raśna, while the study of dogmatic theology was set up in Góra.⁹⁸ The Order was not always able to provide its own properly educated lecturers, but the Franciscan teachers from the nearby monastery in Brest were willingly coming to Raśna.⁹⁹ In the second half of the 18th century, this was the last monastery in the Congregation that relied on the Reformates' assistance in forming young Marian students.

Spiritual revival became a reality. The commitment of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski and the Superiors General Fr. Andrew Deszpot and Fr. Bernard Ostrowski began to bear fruit. A group of exemplary religious came forth. Also, there was increased concern for the common good, internal reform, dynamism, and the spiritual and numerical growth of the Order. However, their visible manifestation had yet to come. The unfavorable opinion of the Order, shaped during the years of internal turmoil and a rigorous penitential way of life in the monasteries, had made an impact. The Order had thirty-two members in 1732 and the same number in 1735; in 1736, there were forty men, but in 1741 their number dropped to thirty-four.¹⁰⁰ However, there was a gradual but noticeable slight increase in numbers. In 1743, there were already forty-seven brethren, and in 1746, there were forty-four.¹⁰¹ In this numerical comparison, a significant percentage of brothers and seminarians stands out compared to the number of priests. The 1732 *Elenchus* of the Marian Order informs that there were seventeen priests, five lay brothers, and ten seminarians

⁹⁶ Cap. Gen., 1754/19. "Propositum erat ab Adm. Rev. Patre Commissario utrum erigendum sit Studium Theologicum. Respondit Ven. Assessorium affirmative."

⁹⁷ Prot. Skórc. 1749/2.

⁹⁸ Cap. Gen., 1757/4.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 1754/19.

¹⁰⁰ B. Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja*, p. 48.

¹⁰¹ Prot. Korab., 31-32, 37-38.

listed by name. Eight of them studied in Skórzec under the guidance of the Marian Father Alexis Gargalski, while the remaining two resided in the Korabiew Forest. In the Korabiew Forest, there was no lecturer at that time, so those seminarians likely did not study formally but fulfilled various duties within the monastery. Next to the name of one of them, the role of the monastery's treasurer is noted.¹⁰²

The preserved detailed list of Marians and their functions in 1733 mentions sixteen priests and sixteen lay brothers.¹⁰³ Although seminarians and lay brothers are included together in this list, there were likely ten seminarians. In 1743, the Congregation had twenty-one priests, eight lay brothers, and eighteen seminarians, not including novices. In 1746, there were already twenty-five priests, eight lay brothers, and only eleven seminarians.¹⁰⁴ It should be emphasized that the studies were relatively superficial, lasting about two years, and focused on moral theology. More talented individuals were directed towards speculative theology studies to prepare them for the role of theology lecturers. In 1735-1736, the Reformat, Fr. Michał Paszkowski, taught this subject to the Marians.¹⁰⁵ The Reformed Franciscans in Poland represented a conservative current in theology and spirituality. They adhered to Scotism. The affiliated Marians belonged to the same intellectual tradition. However, some of them, particularly the more talented and ambitious ones, also drew on other renowned theologians in their lectures. In this field, one notable and learned lecturer among the Marians, mentioned here already, was Fr. Alexis Gargalski.¹⁰⁶ In 1741, the Chapter and the Franciscan vicar, Fr. Fulgentius Wojewódzki, decided to react to such "deviations" by issuing a decree. The decree ordered that in teaching philosophy and theology, the Marians should adhere to the doctrine of Duns Scotus and his school.¹⁰⁷

The seminarians attended classes from nine to eleven in the morning. At eleven, they had their first meal, which was lunch. In the afternoon,

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-32, 37-38.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Father Alexis Gargalski's biographical note.

¹⁰⁷ Cap. Gen., 1741/5. "Deciditur ut PP. Lectores tam Theologiae quam Philosophiae in scripto suas lectiones tradant ad normam Doctoris Subtilis Duns Scoti eiusque scholae."

classes resumed from three to six in the evening. After lunch and a short break, they would engage in *circuli*. These were exercises where they would discuss and solve various life, philosophical, and theological problems.¹⁰⁸ During the school year, there were four long breaks. Fr. Stefan Sydry estimated that the seminarians had a maximum of 170 days of classes throughout the year.¹⁰⁹ It happened that some seminarians lacked the will and motivation to study. This was because some of them were ordained *ad solam missam* and were content with superficial studies. It is important to remember that a religious could become a preacher or confessor if chosen for that role by the Chapter after successfully passing special examinations. In each monastery, the way of life of the superior, confessor, preacher, and lecturer (if there were courses) differed due to the tasks they fulfilled. Others were obligated to celebrate Mass and participate in choir prayers. Those ordained shortly after completing their novitiate and just at the beginning of studying moral theology often did not apply themselves to learning, content with the fact that they were already priests and settling for the bare minimum of knowledge. The Chapters aimed to eliminate this kind of minimalism and issued strict resolutions regarding this matter multiple times. The Chapter of 1734 decreed: "If a young man does not apply himself to studies, he shall be deprived of his right to study, with no hope of assuming them again. Such a person cannot go outside the monastery but must be locked up there, as in solitary confinement. Also, he is to be submitted to various mortifications."¹¹⁰ Another ordinance declared: "Students who would rebel against their teachers and superiors are to be punished by fasting on bread and water [...] and these lazy ones are to be forced to work at any time by salutary penances, even outside the time for studies."¹¹¹ The Marians' spiritual and intellectual formation efforts in the novitiate and during the subsequent training brought positive results. This was achieved through a more thorough selection of candidates, choosing the most suitable religious as moderators, and providing a healthy monastic formation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1737/14.

¹⁰⁹ S. Sydry, *Organizacja Zgromadzenia*, 39.

¹¹⁰ Prot. Rasn., 1734/1.

¹¹¹ Cap. Gen., 1746/5.

Father Casimir Wyszyński's Generalate: 1737-1741

The 1840s brought about the Marians' spiritual consolidation and organizational maturity and the implementation of Fr. Wyszyński's plans. Fr. Wyszyński succeeded in inspiring young Marians with his concern for the growth of the Order and ignited their zeal and love for the Congregation and Father Founder. The biographer of Fr. Wyszyński, Fr. Juozas Vaišnora, explained the motives that led the capitular fathers to elect Fr. Wyszyński as the superior general of the Marian Order on December 12, 1737. He wrote: "Father Wyszyński's activity, his love for his Order, piety, and exemplary life attracted the hearts and attention of everyone."¹¹² This opinion was decisive in his unanimous election as the general of the Marian Order on that day. As general, he declared at the Chapter that he would not exercise his power as a dictator but would make all the important decisions and carry out matters in consultation with the general council. He emphasized that he would conscientiously observe the Statutes and the *Rule*. He also promised to ensure that none of the resolutions of the Chapters would remain mere words but that all of them would be implemented within the Order.¹¹³ Whether they were *non solum in charta, sed etiam in moribus practicae*¹¹⁴ was to be checked and assessed during his visitations. Less than two weeks after his election, on December 23, 1737, Fr. Wyszyński sent a circular letter to his brethren in which he wrote that Almighty God had chosen him, unworthy as he was, lifting him out of poverty and placing upon him "the duty of preparing the way to your salvation."¹¹⁵ In the letter, he called the Marians to straighten their paths and prepare new ways for God, following the example of St. John the Baptist. He urged: "I am begging

¹¹² Juozas Vaišnora, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży o. Casimir od św. Józefa Wyszyński*, Stockbridge 1962, s. VI.

¹¹³ Cap. Gen., 1737/1: "Admodum Reverendus P. Praepositus Generalis communicato semper consilio in rebus arduis cum Adm. Venerandis PP. Assistantibus tum Adm. RR. Patribus Congregationis uno vel alio non obstante deciderat conscientiose, tam quo ad Statum dispositionis, quam in causis criminalibus, in quibus requiritur iuridicus processus admiscendo tamen iustitiae charitativam Clementiam secundum exigentiam subiectorum punibilibus."

¹¹⁴ Cap. Gen., 1737/1.

¹¹⁵ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 170.

you in a fatherly manner [...] and I sincerely recommend that you fully observe the religious discipline, obedience to superiors, fraternal love, and fulfillment of the Chapter's past and present resolutions."¹¹⁶ As the general, Casimir Wyszyński outlined his program of work and reforms in detailed and well-documented twenty-nine decrees, which were discussed and confirmed by the council. These decrees expressed his concern for the renewal and spiritual healing of the Order, the strengthening of monastic discipline, and liberation from the destructive customs of moral corruption prevalent in Polish society at that time.¹¹⁷ In these decrees, Fr. Wyszyński emphasized the proper selection of local superiors. He reminded them to be zealous and obliged them to diligently observe religious exercises under the threat of severe punishment. He particularly emphasized the need for them to watch over the young religious and to be a living example of a life guided by the grace of their vocation. He also obligated them to carry out renovations of neglected monasteries. To prevent various abuses, he imposed on local treasurers the duty to submit detailed financial reports every three months.¹¹⁸ The decrees reflect genuine humanism in the section concerning mutual relations within the Order. Fr. Wyszyński obligated the superiors to treat their subordinates paternally and to provide fraternal care for sick brethren, supplying them with everything they needed. They should watch over their less capable brethren, often exploited in labor and privileges. Despite the rigor and strict discipline within the Order, which were not always fully observed, Fr. Wyszyński further intensified the disciplinary measures in the monasteries. They primarily concerned those who violated the religious law, failed to keep their vows, and rebelled against monastic observance. The extensive decrees, from points 9 to 12, warned against various types of crimes and abuses committed by the religious and threatened them with severe punishments that should be imposed on them.¹¹⁹

An important achievement of Fr. Wyszyński was the organization of the formation and educational program in the novitiate and studies. He

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Zygmun Proczek, *Wzór przełożonego mariańskiego*, in: Janusz Kumala [Ed.], *Powołanie i misja. Sługa Boży o. Casimir Wyszyński*, Licheń 2005, pp. 172-176.

¹¹⁸ Cap. Gen., 1737/1-29, pp. 109-124.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 1737/9-12, 25.

established a daily and yearly schedule for the students. He imposed the responsibility on the professors to ensure that class time and recreation were properly observed so that the students would not waste their time. Under his directives, those who neglected their studies were even subjected to public punishment. He issued a decree stating that the novice master solely depended on the superior general, and no one else had the right to interfere in or oversee his work. He also introduced appropriate regulations for the novices and completely separated their quarters and the novitiate garden from the areas designated for the professed members.¹²⁰ From the preserved writings and letters of Fr. Casimir, it is evident that his main efforts were focused on establishing strong and lasting foundations for the internal life of the members of the Order and instilling in them a desire to strive towards perfection. To achieve this goal, he did everything possible to educate the young members of the Order in a new spirit. Wherever possible, he straightened paths and paved new roads for the beloved Congregation, as he expressed in his circular letter: “‘The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing’ (John 6:63). I fervently desire the salvation of all entrusted to my paternal care. [...] I want to find you adorned with spiritual, heavenly, and eternal aspirations rather than entangled in earthly and temporal ones.”¹²¹ Fr. Wyszyński presented the Immaculate Mary and the Founder, Fr. Papczyński, as the models of Marian religious life. He believed the sons should rely on both the mother and the father. Therefore, he diligently focused on the figure of Father Founder, rescuing him from oblivion and neglect. He also cared for the Cenacle in Góra, which was deplorable then. Water inundated the church and monastery, posing a threat of building collapse. Dampness, mud, marshy terrain, and poverty further exacerbated the dismal situation. The brethren arrived there with great reluctance and resistance, and upon arrival, they suffered from dampness and illnesses. Casimir Wyszyński decided to rescue the church, monastery, and especially the tomb of the Founder. Therefore, in 1739, he took up residence in Góra. In 1740, while serving as the superior general, he voluntarily assumed the position of the local superior because no volunteers were willing to reside in that location. He was joined there by two humble

¹²⁰ Ibid., 1737/17.

¹²¹ Circular letter of June 8, 1738, in: Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 171.

religious brothers appointed by the Chapter. They were Br. Casimir Bonikowski and Br. Nicholas of St. Martin, in whose company Fr. Casimir had traveled back from Rome in 1723. Br. Nicholas collected alms at nearby villages and manors to provide the three Marians with a living.

Fr. Wyszyński held the position of local superior in Góra from 1740 to 1747. His first achievement was the rescue of the remains of Fr. Papczyński, which were slowly being engulfed by mud. He was convinced that this act brought blessings to the Order, the church of the Lord's Supper, and himself. He wrote: "When I sought permission from the ordinary for the initial exhumation of the Venerable Father from the mud in the Cenacle and transfer to another coffin, God helped us lift this Cenacle from almost final ruin."¹²² Michael Wyszyński donated his oak coffin, which he had prepared for himself, to be used for the remains of Fr. Stanislaus. He also supported Fr. Casimir with a substantial sum of 1,000 Polish zlotys, intended for the church's rescue. Fr. Wyszyński carried out drainage works with tremendous effort for several years, laboring with his hands. As a result, the church and monastery, which, according to witnesses, were regularly flooded with water in the spring, never experienced flooding again after these improvements were made.¹²³ He also renovated the ruined church and constructed a new monastery.¹²⁴ The renovation, drainage, and construction works were completed in 1743. The General Chapter sent three priests and three lay brothers to the Cenacle in the same year. In 1746, seven priests and one lay brother were assigned there. Some of them were still studying theology at the time.¹²⁵ Casimir Wyszyński's love and reverence for the Founder inspired him to undertake such significant and challenging tasks. It was also the source of new energy in his efforts to develop the Congregation. He demonstrated to his brethren and the Congregation

¹²² Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 272.

¹²³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 145-146; *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 57.

¹²⁴ *Świadectwo Michała Wyszyńskiego o bracie*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, s. 25: "[Father Casimir] built in Góra the monastery in half-timbered method, renewed the church of Our Lord's Cenacle and drained the swamping waters, for which he took a 1,000 zlotys from his brother." See on the construction of the monastery: *Evidence of Alexis Fischer*, in: *ibid.*, p. 57: "[Father Casimir] drained the waterlogged monastery. He built a new monastery and, with the help from his brother, he restored the church."

¹²⁵ Prot. Korab., 32-34. 39-40.

the depth of spirit of the Polish Founder. Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz wrote: "From this treasure, he drew for himself and ignited the Marians, revitalizing their spirituality and directing the entire Congregation towards brighter paths."¹²⁶ Upon witnessing his exemplary and devout life, Bishop Theodor Casimir Czartoryski appointed him as the spiritual director and confessor of the Dominican Sisters residing near the Cenacle. It is worth noting that this appointment was a recognition and an expression of his trust in Fr. Casimir, as usually, the confessors of the sisters were Dominicans who had a spiritual connection with them.

In his work of renewal and development of the Marian Order, Fr. Wyszyński employed various means. Above all, he set an example for others through his own life. He attached great importance to selecting candidates for leadership positions and other roles within the Order diligently and thoroughly, ensuring that they were thoroughly examined and tested beforehand. His detailed visitations allowed him not only to discern the actual state of the Order and get to know individual members well but also, to the extent possible, to rectify and eliminate abuses. The General Chapters, convened every three years, played a significant role. However, during Fr. Wyszyński's first term as the Superior General, there was only one General Chapter in 1737. Intermediate chapters, called congregations, were held annually. They had lesser importance, lasted for a shorter period, and were attended by the current superior general, former superiors, and the general council. Under Fr. Wyszyński's leadership, two congregations were held in 1738 and 1739. From the few surviving regulations, one can observe Fr. Wyszyński's aim to strengthen monastic discipline and maintain the observance of the Rule and Statutes.¹²⁷ Both congregations issued resolutions of an administrative and disciplinary nature because, despite Fr. Wyszyński's earnest efforts and those of several of his collaborators, some religious still rebelled, failed to observe the monastic rules, and engaged in abuses. For example, we learn from the documents that in 1738, Fr. Charles Pasiński (or Paszyński), the first assistant general (or vicar general), scandalized both the community and the religious in Góra with his drunkenness and squandering of the funds entrusted to him for the renovation of the church and monastery.

¹²⁶ B. Jakimowicz, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży*, p. 27.

¹²⁷ Cap. Gen., 125-131.

When summoned to the congregation, he refused to attend.¹²⁸ The same protocol describes the attitudes of several other rebellious Marians who threatened to leave the Order. The congregation of 1739 sentenced Fr. Bonaventure Boski to a year of solitary incarceration in Skórzec. He had already been punished in 1731 but showed no remorse or willingness to improve, so he was sentenced *ut pro noviter factis excessibus*.¹²⁹ During that congregation, sharp admonitions were also issued against drunkenness, and violations against sobriety were condemned, as they had caused a scandal among the people. A decision was made to implement the resolution of the Chapter from 1734, which introduced the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the monastery in Skórzec.¹³⁰

The visitations, Chapters, and congregations provided Fr. Wyszyński with opportunities to confront the daily realities of Marian life and respond directly to any irregularities. Circular letters from 1737-1741 served him to address general matters. Seven preserved letters, written according to an established template, announced upcoming visitations and appealed for preparation for them. The letters also summoned the authorized fathers to attend the Chapter or congregation. Their common goal was to revive and renew monastic discipline and observance, to encourage subordinates to practice Christian virtues, and especially to love one another, for as Fr. Casimir wrote: *charitate deficiente nihil sunt omnia*.¹³¹ They also bear witness to his great zeal for God's affairs and his concern for the spiritual growth and exemplary life of the Marians, revealing the genuine humility of the author. In the letters, Fr. Casimir presented himself as a caring father, a good educator, and a master of inner life. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in the Decree on the Heroic Virtues of Father Wyszyński, summarized this period of his work: "Elected as the Superior General from 1737 to 1741, he utilized all the means associated with this position to renew and heal the cus-

¹²⁸ Cap. Gen., Assembly of 1738/1-4.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Assembly of 1739/3.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1739/2. "Decisum est ut deducetur ad effectum punctum Capituli anni 1734 de promovenda ConFater Immaculatae Conceptionis B. V. Mariae Skórcii et quam citissime introducatur."

¹³¹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 113. All letters in Polish language appear in: Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 168-179.

toms and spirit of the Order [...]. As the superior of the convent in Góra Kalwaria (1739-1747), he did much to increase its material and spiritual wealth, showing particular care for the preservation of the earthly remains of the Founder from destruction. At the same time, he engaged in fruitful apostolic work, including serving as the confessor of nuns of the Order of St. Dominic in their Góra convent and as the moderator of the Confraternity of Divine Providence, which he established at the Church of the Lord's Supper."¹³²

The Second Generalate of Father Casimir Wyszyński: 1747-1750

On June 19, 1747, Fr. Casimir was elected for a second term as the superior general. Seven authorized fathers attended the Chapter. Fr. Casimir received five votes, while Fr. Cajetan Wetycki received two. The number of individuals constitutionally designated to participate in Chapters in the previous years of Marian history varied. However, at this particular Chapter, some fathers questioned the validity of the election, officially citing the small number of capitular fathers as their justification. Unofficially, they sought to invalidate the election as they supported another option.¹³³ At this General Chapter, four local superiors, one former general, Fr. Andrew Deszpot, and two general councilors, Fr. Cajetan Wetycki and Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski, participated. Marian legislation precisely defined who had the right to participate in electoral chapters. It included the vicar, the superior general, his assistants and secretary, the superiors of the monasteries, and the religious distinguished by the title "Father of the Order," which was a privilege granted to all former superiors general.¹³⁴

Regarding the protests related to Fr. Casimir's election as the superior general of the Order, there is a lack of specific information because the most valuable collection of Marian documents from that time, the

¹³² Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 8-9.

¹³³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 152-153; Z. Proczek, *O. Casimir Wyszyński, jako animator życia mariańskiego*, in: „*Patrimonium Marianorum*”, pp. 116-118.

¹³⁴ Cap. Gen., 1734/3; 1737/16; 1741/1 and the Introduction.

Protocollum Ordinis, ended in 1744. Only three letters have survived from Fr. Casimir's three-year term as the superior general. He wrote the first letter to his brethren only forty days after his election. The opposition from some of the confrères seemed a bitter experience for him. His disciple [pupil], Fr. Alexis Fischer, wrote: "Yet from the very beginning of the novitiate, he constantly encountered hatred, murmuring, curses, and so on [...]. Through all this, he accumulated many merits: he placed his hope entirely in God, begged Him for help, persevered in difficulties until he achieved the desired outcome."¹³⁵ The first circular letter, deeply thought out, is a response to the accusations of several Marians. It officially informs about the election that took place and emphasizes that he did not desire this office, but the choice comes from the will of God. Since he has been elected, he will fulfill it diligently and decisively, with responsibility before God and the Order. To his Marian brethren, he wrote: "I have been chosen according to the law, and this election has been canonically announced. [...] I come to you to serve, not to govern. Not as a hireling but as a true shepherd. [...] I come to you not only full of zeal but also obliged by this pledge: I will search for what is lost with pastoral care; what is astray, I will bring back with paternal love; what is wounded, I will surround with love, not the bonds of fear; [...] Let not your hearts be afraid. Just as Joseph, by the will of heaven, became the ruler of Egypt for the salvation of his brothers, so I, by God's disposition, am the superior of the holy Congregation. [...] God has made me as if a Father, appointed me as a Ruler, not over you, but as I am - one of you."¹³⁶ In the further part of the letter, he presents his program of service and activities.

The three years of Fr. Casimir's generalate was a time of efforts to expand the Congregation, concerns for internal reform, and a careful focus on the formation of its members. As Fr. Alexis Fischer testified: "He did everything out of sincere zeal, piety, and perfect intention, [...] to destroy evil and strengthen good, to increase perfection."¹³⁷ During the first General Chapter, he led, thirty-five decrees were enacted, eighteen of which pertained to religious observance and discipline. Eight decrees

¹³⁵ *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 59.

¹³⁶ Letter of July 27, 1747, in: Wyszynski, *Stróż*, pp. 179-181.

¹³⁷ *Świadectwo Aleksego Fischera*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 59.

focused on the formation in the novitiate and clericate, six addressed prayer and spiritual life within the community, two decrees dealt with administration, and one addressed the functioning of the archive.¹³⁸ The thirteenth decree of the Chapter's decisions addressed the accusations of certain fathers who questioned the election of Fr. Casimir. The decree cited Marian legislation and papal decrees on this matter. It clarified who had the right and obligation to participate in the General Chapter elections and admonished the Fathers (without naming them) who became rebels and troublemakers for their own interests, disrupting the peace.¹³⁹

As the superior general, Fr. Wyszyński, while visiting communities, tried to spend an extended time in each monastery. He encouraged brethren to observe the monastic discipline, awaken the desire for perfection, and inspire them to serve God and people fervently. During his visitations, Fr. Wyszyński would assess whether his brethren were guided by the Holy Spirit, living according to the religious norms and faithfully observing their vows. He would also evaluate their genuine imitation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Additionally, he would demand from the superiors to diligently ensure the proper execution of the religious exercises and be a living example of a life blessed by their vocation. He was one of the first superiors who emphasized dialogue and brotherly love (*caritas*) within the communities. Through visitations, circular letters, and the example of his own saintly life, he consistently aimed for the spiritual renewal and growth of the Marian religious family. The three circular letters, which Fr. Casimir addressed to Marians during that time, are a beautiful testimony of his concern for the spiritual development of the Order. They reflect his great love and care for those who have gone astray and the impoverished serfs.¹⁴⁰ Fr. Casimir particularly cared about providing a solid formation in the novitiate. During the first General Chapter, as many as eight decrees were dedicated to this matter. He believed that laying solid foundations was paramount in the formation process, as it would be the basis for building one's inner life.

¹³⁸ Cap. Gen., pp. 174-201.

¹³⁹ Cap. Gen., 1747/13 s. 188. "Ad obdurandum os protervum nonnullorum patrum nullo jure usurpantium votum electivum in capitulis male intelligentes Constitutiones c. 9, n. 2 [...] Qui autem imposterum frivole attentaverit hoc jus votandi In capitulis talis tanquam rebellis, et turbator pacis religiosae poenis in Statutis expressis mulctetur."

¹⁴⁰ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 179-186.

During his second generalate, there was one General Chapter, as mentioned above, and two intermediate chapters known as annual congregations. These congregations addressed recommendations of lesser importance. The yearly congregation in Goźlin on June 17-19, 1748, primarily focused on spiritual matters and fidelity to the monastic vocation. In the twelve formulated decrees, "due to difficult political disturbances," the brethren were recommended to offer daily additional prayers to the Blessed Mother and recite the *Litany of Loreto*. Efforts were made to revitalize the Blessed Sacrament's honor and intensify praying for the dead.¹⁴¹ Fourteen recommendations and decrees were formulated and approved during the annual congregation held from June 28 to July 1, 1749, in the Korabiew Forest.¹⁴² Among other decisions, it was resolved to build a new church in the Forest and establish two new foundations in Raśna and Staropole (Marijampole). It was also decided to reprint the *Rule* and the Marian Constitutions.¹⁴³ The congregation also reminded the Marians of their obligation to teach the faithful the Catechism at their churches.

Fr. Casimir's second generalate was a period of intensive and fruitful efforts in establishing new foundations and their realization in Raśna, Marijampole, Berezdów, and Ostrzykowce-Samczyki.¹⁴⁴ As the superior general, Fr. Casimir strived to encourage members of the Order to be more attentive to the beatification of the Founder. He collected materials on various events from his life, sought witnesses, and obtained statements from them regarding Fr. Papczyński and his activities. Zygmunt Proczek wrote about him: "Those who met Father Casimir were captivated by this man of average height, dignified countenance,

¹⁴¹ Cap. Gen., 1748, Dekrety, pp. 205-207.

¹⁴² Cap. Gen. Dekrety pp. 209-211.

¹⁴³ In 1750, the following were released in print in Warsaw: the *Reguła Braci Maryanów Zakonu Niepokalanego Poczęcia Błogosławionej Panny Maryi* and *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis B. M. V. sub titulo Immac. Conceptionis, Defunctis, et Parochis in Cura Animarum suffragantium Congregationis Polonae*.

¹⁴⁴ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 29-33; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 160-164; About the foundation in Raśna see Marcin Matuszewicz, *Diariusz mego życia*, t. 1-2, Warszawa 1986, t. 1, pp. 188, 197, 199, 282, 295, 307, 351, 375, 399, 490, 697, 814, 892, t. 2, passim; about the foundation in Marijampole see J. Totoraitis, *Klasztor mariampolskich księży Marianów*, Lower Bullingham 1964; same author: *Marianie na Suwalszczyźnie*, Stockbridge 1966; about the foundation in Ostrzykowce-Samczyki see [Jan Marek Giżycki], *Spis ważniejszych miejscowości w powiecie starokonstantynowskim*, Stary Konstantynów 1910.

moderate in all things, merciful towards the poor, and concerned for the people working in the countryside. The religious, nobility, magistrates, and bishops esteemed him. Thanks to his spiritual qualities, he influenced his contemporaries, who recognized in him great holiness, gravity, and humility.”¹⁴⁵

Procurator General in Rome

Fr. Wyszynski's contributions to the spiritual stabilization and development of the Order, particularly in the second half of the 18th century, were evident. However, they also brought many new tasks, legal issues, and matters requiring direct contact with the Holy See. In the first half of the 18th century, most of these matters were handled through the intermediation of the Franciscan procurators, which often caused various inconveniences.

During the General Chapter held in Skórzec on November 12, 1750, Fr. Cajetan Wetycki, a young religious and a disciple of Fr. Wyszynski, was elected general superior. At the time of his election, he was thirty-seven years old. He was an active, educated, and spiritually-minded individual who devoted his heart and soul to the Order, showing great concern for its fate and development.¹⁴⁶ In his first letter addressed to his brethren after the election, he expressed deep humility and a readiness to assist each confrère, as well as pastoral care and brotherly love.¹⁴⁷ The general council at that time consisted of enlightened religious of great spirit who were shaped by Fr. Casimir or, at the very least, ardently supported his endeavors. The most important of them were Frs. Casimir Polak, Ambrosius Wrzesiński, Ladislaus Kanobrocki (a future general), Andrew Deszpot (a former general), and Benedict Hoenig, chaplain of the Czartoryski family. Under the influence of Fr. Casimir, the capitular fathers decided to establish a Marian institution in Rome, “procurandi hospitium per Nostris vel fundatione.” They planned to send two or

¹⁴⁵ Z. Proczek, *Testament nadziei*, p. 30; cf. *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 46-47, 48-49.

¹⁴⁶ LCVA, *Tabula generalis* (contains an extensive biographical note about Father Cajetan Wetycki).

¹⁴⁷ Cap. Gen., pp. 231-232. Cajetan Wetycki, *Litterae pastorales*, die 2 decembris 1750.

three Marians to Rome to achieve this.¹⁴⁸ Fr. Wyszyński was appointed the mission's superior, with Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer as his collaborator and secretary.¹⁴⁹ In addition, a servant was added to this group, and it is uncertain whether he was a religious or a layperson. The three arrived in Rome on the evening of April 30, 1751, and took up residence in the Reformatory monastery of Ara Coeli. Fr. Wyszyński informed his superior general of this development on the same day through a written letter.¹⁵⁰ As the procurator general of the Marian Order, Fr. Casimir was entrusted with trying to resolve three matters. The most important of these was the defense against the ambitions and encroachments of Fr. Stefan Turczynowicz.¹⁵¹ The Marian Order engaged in a dispute with Fr. Stefan Turczynowicz regarding the name, habit, and some aspects of Marian legislation he attempted to appropriate for the institute he had established. The second task was to acquire and organize a monastic institution that would serve as the headquarters for the procurator general's office or to purchase a church. The third one was to gather materials and information to initiate the beatification process of Fr. Papczyński. It is worth noting that this task originated more from the heart and conviction of Fr. Casimir than from a directive of the general

¹⁴⁸ Cap. Gen., 1750/19. "Perlectae sunt oboedientiae Adm. Reverend Patris Ex Praepositi Generalis Casimiri Wyszyński Roma missae a Rev PP. nempe Ministro Generali totius Ordinis S. P. Francisci et a Reverendissimo Commissario Generali potendi Romam ex negotiis Congregationis nostrae exposuitque causas et negotia Venerabili Assessorio, ob. quas vult petere Romam cum socio procurandi hospitium pro Nostris vel fundatione. Insuper postulabat titulum Procuratoris Generalis ex alma Roma ad quod Venerabile Assessorium assensit juxta oboedientiales a Reverendissimo Commissario datas."

¹⁴⁹ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 202, 227, 252.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192. Letter to Father General Cajetan Wetycki: "April 30. At night we arrived in Rome. The Most Reverend [Franciscan vicar general] showed us a place to stay in his monastery. As for the horses, we placed them in a stable in the city."

¹⁵¹ Fr. Stefan Turczynowicz, a priest of the Diocese of Vilnius, was born in the late 17th century in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He studied at the Vilnius Seminary from 1723 to 1727. After his ordination, he was appointed as the parish priest in Dzieńcioł (or Zdzińcioł) and also served as the chaplain to Prince Michał Radziwiłł. In 1744, Bishop Mikołaj Zienkiewicz appointed him as the superior of the Church of St. Stephen in Vilnius and the existing hospice of St. Lazarus. He founded the female religious congregation *Mariae Vitae*, or the Mariavites, at the church in either 1737 or 1746. He also made efforts to establish a male community, mostly composed of converts from Judaism, which eventually transformed into a religious order using the name and habit of the Marians. See Małgorzata Borkowska, OSB, *Dzieje Zgromadzenia Mariae Vitae, czyli mariawitek*, in: *Nasza Przyszłość*, 93 (2000), pp. 107-152; Jan Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, Wilno 1912, pp. 266, 358.

council. For the trip to Rome, the Marians received letters of recommendation from their general and Fr. Antoni Ostrowski, the general judicial officer in Warsaw, a relative of Fr. Casimir, and a future archbishop of Gniezno. These letters, addressed to the appropriate Church authorities, informed them that the Marians came to Rome for important matters concerning the Congregation. The letters also requested that they be treated kindly and with goodwill.¹⁵²

The Dispute with Father Stefan Turczynowicz; In Defense of the Marians' Title, Rights, and Habit

During that time, the conflict with Fr. Stefan Turczynowicz was a very important and challenging issue for the Marian Order. The problem was of such significance that on the very first day of their stay in Rome, Fr. Wyszyński conducted a thorough investigation into Fr. Turczynowicz's actions to determine the extent of his efforts to appropriate the name and habit of the Marian Order. He promptly wrote a letter to the superior general, informing him of everything.¹⁵³ Fr. Wyszyński devoted significant time, effort, and money to this matter, dealing with it from his arrival in Rome until he departed for Portugal.

What was the dispute with Father Turczynowicz about, and why did the Marians undertake such arduous and lengthy efforts to resolve it? It can be said that, to some extent, Fr. Turczynowicz's initiative threatened the Marian identity and the existence of the Order. His initiative focused on the idea of converting Jews to the Catholic faith and, occasionally, Karaites and Muslims as well. It was a unique phenomenon in the entire Church at that time. Over the centuries, the relationships between Christians and Jews varied greatly. There were periods of assimilation, separation, closeness, and hostility. For example, Pope Pius V ordered the expulsion of all Jews from the papal states, while Pope Gregory XIII and Clement XI recommended that priests deliver catechism teachings to Jews weekly.¹⁵⁴ In the mid-18th century, approximately 600,000 Jews

¹⁵² *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 209-211.

¹⁵³ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 191-192. Letter of April 30, 1751.

¹⁵⁴ Julian Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza księdza Józefa Turczynowicza*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 17-18.

were living in Poland. They maintained their religious, cultural, and customary distinctiveness and even had their own judicial system. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth respected the considerable autonomy granted to them. For the Jewish community residing in Poland, it was a time of profound ferment, crisis, and division as new religious movements such as Hasidism and sects like Frankism emerged, often in conflict with each other. Both in Poland and throughout Europe at that time, there were vigorous attempts to attract Jews to Christianity. In 1742, Bishop Franciszek Antoni Kobielski of Lutsk instructed clergy in fifty-four towns to deliver sermons to Jews. Although the efforts to convert them during these missions did not yield significant results in Poland, the issue of Jewish assimilation remained relevant. Both ecclesiastical and secular authorities addressed it. Jews who converted to Catholicism were granted nobility without significant difficulties, and it was only in 1764 that the Sejm passed a law prohibiting the recognition of neophytes as nobility.¹⁵⁵

Fr. Turczynowicz found a favorable ground for his actions. According to accounts, he experienced a profound conversion, renounced his chaplaincy at the court of Prince Michał Radziwiłł, and dedicated himself to evangelization among the Jews. He carried out his ministry of care for neophytes at the modest church of St. Stephen in the suburbs of Vilnius. Adjacent to the church was a shelter for the poor and the Confraternity of St. Lazarus, where in 1744, around thirty of the most impoverished converts were housed. Their situation was extremely difficult, as they were disinherited, excommunicated, completely isolated, and treated with hatred and condemnation by Jewish communities. However, they were also often despised and viewed with disbelief as converts by Catholics, leading them to a life of poverty and isolation.¹⁵⁶ As the number of neophytes increased, Fr. Turczynowicz, a zealous priest devoted to Virgin Mary, contemplated how to form them into religious monks. He believed a permanent institution should care for neophytes based on principles and organization similar to religious life. Therefore, he decided to establish the institute called "Societas Mariae." As he lacked sufficient experience in legislative matters and had limited knowledge

¹⁵⁵ Aleksander Kraushar, *Frank i frankiści polscy*, Kraków 1895, p. 259 n.

¹⁵⁶ Antoni Marylski, *Dzieje sprawy żydowskiej w Polsce*, Warszawa 1912, p. 69.

of religious life and canonical law in this regard, Fr. Turczynowicz approached Archbishop Adam Ignacy Komorowski, the primate of Poland. He informed the primate of his intention to establish a Marian order, with the monks being called "Marians" and the nuns being called "Mariavites." However, the primate responded negatively, stating that there were already Marians in Poland.¹⁵⁷

In 1745, Turczynowicz approached the superior general of the Marian Order, who at that time was Fr. Wyszyński, and proposed the opening of a Marian monastery in Vilnius. He emphasized that he already had candidates but did not mention that they were neophytes of both genders.¹⁵⁸ Wyszyński suggested that Turczynowicz join the Marian Order, complete the novitiate, take religious vows, and legally establish the new foundation.¹⁵⁹ Turczynowicz did not outright accept or reject the proposal, but he promised to work on it and collaborate. For this purpose, he requested the Marian Order's *Rule* and certain legal documents from the superior general. The superior general believed Turczynowicz's words, provided him with the Marian *Rule*, Constitutions, and authorized him to pursue the establishment of a monastery in Vilnius. This is how Fr. Casimir recorded the event: "We welcomed him warmly and declared our assistance if the foundation came to fruition. As the founder, we gave him the *Rule* of our Congregation, and upon his return to Vilnius, he testified before the authorities that he was already affiliated with us. The bishop was even surprised that we wanted to join with such people, but he remained passive. Father Turczynowicz dressed his newly baptized converts in habits and called them Marians."¹⁶⁰ When the news reached the Marian Order that the emerging community in Vilnius called themselves "Marians," consisted of converted men and women, and used a Marian habit (albeit in a gray shade), the members of the Order were surprised and concerned. They decided to intervene in the matter. Fr. Wyszyński, aware of the serious issue that threatened the development of the Marians, visited Vilnius twice (in 1748 and 1749) to meet with Turczynowicz and reach a resolution. He described the course of the

¹⁵⁷ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁵⁸ Casimir Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii*, in: Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 274-275, [afterwards: Wyszyński, *Diariusz*].

¹⁵⁹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 191-192.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

discussions: "We will not admit the converts nor consider letting the women into our Order. [...] Father Turczynowicz replied: 'Since you refuse to take them, I must think of an Order that would accept them.' We parted after long debates, after putting an obligation on him not to congregate these people under our title and the name of the Marians. However, he was stubborn and continued using both the habit and the title. He claimed they were more devoted to the name of Mary than we were [...]. Knowing also that we have the *Rule of Imitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary*, he derived from it the name *Mariavitae* [Mariavites]."¹⁶¹ In pursuit of his vision of converting and assisting neophytes, especially Jewish women, Fr. Turczynowicz founded a female religious congregation called the Mariavite Sisters in 1746.¹⁶²

Bishop Michał Zienkowicz of Vilnius, who initially held a negative view towards Fr. Turczynowicz's planned activities, eventually changed his stance to a more favorable one under the influence of the general trend in the Church. Fr. Turczynowicz also received decisive support from Franciszek Antoni Kobielski, Bishop of Lutsk; Jan Łopaciński, Bishop of Samogitia; Józef Puzyna, Bishop of Livonia; and some of the religious and local gentry.¹⁶³ To obtain funds for the support of his community, Fr. Turczynowicz approached both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, requesting permission to raise money for the community. In 1746, he received permission and gained wide recognition and social support for his cause.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the bishops agreed to establish houses in other dioceses and conduct public solicitations for fundraising. However, as early as 1747, the Vilnius Bernardines revoked their consent for alms-raising.¹⁶⁵ In 1748, representatives of various religious orders in Vilnius complained to the Congregation of Faith about Fr.

¹⁶¹ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 275.

¹⁶² The year 1746 as the founding date of the Mariavites is more likely, as the establishment of a congregation is a lengthy process. The year 1737 marks the beginning of Turczynowicz's efforts to realize his intentions, while 1746 is when Bishop Michał Jan Zienkowicz of Vilnius gave his approval for the establishment of the Mariavites. This opinion was expressed by Jan Kurczewski based on the records of the Diocese of Vilnius. See Jan Kurczewski, *Biskupstwo wileńskie*, Wilno 1912, pp. 266, 358.

¹⁶³ *Krótką historia zgromadzenia siostr Mariæ Vitæ*, napisana przez jedną mariawitkę, in: *Dzieje Dobroczynności Krajowej i Zagranicznej*, [b.m.], 1820, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶⁴ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, pp. 45-51, 65-66.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Turczynowicz's actions: "Without a requisite consent of our Chapter, he lawlessly and by some murky entitlement scrounged permission [for alms-raising] dated October 7, 1746. By the power of this permission and other documents, he founded some new congregation based exclusively on begging and alms. It was an almost new Order with a habit similar to or the same as some other orders [the Marians]."¹⁶⁶ After considering the arguments from both sides, the Congregation sided with Turczynowicz. It stated that there were no improprieties in conducting public solicitations for the support of neophytes and new converts. They further acknowledged that "in the past, it had been deemed acceptable and continued to be acceptable to maintain hospitals and collect contributions for the benefit of the poor."¹⁶⁷ Turczynowicz interpreted and spread the received decree as the Holy See's approval to establish a new religious congregation. People who had recently converted, without a proper religious formation and often with distorted religious views, joined this congregation and identified themselves as Marian monks. Their immoral behavior caused surprise and scandal, especially since the converts began to be associated with the Marians. According to the researcher of this dispute, Father Boleslaus Jakimowicz, "this resulted in great confusion because many people at that time knew the Marians and admired their work. Now they were shocked by the change in their behavior, observing suspiciously behaving monks living together with women (in mixed communities), engaging in collecting alms, which often turned into mere vagrancy, and bringing shame to the true Marians."¹⁶⁸ Fr. Wyszyński described the public reaction to these events: "They were astonished — the local Ordinary, other religious orders, the entire city, and the whole of Lithuania — seeing us, the true Marians, born in true faith, approved by the Holy See, and fighting under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM, and as a sign of the Virgin's purity, wearing white habits. [...] But now there are other Marians, recently converted from Judaism, undisciplined, wandering the streets in habits, begging for alms. Some desire to enter into marriage, others want to return to Judaism, and still others flee [...] It filled us with great

¹⁶⁶ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 277.

¹⁶⁷ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁶⁸ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 160.

shame and sadness about what was happening under the guise of the Marian name.”¹⁶⁹ It was not easy in those times to inform society and explain that these were not real Marians.

To halt the activities of Fr. Turczynowicz, Fr. Wyszyński decided to intervene at the Holy See. In a memorial dated May 12, 1751, he presented the history of the Marian Order. Then he informed that “Father Turczynowicz, against the will and commands of the Holy See, established a new institute under the title rightfully belonging to the Marians. This institute consisted of neophytes converted from Judaism and Islam to the Catholic faith. He dressed these neophytes in attire similar to the proper habit of the Marians. [...] Father Turczynowicz, on his initiative, created constitutions and laws for them and allowed them to enter into marital unions before the age of forty. These individuals commit many abuses. Turczynowicz allowed the neophytes who appropriated the name of the Marians and Mariavites to conduct public solicitations for their support. The collectors of these public solicitations misbehave, thus bringing discredit to the Marians. [...] Therefore, the Marians oppose Turczynowicz and ask the Congregation for help in this matter.”¹⁷⁰ The Holy See reacted very quickly because just two days later (on May 14th), they sent a letter to Bishop Michał Zienkowicz of Vilnius, requesting information about the emerging community and Fr. Turczynowicz. The bishop’s response, dated September 25th, 1751, was favorable towards Turczynowicz. Fr. Julian Kałowski writes, “[the bishop] exceptionally skillfully, efficiently, and persuasively defends the actions of the new institute.”¹⁷¹ Bishop Zienkowicz explained that Turczynowicz had founded a community called the Society of Mary. Although the members wore garb similar to the Marians’, it was not as white, and the cloak was shorter. Community members went on collecting donations to provide funds, but these were the men only.¹⁷² Fr. Turczynowicz did not remain passive; he engaged his influential supporters, including the Dominican Order, and generously paid lawyers who often resorted to indecorous attacks and words.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 235.

¹⁷⁰ ASV, Sezione Vescovi 1752, folder (busta) Pacchi; quoted after: J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁷¹ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 200, 214, 216, 231, 240-242.

Both sides spared no effort to achieve a moral victory in this dispute. In a letter dated March 4, 1752, to General Cajetan Wetycki, Fr. Wyszyński wrote, "In the afternoon [...] I encountered a Dominican from Lithuania. His socius accompanied him. The Dominican attacked me, threatening to empty my purse due to the lawsuit with Father Turczynowicz. He also uttered many offensive words about our Order and claimed that there is nothing left of us."¹⁷⁴ The supporters of Fr. Turczynowicz spread unfavorable opinions about the Marians in Rome, hindered new Marian foundations in Lithuania, and claimed that "there is no benefit from the Marians like there is from the Turczynowicz's Institute." They even resorted to objectionable actions to oppress the Marians. Fr. Wyszyński informed the superior general that one day, they sent him Fr. de Pasculo, a Basilian, who promised that if they were given a ransom of 50 scudi, "they would leave me alone. [...] I replied that I had done nothing wrong in this matter and had no intention of paying them a ransom."¹⁷⁵ In the same letter, we read that they accused the Marians before the Congregation of the Faith, claiming that "we harass them and hinder their work of converting unbelievers and that we desire to take away their foundation."¹⁷⁶

Fr. Wyszyński saw the activities of Fr. Turczynowicz as a serious threat to the existence of the Marians because the resulting turmoil led to a lack of vocations and difficulties in establishing new foundations. Meanwhile, his efforts in Rome to defend the reputation of the Marians were limited by a lack of funds. Therefore, he complained in a letter to the Father General, stating that "it would take at least 12 ducats for me to obtain a decree [against Father Turczynowicz's institute] and to hire a lawyer, but I have no means of obtaining them."¹⁷⁷ Due to the high cost of living and lack of income, on August 10, 1751, Fr. Wyszyński made the difficult decision to send his companion, Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer, and their servant back to Poland. Both of them left Rome on August 28th.¹⁷⁸

The constant lack of funds was a significant problem for Fr. Casimir as it led to the failure of many initiatives. He wrote about this issue to the Father General with dismay: "If we do not want to lose to them [...].

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 194.

We need to grease the palms not only of the lawyer but also of others. [...] When May comes, gifts must be sent out as if by law. [...] Otherwise, nothing will be achieved, or the matter will be prolonged. [...] Therefore, please send the amount as soon as possible [...].¹⁷⁹ He sought funds not only from the Father General but also from his brothers and benefactors. Due to the lack of money, lawyers delayed the case against Turczynowicz's machinations, causing difficulties in preparing the Founder Father's beatification process. In Rome, "praises about Father Turczynowicz, who is considered more saintly than our own Founder Father"¹⁸⁰ were being heard. Some people even asked, "Who is your founder then?" With concern, he informed the Father General that the "pseudo-Marians" were hindering their efforts regarding the process and the establishment of new foundations. He mentioned that they were powerful and could "do whatever they pleased to us. They would have already done so if I were not here."¹⁸¹ But Fr. Wyszyński's energetic and unyielding efforts eventually took effect. On November 12, 1751, the Congregation of Bishops and Religious issued a decree by which it ordered Fr. Turczynowicz and others (his community) to stop using the habit, as well as the name "Society of Mary," because neither the habit nor the name belonged to his foundation.¹⁸²

Fr. Turczynowicz, however, did not comply with this decree, and his supporters in Rome continued to advocate for the Marian Fathers to be called "Conceptionists" instead of "Marians" and for their neophytes to be considered "Marians."¹⁸³ He claimed there was a misunderstanding

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 241. Casimir Wyszyński informs that such gifts can be either thirty pounds of chocolate or six capons and an equal number of bottles of the finest wine, both for the judges and the lawyers.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁸² J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, p. 57; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 168. This document may be found on pp. 214-215.

¹⁸³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 232-233. Memoriale del Servo di Dio [...], 15 marzo 1752: "Enitendo impedire Dominis novis pseudo-Marianis ne uterentur titulo Marianorum et resistendo eorum conatui relinquendi nobis titulum Conceptionistarum, methodum nos denominandi ad Curias porrexerunt in hunc sensum: Patres Mariani Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatae Virginis Mariae per suum P. Procuratorem Generalem humillime exposcunt quatenus in imprimendis vel scribendis litteris, talis eorum Denominationis methodus poneretur, quali per litteras Apostolicas in sua approbatione sunt intitulati, videlicet: Patres Mariani Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatae Virginis Mariae non vero Conceptionistae".

because the Congregation of the Faith had no legal authority to issue the above decision. According to him, his institute's purpose is the conversion of non-believers and the care of neophytes, which is why it falls under the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Both sides again vigorously tried to present their arguments and justifications to the Holy See. However, Fr. Wyszyński's position was more challenging as he was practically unknown in Rome, had no supporters, and had very limited funds. Therefore, he once again prepared a comprehensive memorial in which he presented the history of Fr. Turczynowicz's institute, various abuses by its members, and their disobedience to ecclesiastical authority. He sent it to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith this time.¹⁸⁴ In the document, Fr. Wyszyński demonstrated his loyalty to the Church and compliance with its commands. However, he also courageously defended anything that would harm the good reputation of the Marians. He explained that the Marians were not opposed to the establishment of a shelter for neophytes but protested against the adopted name: "Marians" or "Society of Mary." They also objected to the idea of making neophytes into monks dressed in a habit similar to that of the Marians. They declared that "it had never crossed their minds to hinder Father Turczynowicz's alm-collection and activities. However, they emphasized that neither he nor his institute should usurp their title and habit to carry out such collections."¹⁸⁵

While waiting for the Congregation's decision, Fr. Wyszyński continued to find protectors, hire good lawyers, and raise money while fighting off the allegations of Turczynowicz and his supporters. It should be noted that Fr. Turczynowicz had many powerful and important protectors. This is how Fr. Casimir assessed the situation: "He has more supporters and people convinced of his sanctity than our Founder Father [Papczyński] among us. And if Turczynowicz were to pass away, his friends, with whom I engage in almost daily disputes, would dare to initiate his beatification process. [...] His merits are proclaimed in Lithuania and Rome by those well disposed towards him as if he were a person of great holiness who has brought many unbelievers into the

¹⁸⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 218-219, *Memoriale del Servo di Dio* [...], 8 maggio 1752.

¹⁸⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 168-169, 218-219.

bosom of the Church.”¹⁸⁶ In his book, Mateusz Mieses states that Fr. Turczynowicz contributed to the conversion to Christianity of approximately two thousand girls,¹⁸⁷ who were later married to people from at least the middle class. Until 1764, Jews who converted to Christianity were granted coats of arms and ennoblement, the easiest way to obtain noble status. It should also be noted that Fr. Turczynowicz served as the chaplain to Prince Michał Radziwiłł for many years, during which he established various contacts with individuals from higher social circles. At that time, the issue of the conversion and assimilation of Jews was promoted and supported in the Church, and it had political and social implications. However, in Rome, those interested in the topic were not always fully aware of the essence of the dispute. After numerous memorials and explanations from both sides, a decision was finally reached. On July 3, 1752, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith issued a decree that prohibited Fr. Turczynowicz from using his habit during the collections and from using a title that did not belong to his foundation, “as they were borrowed from the Marians without proper consent from the Church authorities.”¹⁸⁸ The decree ended the matter that had cost Fr. Wyszyński a great deal of energy and effort, as evidenced by the fact that the name Turczynowicz appears fifty-four times in his letters and *Diariusz* (Diary) in various contexts.

As an interesting anecdote, it is worth mentioning Fr. Wyszyński’s account, in which he attributes the victory to an extraordinary intervention by God. One day, an unknown monk came to Cardinal Hieronim de Bardi, the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and persuasively and compellingly explained the differences between the Marians and Turczynowicz and “talked at length about our cause.” This

¹⁸⁶ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 330.

¹⁸⁷ Mateusz Mieses, *Z rodu żydowskiego*, Warszawa 1991, p. 34; *Podręczna Encyklopedia Kościelna*, t. XXVI, p. 344, states that during the activity of the Mariavite sisters in Lithuania, Belarus, and Volhynia, there were 2,900 conversions of girls. In 1820, the Mariavite sisters had 17 convents in those regions with free schools for underprivileged girls.

¹⁸⁸ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 220–221. *Decreto definitivo S. Congregatione di Propaganda Fide nella causa dei Pseudo-Mariani di Vilna*, 3 luglio 1752. “Serventur omnino ordines datae sub die 22 iulii 1748 quoad quaestum et illius modum, necnon scribatur Episcopo Vilnensi, quod nullo modod permittat Praeposito et confratribus Sancti Lazari in quaestuationibus habitum et titulum, qui eius fundationi non cohaerent et qui absque eius licentia supponuntur assumpti.”

surprised everyone, and Fr. Wyszyński supposed it was Fr. Papczyński himself.¹⁸⁹ After this meeting, even Turczynowicz's lawyer "was stunned [...] and instead of standing on his side, took a favorable position for us." The Congregation instructed Bishop Michał Zienkowicz of Vilnius to implement the decree regarding Fr. Turczynowicz and to announce its contents in the Diocese of Vilnius. Fr. Turczynowicz was not satisfied with the decree he received, but the details of his further actions are unknown. However, it is known that he intended to travel to Rome regarding this matter. Fr. Wyszyński, upon learning about this, appealed to the Penitentiary of the House of Loreto, saying, "Please, Your Reverence, kindly persuade the persistent one to abandon his intentions. Also, ask him to cease sowing seeds of confusion through his neophytes by calling them Marians or Mariavites."¹⁹⁰ Fr. Turczynowicz was subjected to the penalty of suspension for unclear and unknown reasons. Fr. Julian Kałowski suggests this may have happened due to a lack of understanding of his radical, zealous attitude and risky pastoral activities.¹⁹¹

As the superior general, Fr. Wyszyński expressed his readiness to collaborate with Fr. Turczynowicz, especially in educating and providing religious formation to the neophytes. However, his priority was the defense of the title and habit of the Marians. He justified this by stating that it was the will of the Father Founder and that the Marians had been approved by the diocesan authorities and the Holy See under that title. According to Fr. Wyszyński, this was closely linked to promoting and defending the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He regarded it as the Marians' sacred duty; therefore, to protect and defend these values, he appealed to the Holy See.

Efforts to Acquire a Church in Rome

During his first stay in Rome from 1730 to 1731, Fr. Wyszyński vigorously tried to establish a Marian monastery or acquire any church in the Eternal City. However, his efforts came to naught due to financial

¹⁸⁹ Zygmunt Proczek, *Śladami Założyciela Zgromadzenia Księży Marianów. Casimir-Wyszyński o Stanisławie Papczyńskim*, Licheń Stary 2007, p. 29; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 303, 320, 327; *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 63.

¹⁹⁰ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 343.

¹⁹¹ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, p. 33.

difficulties and the lack of acceptance of this initiative by the Marian community in Poland. When he arrived in Rome again in 1751, finding a suitable place for the permanent settlement of the Marians in the Eternal City and establishing a monastery and procuratorship became one of his most significant concerns. This task was also entrusted to him by the General Chapter in 1750.¹⁹² When Fr. Casimir left Poland for Rome to acquire the foundation, he obtained letters of recommendation from King Augustus III and Prince Michał Czartoryski. Both letters were addressed to Cardinal Jerome Colonna di Sciarra, the protector of the Reformed Franciscans. Fr. Casimir Wyszynski's activity in this matter is truly admirable. Through various means and methods, he strived to acquire a place in Rome, even a small chapel or modest monastery, because he, perhaps as one of the few Marians, understood the importance of having a permanent presence there.

On April 30, he arrived in Rome, and just four days later, on May 4, 1751,¹⁹³ after familiarizing himself with the situation, he presented the memorials to the cardinal. However, his hopes of obtaining the cardinal's support proved futile. The cardinal declared that he could not provide the support requested. The next day, May 5, Fr. Wyszynski talked the matter over with a certain abbot, "who pocketed [...] five Maltese zecchinos, promising assistance in acquiring the foundation in Rome."¹⁹⁴ When he learned that the hermits near Porta Angelica were experiencing difficulties due to their small number, he proposed that they join the Marians along with their monastery. "Unfortunately, they were not interested in this proposition."¹⁹⁵ In this situation, he sought to meet with the Holy Father. Just a month after arriving in Rome, when he learned that the Pope had gone on vacation to Naples, he immediately

¹⁹² Cap. Gen., 1750/19: "Si occasio ferret locum pro hospitio Congregationis nostrae commodo acquirendi". Cf. *Positio*, Wyszynski, p. 209.

¹⁹³ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 193. "We handed over letters to Cardinal, from His Royal Majesty and from Prince Czartoryski. However, we did not achieve the expected result because the Cardinal is ill and unable to support us. Thus, we have already been abandoned, and our hope has diminished."

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 196. The Association *Eremitae Dell'Ascensione Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine della Grazie* was founded at the end of the 16th century. Their task was to look after pilgrims arriving in Rome. Due to the small number of members, the association was dissolved in 1806.

hastened there with his secretary and confrère, Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer. He placed great hope in the support of Queen Maria of Naples, who was the daughter of the Polish King Augustus III. However, as he noted, "once again, we achieved nothing. The Queen did not dare to write to the Holy Father and did not want to bother the King. Therefore, she did not provide us with a recommendation."¹⁹⁶ After three weeks, he returned to Rome upon learning that the Pope would be present for the feast of St. Peter. On June 30, he reached Pope Benedict XIV and presented him with the memorial *Supplicando locum aliquem pro nostra Congregatione Romae*. "The Holy Father accepted the memorial from my hands, and, as he read it, he sighed."¹⁹⁷ On July 2, he received a diplomatic response from the Secretariat of Memorials. Experts in Church matters explained to him that it was a negative response. However, undeterred by these setbacks, he approached Cardinal Colonna again, seeking his patronage in acquiring the church of St. Bibiana. This church belonged to the Chapter of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, of which Cardinal Colonna was a member. While the Cardinal supported this matter, the Chapter of the Basilica rejected Fr. Wyszyński's request because they "cannot be deprived of this only filial church since they have already given away other churches. They want to keep this one and not give it to anyone."¹⁹⁸ Despite these setbacks, Fr. Casimir did not give up his search. He became interested in the church of Santa Maria in Dominica alla Navicella because a certain religious informed him that the church was available. The church greatly appealed to him, as he saw a reference to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and featured a mosaic depicting all the apostles in white and the figures of many saints adorned in white robes, the color of Marian habits. Fr. Casimir stated, "I am convinced that God has foreseen this place for us and has prepared such a mosaic."¹⁹⁹ The church was outside the city and belonged to the Eastern Rite Basilians. Few people visited it because it was in ruins, and the monks lived in poverty. Therefore, they abandoned the church and monastery and set

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 214. Cf. *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 171-172.

¹⁹⁹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 172; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 212-213, 215.

out to other countries in search of funds for its restoration. Fr. Casimir made many efforts to find and contact the Basilians. When he finally succeeded, it turned out that the question of their ceding the shrine was no longer relevant. Realizing how difficult and costly it was to acquire any *locum* in Rome for the establishment of even a modest religious institution and struggling with financial difficulties, on August 28, 1751, Fr. Casimir sent his socius, Fr. Szkraffer, and the other brother back to Poland. He lamented this situation, writing, "I am left alone in Ara Coeli, abandoned by everyone."²⁰⁰ The long-awaited and hard-won audience granted to him by Pope Benedict XIV on November 29, 1751, brought great joy to Fr. Casimir. During the meeting, he presented the situation of the Marian Order, their tasks, and the matter concerning Turczynowicz to the Pope. "I also mentioned that we have no place to settle in Rome. He said, 'Look for a place, and we will help you.' When I mentioned the church of Mother Mary in Navicella, he replied, 'You are doing well. I promise you and bless you.' He patted me on the head and made the sign of the cross. Only after this audience did I wipe my eyes and rejoice."²⁰¹ Ultimately, the efforts to acquire this church also failed.

The concern for establishing a foundation in Rome did not give Fr. Wyszyński peace. He was determined to *ponere fundamenta*, to lay solid foundations for the Marian Order in Rome at any cost. Upon being informed of another opportunity by a certain monk, Fr. Wyszyński went to the saddlers' fraternity on November 16 to seek their church. However, the head of the fraternity informed him that "many religious and laypeople have already sought this church. However, they will not give it to anyone because they want to remain independent."²⁰² In the meantime, Fr. Casimir gathered information and tried to acquire the church of Our Lady of Liberation (Liberatrice) — now known as the ruins of Santa Maria Antiqua. He also sought the chapels of several fraternities. He made persistent efforts to gain the support of Cardinal Luigi Carafa, who showed kindness towards the Marians.²⁰³ The cardinal agreed to assign the small church to the Marians. Fr. Wyszyński wrote,

²⁰⁰ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 202.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 218–219.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁰³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 172, 361.

“Cardinal Carafa wants to allocate us a place, albeit modest, but for now, we must be content with that.”²⁰⁴ However, this promise was not fulfilled, and hope quickly faded. When Fr. Casimir went to the cardinal again regarding the promised church, he received the response that Rome no longer wanted any new religious orders or new establishments, and there was no positive atmosphere for it.²⁰⁵ Once again, hope resurfaced in 1752, as Fr. Wyszyński joyfully informed the superior general, “We have found a perfect place with a church, suitable rooms, and a vineyard belonging to Prince Barberini. However, it will require us to set aside [...] nearly two thousand of our funds.”²⁰⁶ In the pursuit of acquiring this attractive location, two insurmountable obstacles immediately arose. The first obstacle was the matter of funds and a lack of understanding regarding the significance of this undertaking by some of the Marians, coupled with their reluctance to pursue this idea. The second one was the dispute with Fr. Turczynowicz, described by Fr. Wyszyński: “I began to negotiate with the Barberini family for this place [...] and they did not refuse me. However, when they learned about our dispute with the pseudo-Marians, they withdrew and are waiting to see how it will turn out for us, whether we will succeed or lose.”²⁰⁷ Although the Marians won the case against Turczynowicz, Fr. Casimir left Rome for Portugal, and the matter of the church fell through. Difficulties with the acquisition of the church were explained most emphatically by a certain religious, a confessor of the Holy Father, whom Fr. Wyszyński approached, seeking his intervention with the Pope. The confessor, a Barnabite, responded to him, saying, “The Holy Father can’t give any church since they all have owners. However, there is a custom of purchasing a house, and then the Holy Father allows the opening of a chapel or church and grants permission for worship.”²⁰⁸ Despite tremendous efforts and endeavors, Fr. Casimir could not secure a headquarters for the Marians in Rome. The papal confessor correctly stated that such a place needed to be purchased. This eventually happened in 1779 when Fr. Candide Spourny purchased the church of St. Vitus and the former Cistercian monastery.

²⁰⁴ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 361, 367, 370.

²⁰⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 172.

²⁰⁶ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 237.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

5

SLOW EXPANSION OF THE CONGREGATION

Bohemians in the Marian Order as the Source of Spiritual Strength, Renewal, and Expansion

Thinking about the complicated history of the Marians in the first half of the 18th century, it is not easy to avoid reflective speculation about what would have happened if a group of several dozen Bohemians had not joined the Order at that time, many of whom shone with saintly lives and would go on to contribute significantly to the Order in the future. Would the Order have survived all that time's personal, ecclesiastical, and political upheavals? When discussing various Marian issues, in many instances, it has been noted that the Marians were not progressing and seemed to be stagnant, caught in internal disputes, and had a lack of observance of religious life. Bright and holy individuals who emerged within the Order attempted to rectify this situation, but the results of their efforts were consistently unsatisfactory. And so, in 1737, the Marians possessed only four humble monasteries, four modest wooden churches, and a total of thirty-seven religious, including priests, brothers, and clerics. Their resources were limited, and their presence was relatively small in numbers.¹ One of the major concerns that weighed heavily on Fr. Wyszynski's heart after being elected as the superior general of the Order in 1737 was the recruitment of new vocations. He saw the reforms within this "Marian backwater" were being met with resistance and great difficulty. A new spirit and fresh intellectual and theological forces were needed, as well as new institutions and vocations to fill them. Fr. Wyszynski dreamed and planned to transplant the Congregation to other countries and to internationalize it. He first directed his attention to neighboring Bohemia.

In 1757, Wojciech Magnuszewski, a friend of Fr. Casimir and a witness to his life, described his efforts to recruit vocations in Bohemia: "In Poland, [Father Casimir] saw that the harvest was plentiful, but the

¹ *Prot. Ord.*, pp. 236-237.

laborers were few, and the novitiate was empty. He sent Father Casimir [with a surname of Polak], a man knowledgeable in theology, a devout priest, to Bohemia. This Casimir was the first Bohemian to join this holy Order. When he arrived in Prague, the capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, many people joined the Order upon seeing this new religious. These were educated men from good families who knew their native language, French and German. They were skilled in playing musical instruments. These remarkable Bohemian men, after completing their novitiate [...] in the church of the Korabiew hermitage or other churches, played and sang during devotions so well that they were considered excellent musicians in Poland. After completing their novitiate and studies, they became lecturers, promoters, preachers, and superiors.”²

From the quoted document, it can be inferred that with the approval of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, the then superior general, Fr. Casimir Polak, a Bohemian by nationality, made several trips to the Czech lands to recruit candidates for the Marians.³ He brought twenty-two candidates to the Order: six in 1738, five in 1739, and eleven in 1740. It should be noted that contrary to popular belief among the Marians, Fr. Polak was not the first Bohemian in the Order. As early as 1735, there were three Bohemians in the Order. Fr. Michael Gibler, a general councilor and a Father of the Order, was mentioned in Marian documents as a preacher and assistant general as early as 1728 and as the novice master in the Korabiew Forest from 1730 to 1732.⁴ Apart from Fr. Gibler, there were two Bohemian clerics: Gabriel Morze, who was ordained a priest in 1734, and Fr. Casimir Polak. According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, Andrew Deszpot, the Superior General from 1722 to 1725, was also Bohemian-born. In 1738, another Bohemian, John Czermak, probably still a student, was sent on a “recruiting mission to Prague” with Fr. Casimir Polak. The detailed list of Marians from 1743 mentions fifteen Bohemians and specifies their roles within the Order. Therefore, it can be assumed that seven of those twenty-two Bohemian candidates who entered the novitiate and

² *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 37.

³ Fr. Casimir Polak (1709-1759) was a Marian of Bohemian origin. Casimir Wyszyński sent him to study in Prague, where he recruited many candidates for the Marian Order. During the mentioned period, he served as a general councilor and master of novices. See Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 229, footnote 58.

⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 66.

seminary studies left the Order within those few years.⁵ The following, who remained in the Order, were: John Czermak, Wenceslaus Bayer, Florian Machaczek, Michael Senel (Sendel, Seydel), Francis Raabe, Matthew Sedlaczek, Gabriel Morze, Adalbert Strach, Bernard Machaczek, Alexis Fiszer (Fisher, Fischer), Januarius Podpusz, Isidore Thaudt (Taudt), John Cantius Szkraffer, Narcissus Richter, and Benedict Hoenig. A sixteenth man was Fr. Casimir Polak, who recruited them.⁶

The fact that such a large group of Bohemian candidates joined the Marians is remarkable. It raises astonishment, especially considering that they were individuals of high intellectual and spiritual qualities, worldly-wise, and coming from Prague, one of the most important cities in the powerful Habsburg monarchy. The biographer of Fr. Benedict Hoenig wrote about his vocation to the Marians and his courageous decision: "He lived his youth in a praiseworthy manner, adorned with great gifts of the soul and Christian virtues befitting such a person. And upon hearing the words of Christ from the Gospel, 'If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross,' he bid farewell to his father and mother and also left his homeland to journey to a distant region, the Kingdom of Poland, a land unknown to him. Neither the long journey, the dangers of forests and marshes, the poor roads, nor the discomforts discouraged him. His thoughts and soul were consumed by one thing alone: the greatness of the promises that await us in heaven."⁷ A question arises: What impulse prompted these Bohemian individuals to come to a distant country amid the "Saxon era" crisis to join an unknown and impoverished religious order? It is generally believed to be the merits of the then-general, Fr. Casimir Wyszzyński, but he was not traveling in search of candidates. Fr. Polak's account, stating that they had a saintly superior general, wore white habits, and had a devotion to the Immaculate Mary, was, in terms of vocations, like a voice crying out in the wilderness because there were other religious communities with similar qualities. It seems that explanations should be sought elsewhere. The fact that in the Habsburg monarchy, there was a not very favorable

⁵ Prot. Korab., *Tabula*-1743, *Patrum ac Fratrum Marianorum*.

⁶ LCVA, 1676, Ap. 1, box 7. *Tabula generalis Patrum et Fratrum vivorum* [...], Anno 1786 conscripta. This document contains personal data of Fr. Casimir Polak.

⁷ Ibid. Three pages of the manuscript contain the biography of Fr. Benedict Hoenig.

phenomenon towards religious orders known as Josephinism, which was common during the reign of enlightened absolutism, certainly cannot be overlooked. It became difficult to join religious orders during that period. Many monasteries were closed down, and attempts were made to fully subordinate the Church to secular authorities.⁸ Another significant obstacle to the country's functioning and development of religious orders was the strong presence of the national Hussite Church. Many indications suggest that it was personally Fr. Polak, enjoying a reputation as a zealous, pious, and educated man, who attracted these Bohemian candidates to the Marian order. This is what Fr. Charles Hondlewski wrote about him in a posthumous biographical note, highlighting his extraordinary charisms, zeal, religious fervor, and piety: "Just as gloriously as the Most Reverend Father C[asimir] Polak began his life in the saintly Order of the Marian Fathers, he also gloriously ended it, never deviating from the path of virtue. Throughout his entire life, he advanced further in religious perfection. Father Casimir knew and often repeated, that it did not matter how long someone lived but how well one lived according to God's will in the Order. To prevent his religious devotion from becoming empty and rigid, he made every effort to be a holy and zealous observer and guardian of the *Rule* and Constitutions of his Order. He was always mindful of this motto: 'A religious always regresses if he does not advance in his vocation.' He believed a religious was committing theft if he lived fruitlessly in the Order. Therefore, during his years in the Order, as he endeavored to obtain the longed-for spiritual fruit of holiness, he devoted all his strength and mortifications to it. By so doing, he acquired many beautiful virtues and gifts of the soul and, being so rich in virtues and gifts of the spirit, he formed the religious very well, working sacrificially."⁹

From the available sources, it appears that in the 18th century, around fifty Bohemians joined the Marian Order, including those who left the Order during the novitiate-seminary formation period. Among this group, the names of thirty-five men have been identified, along with the offices and roles they held within the Order and their burial places.

⁸ See Daniel Olszewski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa w zarysie*, Katowice 1982, pp. 175-176; B. Kumor, *Józefinizm*, in: *Enc. Katol.* t. 8, col. 176-179.

⁹ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*.

This applies to men whose biographical notes or accounts unambiguously identify as “Natione – Bohemus.”¹⁰ The last Bohemian candidate to join the Marians on November 11, 1784, at 18, was Paulin Pirchman (Pirchmanski, Pierzchański, or Pirszmański in Polish). In 1797-1803, he was the secretary of the Russian Province. He was a professor of rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. He made a significant contribution to the formation of Marian seminarians. Unfortunately, he passed away at a young age on April 2, 1807.¹¹

The Marians of Bohemian origin:

First and Last Name	Date of Death	Burial Place
1. Adalbert Strach	2/11/1754	Marijampole
2. Alexander Mraas	5/16/1769	Goźlin
3. Augustin Lagotta (Łagott)	6/24/1780	Góra Kalwaria
4. Andrew Deszpot	11/22/1750	Goźlin
5. Alexis Fiszer (Fischer)	12/31/1784	Balsamão
6. Bernard Machaczek	1/30/1753	Goźlin
7. Benjamin Friszek (a student)	6/7/1776	Góra Kalwaria (23 years old)
8. Benedict Hennig (Hoenig)	9/21/1770	Warsaw
9. Casimir Polak	7/7/1759	Warsaw (at a hospital)
10. Charles Hondlewski	6/19/1787	Góra Kalwaria
11. Damasius Wokal	10/13/1806	Skórzec
12. Emeric Reubau (Reuban)	10/11/1806	Wołpa
13. Florian Machaczek	1/12/1754	the Korabiew Forest
14. Francis Xavier Raabe	2/05/1758	Warsaw (at a hospital)
15. Gabriel Morze	2/06/1746	the Korabiew Forest

¹⁰ In determining national affiliation, the sound of the surname was not taken into consideration, even if it had a Bohemian sound to it.

¹¹ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 58, 65.

16. Honorius Tytz (Tyzt,Tyc)	10/04/1814	Wołpa
17. John Cantius Szkraffer	1/9/1765	Raśna
18. John Nepomucene Czermak	1/10/1786	Marijampole
19. James Machaczek (Brother)	6/13/1749	the Korabiew Forest
20. John Podpusz	5/2/1755	Góra Kalwaria
21. Isidore Taudt (Taut, Thaut)	11/22/1791	Warsaw (at the Capuchins')
22. Joseph Mraas	2/28/1793	Sobotniki
23. Leopold Wawrau	10/18/1799	Goźlin
24. Matthew Sedlaczek	1/23/1770	The Korabiew Forest
25. Marianus N.N. (Czech)	3/12/1753	Goźlin
26. Michael Gibler	2/16/1738	Góra Kalwaria
27. Michael Sendel (Zeydel)	5/12/1754	Góra Kalwaria
28. Mark Herald	3/27/1803	Ryki (Piaseczno?)
29. Nicholas Kreyczyk	2/24/1763	Skórzec
30. Narcissus Richter (Rychter)	9/13/1772	Goźlin
31. Paulin Pirchman (Pirszmański)	4/2/1760	the Korabiew Forest
32. Wenceslaus Bajer	9/2/1760	the Korabiew Forest
33. Felix Hadrawa	7/10/1829	Raśna
34. Amandus Spourny	Ordained in 1781?	
35. Candide Spourny	1798; his fate is unknown after the monastery's dissolution in Rome. ¹²	

For the relatively small religious order, these vocations represented a significant potential in personnel, spirituality, and intellect. This was evidenced by the multifaceted dynamism of their religious activities. As early as 1743, Fr. John Czermak, the first among the Bohemians, was elected superior of the Korabiew Forest monastery and novice master.

¹² The above data were obtained through the examination of documents: LCVA, *Index alphabeticus*; *Tabula generalis*; *Album mortuorum Patrum ac Fratrum Marianorum 1700-1864*; *Capitula Generalia Marianorum 1702-1999*, passim.

Also, in 1749, thanks to the Bohemians' initiative, the Marians opened two new important posts in Raśna, of which the organizer and first superior was Fr. Isidore Taudt. In 1750, an institution was established in Marijampole, where Fr. Adalbert Strach was entrusted with a similar function.¹³ The Bohemians enjoyed great trust within the Order. They fulfilled all available offices in the Order, including the office of superior general, to which Fr. Joseph Mraas was elected on August 21, 1791. A beautiful sign of cooperation and understanding between the Marians of Lithuanian, Polish, and Bohemian origin is the composition of the 1749 general government. There were as many as three Bohemians among its five members: Benedict Hoenig, Casimir Polak, and Andrew Deszpot.¹⁴ Quite amazing were the variety and abundance of the charisms of Bohemian vocations. According to the testimonies, devout religious, ascetics, intellectuals, and theologians loved the Order and served it sacrificially. May the attitude of Alexander Mraas serve here as an example: he was burned alive during the fire at the church and monastery in Goźlin on May 16, 1769, while selflessly saving liturgical paraments and religious documents and books. The General Chapter, on July 25, 1775, emphasized his heroic dedication to the good of the Order.¹⁵ We should mention that before the fire, around a dozen Marians, including the seminarians, resided in that monastery.

The Bohemian best known among the Marians and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and most deserving was Fr. Benedict Hoenig. He was admired by many magnates, bishops, and even King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. Born in 1719 in the Czech town of Swiatło, he began his studies at the University in Prague. However, it is unclear what the outcome of his studies was or whether he completed them because, in 1740, at the age of twenty-one, he entered the Marian novitiate in the Korabiew Forest. As Fr. Benedict was a highly esteemed

¹³ Jonas Totoraitis, *Marianie na Suwalszczyźnie*, transl. from Lithuanian by J. Grisans, Stockbridge 1966, pp. 3-4. "The first, whom the general Casimir Wyszyński sent to Staropole [today Marijampole] at the request of Countess Butler was the Bohemian Adalbert Strach, undoubtedly one of those who had obtained higher education at the University of Prague. He served in Staropole for only four years and died there in 1754."

¹⁴ Cap. Gen., 1749, p. 211.

¹⁵ *Album Mortuorum* for May 16, 1769; Decree commemorating his [heroic] death. Zob. Cap. Gen., 1775/4. "[...] post consumptum infortunato eventu In conflagratione Conventus Goslinensis, dignae memoriae per R. P. Mraaz S. T. L. et secretarium Ordinis."

figure within the Marian Order, having made significant contributions in various areas, it is appropriate to present a biography written by the former secretary of the order, Fr. Charles Hondlewski, who personally knew Fr. Benedict:

“Following the road of perfection from virtue to virtue, he completed his novitiate at the Korabiew monastery impeccably. It is difficult to find words to express the zeal, commitment, and diligence he applied himself to studying day and night. His superiors and professors saw a bright future for him. He was never seen wasting time in idle talk, trivial activities, and frolics [...]. In addition, he undertook exercises in virtue, more precisely in [...] religious discipline. When he finished his courses, his superiors, discerning his particular dignity of conduct and aptitude for learning, appointed him instructor of moral theology for the Marian students. Father Benedict focused on helping his disciples become well-educated men, useful to the Order and the homeland. The ones he taught also learned from him good manners, dignity, goodness, and religious modesty, which he cultivated to a high degree. He had a highly cultured manner of living and a good upbringing, and he arranged everything in the spirit of gentleness and meekness. [...] When his superiors were asked by Prince Michał Czarторыski, Grand Chancellor of Lithuania, to appoint an honorable man to his court as chaplain, they deemed our Father Benedict worthy of this office; he arrived at the Prince’s residence in Wołczyn and remained there for some days as if for a trial period. The princely family accepted him as the court chaplain. Although superiors of the other religious orders were jealous and actively interfered, trying to have him removed and replaced by a priest from their communities as the chaplain of the Prince and his wife, they always met with rejection by the prince, who even refused to discuss it with them. Father Benedict was Prince Czarторыski’s chaplain for many years, serving wonderfully and being very much appreciated; the Prince showed him great kindness. He was well known to magnates, the aristocracy, and even King Stanislaus Poniatowski, who, while visiting

the court in Wołczyn, showed Father Benedict much cordiality and granted favors. Indeed, had not sudden death taken Father Benedict from us, the excellent King would have raised him to episcopal status. Thanks to the assistance of Princess Eleonora [Czartoryska] and through her intercession —because he always enjoyed her particular kindness due to her and the Prince's special regard — he received the honor of being nominated the provost in Prużany and, upon the prior dispensation from the Holy See, he was also granted permission to keep his religious habit.¹⁶ He administered the Prużany benefice with the help of two Marians while he remained at the prince's court as the theologian, preacher, and the Princess's confessor. Regrettably, he did not exercise the control and administration of this benefice for a long time. Father Benedict developed an ulcer of the throat and died in the second year in the office of the provost. This filled Czartoryski Princes and the court with great grief, sadness, and pain. Certainly, the Princess wept much more than the others after his death. She also wrote a letter to our superior general, in which she conveyed these special words: 'The pain that I felt after the death of Father Benedict, my theologian, and confessor, cannot be alleviated in any other way except by sending from your Order another chaplain similar to Father Benedict, who I wish with all my heart [could] still be with me.'¹⁷

Fr. Benedict's high personal culture and presence among the Polish and Lithuanian aristocracy and gentry gave him opportunities to seek patronage in dealing with various matters on behalf of the Marians. It also contributed to the increased prestige of the Order within Polish and Lithuanian society. As the chaplain of the Czartoryski family, Fr. Benedict traveled extensively with its members both within the country and abroad. He dedicated the income and gratuities he received to the benefit of the Order, providing financial support for its various needs. With the help of the Czartoryski family and King Stanislaus Augustus

¹⁶ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Father Benedict Hoenig's biographical note [transl. from Latin into Polish by R. Piętko].

¹⁷ Ibid.

Poniatowski, in 1769, the Holy See granted him a wealthy ecclesiastical benefice in Prużany, within the diocese of Lutsk (today in Belarus).¹⁸ Fr. Benedict allocated the income from this benefice to the needs of the Marian monasteries. He also provided funds for the beatification process in Rome of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, the Founder of the Marian Fathers.¹⁹

After Fr. Benedict's death, despite pressure from other religious orders and intense competition from many candidates vying for the position of chaplain to the Czartoryski family, Fr. Isidore Taudt, also of Bohemian nationality, was appointed according to the wishes of Princess Eleonora. The Marian chronicler described this: "And it so happened that Isidore Taudt, instructor of holy theology, the Father of the Order, was appointed in his [Fr. Benedict's] place, where he was accepted and received wholeheartedly. He was endowed with great virtues, knowledge, and good habits, in which the princess found delight, and she kept him at the court with all due deference after Prince Michał's death [her husband]."²⁰

Isidore Taudt was born in 1715 in Nowy Dom near Prague and graduated from the University of Prague. He joined the Marians at the age of twenty-four in 1739. His contributions to the Order were significant. He served as a local superior and a general councilor and taught Marian clerics for twelve years. As the superior in Raśna, Isidore Taudt organized a new monastery there, establishing a sizable library stocked with valuable books and the first Marian museum. According to testimonies, "he was a man of extraordinary intelligence and a model of virtues." He was theologian and confessor to the Czartoryski Princes for twenty-two years. As a result, he was known and respected within aristocratic circles. He received a high salary for his service, which he used to support his Order. He also contributed to the royal approval of the Marian foundation in Marijampole. He was highly esteemed by the nuncio, bishops, and

¹⁸ ASV, Sez. Penitenziaria, Mariani Albi, Polonia. P. Benedictus Hoennig, Ord. Marianorum, Beneficium in Brestensia, Próżany 24 Januarii 1769; ABUV Doc. Viln., (single documents) Antonius Bogoria Wollowicz, episcopus Luceoriensis et Berstensis ad Bendocto Hoennig Ord. Immac. Conc B. V. Mariae, Janovia, die 19 aprilis 1769.

¹⁹ BUViL, F4-A4559. *Protocollum triennale* Reverend P. Cajetani Wetycki, *Actus Congregationis*, die 26 Juni 1753; cf. *Album mortuorum*, on Sept. 21, 1770.

²⁰ LCVA, *Tabula generalis* contains Father Isidore Taudt's biographical note.

magnates. Through the efforts of the Czartoryski family, he was granted the dignity of apostolic protonotary. He passed away on November 22, 1792, in the palace of Prince Czartoryski in Warsaw. The Prince's family covered the cost of his solemn funeral. He was buried in the prestigious Capuchin church in Warsaw. It is written in the *Album of the Deceased*: "Whatever merits the Order has in management or education, it owes them to Father Isidore. He was zealous in serving the common good and the true religious spirit. He fulfilled fruitfully his duties as a superior. He combined wisdom with zeal and shining example of life."²¹

One must objectively note that being accepted at a princely court was the pinnacle of dreams and a long-awaited culmination of efforts for many clergy members. Karolina Stojek-Sawicka states, "The efforts associated with being accepted at a court occupied a significant part of their life energy, and most of their aspirations seemed to converge in them. However, not all petitions were considered positively; the contents of many were not even reviewed, while others were rejected after an initial selection."²² The previously mentioned biographer of Fr. Benedict Hoenig writes about such efforts, noting the intense endeavors of his competitors and the calumnies they spread when he already held the position of chaplain. Research shows that most chaplains to princely and noble families came from the powerful and dynamic Jesuit Order. They were highly educated, worldly, and politically astute and proposed a new model of piety.²³ Therefore, from a human perspective, it is difficult to understand the Czartoryski family's decision to choose relatively unknown and modest Marians as chaplains for such a prominent family. However, Princess Eleonora Czartoryska, who was referred to as the "saintly lady," was a spiritually mature and deeply devout woman. She chose to forgo well-known and worldly theologians, people of great renown, and instead gave a place to humble and pious Marians like Fr.

²¹ *Album mortuorum*, 22 XI 1792 r.; see B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 32-34; see *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 29, 47-48, 72-74, 149-151, 161-163.

²² Karolina Stojek-Sawicka, *Troski i radości w życiu duchownych na dworze Radziwiłłów nieświeżskich w XVIII wieku*, in: *Nasza Przeszłość*, t. 110, 2008, pp. 265-266.

²³ Stanisław Litak, *Jezuici na tle innych zakonów męskich w Polsce w XVI-XVIII wieku*, in: Ludwik Grzebień i Stanisław Obirek [Eds.], *Jezuici a kultura polska: materiały sympozjum z okazji Jubileuszu 500-lecia urodzin Ignacego Loyoli (1491-1991) i 450-lecia powstania Towarzystwa Jezusowego (1540-1990)*, Kraków, 15-17 lutego 1991 r., Kraków 1993, pp. 185-196.

Benedict Hoenig and Fr. Isidore Taudt. It is also worth mentioning that the Czartoryski family so highly valued the Marians that the position of chaplain was offered to them by several other branches of the powerful family until 1853.

The third distinguished Marian of Bohemian origin and court chaplain to the Butler family, who were benefactors and founders of the institution in Marijampole, was Fr. Joseph Mraas. He was born in 1739, made his religious profession in the Korabiew Forest in 1758, and was ordained as a priest in 1762. We have limited information about his life and activities, but we know he completed his studies at the University of Prague. As an educated individual within the Order, he taught theology to Marian clerics in Marijampole and simultaneously served as the superior of that monastery. In 1771, he was sent by the authorities of the Order to Królewiec (Königsberg) as the court chaplain to Nicholas Butler, where he remained until Butler died in 1782. This was his second time serving in that role, although we do not have information about the specific years he served as the court chaplain for the first time.²⁴ Due to his spiritual, intellectual, and personal qualities, the General Chapter in 1788 in Raśna elected him as the vicar general, commissioner, and visitor. After the untimely death of Superior General Stanislaus Mogień on March 12, 1789, Fr. Mraas, as the vicar general, assumed the office of the superior general following the law.²⁵ As the superior general, he diligently sought the approval of Marian monasteries by the Sejm. He benefited from the support of the chaplain, Fr. Isidore Taudt, and the Czartoryski family in this endeavor. Humble and unassuming, he did not even want to accept the office of superior general. Thanks to his gentle disposition, genuine humility, prudence, and engaging demeanor, he was highly esteemed by his brethren and laypeople, who held him in great respect. In 1791, he applied for permission to construct a new masonry monastery in Marijampole. On May 25 of that year, he arrived there to bless the cornerstone laid for its foundations. The Marijampole chronicler wrote: "In the year 1791, on May 25, the construction of the masonry monastery

²⁴ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 19.

²⁵ Prot. Mariamp., (b.p.). "In the year 1789, on March 12th, at eight o'clock in the evening, [Father Mogień] ceased to live. After the passing of our late General, in accordance with the previous Chapter, Father Joseph Mraas STL was elected as the Vicar, and he assumed authority as the Pater Congregationis."

began. Father Joseph Mraas blessed the first stone and foundations [...], and the construction started first from the side facing the town [...].”²⁶ On September 21, 1791, the Marian Chapter elected him as the superior general, from which he tried every possible way to free himself. He accepted the role with humility and conviction that Mary herself was the actual superior of the Marians, and he was merely her unworthy representative. As the superior general, he cared for young Marians’ spiritual and intellectual formation. Under his leadership, the General Chapter in 1791 developed a comprehensive set of forty-one decrees encompassing various aspects of Marian life. These decrees included the program of clerical studies, the formation process for novices, the responsibilities of lecturers, matters of internal discipline, and fraternal love.²⁷ As the superior general, he played a significant role in publishing the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* and *Marian Statutes* in Polish. He also collaborated with Fr. Adam Matulewicz to develop a new Marian Ritual.²⁸ Fr. Mraas was an exceptional man who made significant contributions to the Marian Order, to which he dedicated himself wholeheartedly. However, his health began deteriorating due to his numerous responsibilities and arduous travels, which were particularly challenging then. Yielding to the requests and pressures from his brethren and benefactors, he decided to seek rest and treatment at the court of Zofia Butler in Żemosław. There, he passed away suddenly on February 28, 1793, and was buried in the church in Sobotniki. His obituary said: “This man was wise and prudent in his work, always having well-thought-out and purposeful intentions. He was warm-hearted in giving advice, strict

²⁶ Prot. Mariamp. Year 1791,(b.p.); J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 19.

²⁷ Cap. Gen., 1791/1-41.

²⁸ Ibid., 1791/20. “Postquam in anterioribus Capituli congregati Patres magnam utilitatem immo necessitatem ritualis Mariani proprii agnoverint, et hucusque omnes religiosi illud excudendum desiderent Venerabile vero Assessorium iisdem ex motivis id in votis semper habeat; hinc unanimiter ad confecionem eiusdem ritualis proprii Venerabiles Patres suppetierunt Reverend Vicarium Generalem J. Mraas, Assistentem Adamum Matulewicz STL et Secretarium Ordinis, STL Franciscum Felice quo dum confectum fuerit, communicabitur singulis Assessoribus Generalibus.” Also see: *Konstytucje Apostolskie [...] Maryanów*, Wilno 1791, Introductoin: “Recognita ad germanum sensum per Deputatos M. R. R. P. Patres ex Ordine nostro Regulae Imitationis B. V. M. et Constitutionum Romae latine editarum vernacula translatione”; *Authoritate, qua fungimur, Eandem pro utilitate Conventuum atque Exemplariorum necessitate typis impromi volumus. Datum in Conventu Nostro Miroslavensi, Die 10 Febr: 1791. Josephus Mraas Vicarius Generalis PP. Marianorum.*

yet compassionate in discipline, punctual in his promises, respected by the powerful, and loved by priests and brethren. He always cared for the well-being of the monastery and vigilantly ensured that no harm befell any of the confrères.”²⁹

The Teachers of the Marian Youth

Before the Bohemians joined the Order, the level of Marian studies was low. There was a shortage of educated lecturers, and there was also a lack of volunteers for teaching. The Marians often had to “borrow” lecturers and novice masters from the Reformates. Young Marians were not sent to formal studies; they were educated within the community. They underwent what was called a *studium domesticum*. This situation changed in the 1740s when many Bohemians joined the Order. Some of them completed their studies at the prestigious university in Prague. They were open-minded individuals, knowledgeable in foreign languages, worldly, and from the great and influential city of Prague. They brought a new spirit, new currents, and a certain dynamism to the Marian Order, and they also assumed positions in the leadership of the Order. They were entrusted with the roles of lectors (the term used for Marian lecturers) and novice masters. One of the most distinguished figures in this field was John Nepomucene Czermak, who joined the Order in 1737. He was born in Prague in 1710 and graduated from the University of Prague. Fr. Wyszyński admitted him into the Order, and he significantly influenced his spiritual formation, as stated by Fr. John Nepomucene in his extensive testimony during the beatification process of Fr. Wyszyński. For thirty years, he taught moral theology in Marian formation houses.³⁰ He also served as a general councilor and novice master. He stood out for the clarity of his lectures and the immense influence he exerted through his personality, sincerity, kindness, and fatherly heart on the Marian youth.

Also highly deserving in the formation field was Fr. Isidore Taudt, also a graduate of the University of Prague. He had extensive knowledge,

²⁹ *Album zmarłych*, entry on Feb. 22, 1793.

³⁰ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 107, 438-441; *Album mortuorum*, note on Jan. 11, 1786.

broad horizons, exceptional intelligence, and numerous virtues. He taught philosophy and theology to Marian clerics for twelve years, imparting them with solid and well-grounded knowledge. Next to him among the ranks of distinguished Marians stands Fr. Benedict Hoenig, who has been mentioned several times. He was also a graduate of studies in Prague. With great passion and enthusiasm, he taught moral theology, first in the monastery in the Forest and then for about five years (1747-1751) in the newly founded monastery in Rašna. He developed a three-volume, thousand-page textbook on moral theology, which his successors used.³¹ In addition to his lectures, according to witnesses, he taught by the example of his own noble and virtuous life, greatly influencing the students entrusted to him.

One of the most active Bohemians, Fr. Felix Hadrawa, played an outstanding role in religious formation. He was born on October 21, 1756, in Pilhrim, in the Diocese of Prague. He joined the Marian Order on March 13, 1773, as a 16-year-old. His was one of the last Bohemian vocations. As a twenty-five-year-old priest in 1780, he was sent to study in Rome, a true rarity at the time. While there, he engaged in educational work among the youth at the school affiliated with the Marian monastery of St. Vitus, and for two years, he studied at *La Sapienza* University.³² Initially, due to his limited knowledge of the Italian language and the resulting difficulties, he found himself in conflict with the energetic superior of the monastery, also a Bohemian, Fr. Spourny, who wanted to send him back to Poland. However, the Holy See came to his defense and decided that "Procurator [Spourny] should not govern as superiors in Poland usually do, because this is Rome, and ordered Father Felix to return and be treated as a priest. He was to remain in Rome until the Father General in Poland made a decision."³³ In Rome, Father Felix negotiated by mail with his uncle, a parish priest and canon from Prague, who had promised to transfer the church of Our Lady of Sorrows in that city

³¹ Library of the Seminary in Lublin. Department of Manuscripts, No. 342.

³² Prot. Rom., Julian Koprowski, letter to Father Isidore Taudt, Rome Nov. 17, 1780: "The first grade is taught by Father Felix H.[adrawa]; AGM, *Percepta et expensa*, *Conventus S. Vito 1779-1783*; ABUV, Doc. Viln., II, c. 38-39. A report from Rašna dated 1822 contains characteristics of various religious, including Father Felix Hadrawa.

³³ Prot. Rom., Julian Koprowski, letter to Father General of Dec. 23, 1780; *ibid.*, Felix Hadrawa to Father General, Rome Dec. 23, 1780. Cf. B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 30.

to the Marian Order. They only needed permission from the Emperor and the Archbishop of Prague, which the Marians did not receive. The times were unfavorable for religious orders. The refusal was justified by the belief that religious, taking over some place under the guise of pastoral work, wished only “for a particular [...] augmentation of their Order,”³⁴ solely for its expansion. In 1782, after two years of studying,³⁵ Felix Hadrawa returned to Poland and was immediately appointed as a theology lecturer at the house of studies in Skórzec. In 1797, the Provincial Chapter entrusted him with the role of novice master, a position he fulfilled until 1816. Fr. Felix Hadrawa held various positions within the Order, but throughout his life, almost until his death, he focused on teaching theology to seminarians or serving as a master to educate novices. After the final partition of Poland in 1795, he was appointed assistant general for the Russian Province in 1797. In 1803, he was chosen as the vicar of the Province of the Immaculate Conception in Russia and entrusted with the responsibilities of house treasurer and confessor at the monastery in Raśna.³⁶ He was incredibly deserving, especially during the difficult times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s partitions and the Order’s division into provinces, as well as during the Napoleonic campaign. He was a pillar of the Russian Province and one of its co-organizers. He was highly esteemed for his kindness, love for the Order, piety, and intellectual qualities.³⁷ During his entire life, Fr. Hadrawa was remarkably active and accomplished much good for the congregation. Therefore, he was granted the honorary title of “Pater Emeritus,” i.e., Deserving Father, associated with certain privileges.

Fr. Paulin Pirchman (Pierzchański, Pirchmański) was another highly deserving member of the Marian Order, especially for the newly established Russian Province after the partitions. He was born on December 19, 1766, and joined the order on December 11, 1784. He was the last candidate of Bohemian origin to enter the Marians. He was ordained as a priest on January 31, 1790, just before the outbreak of the Kościusko

³⁴ Ibid., Felix Hadrawa to Father General, Aug. 16, 1781.

³⁵ Ibid., Cande Spourny to Father Isidore Taudt, Roma, April of 1782: “On April 16, 1782, Father Felix [Hadrawa] departed from Rome together with Father Emeric [Reubau].”

³⁶ ABUV, ACPRus., c. 15, 18-19.

³⁷ BUViL, F4-A4545, Acta Capituli Provincialis Congregationis Marianae [...] In Impero Rosiano exixtentis, 1797-1844; Cf. *Album mortuorum*, note on July 10, 1829.

Uprising and the final two partitions. He did not have the opportunity to receive special education due to the circumstances of that time. However, Fr. Paulin Pirschman (Pierzchański, Pirschmański) was a man of great heart, spirit, and religious zeal. He spent his short life, as he passed away at forty-one, in the Russian Province of the Marian Order, established in 1797. It was a tiny province comprising about fifteen religious struggling with numerous personnel problems. Its functioning primarily relied on two Bohemian Marians, Felix Hadrawa and Paulin Pierzchański, who, in 1797, was elected as the province's secretary and assistant general, provincial confessor *a reservatis*, and preacher. In addition to these responsibilities, he taught the seminarians everything, serving as a rhetoric, philosophy, and theology professor. He passed away on April 2, 1807.³⁸

Alongside Felix Hadrawa, Fr. Emeric Reubau (or Reuban) was also sent to Rome to study at the University of "La Sapienza." He returned to Poland in 1782. Several letters he sent from Rome to Poland were filled with bitterness and criticism of the prevailing conditions in the monastery of St. Vitus.³⁹ Unfortunately, very limited information is available about Fr. Reubau. It is known that after the last partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, he worked as the master of novices in the monastery in Raśna and served as the superior in Berezdów.⁴⁰

Among the distinguished lecturers and exemplary religious, one should also mention Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer. Born in Prague in 1720, he joined the Marian Order in 1740 as a law student of the University of Prague. After completing his novitiate in the Korabiew Forest, he was ordained as a priest in 1743 and, along with eight other compatriots, completed his philosophical and theological studies in Skórzec. As early as 1746, he was appointed a philosophy lecturer and preacher in Góra Kalwaria. In 1750, the General Chapter, hoping to acquire a church in

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Prot. Rom.

⁴⁰ LCVA, *Index alphabeticus*; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 58, 63, 104, 130, 157. Emeric Reubau, who hailed from Bohemia, was born on January 20, 1753. He joined the Marian Order on September 21, 1773, and received priestly ordination on April 21, 1776. After two years of studies in Rome, he likely worked as a chaplain. From 1797 to 1801, he served as the superior in Berezdów, and in 1803-1804, he was a master and educator of clerics in Raśna. He passed away on December 6, 1806, at the Marian residence in Wolpa, where he was buried.

Rome, sent John Szkraffer to Rome to support the Marian Procurator General Fr. Casimir Wyszynski in his pastoral work and organization of the community. Due to the inability to acquire a church, financial difficulties, and health issues, he had to return to Poland in 1752. At the Chapter on June 28, 1752, he was entrusted with the duties of general secretary of the Order,⁴¹ which he performed during the terms of four successive generals. According to the opinion of the Marians, Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer was considered the best Marian secretary in the 18th century. In 1753, the General Chapter appointed him as a lecturer of moral theology. He fulfilled this role diligently, first in Gozlin and later in Raśna, until his premature death on January 9, 1765. On the news of his death, Fr. Fischer, who greatly respected Fr. Szkraffer and was his friend, wrote from Portugal: "I received unfortunate news about the death of Father John Cantius, assistant general, professor of theology and literature, a man of exemplary religious life. He was always amiable without exception and lived in harmony with everyone; he was always cheerful, and no one ever heard any complaints or protests from his lips. With complete simplicity, he carried out the orders of his superiors. His death has filled us and the entire Order with great sorrow."⁴² In the obituary, it was written that Fr. Szkraffer was an exceptionally deserving man endowed with outstanding piety, integrity, and knowledge. His work and nobility significantly contributed to the development of the Marian Order.⁴³

From the lesser-known Czech educators and lecturers, let us also mention Fr. Augustine Łagotta, who also died prematurely on June 24, 1780. For five years, he taught philosophy at the monastery in Góra.⁴⁴ For several years, the theology teacher at the monastery in Skórzec was Fr. Damasius Wokal. He held this position and the office of the monastery's superior in Skórzec until his sudden death in 1768 at the age of fifty-six. Special mention should also be made of Fr. Leopold Wawrau, a long-time lecturer of philosophy and theology. He taught Marian clerics and,

⁴¹ Prot. Ord., p. 243.

⁴² B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 25; same author, *O. Aleksy Fischer komisarz generalny w Portugalii*, in: *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, pp. 50-62.

⁴³ *Album mortuorum*, on Jan. 9, 1765.

⁴⁴ Ibid., on June 24, 1780.

it seems, was one of the first to introduce the teaching of art history, a subject he studied and had a great interest in. Fr. Leopold Wawrau passed away at the age of fifty-five in 1799. Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, a late historian, among many outstanding Marian priests of Bohemian origin, places Fr. Alexis Fischer first. Fr. Fischer was a well-educated man, zealous in the service of God, prudent, and a devoted apostle. He was born on June 23, 1721, in Prague. He joined the Marian Order in 1740 along with a group of eleven Bohemians brought to Poland by Fr. Casimir Polak. He was ordained as a priest in 1745 and served as a lecturer of moral theology in Gozlin from 1749 to 1752. From 1753, he took on the role of novice master in the Korabiew Forest. Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz assessed Bohemians' role in the Marian community: "Marian priests of Bohemian origin made a great intellectual and spiritual contribution to the Order. Through their exemplary lives and practice of religious virtues, as well as their devotion to the religious family, they brought great honor to the Marians and their own nation. Inspired by the example of Father Wyszyński as their ideal, they worked very fruitfully in Poland, Lithuania, Rome, and Portugal."⁴⁵

Analyzing the available information on the thirty-five Bohemian Marians, it can be observed that many of them had relatively short or average lifespans. Approximately half of them did not reach the age of fifty. It should be noted that the exact birth dates of all Marian Fathers of Bohemian origin are unknown, hence the approximation. However, there were exceptions, such as Fr. Isidore Taudt, who lived to the age of seventy-five (1716-1791), and Felix Hadrawa, who lived to be seventy-three (1756-1829). Their longer lifespans may have been influenced not only by exceptional health but also by the roles they held. Fr. Taudt served as the chaplain of a princely family, while Felix Hadrawa fulfilled the role of a court chaplain for several years, always in official positions within the Order, and from 1803, he became the vicar of the Russian province. Such posts were associated with various privileges and sometimes a comfortable lifestyle.

⁴⁵ Bolesław Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja i rozwój Zakonu w XVIII wieku*, in: *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, pp. 43-44.

Pastoral and Organizational Work

In 1752, Fr. Alexis Fischer was appointed the procurator general in Rome, where he went together with Fr. Benon Bujalski.⁴⁶ Their journey was filled with great difficulties due to material poverty and unforeseen troubles. Fr. Fischer frequently fell ill in Rome, so he returned to Poland at the end of 1753. After his return, he served as the novice master for three years. In 1757, the Chapter appointed him as the vicar general to Portugal (following the death of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński). He wrote about that appointment: "After the Chapter held in 1757 and the election of the new general, Father Cyprian Fijałkowski, the Venerable Council chose, designated, and sent a new mission to Portugal. They sent me, unworthy Father Alexis Fischer, a professed member of the Marian Order, former novice master, as the vicar, not due to my merits or special abilities, but solely by virtue of holy obedience, from Poland to Portugal. The purpose was to stabilize and multiply this new branch of the Order. They appointed dear Father Rafał de Buffo from the same Order as my companion."⁴⁷ Father Alexis encountered immense difficulties in Portugal, both from his Portuguese Marian brethren, laypeople, and even the Marians in Poland. He made great efforts to obtain royal approval and secure a legal future for the young branch of the Marian Order. Despite numerous hardships, busy schedules, health issues, and lack of funds, Fr. Alexis also made continuous efforts to carry out the beatification process of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, which, thanks to his intensive actions, was successfully concluded in June 1767. After numerous efforts, in 1778, Fr. Fischer also obtained royal approval for the monastery in Balsamão, permission for solemn religious profession, and new foundations, including one in Lisbon. This tireless Marian, a divine apostle, likely passed away in 1784. His contributions and virtues within the Order were fully appreciated only by the eminent general and reformer of the Marian Order, Fr. Raymond Nowicki. In a special circular letter issued after Fr. Fischer's death, he emphasized his exceptional love for the Order and his work

⁴⁶ Prot. Skórc. "Die 30 Junij 1752. Decisum Est Romam mittere tam RR. Generalis quam Comissarij Generalis ex forum perlectis literis R. dum Patrem Alexium Fischer pro Procuratore Generali, ac Negotijs occurrentibus Congregationis nostrae et R.dum Patrem Benonem Bujański In Regnum Portugaliae cum Ad.m R. P. Wyszyński Ex Praeposito Generali."

⁴⁷ B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 53.

accomplished in Poland and Portugal. Fr. Nowicki called him a tireless worker, a great devotee of the Immaculate, and one of the most deserving fathers in the Marian Order.⁴⁸

A person deserving of a separate, thorough biography is undoubtedly Fr. Candide Spourny, a somewhat controversial and unconventional man. He was born in Bohemia on December 22, 1744. He joined the Marian Order on January 2, 1762, and was ordained as a priest on November 17, 1768.⁴⁹ After his ordination, he held various positions within the Order. It is unknown where he completed his specialized studies, culminating in the publication of a work on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁵⁰ For several years, he taught philosophy and theology to seminarians. He was appointed a vicar to Portugal at the General Chapter in June 1776. After settling matters in Rome, he was supposed to move there with Fr. John Niezabitowski and take over as the superior instead of Fr. Alexis Fischer.⁵¹ He never reached Portugal. During his stay in Rome, he received a nomination from Fr. General Raymond Nowicki to serve as the general postulator for Marian candidates for sainthood. Additionally, he became the temporary procurator general of the Marian Order. He arrived in Rome on January 11, 1777, and with extraordinary energy — being an active individual with a strong personality, a skillful diplomat with exceptional social qualities, and a prominent figure, although according to his brethren, also quite conflict-prone — he quickly initiated actions in three directions. Firstly, he aimed to acquire a church and monastery for the Marian Order. Secondly, he sought to establish a permanent procuratorship in Rome. And thirdly, what he considered the most crucial task: to break free from dependence on the Reformed Franciscans at any cost. He wrote extensive letters and elaborations to stimulate courage among the Marians in this matter and bring attention to the issue. One of them, when translated, amounted to

⁴⁸ Ibid. Text of the decree, in: Prot. Skórc., c. 55.

⁴⁹ LCVA, *Tabula generalis; Positio*, Wyszynski, 443, 447-449, 459; Juozas Vaišnora, *Notae historicae Mariani Romae saeculis XVII-XVIII*, Marianus 1962, n. 1, pp. 25-26 [dalej: J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*]. Many extensive letters, twenty-three in total, written from Rome by Fr. Candide Spourny and Fr. John Niezabitowski, speak a lot about his activities and complex personality. See *Listy*.

⁵⁰ *Cultus pulcherrimae Virgini... ordinis nostri protectrici...*, Vilnae 1755.

⁵¹ B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 59.

as many as thirty typewritten pages. The letters were bold and strong in their formulations, including those addressed directly to the general. Some phrases are not even appropriate to quote here. Trying to convince Father General Raymond Nowicki of the necessity for a permanent procurator's office in Rome, Fr. Candide wrote: "It is a good thing not only to send the religious into the world but also to maintain a procurator in Rome, albeit an idle one, who, in addition to gathering in various circles all sorts of information to the benefit of our Order, would also inquire and carefully watch where, what and how to find, in due time, some little spot in Rome. Then, by winning over one or another Italian nationalist, he would soon obtain more than one place outside Rome; only in this way would our Order increase."

Fr. Spourny energetically put these words into action because, on July 14, 1779, he acquired the church of St. Vitus along with the monastery for the Marian Order. This establishment was intended to serve as a permanent residence for the Order and the procuratorate, with the possibility of hosting Marians from Poland⁵² who came to Rome to study. As the postulator, Fr. Spourny conducted the beatification process of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński (the so-called informative process) in Rome, obtaining a decree declaring Fr. Wyszyński a Servant of God. Then, with tremendous passion and commitment, he began efforts to free the Marians from the jurisdiction of the Reformed Franciscans, which he considered unlawful, detrimental to the Marian Order, and hindering its development. In his letters, Father Spourny raised awareness among the Marians about the necessity of this emancipation, presenting numerous facts that still astonish today.⁵³ He informed the general that even church dignitaries in Rome expressed their astonishment at seeing the unlawful dependence of the Marian Order, which enjoyed the privilege of exemption, on the Reformates. Father Candide's activities also created a favorable atmosphere for taking more decisive steps in Poland. In 1783, the superior general dismissed Spourny from the position of procurator general, and in his place, a young, energetic, and intelligent Marian, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, was sent to Rome. As the appointed procurator general, he successfully concluded the process of emancipating the

⁵² *Listy*, Father Candide Spourny's letter to Father General Raymond Nowicki, 1777 (?) [b.d.].

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Marians from the Reformed Franciscans. On September 15, 1786, the Marians obtained approval of their Constitutions, adapted to their new legal status.⁵⁴ The Constitutions formulated five goals: spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, praying for the souls of the deceased, helping parish priests, teaching in parish schools, and conducting parish missions.

A new period of pastoral, charitable, missionary, retreat, and educational work began in the history of the Marian Order. By the end of the 18th century, in addition to the monastery in Rome and houses in Portugal, the Marians had thirteen establishments in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1781, the Order had 147 members.⁵⁵ The Marians were already a well-known and respected order; even the papal nuncio in Warsaw spoke favorably of them. The philosophical and theological studies were conducted at a high level, and numerous candidates applied to join the Marian novitiates. With a view toward the Order's division into provinces, the government prepared three houses, planning to open novitiates there for the better accommodation of candidates and fruitful recruitment: in Marijampole for the Lithuanian Province, in the Korabiew Forest for the Polish Province, and Berezdów for the Russian Province.⁵⁶ Upon the requests directed to the Holy See regarding this matter, the consent was granted in 1792. Unfortunately, the second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1793, followed by the third partition in 1795 and the Targowica Confederation,⁵⁷ internal conflicts, anarchy, and the Kościuszko Uprising⁵⁸ (1794), led to the destruction of the Polish-Lithuanian state. The Marian monasteries

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ ASV, Archiwum Nuncjatury Warszawskiej, vol. 76, c. 2 r. Nuncio Giovanni Archetti alla Sacra Congr. VV. et RR.

⁵⁶ ASV, Congr. VV. et RR. Sezione Regolari, Mariani, Fundatio Novitiatu, VII 1792.

⁵⁷ * The Targowica Confederation was established by Polish and Lithuanian magnates on April 27, 1792, in Saint Petersburg, with the backing of the Russian Empress Catherine II. The confederation opposed the Constitution of May 3, 1791, and fought in the Polish-Russian War of 1792, which led to the Second and Third Partitions of Poland (Wikipedia).

⁵⁸ * The Kościuszko Uprising, also known as the Polish Uprising of 1794 and the Second Polish War, was an uprising against the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia led by Tadeusz Kościuszko in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Prussian partition in 1794. It was a failed attempt to liberate the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from external influence after the Second Partition of Poland (1793) and the creation of the Targowica Confederation (Wikipedia).

came under the rule of non-Catholic monarchies, whose goal was to impose significant restrictions on religious orders and, ultimately, their total suppression. This marked the beginning of the orders' long and arduous struggle to secure their existence and survival.

During the reform undertaken during the generalate of Fr. Raymond Nowicki (1766-1778) and completed in Rome by Fathers Candide Spourny and Norbert Gołkowski in 1786-1787, there were only nine Bohemians among the Marians. Due to political turmoil, the influx of new candidates ended, but the seeds sown by many of them bore admirable fruit. They are worthy of admiration for their care for the development of the Order, their faithfulness to their vows, and their great zeal for apostolic work. They organized new monasteries in Marijampole, Raśna, and Rome and served as their first superiors. Fr. Fischer spent remarkable twenty-seven years among the Marians in Portugal, effectively opposing their intentions to separate them from their parent order. As highly educated individuals, the Bohemians imparted knowledge to the young Marians, broadening their intellectual and spiritual horizons. As chaplains in prominent courts, they contributed to the prestige of the Order, attracted new patrons, and provided material support to the Order. Some encouraged the faithful and fellow Marian Brothers through their evangelical attitude, leading genuinely pious lives. Amazing things are written about them in *The Album of the Deceased*. For example, we read that Fr. Matthew Siedlaczek was "an ascetic who abstained from eating or drinking sometimes for many days"; that Fr. Nepomucene Czermak "kept fasts, flogged himself and wore a cilice, and was faithful to the religious regulations"; that Fr. Nicholas Kreyczyk "distinguished himself by poverty and humility"; and that Fr. Narcissus Rychter (Richter) "flogged himself, kept fasts and wore a cilice." Therefore, in addition to admiration for their multifaceted activity, zeal, apostolic spirit, and exemplary lives in a foreign country, the Marian Order expresses deep gratitude to them. Going slightly outside the time frame of the present book, we should say that at the end of the 18th century, the Marians entered a crisis, which would become severe in the first 20 years of the 19th century, as pointed out by Ferdinando Maria Saluzzo, the apostolic nuncio in Warsaw.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ "There is a lack of suitable individuals in the Marian Congregation who are capable of

Marian Fathers as Chaplains

Although it may appear otherwise, chaplains' service, including formation and sponsorship, is a vital aspect of the history of the Marians. According to the wishes and requirements of their benefactors, such positions were assigned to more distinguished and better-educated priests, thus reducing the number of educated Marians who were available for needs within the Congregation. Thanks to the chaplains, various social, spiritual, and intellectual connections were formed, although negative phenomena such as addictions and inappropriate relationships also occurred.

Throughout the history of religious life, chaplains were not evaluated unequivocally. It is true that Fr. Papczyński foresaw a chance for the Marians to do certain kinds of work outside their monasteries and included it in *Norma Vitae*: "[...] those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work, if they would be called upon by pastors."⁶⁰ However, there are no documents from the time of the Founder's life regarding the assistance provided by the Marians to diocesan parishes. Although he encouraged such work, he did not outline any specific program or give any guidelines. After he died in 1701, the pastoral activity of the Marians intensified and took the form of chaplaincies. This resulted from the directives issued by the Chapter held in 1712 under the leadership of a Reformat, Fr. Kapistran Klein. The Chapter, recognizing the danger that *perpetuae capellaniae* posed to the religious, abolished them by decree. It also prohibited sending the Marians for pastoral work, except for missions.⁶¹ The lack of documents does not allow for a clear assessment of how this regulation

serving as professors. It seems appropriate, therefore, to sensitize the General Superior to find the most appropriate and suitable means for the education of individuals within the Congregation who would be capable of learning the necessary subjects related to their vocation. Regularly sending them to the monastery of St. Vitus would be the best way for them to observe and learn the adherence to the monastic rule, as well as acquire knowledge." ASV, Congr. VV et RR., Sez. Regolari-Mariani, July 1792, ff. 3-4. F. Saluzzo, Nuncio in Warsaw to Congr. VV et RR 13 VIII 1792 r. [translated by the Author].

⁶⁰ *The Rule of Life*, I, 3, in: *Selected Writings*, p. 57.

⁶¹ Cap. Gen., 1712/1. "Cum ea quam religiosae personae vovent castimoniam securius et felicius illibata nequeat custodiri, quam in claustrali commoratione, ideo perpetuae capellaniae tolluntur, nec poterunt in futurum superiores locales sub poena suspensionis ab officio quemquam pro subsidio spiritualis extra religio sum expedire domicilium, nisi per modo missionum."

was implemented, especially since there was no clear and explicit position from the general government. The Chapter in 1722 allowed for three-month chaplaincies,⁶² while the Chapter in 1728 reduced it to two weeks but left a loophole by adding that, in case of explicit need and if it was for the benefactor of the Order, the chaplain could stay longer than three months.⁶³ It also presented the dangers that threatened a religious who took on a chaplaincy, which was already well-known in the Church. The document speaks of secularization, drunkenness, a tendency towards comfort, participation in secular feasts, the desire for wealth, and a departure from religious practices.⁶⁴

In general, there was a conflict of attitudes and interests regarding chaplaincies between the chaplain, the religious order, the benefactor, and the religious law and observance requirements. For the nobility, having their own chapel and chaplain symbolized social status, as it added splendor to their family. Therefore, although not desired by the Church, chaplaincies were quite common. It was also considered a means for the Church to reach wealthier social strata. However, it often happened that instead of the chaplain's influence on the court, the opposite occurred, and the chaplains themselves lost their monastic virtues.⁶⁵ The concerns and worries about the secularization of religious working in parishes were confirmed in the report to the Holy See by Bishop Felix Turski of Lutsk. In an extensive report on the religious working as chaplains in his diocese, he emphasized that those who worked longer as chaplains in courts or parishes lost their vocation. Their secular habits transformed them into worldly people. It became challenging to call them back to the monasteries. They cast off the monastic yoke, disregarded both episcopal and monastic jurisdiction,⁶⁶ and nothing could be done to repair the situation.

⁶² Ibid., 1722/5.

⁶³ Ibid., 1728/13. "Licet per Statuta concessum est in subsidium parochorum missis morari ad tres menses, cum tamen ex hoc gravia emergeant mala, proprietates, divagationes, ebrietates, inobedientiae etc. Limitamus, ut nisi concedatur in subsidio parochorum commorari ad duas hebdomadas".

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ludwik Łętowski, *Wspomnienia pamiętnikarskie*, Wrocław 1956 (2nd Ed.), p. 205; Jerzy Flaga, *Działalność duszpasterska zakonów w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 1986, passim.

⁶⁶ ASV, Arch. S. C. Concilio, Relationes ad Limina Luceoriensis, 10 Iulii 1773. Felix Paulus Turski, quoted after Boleslaus Jakimowicz, *Złoty wiek Księży Marianów (1702-1795)*, manuscript in AGM Archives.

Only incomplete information about the functioning of the chaplaincies in the first half of the 18th century is available. In the files of the Radwanków parish, a Marian, Fr. Joachim Kozłowski,⁶⁷ is mentioned as pastor. In 1742, Fr. Augustine Żmijewski died in Suchożebry while serving as a chaplain there. Two days earlier, Fr. Yves Berliński⁶⁸ had “died after Easter serving in the chaplaincy.” In the 1730s, at the request of the Karski family, Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski⁶⁹ became a chaplain in Lubocza. However, this appointment was motivated by deference because Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński⁷⁰ himself held the office of chaplain in Lubocza for over two years. Furthermore, Fr. Fijałkowski was born near Lubocza and was a friend of the Karski family. Thus, he did not refuse their request, and the religious authorities honored his petition and sent him to this chaplaincy. It must be acknowledged that the three Chapter decrees mentioned above, approved by the Reformaté vicars, regulated the issue of chaplaincies and parish work outside the convents, effectively blocking it. However, the idea of engaging in such work was alive among many Marians. We should consider the reform efforts undertaken by Fr. Matthew Krajewski and his supporters in this context. In 1746, the superior from the Forest informed the Father General that he was resigning from the chaplaincy and the *Jerusalense Varsaviae* benefice due to a lack of priests.⁷¹ Considering the Marian Order’s situation, this was a grave reason. In 1736, there were only sixteen priests out of thirty-nine religious, and in 1746, out of forty-four religious, twenty-five were lay brothers and clerics.⁷² As the Marian Order gradually became independent from the

⁶⁷ Documents of the Warszawice Parish. List of pastors of the Radwanków Parish, 1722. It is very likely that as an opponent of Father Matthew Krajewski he worked there during the “Rostkavian dispersion” of 1717-1722. In those years his name did not appear in Chapters minutes, yet as a former superior general by virtue of his office he was a member of the general council.

⁶⁸ *Album mortuorum*, On March 29 and 31 of 1742.

⁶⁹ APS 10 f. 148v. Evidence of Father Cyprian Fijałkowski: “Capellam in Villa Lubocza optime conosco, nam in ea Missae Sacrificia celebrare consuevi, siquidem ago capellanum ad praesens apud Dominum Karski ejusdem Villae Haeredem, ibidemque Residentiam habeo. Imago vero Virginis Mariae (coram qua Servus Dei habitum nigrum depo suit, albumque induit) de dicto Oratorio Lubocza translata est ad Ecclesiam Conventualem nostram Corabieviensem.

⁷⁰ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 39-40.

⁷¹ Cap. Gen., 1746/6. It proved impossible to establish where and what kind of chaplaincy was in question.

⁷² Prot. Korab., Ab Anno 1731 usque ad Anno 1793.

Reformates and grew stronger and more stable, the Marians increasingly took on various external works. Despite the lack of specific documentation on this matter, a valuable source of information on this topic can be found in the preserved books of income and expenses, where the revenues received by the monasteries from chaplaincies, parishes, benefactors, including the names of chaplains and donors, were meticulously recorded. The best-maintained and preserved account books are from the monasteries in Gozlin and the Korabiew Forest, and they can be considered representative of other monasteries.⁷³

In the second half of the 18th century, all Marian monasteries provided occasional assistance to the parish clergy, especially those communities located in areas with a predominance of Greek-Catholic and Orthodox populations, such as Raśna, Berezdów, and Ostrzykowce. This was because they did not carry out pastoral activities in their churches due to a lack of faithful. The same situation occurred in localities near other pastoral centers. In the report regarding Raśna, the visitor wrote: "This monastery does not run a parish, but only ministers to residents."⁷⁴ The superior informed similarly about the monastery in Góra: "The usefulness of this monastery is limited to fulfilling the obligations of the religious order and occasionally providing assistance to the parish."⁷⁵ Pastoral involvement of the Marians from the Forest is described in a report: "The monastery is located amidst five large parishes. The Fathers provide spiritual assistance to the faithful. They go as chaplains to help the pastors and, on-site, fulfill their spiritual and religious ministry."⁷⁶ This activity of the Marians increased significantly during specific periods of the liturgical year, such as Lent, Advent, Easter, Christmas, parish indulgences, and feast days of the church's patrons. During these times, the Marians were invited to serve in the confessionals and deliver sermons.⁷⁷

⁷³ AMPP, VII A 4. The Korabiew Forest, *Regesta perceptarum* [...] 1742-1788; *ibid*, VII A 23, *Rejestra perceptarum et expensarum*, Conv. Goslinesis A. D. 1770.

⁷⁴ ABUV, Doc. Viln., I (single documents).

⁷⁵ *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 108, n. 190.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11, n. 5.

⁷⁷ The accounting books, such as those from Mszczonów, provide records of the assistance given to parish priests and the donations received. "In vim of the priest's merits — 50 zlotys" in 1750, 1753, 1756/7/8/9; for hearing Easter confessions — 18 zlotys from Father Badowski.

Chaplaincies were a privilege. The deserving and distinguished Marians would apply for them and generally receive approval. This was understandable, especially when it concerned court chaplaincies, where a higher level of culture, social skills, and intellectual preparation was required from the chaplains. These positions were typically held by general counselors, order secretaries, and superiors of houses. In 1754, the General Chapter attempted to limit the possibility of such work for the Order's "curialists" with a decree. The decree allowed, if necessary, the possibility of working as a chaplain, but only within such a distance that those called could arrive for a council at any moment.⁷⁸ In the second half of the 18th century, the number and importance of Marian chaplains clearly increased. This was partly due to the permission granted by Pope Benedict XIV in 1758 to establish private chapels. Although bishops were generally unfavorable towards this fact, the number of chaplains continued to rise. This was related not only to piety but also to a sense of noble pride, sometimes arrogance, and the desire of privileged estates to separate themselves from the rest of society, especially from the serf peasants.⁷⁹ This atmosphere is well captured in a document from the church's visitation in Goźlin. We read: "Benches for the gentry: twelve; for the peasants: two."⁸⁰

During the discussed period, the number of chaplaincies served by the Marians from Goźlin is surprising. Throughout that half-century, they simultaneously served three chaplaincies; there were even instances where they served four. That was the case in 1790 when they provided pastoral care in the parishes of Łaskarzew, Garwolin, Korytnica, and Osieck.⁸¹ It is worth noting that during that time, there were usually four or five priests residing in the monastery, which means that often only one priest remained on site. The parishes that the Marians from Goźlin assisted in various ways and at different times

The pastor from Rawa Mazowiecka donated 16 zlotys to the religious from the Korabiew Forest for helping in the parish. From the Reverend Dean of Bolimów for hearing Easter confessions — 16 zlotys. See *Regesta perceptarum*, Korabiew Forest, passim.

⁷⁸ Cap. Gen., 1754/26.

⁷⁹ Andrzej Wyczański, *Polska rzeczą pospolitą szlachecką*, Warszawa 1991 (2nd Ed.), p. 227.

⁸⁰ ASD, Visitatio generalis Ecclesiae parochialis ac monasterij Goslinensis marianorum [...]. Die 16 Septembris a. d. 1810, 146/III/10.

⁸¹ AMPP, *Rejestra perceptarum*, Goźlin, 1770-1803.

included Garwolin, Łaskarzew, Ryczywół, Korytnica, Osieck, Maciejowice, Sieciechów, Warszawice, Prażmów, Kłoczew, Górzno, Magnuszew, Mniszew, Wilga, and Żelechów.⁸² In the years 1750–1793, the Marians from Korabiew Forest provided help to parishes in Chojnata, Mszczonów, Rawa Mazowiecka, Bolimów, Gnojno, Sochaczew, Cielądz, Osuchów, Kamion, Radziejowice, and Skierniewice.⁸³ These assignments lasted several months or even several years, if necessary. An important aspect of the Marians' work was their service in the confessional, both in their own churches and in parishes. The testimonies show that the Marians were better prepared for this role than parish priests. Not all of them had passed the exams that gave them the right to preach and hear confessions. Still, the 1773 report of the Nunciature states, "there are five priests in Goźlin. All are approved for confession and employed in parish churches." Similarly, in the monastery in Berezdów, "There are five priests. They are all approved confessors. They serve in parish churches and preach God's Word in their own."⁸⁴ The General Chapter of 1785 decreed that every large monastery had to have a confessor with the power of "absolvendi a reservatis."⁸⁵ After establishing the monasteries in Marijampole (1750) and Miroslav (1763) in Lithuania, new opportunities for pastoral work opened up for the Marians. The Marians working in these monasteries willingly assisted Lithuanian parishes, especially since most were familiar with the Lithuanian language, while many parish priests did not know it. According to Jonas Totoraitis, the Marians from these monasteries occasionally supported over twenty parishes, and in several of them, they served as permanent chaplains.⁸⁶

The number of Marian priests working outside the monasteries systematically increased. In the late 1770s and 1780s, even up to thirty percent of Marians served in diocesan parishes.⁸⁷ These developments

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ AMPP *Regesta perceptarum*, Puszca, 1742-1788.

⁸⁴ ASV, Arch. Nunc. Vars., vol. 130, f. 32 r, 32v. Synopsis Domorum ac Religiosorum Ord. Marianorum, die 19 Dec. 1773.

⁸⁵ Cap. Gen., 1785/32.

⁸⁶ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, pp. 14-16.

⁸⁷ *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 78, n. 147. The report from the Skórzec monastery in 1818 shows that "there are 9 Mass priests [...], and four of them often travel to neighboring parishes as vicars." J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 121-122; J. Flaga, *Działalność duszpasterska zakonów*, pp. 121-122.

were facilitated by the reforms by the energetic Superior General Fr. Raymond Nowicki (1776-1788), which opened the way for the Order's apostolic activities. The general shortage of clergy due to wars and epidemics, as well as the financial needs of the Order, also contributed to this trend. The monastery in Marijampole and two new churches, which replaced the ones burned down in Goźlin in 1769 and Skórzec in 1769 and 1789, were under construction. As the list of undertaken chaplaincies increased alarmingly, the General Chapter issued a warning decree in 1779 to curb and organize this trend. The decree cautioned and accused the superiors of arbitrarily appointing chaplains "by personal decision, thus leaving Marian monasteries orphaned, depriving churches of priests, and diminishing the glory of God."⁸⁸ The Chapter ordered that every decision to undertake such service should be coordinated with the superior general. The income should be divided in half: one part is to be allocated to the monastery from which the chaplain is sent, and the other part is to be used for common purposes, especially for repairs and the needs of other monasteries.

Chaplaincies were desirable positions for the Marians, but the general government was also aware of their risks. The issue of chaplaincies and certain abuses associated with them was not only addressed by the Chapters, which were not particularly favorable towards this type of work. In the amended Constitutions of 1787, much attention was given to this matter, emphasizing that chaplains "should be exemplary in the sacred missions and in assisting parish priests [...]; they should avoid secular feasts and refrain from hard liquors, which are an incentive to sin [...]. Neither shall they stay longer than three months on missions or assisting parish priests, nor shall the superiors of their monasteries allow for an extension, under penalty of suspension from the office [...] unless the Most Reverend Father General deems otherwise for a just cause."⁸⁹ In practice, this chapter of the Constitution was not enforced and remained only on paper. The number of chaplains during this period was very high, and the duration of chaplaincy appointments lasted even for several years.⁹⁰ Superiors sounded the alarm, but they felt helpless because the

⁸⁸ Cap. Gen., 1779/1.

⁸⁹ *Konstytucje Apostolskie dla Zakonu Niepokalanego Poczęcia*, VI/3-4, Wilno 1791.

⁹⁰ To illustrate: Benedict Hoenig served as a chaplain in 1750-1770; Isidore Taudt — in 1770-

stricter their admonitions and decrees, the more Marian chaplains left the Order and transferred to dioceses. It can be stated that more than half of them did not return from their chaplaincies to the monasteries.⁹¹ In addition to the comfortable lifestyle, an important motivating factor for Marian priests to engage in work “outside” was the financial aspect. In the mid-18th century, a chaplain would receive around 150 zlotys per year. This sum would go to the monastery. In addition to that, there were expenses for their overall maintenance and a decent personal allowance, “pro victu and amictu.” The remuneration steadily increased, and by the end of the 18th century, some chaplains were receiving 250 zlotys per year.⁹² Was it a lot? For reference, it should be noted that an offering of 1 zloty was made for a single Mass intention, and a skilled worker at the Marian Order earned the same amount for a day’s work. The amounts obtained from chaplaincies were not excessive, but it should be remembered that the monasteries operated a trade economy, and the sources of acquiring money were limited.

Chaplaincies at the Gentry’s Households; Educational Work

The Commission of National Education, established in 1773, devoted much attention to the issue of parish schools’ management and maintenance by the diocesan clergy and religious orders.⁹³ The Marian Order also understood this need and actively engaged in the education of society. The superior general presented this task as a priority during the Chapter meeting in 1782.⁹⁴ Inspired by this movement, the Marians not only opened parish schools at their monasteries but also gladly accepted chaplaincies in the 1780s and 1790s, the main goal of which was the

1792; Stanislaus Chromiński — in 1814-1832. Fathers Vallentine Czubernatowicz (†1785), Aloisius Chelstowski (†1794), Boniface Hubryk (†1791), Stepen Micewicz (†1789), Dominic Śliwiński (†1775) and others also spent a few years serving in chaplaincies.

⁹¹ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 179-180, footnotes 78, 79.

⁹² *Rejestra perceptorum*, Goźlin. In 1797 the chaplaincy in Korytnica brought in 216 zlotys, and the chaplaincy in Maciejowice provided 250 zlotys in 1794.

⁹³ Irena Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim*, Wrocław 1973, pp. 17-19.

⁹⁴ Cap. Gen., 1782/5/17.

education of noblemen's sons. Here are a few records illustrating this trend: "In 1784, 108 zlotys for one quarter *in vim* education of the son of Mr. Rawski, administrative official." "In the same year, the Countess Butler in Königsburg asked for a priest to serve as a chaplain and to teach her children."⁹⁵ "In 1785, 108 zlotys from the Honorable Mr. and Mrs. Suffczyński for *in vim* education." Likewise, in 1787, "from Mr. Popławski for *in vim* education of his son; from Mr. Grzymała for *in vim* education of his fraternal nephew."⁹⁶ According to preserved sources, at least one priest from each monastery held the role of educator and teacher at the estates of wealthy nobility. Through these activities, bonds were strengthened with influential, affluent elite, and a new form of patronage and sponsorship over the Marians emerged. However, some bishops did not support the appointment of religious chaplains, especially "skivvying as private tutors for the gentlefolk."⁹⁷

The increase in the number of private chaplains raised valid concerns. They operated to a large extent outside the parish and monastic structures. Dependent on the owners of chapels, namely magnates and wealthy nobility, they were financially supported by them, which obligated them to submit to their authority and often be manipulated in this way. In a reprimand addressed to them in 1775, Bishop Michał Jerzy Poniatowski wrote: "We admonish the court chaplains to use permissions regarding domestic chapels in a manner that corresponds to their essence, as expressed in words, content, and purpose, and not to interpret them according to their own or their masters' will."⁹⁸ Furthermore, the bishop warned the chaplains against idleness, encouraged them to lead exemplary lives, and threatened that there would be no tolerance for those who misbehaved. The official conduct of chaplaincies required the consent of the diocesan authority, which sought to limit this type of work. Therefore, a religious chaplain was only allowed to say a Low Mass and was prohibited from delivering sermons. Only the employing family and sometimes the household staff were allowed to participate

⁹⁵ Prot. Conv. Mariamp., 1784.

⁹⁶ *Regesta perceptarum*, Puszcza [Korabiew Forest].

⁹⁷ S. Litak, *Jezuici na tle innych zakonów*, p. 206. As early as 1643, the provincial synod of Warsaw forbade the clergy under the penalty of suspension to do such work.

⁹⁸ S. Litak, *Parafie w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI-XVIII wieku: struktura, funkcje społeczno-religijne i edukacyjne*, Lublin 2004, p. 168.

in the Mass. Of course, the more important the nobleman, the more he imposed his own agenda on the chaplain.⁹⁹ Chaplaincies added splendor to the nobleman's court, so the nobility willingly funded them despite the expenses. The Marian Order also considered them attractive positions and accepted them eagerly. However, chaplaincies often became the cause of negative attitudes and habits. Visitations confirmed that chaplains became accustomed to the comforts of a worldly lifestyle and disregarded religious rules and observance. In this regard, the opinion of Father General Thaddeus Białowieski from 1793 is significant. He sought to abolish chaplaincies and stated, "[These religious] gradually neglected the practices of religious life, and eventually, it happened that they severed ties with the Order, with nothing connecting them except for the white Marian habit they wore."¹⁰⁰

Fr. Benedict Hoenig (1719-1770) was the most esteemed and influential chaplain. He held this position from 1750 to 1770 at the court of Prince Fryderyk Michał Czartoryski, the Grand Chancellor of Lithuania. In 1750, Prince Czartoryski requested the presence of a devout Marian at his court in Wołczyn.¹⁰¹ Prince Czartoryski was familiar with the Marians from the monastery in Raśna, which was located near his residence in Wołczyn.¹⁰² The Marians sent Fr. Benedict Hoenig from Raśna, who stayed initially at the Prince's court for several days for a trial period. "The Prince approved of him. [...] Our Father Benedict was very kind and appreciated by the princely couple."¹⁰³ He was a pious religious and a good theologian with an incredibly insightful, deep mind and a high level of personal culture. At the request of Princess Eleonora de Waldstein Czartoryska, he also served as her confessor, chaplain, and theologian at the princely court. The princess was an educated, cultured, and exceptionally devout, referred to as the "saintly lady."¹⁰⁴ Despite intense

⁹⁹ Władysław Łoziński, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach*, (5th Ed.), Kraków 1998, p. 32; Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, Wrocław 1970, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁰ Cap. Gen., 1793/10.

¹⁰¹ ABUV, Prot. Wet., Actus Congregationis, die 26 Juni 1753; *Album mortuorum*., of Sept. 21, 1770; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 27; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 188-189.

¹⁰² Marcin Matuszewicz, *Diariusz mego życia*, t. 1 i 2, Warszawa 1986, passim; Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 193, 336, 340.

¹⁰³ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*, Father Benedict Hoenig's biographical note.

¹⁰⁴ Władysław Konopczyński, *Czartoryski Michał Fryderyk (1696-1775)*, PSB, t. 4, pp. 288-289.

competition from candidates from other religious orders, the princess favored the humble Marian. As a generously compensated chaplain, he used his earnings for the benefit of the Order. Thanks to influential patrons, he also gained the support of King Stanislaus Poniatowski, who, in supporting the Marians, sent a commendatory letter to the Holy See, stating: "The Congregation of secular priests commonly known as Marians has a special purpose to assist parish priests in the pastoral care of the people, teaching with zeal what pertains to their salvation."¹⁰⁵ During this time, the Marians also obtained the support and advocacy of the Czartoryski family and the Sejm, especially regarding the initiation of the beatification process of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. Fr. Benedict provided funds for its advancement. Thanks to his efforts, the Coronation Sejm in 1764 passed a resolution and sent a request to the Holy See: "Instantia ad Curiam Romanam pro canonizatione et beatificatione Stanislai Papczyński."¹⁰⁶ It is important to note that Fr. Benedict did not succumb to secularization like many other chaplains despite spending twenty years among the elite of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He maintained a close connection with his religious order and adhered to the monastic constitutions and devout practices until the end of his days.¹⁰⁷ Fr Stefan Sydry wrote about him, saying he was a man of extraordinary holiness and learning. Due to his virtues, he enjoyed great respect among princes, magnates, and even the king himself.¹⁰⁸ His funeral, which took place in Warsaw at the Capuchin church, was a solemn tribute to his humble and modest life as a monk. It was attended by both magnates and the poor whom he cared for. After his death, Princess Eleonora, deeply impressed by Fr. Benedict's demeanor, culture, and kindness, extended her goodwill and sympathy to the Marian Order. She wrote a heartfelt request to the Marian Superior General Fr. Hadrian Ignatowski, asking for the presence of a Marian priest who would be "similar [in character] to Father Benedict, whom I wholeheartedly desire

¹⁰⁵ ASV, S. C. Vescovi e Regolari, Posizioni, Sez. Regolari, 1787. King's letter of Sept. 11, 1779. This collection includes various letters supporting the efforts of the Marians in Rome to separate themselves from the Reformates, to obtain privileges for their missions, and to get approved their revised Constitutions.

¹⁰⁶ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 804-805; M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, t. 2, pp. 611, 622-623.

¹⁰⁷ See the chapter *Bohemians in the Order*.

¹⁰⁸ S. Sydry, *Papczynski*, p. 274.

to have by my side.”¹⁰⁹ In response to the princess’s request, the superior general granted permission to send Fr. Isidore Taudt to the Czartoryski court. For twenty-two years of service to the Czartoryski family, Fr. Taudt significantly contributed to the development of the Order and the favorable resolution of many monastic matters, thanks to the respect he enjoyed and his connections within the magnate and clergy circles. Fr. Hoenig and Fr. Taudt played an important role in raising funds for the benefit of their confrères. From 1776 to 1779, Fr. Taudt personally provided financial support to the emerging Marian establishment in Rome. He obtained a significant donation from the Czartoryski princes and other benefactors to purchase the church of St. Vitus and the monastery.¹¹⁰

In 1778, with the Czartoryski family’s support and Fr. Taudt’s assistance, the Marians began efforts to have their posts legally sanctioned, that is, to obtain parliamentary and royal approval of all their monasteries. To this end, they printed the “Memorial to the Most Serene and Invincible Monarch, Stanislaus August, King of Poland and people in all walks of life in the Republic of Poland, by which the ablest Polish Religious, the Marians, ask for the parliamentary approval of their monasteries.”¹¹¹ Getting this approval was a warrant for the existence and development of religious facilities, mainly because in 1764 the Sejm had categorically declared “forbidden under pain of nullity to establish any new foundations and new bequests without the consent of the Republic of Poland.”¹¹² Details about the course of actions taken in this matter are lacking. Ultimately, they ended unfavorably for the Marians, although some local assemblies (sejmiks) accepted granting approval to the Marians.¹¹³ Several factors contributed to this outcome. The main patrons of the Marians, the Czartoryski family, entered a conflict with their nephew, King Stanislaus Poniatowski, and the Marians lost his support. Additionally, the king considered religious orders useless and

¹⁰⁹ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*.

¹¹⁰ Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski to the general; J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*.

¹¹¹ S. Sydry, *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 199; Henryk Gapski, *Mecenat nad marianami w Polsce przedrozbiorowej*, in: *Marianie 1673-1973*, Rzym 1975, pp. 66-67.

¹¹² *Volumina Legum*, IV, p. 16.

¹¹³ M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, t. 2, p. 611.

detrimental to society.¹¹⁴ According to his opinion, “the monks were fanaticizing Poland, which would not gain significance in Europe until it expelled the cowls from its borders.”¹¹⁵ A significant portion of the magnates shared a similar opinion. However, the bishops demanded that the religious orders be placed under their authority.¹¹⁶ It was a particularly unfavorable time for the religious formation represented by the Marians. Therefore, a friend of the Order, Bishop Jan Nepomucen Kossakowski, even warned General Raymond Nowicki about the imminent threat that could lead to the dissolution of the Order if reforms were not undertaken.¹¹⁷

The Marian historian, Fr. Stefan Sydry, wrote about Fr. Isidore Taudt: “Greatly merited for both the Church and the Order, he died in the odor of holiness in 1792.”¹¹⁸ Another noteworthy figure in the discussed context is Fr. Joseph Mraas, about whom his biographer wrote: “Thanks to his extraordinary intellectual abilities and engaging demeanor, his gentle disposition, sincere humility, and prudence, he was particularly beloved by his fellow brethren as well as laypeople. Especially the upper classes and esteemed individuals treated him respectfully and invited him to their homes.”¹¹⁹ For approximately twenty years (1765-1782), with short breaks, he served as a chaplain and theologian at the court of the Graff Butler family in Königsberg.¹²⁰ As their chaplain, thanks to various established connections, he resolved property matters concerning certain Marian monasteries. On March 12, 1789, following the sudden death of General Father Stanislaus Mogień, he assumed his responsibilities and positions.¹²¹ In 1791, he was elected as the superior general.

¹¹⁴ W. Konopczyński, *Dzieje Polski*, pp. 180-182.

¹¹⁵ Jan Skarbek, *W dobie rozbiorów i braku państwowości (1772-1918)*, in: Jerzy Kłoczowski, Lidia Müllerowa, Jan Skarbek, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Kraków 1986, p. 157.

¹¹⁶ Władysław Chotkowski, *Księcia Prymasa Poniatowskiego spustoszenia kościelne w Krakowie*, Kraków 1918, *passim*. In his activities, the Primate of Poland strove to curb the development of religious orders. J. Skarbek, *W dobie rozbiorów*, pp. 155-158.

¹¹⁷ S. Sydry, *Dokumenty mariańskie*, p. 194; also see: Arch. Nunz. Vars. Vol. 144, ff. 234r.-235 r-v.

¹¹⁸ S. Sydry, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży o Stanisław od Jezusa Maryi Papczyński i jego dzieło w świetle dokumentów*, Warszawa 1937, p. 274.

¹¹⁹ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, 51.

¹²⁰ AGM, Prot. Conv. Mariamp., (loose docs.) *passim*.

¹²¹ Cap. Gen., pp. 475-478. Pastoral letter of May 28, 1791; J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 19.

In a circular letter, he urged superiors to treat the religious kindly and to approach them with fraternal love.¹²² Soon after, he fell ill and was invited by Countess Józefina Butler, a *singularis benefactores*, to seek treatment at her estate in Żemosław. It was there that he passed away on February 28, 1793. After his death, the Vicar General Fr. Hadrian Ignatowski wrote an extensive letter to his fellow brethren, informing them about the deceased's merits, life, and death.¹²³ According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, "he was one of the most distinguished Marians of Bohemian origin."

Historian Henryk Gapski argues in his article that the Marians lacked patronage and support that would have been associated with the family tradition of powerful noble families.¹²⁴ Undoubtedly, the Czartoryski family provided extensive patronage to the Marians. By entrusting the role of family chaplains to the Marians, they established a multi-generational tradition of privileged relationships. For over a century, the Marians served as theologians, chaplains, and confessors at Eleonora and Michał Fryderyk Czartoryski's houses in Wołczyn and Warsaw; at the houses of their daughter, Aleksandra Sapieżanka née Czartoryska, in Siedlce and Puławy; at the manor of Prince Adam Czartoryski in Puławy and that of his daughter Zofia Zamojska in Maciejowice, as well as those of his other daughter, Maria of Württemberg, in Puławy and Paris; at the house of Minister Feliks Łubieński, an associate of Michał Czartoryski; and also at the houses of the Sapieha¹²⁵ family related to the Czartoryskis. Noteworthy — although it exceeds the time frame of this work — is the ministry of Fr. Seweryn Pachta, who served as chaplain and theologian at the court of Duchess Alexandra Ogińska née Czartoryska from 1791. Fr. Pachta, previously a curate of St. Stanislaus Parish in Siedlce,¹²⁶ where he served together with Fr. Arnold Fortunat, also a

¹²² Cap. Gen., pp. 478-481. Letter of May 1, 1791.

¹²³ Cap. Gen., pp. 489-491. Letter of Oct. 2, 1793.

¹²⁴ H. Gapski, *Mecenat nad marianami*, pp. 63-69.

¹²⁵ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 188-196.

¹²⁶ Archives of the Archidiec. of Lublin. The Dean's inspections of the churches in: 1) Łuków deanery in 1790; 2) The same deanery in 1791: "Frs. Arnold and Pachta, the Marians of Skórzec, vicars ab officio Lucovien [sem] ad sex menses produced a certificate, issued by their superior of the monastery in Skórzec, located in the Diocese of Poznań, which confirmed their completion of the retreat this year."

Marian, was distinguished by his refinement, theological knowledge, and virtues; his qualities prompted the Duchess to ask for him as a chaplain at her court, a request to which his religious authorities gave consent.¹²⁷ Thanks to the high remuneration from the Duchess and the Czartoryski family, he generously supported the Marian monasteries.¹²⁸ However, his relations with the Marian Order soon deteriorated and even severed. Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski, elected as the general in 1793, did not support the chaplaincy and saw it as a “source of secularization and corruption.” He decided to summon Fr. Seweryn Pachta to the monastery in Skórzec. Not only did Fr. Pachta resist this demand, but also Princess Alexandra Ogińska, who wanted to keep the beloved and esteemed chaplain at her court. In this matter, she intervened at the Nunciature in Warsaw, and when that did not help, she appealed to the Holy See. She won the case, and Fr. Seweryn Pachta remained at her court as a diocesan priest with a high benefice, enjoying great esteem and respect from the princess and the Czartoryski family.¹²⁹ Ultimately, he severed his relations with the Marian Order. The substantial wealth that he accumulated over twenty-seven years of chaplaincy, including properties and a sum of 18,000 zlotys in cash, he entirely bequeathed to others in his testament written in 1818, completely overlooking the Marians as far as property dispositions were concerned.¹³⁰

We provided this example to show how a trusted confrère, who received formation and education within the Order, gradually distanced himself from the Order and its affairs and even secularized, while serving as a chaplain. It is worth mentioning in this context the person of Fr. John Dziewulski, who served as the chaplain to Duchess Maria von Württemberg née Czartoryska for thirty years. He performed his duties in Puławy,

¹²⁷ Diocesan Archives in Drohiczyn. The register of the dean's inspections of the Deanery of in 1808-1816, sygn. XIII/Y/1. “Capellanus Severianus Pachta, Ordinis Marianorum, cum licentia suos superiores apud penes Capellam residet obligationibus fundatoris satisfacit et nemo eum detulit ut a morallitate deviare positum.”

¹²⁸ The accounting books of the monasteries in Gozlin and the Marian Forest frequently display the sums received from Father Pachta. The ledgers of 1791, 1792, 1793, 1798. To his high earnings testifies his testamentary bequest of 18,000 Polish zlotys to the parish church in Siedlce. See State Archives in Siedlce. Documents of the Siedlce notaries public from 1810-1818, n. 99, sygn. 16, doc. No. 12, c. 45-46.

¹²⁹ ASV, Arch. Numz. Vars. Vol. 135, c. 46. Letter of Feb. 14, 1794.

¹³⁰ See footnote 127.

Vienna, Rome, and Paris in 1823–1853. Spending many years in the center of political life at the Hotel Lambert, he played a significant role in that environment due to his extensive connections and friendly relations with prominent Polish emigrants. Personally known and esteemed by the nuncio in Vienna, he used his diplomatic channels in the Holy See to resolve many important matters for the Marians.¹³¹ However, his endeavors in the 19th century go beyond the scope of this work.

Among the magnate chaplains, Fr. Leon Szczepkowski is also worth mentioning. He served in this role in the 1780s at the court of influential magnate Kazimierz Krasiński (1725–1802), the Marshal of the Crown Tribunal. The magnate's prestige and influence in the Church, the Sejm, and the political environment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were so significant that even Nuncio Giovanni Archetti and Pope Pius VI sought his support.¹³² Krasiński valued his chaplain and personally intervened with the Marian general to grant him the appropriate privileges within the Order for his merits.¹³³ After this chaplain died in 1789, Krasiński ensured his body was buried in the prestigious church of missionary priests in Warsaw instead of at the appropriate monastery in the Forest.¹³⁴

Toward the end of the 18th century, the Marians' commitment to the pastoral ministry as chaplains at the houses of the nobility increased. Documents mention Marian chaplains serving at the manors in Rawa Mazowiecka and Sochaczew; in Skierniewice and Maciejowice, the estate of a cupbearer, Mr. Liszewski; at the manor in Czersk; at houses in Liw, Ozarów, Siedzów, Siedlce, Sucha, Korabiewice, and many other places. The situation was different in Lithuania. It seems that the monasteries there were minimally involved in serving at the courts but

¹³¹ As to the matters arranged by Father John Dziewulski see ASV, Sancta Congregatio Rituum, Decreta 1843–1844, Mariani, "De mandato Reverend Prep. Generalis Joannes Dziewulski, capellanus Serenissimae Ducissae de Württemberg Mariae"; ASV, Arch. of the nunciature in Vienna, vol. 282 B, f. 93 r.; General Zamoyski, 1803–1868, [Pamiętniki], t. I–VI, Poznań 1910–1930, cyt. t. IV, 410–411.

¹³² Wacław Szczygielski, *Krasiński Kazimierz (1725–1802)*, PSB, XV, pp. 184–186.

¹³³ Cap. Gen., 1785/18. "Ad obligationem Illustrissimi Excelentissimi Krasiński, castrametatoris Regni Equitis Albae et S. Stanislai, quatenus, P. Leo Szczepkowski, suus cappellanus gaudeat titulo Reverendi Patris Ven. Assessorium hoc titulo eum veneri ac revereri judicavit dignum". This was the highest honorary title in the Marian Order, which entailed tangible privileges.

¹³⁴ *Album mortuorum*, April 10, 1789.

focused on providing pastoral assistance in parishes. The Order became known to the local clergy and nobility thanks to the Marians working in important urban centers. Through these contacts and the presence of the Marians within the circle of the bishops of Poznań, other bishops and the primate of Poland showed kindness to the Marians. They often stayed at the primate's palace in Skierniewice, about 20 km from the Korabiew Forest. Their kindness resulted in personal contacts with the Marians serving as chaplains in Skierniewice and substantial donations to the Marian Order. The accounting books noted: "In 1744, charitable donation was received from His Eminence Primate [Krzysztof A. Szembek]"; similarly, in 1747, a donation was made to the monastery in the Korabiew Forest. In 1769, "1,000 zlotys had been left to the Marians by the will of H. E. Primate [Adam I. Komorowski]." In 1781 "alms donated by His Eminence Duke-Primate [Antoni Kazimierz Ostrowski]." In 1784, "alms received by the Marians after the funeral in Skierniewice of His Eminence Duke-Primate."¹³⁵ The goodwill of the bishops from Poznań and Gniezno was manifested in their material support and their active involvement in the beatification processes of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and Fr. Casimir Wyszyński. In particular, we should mention Primate Antoni Kazimierz Ostrowski, a relative of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński and a nephew of the Marian General Fr. Bernard Ostrowski.¹³⁶ Among those who supported the beatification processes were also Bishop Andrzej Młodzianowski, Bishop Andrzej Załuski, Bishop Antoni Onufry Okęcki, Primate Krzysztof Szembek, Bishop Teodor Czaratoryski, and Primate Teodor Potocki.¹³⁷ They wrote "Petition Letters" to the Holy See, acknowledging the widespread reputation of holiness of both Servants of God throughout Poland and requesting the Holy Father to initiate the beatification process for Fr. Papczyński.¹³⁸

Evaluating the Marian chaplaincies is challenging and ambiguous. The activity of the Marians in magnate circles and their influence not only on the spirituality of the courts but also on politics has not been thoroughly

¹³⁵ The data come from *Regesta perceptarum*, Korabiew Forest, 1744-1784.

¹³⁶ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 469-470, 505-506. "Importante, fra le testimonianze e questa di A. C. Ostrowski, vescovo, che fu in familiarità con lui"

¹³⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 835-839; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 426, 427, 460.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

examined. The long-term chaplaincies developed and strengthened a strong emotional bond with their patrons. There was a sense of identification between the religious and the courtly environment. Such a chaplain became almost like a member of the household, as evidenced by the notable relationships of Fr. Dziewulski with the Czartoryski family.¹³⁹ We have limited information about other chaplains, as many documents have not been preserved. The chaplain often became an advisor to his patron, and his heart was closer to the court than the religious order. The Jesuits, who had many court chaplains, developed a comprehensive program for chaplaincies, which included adhering to monastic discipline, residing outside the monastery, and engaging in spiritual exercises.¹⁴⁰ Those who did not comply with the program were withdrawn from their chaplaincies and returned to the monastery.

There was a significant discrepancy between legislation and practice in the Marian Order. General Chapters timidly attempted to curb the development of chaplaincies, but life followed its rules, and privileges mattered. There was a division between two attitudes: on the one hand, there was a need to gain the goodwill of influential people, which also resulted in some praiseworthy service; on the other hand, concerns arose about whether the office would distract the religious from fulfilling the calling of the religious order, i.e., its charism. Marian priests were driven by various motives when taking on chaplaincy roles. These included external and internal pressures, the prospect of multiple benefits, the long-term gratitude of the Order, the patronage of noble families over the Order, and the desire and protection of a candidate for chaplaincy if he possessed the required attributes. In summary, chaplains and pastoral work in parishes generally did not serve the monastic life. Among the Jesuits, chaplains, as a particular elite, were not always well-liked by their confrères.¹⁴¹ As mentioned earlier, the Marian authorities in the 18th century attempted to limit this type of work, but the executive power

¹³⁹ Seweryna Duchńska, *Wspomnienia z życia Maryi z ks. Czartoryskich ks. Wirtemberskiej*, Warszawa 1886, pp. 39, 46, 53, 55, 59, 74, 75, 101. The author cites the recollections of Maria von Wurtemberg about Father Dziewulski and his close association with the Czartoryski household.

¹⁴⁰ Andrea Mariani, *Aktywność jezuickich kapelanów nadwornych prowincji litewskiej*, in: "Rocznik Lituanistyczny", 1 (2015), pp. 37-81.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

within the Order was weak. Percentage-wise, the Marians had the highest number of chaplaincies among all the religious orders.¹⁴² The name of the Congregation, which emphasized the Marian charism, likely had an influence in this regard: “Defunctis et Parochis in Cura animarum suffragantes.” It was already defined in the will of Fr. Papczyński, who wrote: “This tiny Congregation [...] supporting the dead and parish priests [...].”¹⁴³ It is worth noting that Fr. Papczyński himself served as a chaplain at the Karski court in Lubocza for two years, so this type of work was not unfamiliar to him. The problem lay in the fact that, over time, chaplaincies heavily shifted the focus from assisting the deceased to helping parish priests and noble courts, thereby limiting the fulfillment of the Order’s calling. Only through the enterprising efforts of Father General Thaddeus Białowieski (1793-1829) were attempts made to resolve the issue of chaplaincies. Unfortunately, the partitions of Poland of 1795, the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the division of the Order into provinces, the ban on contacts between them, political chaos, and persecution of the Catholic Church blocked his plans. Ultimately, after the Kingdom of Poland was created in 1815 and certain freedoms were granted to the Church, Fr. Białowieski closed all the chaplaincies except for the one carried out by Fr. Dziewulski at the Czartoryski family.¹⁴⁴

Reflection on providing pastoral assistance by religious outside of monasteries in the 18th century remains open. It was undertaken by individuals who were more knowledgeable, theologically prepared, and enjoyed prestige. While serving as chaplains, most had limited contact with their religious order, and around fifty percent either left for dioceses or remained on chaplaincy until their death. Therefore, in the 19th century, religious orders would attempt to limit the number of chaplaincies on the one hand and, on the other hand, through various actions, discourage bishops from accepting and encouraging religious to transfer to their dioceses.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, p. 181.

¹⁴³ S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, p. 247.

¹⁴⁴ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, s. 195.

¹⁴⁵ In the second half of the 19th century the Franciscans, who served in numerous chaplaincies, managed to resign from all of them and to recall back to their monasteries all their confrères. Cf. Kamil Kantak, *Bernardyni polscy*, t. 2, Lwów 1933, p. 452; The Marian Generals, Frs. Thaddeus Białowieski and Stanislaus Pórzycki appealed many times to the Holy See, complaining

**General Superiors in 1750-1776,
from Father Casimir Wyszyński, a Renovator,
to Father Raymond Nowicki, a Reformer**

**Father Cajetan Wetycki (1750-1757)
New Foundations**

During this period, five generals successively exercised authority in the Order. We ought to underline firmly and clearly that they all were the disciples of Fr. Wyszyński, who undertook the Order's internal reform. This saintly priest strove to shape young candidates and the Marianas as exemplary and zealous religious, faithful to the Immaculate Mother of God and their Founder, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. They were filled with love for them, the Order, and their confrères. By studying the biographies of the five generals presented in this chapter, it can be seen that Fr. Wyszyński's desire was fulfilled. Even though the Reformates continued to play a decisive role in the Chapters, both in formation and management, the prestige of the Marian generals increased with each Chapter. After the conclusion of the second term of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński's generalate in 1750, a Reformat, Fr. Jacek Szaławiecki, convened the Marian members eligible to participate in the General Chapter through a circular letter. On November 11 and 12, 1750, Father General Wyszyński, the Fathers of the Order, and the assistants were invited to Skórzec.¹⁴⁶ During the pre-election meeting, current affairs, relocations, and other urgent matters were discussed in a small group. With a broader attendance, the proper General Chapter was convened on November 12. The Chapter members elected Fr. Cajetan Wetycki as the Order's general that day.¹⁴⁷

Fr. Cajetan Wetycki was one of the most distinguished Marian priests and notable generals of the 18th century. He was born in 1713. He joined the Congregation of Marian Fathers at age twenty and was

about the actions of certain bishops, who had gladly incorporated into their dioceses some members of the Marian Order without prior consent of their superior general. Cf. ASV, Congr. VV et RR.-Posizione-Regolari-Luglio 1842. Recursus ad S. Sedem contra Ordinarium Varsaviensem-Chierici Regolari Mariani.

¹⁴⁶ Cap. Gen., 212-213.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 230-231; Prot. Bals., 198.

ordained as a priest¹⁴⁸ on April 5, 1738, by Bishop Stanislaus Hozjusz. As one of the few then, Fr. Kajetan Wetycki studied speculative theology, which he completed with distinction and the title S.T.L.¹⁴⁹ Immediately after completing his studies, he was appointed to form young Marian candidates, whom he taught philosophy and theology for twelve years. During this time, he also served as the master of novices and, starting from 1744, as the superior of the house in Skórzec.¹⁵⁰ In 1744, just six years after his ordination, upon the suggestion of Fr. Wszyński, he was elected as an assistant and the general secretary of the Congregation.¹⁵¹ He was a faithful disciple of Fr. Wszyński and underwent his entire spiritual and intellectual formation under his guidance. Three weeks after his election, he addressed a short letter to his fellow brothers, filled with profound humility, in which he revealed the depth of his spiritual formation and his boundless dedication to the Congregation, which he desired to serve with his whole heart. He compared his election to the calling of David by Samuel, who, rejecting Jesse's seven more beautiful and wiser sons, asked, "Are these all the young men? No, there is still one, the youngest, a shepherd, tending the sheep. Send for him and bring him here. Similarly, the Lord called me—the last among the sons [of the Marian Order], unprepared. I was chosen to serve you, not to be served. I was not chosen to be a hired hand but a true shepherd in genuine love. Therefore, I extend my arms to all of you so that if I find anything weak in the Congregation, I may strengthen it, and if I find anything sick, I may heal it."¹⁵² This humble letter seems to echo the letter of Father General Wszyński, written after his election for a second term.¹⁵³

Cajetan Wetycki, as one of the few Marians, understood the need and significance of establishing a foundation in Rome and opening a

¹⁴⁸ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 37.

¹⁴⁹ S.T.L. stands for *Sacrae Theologiae Licentiatius* (Lecturer in Holy Theology).

¹⁵⁰ Prot. Ord., 260-261; Prot. Bals., 198; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, 37.

¹⁵¹ Prot. Korab., 34.

¹⁵² Cap. Gen., 231-232. Letter of Dec. 2, 1750.

¹⁵³ Wszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 180-181. Letter of July 2, 1747. The following excerpt reads: "I come to you by way of legitimate election in no other guise than that of a good shepherd. I come for no reason other than obedience to God's will [...] "I come to serve, not to govern. I am not a hired worker indifferent to the fruits of his labor, but a true shepherd led by sincere love. [...] I come to find with pastoral solicitude what has been lost and to embrace with love what has been wounded."

Marian institution and their own procurator's office there. He fervently supported Fr. Wyszyński in these efforts. On June 30, 1752, he sent Fr. Alexis Fischer to Rome as the procurator general.¹⁵⁴ He also consistently engaged in efforts to establish a Marian institution in Portugal. He appointed Fr. Wyszyński to carry out this mission in cooperation with Fr. Benon Bujalski.¹⁵⁵ Fr. Cajetan also deeply cared about the cause of the beatification of the Founder Father, a concern instilled in him by Fr. Wyszyński, and he showed great zeal in this matter. On January 11, 1752, through a circular letter, he informed the Marians about the efforts undertaken by Fr. Casimir in Rome to initiate the beatification process. He called for prayers in this intention and for collecting any testimonies concerning the life, work, and holiness of Fr. Papczyński.¹⁵⁶

Under the leadership of Fr. Wetycki, two General Chapters took place. During the Chapter in 1750 in Skórzec, forty-eight decrees were passed, addressing various aspects of religious life. These decrees had the character of regulatory, disciplinary, and ascetical provisions. Their implementation aimed to enhance discipline, observance of religious life, enclosure, brotherly love, and devotional practices. Decree 41, forbidding the Marians in Raśna to run the school of *instructio saecularium studiosorum*, introduced by the Reformat vicar, proves that the Reformates still had a decisive voice in decision-making.¹⁵⁷ A disturbing signal was the prohibition on preaching by the seminarians in the church,¹⁵⁸ which contradicted Marian's practices and the encouragement of Fr. Papczyński himself.¹⁵⁹ The Chapter also decided to expand the church in the Korabiew Forest, which was soon undertaken with the support of the Sanguszko family from Guzów. The church was expanded and consecrated in 1755.¹⁶⁰ During the same Chapter, Fr. Wetycki, aware of the local difficulties faced by the Marians, ordered renovations to be carried out in the monasteries to improve the living conditions of the

¹⁵⁴ Prot. Bals., 71; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 329, 350, 353.

¹⁵⁵ Cap. Gen., 1752/1; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 329.

¹⁵⁶ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Short biography of Cajetan Wetycki. Cap. Gen., 237-238.

¹⁵⁷ Cap. Gen. 1750/41.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1750/8.

¹⁵⁹ *Letter to the Marians in Korabiew Hermitage*, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 919-922.

¹⁶⁰ Cap. Gen., 1750/42; see Wacław Makoś, *Puszcza Mariańska. Kolebka Zgromadzenia Księży Marianów*, Warszawa 2000, p. 18.

religious.¹⁶¹ The necessity of further improving the living conditions of the Marians, expanding the monasteries in Skórzec, the Forest, Goźlin, and Raśna, and organizing their surroundings was strongly emphasized during the 1754 Chapter.¹⁶²

Marian confrères held Fr. Wetycki's efforts for the development and sanctity of the Order in high regard. Therefore, during the Chapter on June 30, 1754, in the Forest, he was re-elected to the position of general.¹⁶³ His letter addressed to his confrères after the election breathes deep love, humility, and concern for every Marian. In its content, one can almost literally read the thoughts contained in the letters of Fr. Wyszynski as general. Fr. Wetycki wrote: "Although the unworthy and the most miserable among you, I have been elected superior general for a second three-year term. Thus, through this pastoral letter, I come to you the Venerable, the very Venerable, and especially the dearest Brothers. I do not come as a hired servant who does not care for the sheep or as a ruler, but as your lowest servant, recommending you to have a fear of God and love of God and neighbor. Remember your vocation so that you may be true Marians and not only Mary's sons by name, so that — after this miserable life — we may find the food of eternal salvation under the guidance and protection of Mary."¹⁶⁴ His short, fervent letters are filled with love for his fellow brothers, sincere concern for their fate, and faithfulness to the Marian vocation. While Father Wyszynski made intense efforts to establish new foundations and initiated their realization in Raśna, Marijampole, and Berezdów,¹⁶⁵ Fr. Wetycki bore the burden of setting up these institutions, staffing them, organizing them, and ensuring their material well-being. He faced many challenges, such as the requirement set by the founder of Marijampole, Countess Frances Butler, that at least six Marians¹⁶⁶ must reside in the Marijampole monastery. It was necessary first to make efforts to prepare suitable religious and provide them with accommodation. In 1750, Fr. Wojciech Strach

¹⁶¹ Cap. Gen., 1750/43/44.

¹⁶² Ibid., 1754/ 20/21/22.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 1754.

¹⁶⁴ Cap. Gen. Letter of July 23 VII 1754, p. 266.

¹⁶⁵ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 161-164; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 30-33.

¹⁶⁶ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, pp. 6-7.

arrived there with one brother. The monastery in Marijampole was built only in 1758, but Fr. Wasilewski came there in 1752. Two years later, in 1754, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Wyszyński and Fr. Wetycki, the novitiate was opened despite the difficult conditions.¹⁶⁷ The monastery thrived, and the number of Marians steadily increased. By the end of the 18th century, there were around twenty.

The foundation of the monastery in Raśna was promised to Fr. Wyszyński by the owner of the extensive estate, Jerzy Matuszewicz, as early as 1735.¹⁶⁸ The realization of the foundation faced obstacles due to disputes between the Marians and Fr. Turczynowicz and his neophytes. Additionally, Bishop Franciszek Kobielski of Lutsk had plans to support missionary activities among Jews and establish a shelter for Mariavites in Raśna.¹⁶⁹ The disputes and legal proceedings lasted for fifteen years, and the founder himself, Jerzy Matuszewicz, was suspended by Bishop Kobielski and had to leave the territory of the Lutsk diocese. However, the persistence of the founder, the mediation of Prince Michał Czartoryski, and the papal nuncio eventually overcame all obstacles. On June 8, 1749, Bishop Kobielski consecrated the church and solemnly introduced the Marians to the foundation in Raśna.¹⁷⁰ Fr. Isidore Taudt became the first superior there. Difficulties began in the early years of the monastery's existence. They were caused by Jerzy Matuszewicz, who, for the sake of the foundation's splendor, demanded to have at least eight priests in residence at the monastery, according to the agreement. Due to the needs of other establishments, Fr. Wetycki was unable to meet this demand. Nonetheless, he sent four priests and four seminarians to Raśna, which the founder considered an insult and offense. But the number of vocations increased, the state of affairs normalized, and the monastery in Raśna became one of the most important places of the seminarians' formation.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Dec. 5, 1754 — permission to open the novitiate.

¹⁶⁸ M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, t. 1, pp. 188, 197, 198, 199; Raśna, in: *Słownik Geograficzny*, t. 9, Warszawa, p. 529.

¹⁶⁹ J. Kałowski, *Działalność zakonodawcza*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁰ LCVA, *Index alphabeticus*; *Specificatio Conventuum*. *Conventus Rasnensis*; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 160-161; Prot. Wet., c. 2.

¹⁷¹ J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 63, 105, 117.

The third foundation, for which Fr. Wyszyński received a promise and whose realization fell to Fr. Wetycki, was the church and monastery in Berezdów in the Volhynia region. Prince Jan Kajetan Jabłonowski, the voivode of Braclaw, after getting to know Fr. Wyszyński better, promised to fund a church and monastery for the Marians on his estates.¹⁷² The Prince fulfilled his promise. He wrote to General Wetycki on April 14, 1755: "By this message [...] I testify that being of sound mind, for the greater glory of God, One in the Holy Trinity, out of my own free will, I promise the Marian Fathers who bear the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to establish their monastery in my hereditary estates in the Duchy of Berezdów, to which I want seven of them to be assigned."¹⁷³ In response to the letter, three Marian priests were sent there two months later.¹⁷⁴ Then, on May 20, 1760, they were solemnly introduced by the diocesan authorities.¹⁷⁵ In the monastery, there were usually five religious. Since the area was inhabited mainly by Greek Catholics (Uniates) and Orthodox Christians, the Marians' ministry was directed towards the residents of the manor, court servants, the local gentry, and pastoral assistance in extensive parishes.

At the end of Fr. Wetycki's second generalate, the General Council proposed that he choose any monastery for rest in recognition of his efforts and merits. With humility, he declined and decided to continue serving and forming the Marian youth. He took on the position of novice master and theology lecturer in Marijampole.¹⁷⁶ In that position, according to the obituary, he "ignited love in the hearts of his students. He was an example of virtuous life and good manners to them. He not only taught them knowledge but also instilled in them spiritual exercises of

¹⁷² *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 163. "Father Isidore Taudt [...] claims that the servant of God, (Father C. Wyszyński) [...] Berezdoviensi monasterio obtinuerat ante discessum suum (Romam 1751) declarationes a benevole Fundatore, quo ex post in brevi effectuatum erat." Berezdów, in: *Sl. Geogr.*, t. 1, p. 114.

¹⁷³ Prot. Wet., c. 84.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 76 r. The General Chapter held in Gozlin on June 28 decided: "Praesidens Berezdoviae P. B. Bujalski, coadiutores M. R. P. Gregorius Olszewski et V. P. Joachimus Staniewski."

¹⁷⁵ [Giżycki J. Marek], *Spis ważniejszych miejscowości w powiecie staro konstantynowskim na Wołyniu*, Stary Konstantynów 1910, pp. 647-665; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 163.

¹⁷⁶ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Cajetan Wetycki's biographical note; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 38.

temperance and religious discipline.”¹⁷⁷ Fr. Charles Hondlewski, the Marian secretary general who knew Fr. Wetycki personally, expressed the following opinion of him: “He was a priest known in the Marian Order for his honest and upright life. He shone with many virtues, particularly his dignity and gravity, adorned with monastic humility and moderation. He was constantly striving for religious perfection. He was an example of piety and living love of God, fervent and ardent prayer and faithfulness in observing the Rule and the Constitutions.”¹⁷⁸ Fr. Cajetan Wetycki was a strict ascetic. Witnesses testified that he led a highly spiritual life and sought graces for others through fasting, self-flagellation, mortifications, and prayers. Jonas Totoraitis wrote about him: “Filled with God’s grace, he healed the sick who sought help and comfort from him through prayer and the laying on of hands.”¹⁷⁹ His premature death on May 19, 1761, in Marijampole at forty-eight was a significant loss for the Marian Order.¹⁸⁰

It is worth noting the decision made at the Chapter in 1754. Under the influence of Fr. Wetycki, the capitular fathers concluded that the interference of the Reformat vicars in Marian affairs had often exceeded the proper limits. As a result, it was decreed that the vicar did not have the authority to permit Marian priests to visit their relatives, decide on the ordination of Marian clerics, invest novices with the habit, allow the profession of vows, or exempt religious from imposed mortifications. All these decisions were entirely within the jurisdiction of Father General and his council.¹⁸¹ This bold decree was a proper and just step towards gradually gaining independence from the Reformates.

Father Cyprian of All Saints Fijałkowski (1757-1760)

Fr. Fijałkowski was born in 1702, a few kilometers from Lubocza. He came from a noble family and received primary education at home.¹⁸² In 1722 (the end of the “Rostkopian dispersion”), he joined the fragmented

¹⁷⁷ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁸ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Cajetan Wetycki’s biographical note.

¹⁷⁹ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ *Album zmarłych*. Under the date of May 18th.

¹⁸¹ Cap. Gen., 1754/7; S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 94.

¹⁸² APS 10 f. 137v, 148r-v; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 39; *Album zmarłych*.

Marian Order, taking the religious name Cyprian. After completing his novitiate in the Forest, he studied philosophy and theology in Goźlin and Skórzec. In 1731, he was already assigned the duties of a theology professor in Skórzec.¹⁸³ Thanks to his spiritual and intellectual qualities, he quickly ascended through all the ranks of his religious career. He served as a superior in Skórzec and the Forest, a lecturer in philosophy, theology, and rhetoric, a preacher, a spiritual father, and a confessor in Skórzec. As a well-known and experienced preacher, he was entrusted with delivering sermons in the Forest, Skórzec, and Goźlin, and he also preached in diocesan parishes, assisting the parish priests. Several times, he served as a master of novices.¹⁸⁴ The experiences gained from working in such diverse environments later bore fruit when he assumed the office of superior general. He was elected as the superior general at the General Chapter in Raśna on September 11, 1757. Unfortunately, apart from official summonses to Chapters and congregations, no letters addressed to his confrères have been preserved from his three-year tenure as the superior general. We can only infer his wise and prudent actions from the extensive decrees of the General Chapter in 1757, which he led.¹⁸⁵ This Chapter differed from the previous ones in terms of proceedings, topics discussed, and the content of decrees. The first observation that stands out is the absence of reprimands, admonitions, threats, and punishments, as was common in the early 18th century Chapters. However, there is an evident concern for the common good of the Order, the more profound formation of novices and clerics, and the spiritual development of all Marians. The first comprehensive decree called upon the religious to conduct the worship of God, Holy Mass, devotions, and communal and private prayers in a worthy manner.¹⁸⁶ Decree 3 encouraged local superiors to establish and promote at their churches the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹⁸⁷ This may indicate that, despite the appeals and admonitions of the Chapters of 1734 and 1739, these confraternities still were not functioning at all the

¹⁸³ Prot. Ord., c. 226; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 8, 109, 110.

¹⁸⁴ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 39.

¹⁸⁵ Cap. Gen., pp. 276-283.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1757/1.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1757/3. "Confraternitatis Immaculatae Conceptionis in omnibus conventibus diligentissime et devotissime a Promotoribus (qui constituentur devoti et exemplares) promoveatur."

Marian Fathers' churches.¹⁸⁸ Three decrees were dedicated to improving formation in the novitiate. They urged the moderators to help novices discover the motive for choosing to serve God and the Church and strengthen their calling to the Marian Order.¹⁸⁹ The decrees regarding religious observance called for preserving enclosure and silence and cultivating a spirit of prayer and concentration. The only decree that mentioned penalties was related to the neglect of the call to take care of the churches and monasteries, ensuring their maintenance and good condition. The penalty for non-compliance with this decree was the removal of the superior from office. Decree 5 called for the care of the Founder's grave, the preservation of documents that bore witness to him, and the collection of all kinds of testimonies about his life. At the end of the Chapter, a letter was read from the superior of Balsamão, Fr. John of the Rosary, explaining the situation in the Portuguese monastery. In light of the letter, the Father General decided to send two Marians, Fr. Alexis Fischer and Fr. Raphael de Buffo, to Portugal as quickly as possible.¹⁹⁰ Decree 22, by the decision of Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski, extended the term of Fr. Ladislaus Kanobrocki's leadership in Skórzec for the next three years, which was a clear departure from the provisions of the Reformates' directives that stated the term of a local superior could last only one year.¹⁹¹ The decision was motivated by the need to rebuild the burned monastery in Skórzec. The rebuilding work was progressing smoothly and efficiently thanks to the efforts of Fr. Kanobrocki. In recognition of his meritorious services, Fr. Ladislaus was granted the privileged title of "Father of the Order."

The generalate of Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski showed that significant changes were slowly taking place despite the same Rule and Constitutions being in effect. The resolutions lacked emphasis on reforming religious life through control, severe and humiliating punishments, constant reprimands, and various forms of intimidation, which were served, among other things, by the "Penal Canons" developed in 1731.

¹⁸⁸ Prot. Skor., 1734/12; Cap. Gen., 1739/2; Prot. Gosł., f. 243-244.

¹⁸⁹ Cap. Gen., 1757/2/3/4/13.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 1757/24. "Lectae sunt Litterae a Patre Joanne a Rosario Praesidente de Balsamão."

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1702/3. The instruction of Father Louis Borzowski, OFM. The superior general could extend this term in the office, yet the local superior was obliged to submit his resignation every year.

It is also worth mentioning that Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski was one of the key witnesses who testified in the informative process of the Founder. He provided many details about the Founder's life that were unknown to others. This was possible because he came from the vicinity of Lubocza and served as a chaplain to the Karski family in Lubocza. Being deeply convinced of the Founder's holiness,¹⁹² he collected all materials and testimonies about him.

Father Ladislaus of St. Valentine Kanobrocki (1760-1763)

Little is known about Fr. Ladislaus's activities. He was born in 1708.¹⁹³ He received a priestly ordination in 1732. From 1732 to 1737, he served as a priest in Goźlin and Skórzec.¹⁹⁴ In 1737, Fr. Wyszyński appointed Fr. Ladislaus as his secretary as well as the general secretary.¹⁹⁵ At the same time, he was appointed the treasurer, preacher, and spiritual director in Skórzec. In 1744, he assumed the position of superior there, which he held several times in that monastery. Fr. Kanobrocki was a very close collaborator of Fr. Wyszyński. He enjoyed his respect and trust. It should be noted that during both terms of Fr. Wyszyński's generalate, Fr. Kanobrocki served as the novice master. As his secretary, he embraced Fr. Wyszyński's ideas. He was deeply concerned about the formation of novices and clerics, striving to instill in them the ideals outlined by Fr. Wyszyński. Enjoying the trust of his confrères, he was elected as the general of the Order on August 10, 1760, during the Chapter held in the Forest.¹⁹⁶ It was the peak of the "Saxon times," which were difficult for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and challenging for the Church and religious orders. As the general, Fr. Kanobrocki paid special attention to the formation of young Marians. The Chapter led by him issued only sixteen short decrees. The first two were dedicated

¹⁹² B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 39-40. Father Cyprian extensive testimonies covered all aspects examined during the informative process. See APS -10 f. 137v, 138r, 139r-v, 144r-145r, 146v, 148r-v, 150v, 154r-v, 155r, 156r-v, 157r-v, 158r-v, 159v, 161v, 162r-v, 163r-v, 164r-v, 167v, 168r-v, 169r-v, 170r-v.

¹⁹³ El. Alph., p. 24.

¹⁹⁴ Prot. Ord., pp. 236-237, 242.

¹⁹⁵ Cap. Gen., 1737/29.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 290-294.

to studies and formation. The first decree mandated the organization of systematic studies in moral theology, sufficient for ordination for those who, for various reasons, were unable to study dogmatic theology.¹⁹⁷ The capitular fathers were aware of the importance of having their own study program. However, the scarcity of resources within the Order and the simultaneous operation of study programs in multiple monasteries posed obstacles to its development and ensuring a high level of education. As a result, the study program was often interrupted, and this fact is critically addressed in Decree 2: "It was enough for the lector to fall ill, resign, or be chosen for another position, and the study would be interrupted."¹⁹⁸ Both decrees firmly commanded that the lecturers be well-prepared and that the study of philosophy and theology function continuously and without interruption. Decrees 12 and 14 concerned the formation in the novitiate and the prudent selection of candidates. One of the decrees mandated the sending of a qualified father, a "Pater Qualificatus," to the Cenacle to serve as the guardian of the Founder's tomb and the church, gather testimonies about his life, holiness, and graces, and act as a confessor for the Dominican sisters.¹⁹⁹ In three short letters addressed to his fellow brethren, Fr. Kanobrocki emphasizes the worship of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Immaculately Conceived, and the love for the Congregation.²⁰⁰ According to Boleslaus Jakimowicz, Fr. Kanobrocki was one of the more enlightened fathers of his time, and being deeply devoted to his master, Fr. Wyszyński, he successfully carried forward his work.²⁰¹ Fr. Ladislaus died on May 3, 1766, at the monastery in Skórzec.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 1760/1.

¹⁹⁸ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 41-42; Cap. Gen., 1760/2.

¹⁹⁹ Cap. Gen., 1760/11.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 294-301.

²⁰¹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 110.

²⁰² El. Alph., p. 24.

Father Hyacinth Wasilewski (1763-1770)

Valentine Wasilewski was born into a noble family in Wasilewo, in the parish of Skrzyszew, in the Podlasie region.²⁰³ He entered the Marian Order on September 21, 1746, at age twenty-seven, and took the religious name Hyacinth. Judging by the date of his entry into the Order and subsequent roles and responsibilities, it can be presumed that he was already an educated man. After completing his novitiate in the Forest, he made his religious vows in 1747. In the same year, we see him accompanying Fr. Wyszyński (the general at that time) on a walking pilgrimage to Częstochowa. As a cultured and socially refined man, he visited noble courts²⁰⁴ along with Fr. Wyszyński. He also visited the Wyszyński family estate in the village of Jeziora Wielka. Fr. Hondlewski claimed that Fr. Hyacinth Wasilewski enjoyed great trust and esteem from Fr. Wyszyński. He was one of his most beloved and well-formed disciples. Serving the Order in various positions, he encouraged his brethren through the example of piety, diligence, and love for the Congregation and its Founder.²⁰⁵ Fr. Wyszyński, when leaving for Portugal, had a strong desire to have Fr. Hyacinth Wasilewski with him. He even wrote a request to the general, Fr. Cajetan Wetycki, stating, "For Portugal [...] I see no one more suitable to be sent with me than Father Hyacinth [Wasilewski]. It must be a composed priest with a long life ahead of him [at that time, he was thirty-three years old]." He repeated this request in another letter, justifying it by stating, "It is necessary to send a serious person here, and I see no one more suitable than Father Hyacinth."²⁰⁶

Unfortunately, Fr. Hyacinth did not go to Portugal because organizing the monastery in Marijampole became a significant task. In 1752, the Chapter recognized that Fr. Wasilewski was the most suitable person to accomplish this goal, and he was sent there. In Marijampole, as the first superior of the emerging monastery, he organized the internal monastic life and established order, discipline, and relations with the staff, court,

²⁰³ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 43-44; *Słownik Geograficzny*, t. 13, p. 126: Wasilew Szlachecki, commune of Repki, district of Sokołów Podlaski.

²⁰⁴ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Specificatio Vivorum Religiosorum memoriae dignorum. Biography of Hyacinth Wasilewski.

²⁰⁵ *Tabula generalis*. Biography.

²⁰⁶ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 252; *ibid.*, letter of March 18, 1852; and also p. 264.

faithful, and clergy. In 1754, the novitiate²⁰⁷ was opened in the monastery, to which he also made a significant contribution. While working in Marijampole, Fr. Hyacinth earned the respect of Countess Butler and was well-liked and highly regarded by the peasants and serfs. Charles Hondlewski wrote about him, "He was a very devout, humble, polite, and highly intelligent religious."²⁰⁸ Recognizing his work and exemplary religious life, the capitular fathers elected him as the Congregation's superior general on September 11, 1763, during the Chapter held in the Forest.²⁰⁹ Under his leadership, the Chapter passed forty-six decrees that addressed significant matters concerning the Congregation's growth and spiritual development. Like his predecessors, he emphasized the formation of clerics and novices. Five decrees (numbers 10 to 15) were dedicated to the formation in the novitiate, focusing on spiritual and formational aspects. The issue of beatification of the Founder was also firmly addressed. The Marian Fathers were called upon to pray for this intention, gather information and testimonies about his life, and collect funds to support the beatification process.²¹⁰

Several decrees focused on the standardization of liturgy, the form and timing of devotions, prayers, and devotional practices within the monasteries. To compel chaplains and preachers to be more zealous and diligent in their preparation for this service, Fr. Wasilewski ordered that all sermons and teachings be written down and submitted for review by the visitor during visitations and signed by him.²¹¹ Among the forty-six Chapter decrees, there were also two punitive decrees. These decrees shed light on the internal situation within the Order and tensions among the brethren. The first decree announced severe penalties for religious who expressed ingratitude, various accusations, or spread rumors against the Father Vicar and the visitor (a Reformat). This suggests that prejudice, dissatisfaction, and a desire for independence from the Reformates grew stronger within the Order, sometimes taking drastic forms. The second punitive decree pertained to disputes and prejudices

²⁰⁷ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ LCVA, *Tabula generalis*. Biography.

²⁰⁹ Cap. Gen, pp. 307-316.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 1763/4.

²¹¹ Ibid., 1763/5.

based on nationality and social status. Under the political dominance of the Saxons, Russians, and Prussians, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a melting pot of many nationalities and denominations. The punishment for mocking fellow brethren of lower social status or from different nations and saying, "You are a peasant, you are Moskal, you are Piefke," was publicly licking a cross drawn on the floor of the refectory.²¹² It is worth noting that during Fr. Wasilewski's term as superior general, there was an emphasis in letters and official documents on the Marian Order being a Polish order devoted to the Virgin Mary. This was done to increase the number of vocations, especially in a time marked by national prejudices.²¹³ During the congregation, i.e., a local chapter, on July 22, 1764, in the Cenacle, Fr. Wasilewski raised the issue of approving the monasteries by the Sejm and the king. For this purpose, Fr. Norbert Gólkowski and Fr. Benedict Hoenig were sent to the coronation Sejm in 1764. As a result of their efforts, the Sejm expressed its support for the beatification of the Founder.²¹⁴ Recognizing Fr. Wasilewski's merits, the General Chapter in Raśna, on August 24, 1766, entrusted him with the office of general for the second time. Under his leadership, the Chapter developed decrees that served as spiritual exhortations²¹⁵ to observe eight-day retreats, prayers, and mandatory and dignified participation. There is also a firm appeal for cultivating language and speech among the brethren. It was emphasized to avoid using the language of hatred, envy, and anything that may hurt one's confrère to prevent discord from spreading. The complex political situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during that time, including the Confederation of Bar, bloody fratricidal conflicts, and intense quarrels, also had an impact on life within the monasteries, leading to disagreements based on these issues. Hence, the emotional appeal for respect and love towards everyone: let the spirit take precedence over nationality or social origin.

²¹² Ibid., 1763/23. "Renovatum est punctum, ne se mutuo verbis laesivis prosequantur et praecipue cum exprobratione nationis sub poena lingendi crucem super pavimentum refectorii, aut sub alia poena arbitraria Discretorio." Cf. S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, 203.

²¹³ Ibid. 1766. Introductin (and other parts). Officially used title was: „*Ordo ... sub Titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis B. V. Mariae Congregationis Polono-Marianae*".

²¹⁴ M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, t. 2, p. 623; *Positio*, Papczyński, 804-805. "Instancja ad Curiam Romanam pro canonizatione."

²¹⁵ Cap. Gen., 1766/1-33, pp. 330-337.

“Nescit religio nostra personas nec conditiones hominum, sed Nimos respicit, ait s. Hieronymus,” cried out Fr. Wasilewski.²¹⁶ The priority in Fr. Wasilewski’s work was the cause of the beatification of the Founder. In 1766, he oversaw the relocation of the Founder’s remains to a new masonry sarcophagus, which was placed on a high catafalque. This catafalque still exists today in the Cenacle.²¹⁷ On January 1, 1767, to expedite the Founder’s beatification process, Fr. Wasilewski appointed Fr. Louis Zapalkiewicz as the postulator general of the cause.²¹⁸

Fr. Wasilewski took great care to preserve unity and discipline within the Order. Several of his preserved letters are filled with concerns for the unity and well-being of the Congregation. Historian Boleslaus Jakimowicz wrote, “There was no aspect of monastic life where Father Wasilewski did not lend a hand to improve and perfect. [...] He worked with complete dedication for the Congregation, leaving behind an immeasurable love for the Founder and his work.”²¹⁹ Fr. Wasilewski spent nearly his entire monastic life in the monastery in Marijampole, where he resided for twenty-five years. The chronicler wrote, “Father Wasilewski, a religious with a great heart, gentleness, and sensitivity, edified everyone, the local gentry and the peasants. When he traveled to Poland for certain matters, people longed for him, awaited his return, and joyfully welcomed him.”²²⁰

Father Hadrian Ignatowski (1770-1776)

Fr. Hadrian was born into a noble family near Grodno.²²¹ His mother was Anna Ignatowska née Wyszyńska, the sister of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński. He spent his childhood and youth in the circle of the Wyszyński family.²²² As a young boy, he was raised in the Wyszyński family estate in the village of Jeziora Wielka. In 1741, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, who became

²¹⁶ Ibid., 1766/12.

²¹⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 769-771.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 788.

²¹⁹ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 44.

²²⁰ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, p. 17.

²²¹ LCVA, *Index alphabeticus*.

²²² “Educatuŕ eram in eadem Villa Jeziora sub tutela olim Magnifici Domini Wyszyński Venatoris Terre Sanocensis, fratres Servi Dei”. PIP, art. 11, f. 89.

the superior of the Cenacle monastery, took the boy under his care and brought him there for his upbringing. He also provided him with an education at the Piarist College in Góra Kalwaria.²²³ Thus, the young Ignatowski had close connections with the Wyszzyński family and the Marian religious life, with its secrets, highs, and lows. Fr. Casimir shaped him into a responsible and sensitive man with deep faith and trust in God. Spiritually mature, at the age of twenty-two, he entered the Marian Order on September 8, 1755, taking the religious name Hadrian.²²⁴ According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, the principles instilled by his pious uncle and reinforced through his hard work shaped him into a person of a very strong character. He underwent his novitiate in the Forest under the guidance of the spiritual and enlightened master, Fr. Cyprian Fijałkowski. On September 8, 1756, he made his religious vows. After two years of studies, on September 23, 1758, he was ordained as a priest.²²⁵ After his ordination, he was entrusted with various tasks within the Marian Order. In 1763, he assumed the role of parish priest, superior, and organizer of a new foundation in Mirosław.²²⁶ It was the first church where the Marians held the full cura animarum, the first Marian parish.²²⁷ On June 6, 1770, during the General Chapter in the Forest, he was elected as the Congregation's superior general. In his first letter to his brethren, he called for unity and fidelity to God, urging them to seek God's mercy and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He emphasized the importance of building the Congregation's future on these spiritual foundations.²²⁸ However, the inevitable collapse of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was approaching, and signs of an impending crisis within the Congregation were also emerging. In his second extensive letter, Fr. Ignatowski warned of the crisis and called for communal fervent prayer to the Holy Spirit. He emphasized the need to pray together, saying, "Let us also implore

²²³ "...tunc me Servus Dei Casimirus penes se in monasterio Gorensi fovebat, et educabat". PIP, art. 24, f. 89.

²²⁴ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 45.

²²⁵ LCVA, *Index alphabeticus*.

²²⁶ AGM, Conventus Mirosłaviensis, Actus ipse introductionis, Feb. 1, 1769; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, p. 33.

²²⁷ *Relationes status dioecesium in Magno Ducatu Lithuaniae*, P. Rabikauskas [Ed.], Romae 1971, 160, footnote 410.

²²⁸ Cap. Gen., pp. 353-354. Letter of June 12, 1770.

the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and let us cry out in unison, ‘Come, Holy Spirit, Father of the poor, destroyer of hardened hearts. Come and strengthen what you have perfected within us.’”²²⁹ In the letter, Fr. Ignatowski also reminded his confrères that even today, Christ speaks to them just as He did to the Apostles, and he emphasized the importance of setting an example of living faith: “May your light shine before men in such manner as to let them see your good deeds.” His letters were filled with profound humility, love for his confrères, and genuine concern for the fate of the Congregation. He urged his brethren to give true testimony: “Do good not only before God but also before people. Always work without grumbles and distrust to become impeccable, blameless Children of God. Endeavor to be among people as a light source in the world.”²³⁰ Following the Apostles’ example in the Cenacle, enlightened and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit, Fr. Ignatowski strongly emphasized the need and value of prayer as an unifying force. During his first General Chapter in 1770, Fr. Ignatowski’s leadership resulted in the adoption of twenty-four decrees. These decrees primarily addressed spiritual matters, observance of religious life, religious practices, retreats, prayers, communal conventual Mass, and the formation of novices and clerics. He also demanded that professors and educators shape the youth in the spirit of discipline, piety, and responsibility for their actions.²³¹

Fr. Ignatowski’s term as superior general was marked by various disasters within the Congregation. On May 16, 1765, a fire broke out in Goźlin, destroying the church, monastery, and some outbuildings. During the fire, while trying to save liturgical vestments and books, a Marian named Aleksander Mraas lost his life.²³² On March 3, 1769, the Skórzec monastery burned down for the second time, and once again, a Marian Brother named Casper Turski lost his life in the fire.²³³ The church was also damaged in the fire. The reconstruction of both institutions, where the studies took place, required reorganizing and transferring them to the Forest, Góra, and Raśna. All of this entailed great effort, laborious work,

²²⁹ Ibid., pp. 355–358. Letter of May 18, 1771.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., 1770/1–24.

²³² Ibid., 1775/4.

²³³ *Album zmarłych* (The Album of the Deceased), under the date of March 3rd.

and financial investments. The new church and monastery in Goźlin were consecrated in 1776.²³⁴ In 1775, the Marian Order received a new foundation in Janów (Jonava), Lithuania, from Bishop Józef Kazimierz Kossakowski. To organize this new foundation, Fr. Ignatowski sent a trusted and esteemed Marian, Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski.

This was a time after the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the new reality proved unfavorable for the religious orders in Poland. The suppression of monasteries in the Austrian Empire and the restriction of monastic rights in Prussia and Russia caused concern. Contemplative orders, which did not engage in apostolic work, were particularly at risk. Fr. Ignatowski watched with apprehension as dangerous changes and revolutionary unrest emerged in Europe. Fr. Ignatowski sought new forms of engagement for the Order and responses to the needs of society. To collaborate in implementing plans related to the development of the Order and to overcome the crisis, he appointed a young and energetic Marian, Fr. Raymond Nowicki, who later took over the leadership of the Congregation. Fr. Nowicki carried out significant reforms and returned to the legacy of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and the ideals he outlined for the Order.

Marians in Portugal

Beginnings; Adversities and Hopes

Fr. Casimir Wyszyński repeatedly professed that he would travel to India, Brazil, or even the farthest corners of the world to spread devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was even prepared to give his life for this cause.²³⁵ During his stay in Rome, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński experienced a lot of misery, troubles, and suffering. Therefore, he received the news from the Franciscan general with even greater joy, which he immediately shared with the Marian

²³⁴ ADS, *Visitatio generalis* in Goźlin, 146/III,10.

²³⁵ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 413. Evidence given by Br. Giovanni Rodriques: “[Padre Casimiro], nei suoi principi era devoto dell’Immacolata Concezione e che molte volte udi dire dal medesimo Venerabile che a contemplazione di questo gran mistero sarebbe andato nell’Indie, e nelle parti piu remote [...] ed avrebbe a tale effetto sacrificata la propria vita”. Cf. Evidence of Father Taudt, in: *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 430, art. 8; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 419.

superior general. He wrote, "Saturday, the day of God's joy, a consolation after so many hardships. A letter arrives from the Franciscan general in Spain to the vicar general of the Reformates in Rome. In this letter, the general writes to inform our Marian brothers in Poland as quickly as possible that two Marians must be sent to Portugal. The Portuguese king wants to establish our Order in Portugal."²³⁶ Fr. Wyszyński knew that, just as acquiring a church in Rome required many efforts and endeavors, embarking on the Portuguese mission would encounter numerous difficulties and resistance from the brethren "entrenched" in the Marian monasteries. Therefore, in a lengthy, enthusiastic letter, he urged the superior general and the Marians to make the courageous decision to accept this mission, which would bring honor to the Congregation and the Polish nation.²³⁷ Fr. Wyszyński emphasized in his letters that this was a splendid opportunity to proclaim devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He viewed the foundation in Portugal, sponsored by the king himself, as an extraordinary display of splendor and financial support for the Marian Order. He also mentioned that "such a wealthy country could assist in the beatification process of Father Stanislaus, even if it took some time."²³⁸ In his letter, Fr. Wyszyński urged the superior general to send at least two Marians to Portugal as soon as possible. He emphasized that these individuals should be priests of good character and humble disposition. Although the mission's opening was still far off, Fr. Casimir was keen on building it on solid personnel foundations. Therefore, he proposed candidates: Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer, who had been with him in Rome in 1751 and was familiar with the Italian language, and another "good and proven individual as this would bring honor to our Order."²³⁹ Fr. Wyszyński also tried to prepare the Marian community for a deeper understanding of the missionary idea and encouraged their involvement. He was ready to go to Portugal, but he prioritized the cause of the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus, which was of great importance to him because he was deeply convinced of his holiness. He even admonished the superior general,

²³⁶ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 245.

²³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 246.

²³⁸ *Ibid.* Letter of March 11, 1752, pp. 246-248.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

saying, "I dare not leave Rome for Portugal until I at least hear about the initiation of this process. It should be our utmost concern because our development depends on it; otherwise, we will decline. Ultimately, if they can manage without me there [in Portugal] and I need to return to Poland and focus on the process, I will not shy away from the work. But for God's sake, I am not alone in the Congregation. [...] These two undertakings—the process and the mission to Portugal—should be undertaken by us as soon as possible, as they are the most important and sacred."²⁴⁰

The motive behind Father Wyszyński's apostolic zeal was to spread the glory of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception through the promotion of the Marian Order. Seeing the sluggishness of the general government and the lack of understanding from his fellow Marians, he strongly insisted on making a final decision. He even appealed to the ambitions of the superior general, asking, "Are we not suitable for this?" In his letter, he informed him that the lack of action in this matter led to critical and negative opinions about the Marians. "They are astonished [...] that we are delaying our mission to the Portuguese king so much. This leads to suspicions that we are incapable of expanding the Order and the devotion of the Immaculate Virgin. Therefore, sending those appointed as soon as possible is necessary."²⁴¹

There was a lack of candidates for the mission. Fr. Szkraffer, whom Fr. Casimir had designated and relied on the most, excused himself due to his "weakness." Others also declined. Fr. Casimir wrote bitterly to the superior general, "I no longer know who will work when the young ones are weak and incapable, and what will we, the old ones, do?"²⁴² Fr. Wyszyński tirelessly moved heaven and earth to mobilize the unconvinced Marians. Within a few months, he wrote letters on this matter to Fr. Antoni Kazimierz Ostrowski, his relative and later the primate of Poland, to Teodor Kazimierz Czartoryski, the Bishop of Poznań, and many other dignitaries, both clergy and laity, as well as to his friends, seeking their support. His missionary passion is astonishing, continuously driving him to press and urge the superior general. He painfully

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 331-332. 319.

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 304-305.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 305.

points out the Marians' lack of understanding and responsibility: "Many express surprise that our brethren are not preparing themselves for Portugal, and I cannot assure them that they are already on their way. Because of this, they suspect me and consider me a storyteller. They suspect that I am fabricating things. They cannot comprehend that there could be such sluggishness on our part in such a favorable time for the expansion of our Order. I don't know what to answer to the question posed by the Superior General and many well-wishers of our Order, and the shame is overwhelming."²⁴³

After many hardships, uncertainties, and expectations, on August 6, 1752, a joyful message finally arrived from Poland: the General Council had accepted his candidacy for work in Portugal, and Fr. Benon Bujalski was appointed as his collaborator. In Rome, Fr. Casimir was to hand over the duties of the general procurator to Fr. Alexis Fischer.²⁴⁴ However, this joy was soon disrupted as dark clouds loomed over the "Portuguese expedition." Initially, the vicar general of the Franciscans, believing that the Portuguese king was inviting the Marians, encouraged Fr. Wyszynski to go and organize the mission: "Optime facies si tu ibis illuc."²⁴⁵ However, on August 8, 1752, the minister general of the Franciscans, having doubts about the circulating news of the Marians being invited by the king, ordered those intending to go to Portugal to stay in Rome until they received a summons from the king. When Fr. Bujalski and Fr. Fischer arrived in Rome on November 1 of that year and took up residence in the Franciscan monastery of Ara Coeli, the vicar general of the Franciscans instructed them to wait for the arrival and instructions of the minister general. This worried Fr. Casimir. The minister general arrived only in April 1753, and Fr. Wyszynski immediately went to see him, wanting to obtain information about who was inviting the Marians to Portugal and the true motive behind the invitation.²⁴⁶ Unfortunately, he encountered an unpleasant surprise. He described this conversation: "The minister general [...] started to persuade me to abandon this undertaking,

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 312. Letter of July 15, 1752.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 324.

²⁴⁵ A. José de Sá Vargas, *Memoria acerca de Balsamão*, Bragança 1859, Pol. Version: *Wspomnienie o Balsamão*, transl. by M. Wiśniewski, Stockbridge 1964, p. 31, [afterwards: Vargas, *Memoria*].

²⁴⁶ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 237-238.

saying that it would be better to return to Poland and wait for a second summons. However, I replied that under no circumstances could this be the case and that we should not bring disgrace upon ourselves in front of the whole world. It is announced everywhere that the Marians have been sent from Poland [to Portugal]. [...] It is also known in Rome, and it would be a great shame if we were to return to Poland now. [...] We cannot, by any means, return to Poland, as we would disgrace the Order and ourselves.”²⁴⁷ The minister general, skeptical about the success of the Marian mission,²⁴⁸ approached the matter with doubt and reluctantly consented to the departure, setting a strict condition: “If the Portuguese minister does not provide you with the *patentes*, do not dare to set out.”

As Fr. Wyszyński prepared for his journey, he did not inform the superiors in Poland about the various warnings, threats, and uncertainties. Instead, he asked his brethren for prayers for himself and his work solely “for the spread of the honor of the Blessed Mother.”²⁴⁹ In his concern for the devotion to Mary and spiritual privileges for the mission he had undertaken, on May 5, 1753, Fr. Wyszyński obtained from the general superior of the Theatines the privilege to bless, impose, and propagate the scapular of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of Portugal.²⁵⁰ In the days leading up to their departure from Rome, Fr. Casimir and Fr. Bujalski dedicated themselves to prayers in the Roman basilicas and bid farewell to their friends and compatriots. On May 14, 1753, they embarked on a long and arduous journey to Portugal, expected to last about a month. However, the journey lasted five months due to numerous obstacles, such as storms, tempests, and pirates. Fr. Wyszyński experienced failures, humiliations, and lack of money during the long journey with humility, keeping all within his heart and conscience. He wrote his first letter to the superior general

²⁴⁷ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 379.

²⁴⁸ Basileu Pires dos Anjos, *Veneravel Frei Casimiro. Testemunhos daqueles que o conheceram*, Fátima 2000; in Polish: *Ojciec Kazimierz Wyszyński: ten, który zaszczerpił marianów w Portugalii*, in: Janusz Kumala [Ed.], *Wierni mariańskiej drodze*, Licheń Stary 2007, p. 37.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

²⁵⁰ Prot. Ord., p. 244; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 232. “A. D. 1753 5 Maji in aedibus S. Silvestri. R. mus D. Joannes Baptista de Mari Praepositus Generalis Clericorum regularium benigne concessit Adm. Reverendo Patri Casimiro Wyszyński, Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis B. V. Mariae facultatem distribuendi in Portugalia scapulare ceruleum Ejusdem Immaculae Conceptionis.”

after fifteen months when concerns arose in Poland about his well-being and extensive inquiries were made regarding the mission he had undertaken. In the letter, he informed the superior about their difficulties: "We experienced many dangers, to the point where our lives hung by a thread [...] and we were in great distress due to sea robbers. [...] We were in ultimate danger [...]. By God's Providence [...] we were saved. It was a miracle. [...] I only prayed according to our practice: 'The Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, be our health and our protection.'"²⁵¹

After enduring numerous hardships and dangers, Fr. Wyszynski and his companions arrived in Lisbon on October 10.²⁵² They began searching for Fr. Salazar, who had invited the Marians to Portugal on behalf of the king, promising them favorable conditions for work and development. However, it turned out that the entire initiative was a misunderstanding and a hoax, as neither the king nor any significant Portuguese figures had expressed any intention of establishing such an order in Portugal. Moreover, during that time, religious orders in Portugal faced various difficulties, characteristic of the Enlightenment era.²⁵³ One prominent figure during that period was Sebastian Joseph Pombal, an influential politician and the prime minister of Portugal from 1750 to 1777. He wielded significant power and sought to reform the state in line with enlightened absolutism and Masonic ideas, which were hostile to the Church and religious orders.²⁵⁴ The Marians realized that they had been deceived and felt lost. It became apparent that the entire affair had been orchestrated by Fr. Salazar,²⁵⁵ who had devised and organized it. The idea originated in Fr. Salazar's mind out of personal ambition, as he strongly desired to become the founder of the Order of the Immaculate Conception. Around the same time in Portugal, another fervent devotee of the Immaculate Conception, John of the Immaculate Conception, later known as John of God (1495-1550),²⁵⁶ undertook a similar initiative. During the journey from Rome to Lisbon, Fr. Casimir, while staying

²⁵¹ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 395. Letter to the superior general of Aug. 3, 1754, pp. 409-411.

²⁵² Prot. Bals., p. X; *Positio*, Wyszynski, p. 241, footnote 46.

²⁵³ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 31.

²⁵⁴ *Nowa Encyklopedia Powszechna*, t. 5, Warszawa 1966, p. 239.

²⁵⁵ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, p. 39.

²⁵⁶ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 406.

in the city of Mertola, learned from a certain guardian of the Observants that there were “two conceptionists” [a clergyman and a lay person] in Lisbon who were trying to establish a congregation of the Immaculate, but “something is happening in their minds, they are going crazy. This gave us comfort” — he wrote in his *Diariusz* — “that they will not hinder us, so we go with hope in the Name of the Lord.”²⁵⁷

The situation was as follows: several years earlier, on Mount Boboda, in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, located fifteen kilometers from Lisbon, Fr. Salazar and John of God organized a group of hermits without proper permission and the required formalities, using the *Rule* and Statutes of the Marians. John of God designed his habit and also dressed his companions in it. A conflict arose between John of God and Salazar, who soon tried to become the founder of his own order. When his attempts did not yield results,²⁵⁸ and upon learning from the Franciscans that such an order already existed in Poland, with its representatives living in Rome, Salazar decided to bring the Marians to Portugal to fulfill his founding plans. The Marians were to be merely a tool in his hands to realize his project.²⁵⁹ By inciting his brethren against John of God, Salazar promised to bring in genuine Marians, thus contributing to the division within the community.²⁶⁰

Fr. Wyszynski, in a letter to Poland, informed that “a community was already forming here under the guise of our Statutes and *Rule*, but it ceased to exist upon our arrival. Furthermore, its founder submitted to my jurisdiction, received the habit from my hands, and set aside his own that he had devised. Now, he is cooperating with me.”²⁶¹ However, the situation unfolded somewhat differently, as Fr. Salazar did not give up on his endeavor. He deceitfully involved several influential individuals, including the superior general of the Franciscans, who were persuaded by his version. He also manipulated Fr. Wyszynski.

Upon arriving in Lisbon, the two Marians took up residence in Salazar's house, and it was only then that they discovered his deceit and cunning. Fr. Alexis Fischer recorded that “the fathers were dismayed and

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 419.

²⁵⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 33-34.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁶¹ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 419.

troubled.”²⁶² According to witnesses, Salazar treated them inhumanely, subjecting them to mistreatment, insults, and demeaning their dignity. “Father Casimir had to endure a trial of hunger, thirst, humiliation, loneliness, ridicule, and all kinds of hardships, to the point of madness.” According to an eyewitness, Fr. Bujalski, during a meal, Salazar would call Fr. Casimir, order him to stand, kneel, kiss the ground, and repeat this action multiple times. Salazar also restricted Fr. Casimir’s meals and sleep.²⁶³ After Fr. Casimir’s death, Salazar testified during the beatification process that he wanted to test his humility and holiness in that way. He humbly and tearfully confessed: “I made a martyr out of him,” and promised to make a pilgrimage to his grave to beg for forgiveness.²⁶⁴ After objectively assessing the situation and seeing no way out of this strange situation, and suffering from various afflictions and illness, Fr. Bujalski decided to leave Portugal. He also urged Fr. Casimir to leave, saying, “Father, let us leave this house because this man seems to be a Jew or some other unbeliever.”²⁶⁵ Fr. Casimir responded, “Let us endure suffering with patience.” However, under such harsh conditions, Fr. Bujalski eventually fell seriously ill. On December 26th, after two months in Lisbon, he departed for Poland. In a letter to the general, Fr. Wyszynski explained, “The local air did not suit him at all, and there was a fear that he might die as he was continuously ill.”²⁶⁶ Despite his hesitations, Fr. Wyszynski, placing strong trust in Divine Providence, decided to stay, willing to endure all kinds of suffering until death, as long as the glory of the Immaculate would increase.²⁶⁷ He wrote, “Perhaps God will provide some means to remedy our trouble and shame caused by Salazar. On the other hand, I do not feel enough strength to undertake the arduous journey due to my old age and weak health. Moreover, we have spent all our money hoping to settle here [in Portugal].”²⁶⁸ Realizing

²⁶² Prot. Bals., 10.

²⁶³ *Positio*, Wyszynski, p. 243. Father Benon Bujalski’s evidence given during the beatification process.

²⁶⁴ Prot. Bals., 106-107.

²⁶⁵ *Positio*, Wyszynski, p. 243; B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, pp. 46-47. They contain the evidence given by Br. John of Monte Policiano.

²⁶⁶ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, pp. 409-410.

²⁶⁷ Prot. Bals., p. 10.

²⁶⁸ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 31.

that cooperation with Fr. Salazar offered no prospects for the future, Fr. Casimir began efforts to find a new place. Salazar's response was anger, seeking revenge, and isolating Fr. Casimir. However, Divine Providence watched over him. Not speaking Portuguese well, this unknown religious encountered powerful and influential protectors on his path. He wrote: "God gave me protectors who almost forcibly tore me away from Father Salazar and opened the way for me to develop our Order better."²⁶⁹ Like the biblical Samaritan, these protectors took care of Fr. Wyszyński. They "provided for his maintenance by paying for his expenses to the guardian of the monastery" and searched for a place where he could work in peace and dedicate himself to the foundation of the Marian monastery.²⁷⁰ Thanks to their intercession, Cardinal Melchior Tempini issued a "Mandatum" to Fr. Casimir, which was an official document that freed him from Salazar's authority and placed him in the Franciscan monastery of St. Peter of Alcantara in Lisbon.²⁷¹ Just six days after arriving at the Franciscan monastery, Fr. Casimir experienced great joy. John of God, the main protector, declared his accession to the Marian Order on March 25, 1754, and was officially received and invested with the Marian habit. This was the first Portuguese vocation to the Marian Order, and for Fr. Casimir, it was a sign of God's blessing on his work. John of God was a dynamic, pious, influential, wealthy man closely connected to many Portuguese nobles, clergy, and laypeople.²⁷² He was also a devotee of the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Casimir reported to the superior general, "A great fish has fallen into our net, for he is the Founder of the new Order of the Immaculate Conception [...]. Brother John of God willingly joined me. He comes from a distinguished family. On the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on March 25, I vested him in our habit according to our ceremonies. This took place with the participation of worthy people in the chapel of his brother-in-law [...]. Together, we began efforts to establish a foundation for our Order."²⁷³

²⁶⁹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 413; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 244. These people were: Salvatore Marcello de Figueiredo a landowner and a royal courtier, and the above-named John of the Immaculate Conception.

²⁷⁰ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, pp. 26, 29, 41.

²⁷¹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 244. It contains the *Mandatum*.

²⁷² *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 245-246; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 33.

²⁷³ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 410, 413.

Fr. Casimir, convinced of the intercession of the Founder in the affairs of the Portuguese mission, expressed his gratitude by compiling his biography titled *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanislai a Jesu Maria*. This work served as the basis for the extensive biography of Fr. Papczyński in the Portuguese language, which was subsequently developed by Fr. João Teixeira.²⁷⁴ Its publication was an important contribution to the beatification of Father Stanislaus.

On the Road to Balsamão

Due to his origins from the diocese of Miranda, Br. John of God was familiar with the retreat in Balsamão,²⁷⁵ where devout members of the Third Order resided, although they were not professed members. He was convinced that this place was ideal for Fr. Casimir to establish a Marian monastery and promote devotion to the Immaculate. The bishop of the diocese of Miranda (now Bragança) was Carmelite Fr. John of the Cross, who had jurisdiction over the monastery in Balsamão. The bishop was

²⁷⁴ J. Teixeira, *Vida do Veneravel Servo de Deos Estanislao de Jesus Maria*, Lisboa 1757, pp. XXIV + 256; in Polish: *Żywot Sługi Bożego o. Stanisława Papczyńskiego*, transl. by M. Wiśniewski, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1962.

²⁷⁵ The Balsamão Hill encompasses an area of approximately three hundred hectares. In ancient times, the Roman army built a fortress on this hill. The Muslims, who conquered Spain and Portugal in the 8th and 9th centuries, constructed their fortress there and imposed a specific tribute on Christians. The most burdensome aspect of this tribute was the obligation for each settlement to provide a young girl to the Muslims. The Christians resisted but were unable to defeat the Muslims. During one of the battles, the Most Holy Lady appeared to the knights carrying a vessel of balsam in her hands and anointed their wounds, providing them with strength and courage. The Muslims were defeated and driven out. After their expulsion, the mosque was cleansed, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a hermitage was built. The hill was named Balsamão in honor of the Mother of God (balsam a Mao, hand balm). In the late 16th century, devotees of Mary from Balsamão founded the "Confraternity of the Holy Mary of Balsamão," approved and granted privileges on June 30, 1605, by Pope Pius V. In the 18th century, the Hospice of Our Lady of Balsamão was established. In April 1740, it was approved under the name "Congregation of Our Lady in Balsamão," which included several Franciscan Third Order members. They sought a more austere form of life and a foundation in some order dedicated to Mary. Their situation coincided with the search by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński for a place where he could establish a religious order in Portugal. At the invitation of the hermits, on September 6, 1754, Fr. Wyszyński arrived in Balsamão and was warmly received by the hermits and the Bishop of Miranda, who granted him a document of authorization, appointing him as the superior of the community in Balsamão and granting permission to admit candidates and invest the hermits in Marian habits, along with other necessary privileges. This document is considered the beginning of the Marian foundation in Portugal.

sympathetic to the problems of the Balsamão community, composed of St. Francis's tertiaries and supervised by the only priest, Fr. Jerome of the Holy Trinity, who was a "worthy priest, a model of virtue, to whose zeal the construction of chapels of Our Lord's Passion was owed."²⁷⁶ Father Jerome took care of the tertiaries' spiritual well-being and looked after their material situation. They requested the bishop to allow the Third Order members from Balsamão to join the Marian Order and included information about the Marians and a miniature portrait of the Founder. A second letter was addressed to the hermits, who were initially undecided about being incorporated into the Marians, a foreign community with unknown Statutes. "Not knowing exactly who Your Reverences are, the hermits cannot consent for fear of having invited such people who would only consume and spend all that they had accumulated with so much difficulty."²⁷⁷ The bishop personally knew the community in Balsamão and was aware of the members' desire for a more perfect and nurtured life, which was awakened by the pious Fr. Jerome. After reaching an agreement with the tertiaries, the bishop made efforts and facilitated the entry of Fr. Wyszynski and Br. John of God into the hospice. He also agreed to incorporate the Third Order members into the Marian Order. He expressed this clearly in an extensive letter addressed to Fr. Casimir on July 11, 1754: "I have received the letter and memorandum from Your Reverences, which outline the project of establishing a new monastery of your Order in Balsamão. I did not respond immediately; I had to consider the project, gather information about your institute, and inquire with the residents of Balsamão [...]. I will assist as much as I can [...], the brothers from Balsamão will receive you with great love, as they desire to join a religious order with vows [...]. I wish you prosperity and growth. May God protect you for many years."²⁷⁸ After receiving the bishop's permission, Fr. Casimir and Br. John embarked on their journey and arrived in Balsamão on September 6, 1754. According to Fr. Casimir's account, they were received by the community "with deep affection, joy, and love." At that time, the community was small, con-

²⁷⁶ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 35.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁷⁸ Prot. Bals., c. 13-14, it contains a copy of this letter. Cf. Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 34.

sisting of a priest, a seminarian, and four brothers.²⁷⁹ After a few days, Fr. Casimir and Br. John, both wearing Marian habits, along with the superior of the hermits, Fr. Jerome, set out to meet with the bishop of Miranda to introduce themselves, establish a plan, and receive the appropriate jurisdiction. They arrived there on September 25. According to Fr. Casimir, the bishop received the envoys warmly and approved their stay, habits, *Rule*, and Constitutions.²⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the next day, during their visit to the bishop, Fr. Jerome fell ill and unexpectedly passed away. Sensing his impending death, he asked Fr. Casimir for a Marian habit, and, with the bishop's permission, he made his religious vows while wearing it. He passed away as a Marian. Fr. Casimir reported to the Father General: "The local superior, Father Jerome, fell seriously ill [...] and he requested our habit to die in it. He peacefully passed away after he made his profession on our Rule before me with the bishop's permission [...]. He was a perfect man, exhausted because he rarely left the confessional."²⁸¹ Fr. Jerome's desire to make his religious vows and his act of doing so before his death is a testament to his extraordinary spiritual maturity and genuine devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Following Fr. Jerome's death, the bishop immediately appointed Fr. Casimir as the superior of the community in Balsamão. This decision speaks volumes about the bishop's extraordinary trust and respect for Fr. Casimir. Despite him being an unknown person who did not speak Portuguese, this appointment confirms the testimonies of some witnesses who described their encounters with Fr. Casimir as captivating and having a positive impact. He inspired trust because he embodied deep evangelical humility.²⁸² On October 1, 1754, the bishop issued a document titled "Permission of Incorporation" to Fr. Casimir, authorizing him to bestow habits upon the community in Balsamão and to admit candidates to the Congregation and allow them to make their religious profession. This was something the members of the community had previously requested. The document also outlined the community's

²⁷⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 37.

²⁸⁰ *Poisitio*, Wyszyński, p. 247; Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 414-415.

²⁸¹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 414.

²⁸² B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, passim. Evidence given by people who personally met Fr. Casimir. A. da Silva e Sousa gave a particularly strong witness to Father Casimir's saintliness, p. 28.

conditions, privileges, and tasks.²⁸³ Based on the received document, Fr. Wyszyński, in his concern for the spiritual life of the tertiaries, began their formation to prepare them for receiving the Marian habit and subsequently living in the novitiate and true religious community. After six months of formation, on April 13, 1755, an investiture ceremony took place in which five Portuguese men, including one seminarian in minor orders, received the Marian habit. This seminarian later became ordained as a priest and served as the superior in Balsamão for many years.²⁸⁴ According to *Diariusz*, the ceremony took place in a solemn and dignified atmosphere. It was attended by many notable individuals, both clergy and laypeople. Fr. Casimir captivated others with his holiness, simplicity, and apostolic zeal. It was a day of extraordinary joy for him. He believed that this favorable development was owed to the Blessed Mother and the intercession of Fr. Papczyński, whom he continuously entrusted with the Portuguese mission.

As new candidates continued to come to the monastery in Balsamão, it promised a favorable development for the Portuguese branch of the Marian Congregation. However, the immediate success of the Portuguese community did not overshadow Fr. Casimir's concern for its future and its ties to the mother community in Poland. Therefore, he requested prayers and personnel support in his letters to Poland: "Since I am already advanced in years [...], please have one of the young men come to me, a man of good qualities [...], so that the unity of our Congregation may be preserved."²⁸⁵ The interest in the Marian Congregation was growing, and Fr. Casimir informed the superior that he expected to open a monastery in Spain soon and, in the future, send several brethren to Brazil, which was then a Portuguese colony.²⁸⁶ He wrote to Father General Cajetan Wetycki: "Many esteemed individuals look at me with respect. [...] I lack nothing because not only here but also in Lisbon, I

²⁸³ Prot. Bals., pp. 17-18; Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 36-37.

²⁸⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 248; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 37; cf. Prot. Bals., p. 21. Wyszyński gave a different date of vesting: "Wyszyński provides a different date for the investiture: 'On April 23, 1755, around 11 o'clock, I admitted the following Brothers to our Congregation and clothed them in the habit of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, namely [lists 4 brothers] and Brother Emmanuel de Jesus Maria Jose, a cleric in minor orders, who signed for this purpose.'"

²⁸⁵ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 416.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 415-416.



Marian Fathers' shrine of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and monastery in Balsamão, Portugal (present-day view).

have significant benefactors who greatly assist in our Order's endeavors." He also enjoyed significant support from the bishop of Miranda. "The bishop has taken a great liking to our Order, and although there were numerous and serious endorsements for other orders, he refused them all and ordered the acceptance of our Institute [...]. I, in turn, am held in high regard by the bishop." He wrote about his confrères from the Balsamão community: "They are people of great qualities, but one needs to know how to deal with them. They surround me with great love because, with the help of God's grace, I know how to adapt to them."²⁸⁷ These are not words of pride or arrogance. Fr. Casimir, in his humility, knew this to be true and wanted to convince the Marians in Poland that there was no need to fear Portugal. He described its inhabitants as an honorable, noble, and religious nation. In the diary, which he started on the eve of the investiture of the five Portuguese and kept from April 12 to August 28, 1755 (unfortunately, only partially preserved), Fr. Casimir

²⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 415-417.

recorded the details of the candidates who desired to join the Marian monastery in Balsamão.²⁸⁸ He interviewed them and classified them for specific tasks and levels of formation. Within four months, approximately ten candidates came forward. Among them was a priest from Spain who desired to receive the Marian habit and establish a monastery in Spain.²⁸⁹ Worthy of mention is also the brother from Monte Policiano, who, being by Fr. Casimir's side, later witnessed his exemplary monastic life. In the beatification process, he provided extensive testimonies about Fr. Casimir's activities, love for the brethren, humility, and holiness.²⁹⁰

Fr. Wyszyński professed with faith, "I see marvelous Divine Providence before me in this distant and unknown country. I am eager to serve the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And I receive great encouragement to expand our Congregation from many of its supporters in this kingdom."²⁹¹ Those supporters helped the Marians stabilize the Order and its development. The fame of holiness that Fr. Papczyński enjoyed in Portugal also contributed to this. Fr. Casimir wrote: "Our Founder enjoys a reputation of great holiness in Lisbon. He restored two individuals, whose lives were in danger, to health [...]. One of them is a high-ranking Franciscan dignitary. After being healed, he prepared an extensive biography of Father Stanislaus and is trying to have it printed, dedicating it to the king."²⁹² All of this created hope for the rapid development of the Marian community. Of significant importance was the presence of Fr. Wyszyński, who captivated others with his culture, humility, and holiness.

The promising development of the Marians in Balsamão was interrupted by the death of Fr. Casimir. He passed away on October 21, 1755,

²⁸⁸ Prot. Bals., pp. 19-22; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 269-273.

²⁸⁹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 272.

²⁹⁰ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 333, 335-337, 389, 406, 417. Brother John was born in 1714 and received the Marian habit from Father Wyszyński on July 27, 1755. In Balsamão he was the secretary of the monastery. He died on December 11, 1763. See *Album of the dead* from December 11, 1763. During the beatification process, he testified: "[Padre Casimiro], era molto esatto nelle vite del silenzio, come ancora nell'umiltà, e pazienza, e nella modestia, continenza e gran mortificazione [...] era molto caritatevole verso i poveri [...] ho udito quasi generalmente da tutti che lo avevano veduto, subito erano rimasti edificati formando un gran concetto della di lui virtù e santità". *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 417-418.

²⁹¹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 411.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 415. This biography was printed in 1757. J. Teixeira, *Vida do Veneravel*, Lisboa 1757.

after serving as the superior for thirteen months and a few days. It was a significant blow to the young Marian community, especially since no priest was among them, and none of the brethren had yet made their vows. Soon, Fr. Casimir's prophetic words, which he used to console those who were crying, proved to be true: "Do not weep. Your Foundress is the Most Holy Virgin Mary. And when I leave this body and my soul is brought to God [...], I will support you even more."²⁹³

Under Brother John of God

The life of Fr. Casimir, as described by Fr. Basileu Pires, is a testimony of a missionary deeply and authentically in love with his vocation. He experienced this love profoundly within his Congregation and desired to spread its mission with all his strength to the ends of the earth. It can be perfectly summarized by two Gospel passages: "[...] learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29), and "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, [...] heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, [...] as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also do" (Col 3: 12-13).²⁹⁴ With his life, which was a testimony of God's love and love for his brethren, Fr. Casimir deeply moved those in his presence. During the short period of his formation, he shaped the community well. As long as he lived, many faithful would come from distant places to participate in the Holy Mass celebrated by him and admire the devotion with which he did it. "Even during his lifetime, he performed extraordinary deeds, which people called miracles."²⁹⁵ Fr. Casimir's death was a blow to the Marians in Balsamão, but he left behind the Gospel values instilled in his brethren. His spirit and spiritual legacy continued to have an impact. His confessor, Fr. Gonzalez, provided the following testimony about him: "By all who knew him, he was considered a praiseworthy religious in virtues who lived an exceptional, exemplary life."²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Prot. Bals., p. 112; Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 423.

²⁹⁴ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, pp. 56-57.

²⁹⁵ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 405-426. Evidence given by eyewitnesses. See also: B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, *passim*. Reports about graces received.

²⁹⁶ *Positio*, Wyszynski, s. 421.

After Fr. Casimir's death, the community's situation became difficult because they lost their superior and a priest. Additionally, the legal status of the members was unclear. They were under the jurisdiction of the local bishop, and without his approval, they couldn't elect a new superior or communicate with the superior in Poland. With no one to administer the sacraments, the hermits requested the assistance of Bishop John of the Cross from Miranda. He granted permission for Fr. John of the Rosary to come to Balsamão. Fr. John had expressed his desire to join the Marians even before Fr. Wyszyński's death. In his home chapel, the bishop clothed Fr. John in the Marian habit, accepted him into the Marian community, and appointed him as their superior. According to Vargas, "the act was performed with great solemnity."²⁹⁷ Br. John of God, the mentioned earlier collaborator of Fr. Wyszyński, was appointed as the monastery's treasurer and procurator. Although the bishop had partially resolved the legal situation of the monastery, it did not yet provide the possibility for development and monastic stability. There were also issues with some permits that had been explicitly granted to Fr. Casimir, which expired upon his death. It was also unknown whether a response had been received from Rome regarding Fr. Casimir's request for the establishment of a novitiate and permission for the profession of the brethren, which he had sent on August 4, 1755.²⁹⁸ In the face of such a situation, the members could not make their profession, no one could enter the novitiate, and the community could not grow. Additionally, the required royal permission to establish a Polish order in Portugal was lacking, and the matter of ownership of the monastery and properties in Balsamão had not been resolved.

Br. John of God, a very proactive man with connections to influential families, took charge of all these matters. Firstly, he went to Madrid to meet with the minister general of the Franciscans, Fr. Peter John Molina, who was familiar with the Marian mission to Portugal. Br. John of God explained that all the brethren from Balsamão wished to remain as Marians. They lived according to the rule established by Fr. Wyszyński and desired to continue following it.²⁹⁹ On January 14, 1756,

²⁹⁷ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 38.

²⁹⁸ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, pp. 418-419.

²⁹⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 39; Cf. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, *The Marians in Portugal*, in: "Antemurale"

the minister responded to his request, explaining that they first needed to obtain royal permission to establish the monastery. Second, they had to acquire perpetual ownership rights to the property in Balsamão or another location. Third, they should request the superior in Poland to designate and send a “qualified and authorized” religious who would handle the matters of the foundation, including the novitiate, permission for profession, and other monastic affairs. Without fulfilling these conditions, establishing a new order in Portugal would be considered non-canonical. After consulting with his confrères and receiving their approval, Br. John immediately traveled to Lisbon. “He and his relatives used all means to obtain the royal permission necessary for the foundation.”³⁰⁰ His efforts were supported by the secular regional authorities, who argued that there was no monastery nearby and that a greater number of priests and confessors were needed for the pilgrims. It should be emphasized that an important factor in these efforts was Fr. Casimir’s informative process initiated by the superior of Balsamão, Fr. John of the Rosary, and approved on August 4, 1756, by Bishop John of the Cross. This process was also supported by the firm conviction of the faithful regarding the numerous graces and miracles obtained through the intercession of Fr. Casimir.³⁰¹ On September 27 of the same year, John of God received the long-awaited royal decree. It was a significant achievement as it allowed for the residence of six fathers in Balsamão. Previously, only one priest and a few lay brothers were permitted to stay there.³⁰² After obtaining the royal approval, Br. John of God presented the decree to his brethren. Following a collective consultation, a letter was sent to the superior general in Poland, informing him about the death of Fr. Casimir (which had occurred 17 months prior). They also requested that two Marian Fathers be sent from Poland to the monastery in Balsamão. The request was signed by the superior of Balsamão, Fr. John of the Rosary, Br. John of God, and all the lay brothers. This indicates that the entire community was involved in the canonical regularization of the legal basis for the foundation and its establishment

22(1978), pp. 55-89.

³⁰⁰ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 39.

³⁰¹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 402-403; B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, passim.

³⁰² Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 39-40.

on solid and enduring foundations. The superior of Balsamão, Fr. John, explained in his request for Marian fathers from Poland that the work of Fr. Casimir, “Magister Nostri,” needed to be continued, as numerous miracles were happening through him, which were recorded in a special book of graces.³⁰³ After reading the letter from the superior of Balsamão, during the General Chapter on September 11, 1757, held in Raśna, the capitular fathers unanimously decided to send two distinguished Marians to Balsamão: Fr. Alexis Fischer, a Bohemian, and Fr. Raphael de Buffo, an Italian.³⁰⁴

After attending to the practical matters and the functioning of the monastery, as well as obtaining royal approval, Br. John of God dedicated himself to the spiritual legacy of Fr. Casimir. He also collected and prepared materials for the formation of novices and clerics. He gathered and compiled materials and documents that regulated the monastic life of the Marians, such as the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, *Statutes*, ritual, Marian prayer book, and other Marian regulations and traditions. His actions, even today inspiring admiration, were crowned with the publication of three extensive works in Latin and Portuguese in 1757. The first publication was the comprehensive 256-page Marian prayer book *Ramalhete*, including an introduction and dedication written by Br. John of God.³⁰⁵ The second publication is a collection of Marian legislation in a Latin-Portuguese version. It included Marian Constitutions, the *Rule*, ritual, papal approval, and other Marian documents. The collection also included the strict *Cannones penales* developed in 1731 by the Reformat Roch Chełchowski.³⁰⁶ The third work published in 1757 was a biography of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, which was prepared for printing by the Franciscan friar, Fr. João Teixeira, between 1755 and 1757. It was based on a manuscript written by Fr. Wyszynski in Polish.³⁰⁷ The biography written in Portuguese is the first printed work about the life and sanctity of Fr. Stanislaus. It is not a literal translation of the

³⁰³ Prot. Bals., p. 68.

³⁰⁴ Cap. Gen., 1757/24, decree.

³⁰⁵ *Ramalhete manual de diversas oracoes ou Diario Espiritual*, Lisboa 1757, pp. 256.

³⁰⁶ *Regra dos Religiosos Marianos*, Lisboa 1757, pp. 285.

³⁰⁷ J. Teixeira, *Vida do Veneravel Servo de Deos, o Padre Estanislaw de Jesus Maria*, Lisboa 1757. With aid of his powerful friends, Brother John of God contributed to its publication and distribution.

**RAMELHETE
MANUAL
DE DIVERSAS ORAÇÕES,
O U
DIARIO ESPIRITUAL**

De quotidianos exercicios , que costumão
nos seus Conventos os Religiosos Maria-
nos Conceicionistas , tirados do seu Ce-
remonial para o uso commum da
Congregação de N. Senhora da
Conceição de Balsamão ,

**Offerecido , e dedicado à mesma immaculada Senho-
ra no seu Santuario da Villa de Chacim ,
Bispado de Miranda ,**

**SUBDEDICADO
AO SERENISSIMO SENHOR
D. GASPAR ,**

Arcebispo eleito de Braga ,

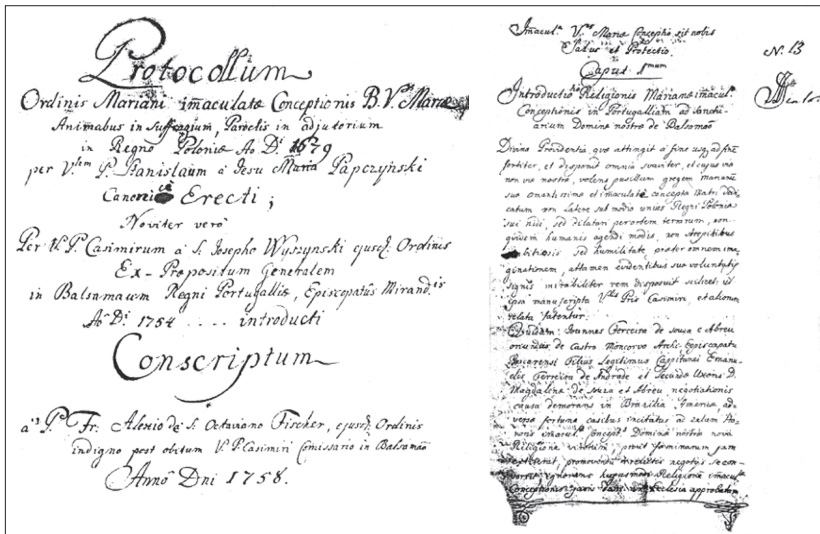
Por

Fr. JOÃO DE DEOS DA CONCEIÇÃO
Da mesma Congregação.

L I S B O A ,

**Na Officina de MIGUEL MANESCAL DA COSTA ,
Impressor do Santo Officio. Anno 1757.**

Com todas as licenças necessarias.



Collection of documents from the 18th century concerning the Marians in Portugal.

manuscript, as it includes comments and remarks by Fr. Teixeira and information from the confrères in Balsamão.

Meanwhile, the two appointed Marians in Poland, Fr. Alexis Fischer and Fr. Raphael de Buffo, were preparing for their journey to Portugal.³⁰⁸ Having obtained letters of recommendation from King Augustus III to the Portuguese monarch Joseph I, the bishop of Miranda, and other personalities, on November 17, 1757, they set off from the monastery in Raśna. The winter journey, during a very unfavorable time of the year, indicates the urgency and commitment of the religious authorities to establish contact with the monastery in Portugal as quickly as possible. They arrived in Miranda on March 4, 1758. After obtaining permission and jurisdiction from the bishop and the Chapter, they came to Balsamão on March 8, where they were "warmly welcomed by Brother John of God and the hermits."³⁰⁹ Alexis Fischer arrived in Balsamão as the vicar general with full authority over the Marians in Portugal. In the decree issued on September 11, 1757, by the superior general, it was stated: "By

³⁰⁸ Prot. Bals., c. 103-104.

³⁰⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 40.

this document, we grant him all the necessary authority to deal with all matters related to the admission of novices, profession, acceptance of new foundations, according to the original rule of our Polish-Marian Institute. [...] Whatever is treated, executed, and settled by him should be considered as if it were done and settled by ourselves.”³¹⁰

However, the domestic harmony, unity, and peace in the monastery in Balsamão did not last long, as a dispute and sharp conflict over competencies erupted on March 23. The conflict had a claim-related background, and one can see a certain analogy to the disagreement that arose between Fr. Papczyński and Joachim Kozłowski, who believed that obtaining papal approval for the Order and the approval of new Constitutions in Rome gave him the right to proclaim himself as the founder and patriarch of the Order.

Similarly, Br. John of God — although it must be strongly emphasized that he wholeheartedly devoted himself to the cause of strengthening and developing the Marian foundation in Portugal — sought out hermits in Balsamão, obtained permission for six priests to reside there, took care of the proper management of the monastery’s assets and funds, and oversaw the printing of formative works. He held authority in the monastery, and the brethren showed him respect. He acted as the procurator general of the community before the king and Church authorities. However, following the issued decree, the Marians who arrived from Poland began fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them based on the delegated authority, discreetly sidelining Br. John who felt offended and threatened in his role as the procurator of the monastery. He began to incite his Portuguese confrères against Fr. Fischer, refusing to obey him and openly opposing him. He publicly expressed his dislike for Fr. Fischer’s arrival in Portugal.³¹¹ It appears that the dispute between them also had broader roots, as it involved different visions of the Order, different religious traditions, and the different positions of the orders in Poland and Portugal in relation to secular and diocesan authorities. A researcher of Fr. Fischer’s activities wrote: “[Fischer] defended the religious community against an attempt to distort it by the first Portuguese Marian, Brother John of God, who was admitted to the Order by Father Wyszynski on March 25,

³¹⁰ Prot. Bals., c. 69.

³¹¹ Prot. Bals., c. 71-72; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 40.

1754, in Lisbon. This brother claimed that there was no order in Balsamão [after the arrival of the Marian friars from Poland] and that there was a reign of terror.”³¹² It is very likely that the arriving fathers, who were raised in strict monastic observance in Poland and following the received decree, tried to establish discipline and strict rigor in Balsamão, following the rules of monastic life that the Marians then practiced in Poland. However, these requirements, discipline, and severe asceticism did not align with the Portuguese community’s customs. The conflict escalated, and the opponents did not back down. Br. John of God pressured his fellow brothers, “urging them to listen only to him, or else they would deeply regret it [...], as he would report everything to the king.”³¹³ Br. John of God referred to the Brothers who did not want to listen to him as “devils.” He spoke negatively about Fr. John of the Rosary, the superior of Balsamão, expressing his disgust towards him and frequently engaging in arguments with him. The misunderstandings and conflicts intensified to such an extent that they threatened division and discord within the community and perhaps even its dissolution.

Fr. Fischer did not intend to step down from his position and authority. On April 2, 1758, after a heated argument, Br. John, despite Fr. Fischer’s persuasion and gentleness, discarded his Marian habit and declared that he was leaving the Marian Order forever. He soon left for Lisbon to stay with his parents and engaged in hostile actions against Fr. Fischer.³¹⁴ Alexis Fischer genuinely regretted this fact and assured of his sincere intentions towards the offended religious: “Let no one in the future think that we wanted to harm him, that the Order proved ungrateful to him, or that we removed him from our ranks because, after all, he was the first Portuguese vocation. We especially feel great

³¹² B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 55. Cf. Prot. Bals., c. 73.

³¹³ Prot. Bals., c. 73. “Sabbato in albis ille collectis suis rebus, procuratis in Chacim bestiis, tempore mensae totam sacristiam pervolvit solus, nulli se insinuans, et e templo res non tantum suas, sed quae pro Domina Nostra SS.ma data fuere per eleemosynam, composuit, tandem tempore matutini, dum omnes in choro recitasset, omnia sua exportari fecit e claustrum ad forasterium ibi dormiturus, cui cum proposuissem bono modo et amore Dei, ut videret inconveniencias tantas attentas etc Daemoni, Daemonio clamavit, porro venien ad refecturium caenanatibus nobis cum magno strepitu et clamore se inter alia declaravit, velle se omnia Regi deffere, etc. etc. Sicq in nullo audens se opponere communitas sequenti Dominica, eum habitum mutatum cum omnibus dimisit, sicq. exeunte eo itrante Christo pax huic domui facta est”.

³¹⁴ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 40; Prot. Bals., c. 73.

gratitude towards his family and relatives, who have been such great benefactors to us. Our gratitude will always remain with them in our memory.”³¹⁵

The Opening of Father Casimir’s Beatification Process

Fr. Fischer, facing all these difficulties, resorted to supernatural means, just like his mentor, Fr. Casimir, who, in times of hardship, placed all his trust in the Immaculate Mary and in initiating the beatification process of the Founder Father. He was convinced this would bring the Order spiritual renewal, stability, and blessings.³¹⁶ Even before Fr. Fischer arrived in Portugal, the superior of Balsamão, Fr. John of the Rosary, a few months after the death of Fr. Casimir, convinced of his holiness, approached Bishop John of the Cross of Miranda with a request to initiate an informative process regarding the “virtues, holiness, and miracles of the Servant of God” Father Casimir. By a decree dated August 4, 1756, the bishop ordered the commencement of the process.³¹⁷ However, as Fr. John of the Cross passed away shortly after (on October 20, 1756), the preparations for the process were interrupted. Meanwhile, the cult of Fr. Casimir continued to grow. Public opinion, especially in Portugal, regarded him as a saint. Similar convictions reached from Spain and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.³¹⁸ Due to the widespread belief in his sanctity, the bishop granted permission to bury him in the church,

³¹⁵ Prot. Bals., c. 73.

³¹⁶ Evidence given by Father Alexis Fischer, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa*, pp. 75-76; Zygmunt Proczek, *Śladami Założyciela. Kazimierz Wyszyński o Stanisławie Papczyńskim*, Licheń Stary 2007, pp. 42-43.

³¹⁷ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 402-403; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 38.

³¹⁸ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, contains testimonies of his holiness and accounts of miracles. M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, vol. I, pp. 188-189. “He [Father Casimir] died there in *opinione sanctitatis*, since the signs of his holiness and God’s graces were manifested at his tomb.” Prot. Ord., 455-456, Letter of November 29, 1767. Testimony of Brother Emmanuel Szarosiek about the devotion in Portugal and Spain: “The Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński became so famous for his miracles throughout Portugal: they hear about him not only in the nearby places where graces had been experienced, but also in provinces distant from the sea and the ocean. Spain, Castile, Gaul, from where people come to visit this place (in Balsamão), heard about him. And even the royal capital, the famous city of Lisbon experienced his holiness. [...] On All Souls’ Days and throughout the entire octave, there is a great influx of people, including more than a 100 secular priests.”

so his body was placed without a coffin under the wooden floor. As many pilgrims came to his grave to give thanks and seek various graces, believing that miracles were happening there, Fr. Fischer concluded that the body of the “deceased with the reputation of holiness” and so venerated should be in a more worthy place. He was also strongly convinced that Fr. Casimir would soon be raised to the altars. Another argument was the concern for the grave and mortal remains. According to witness testimonies, pilgrims would take soil from the grave and remove pieces of the floor above the grave. An ex-Trappist even took a portion of the bones as a relic. Therefore, the Brothers kept watch near the grave when the church was open to prevent desecration and profanation. In these circumstances, Fr. Fischer, the vicar general of the Marian Order in Portugal, requested the bishop on March 12, 1759, seeking permission to exhume and secure the coffin and the site.³¹⁹ On the same day, Bishop Alexi Henriques de Miranda issued a decree allowing for the exhumation, emphasizing that the reputation of Fr. Casimir’s sanctity obligated him to provide a “more worthy place and secure the body against profanation.”³²⁰ Upon receiving the decree, the confrères conducted the exhumation on June 26 and transferred the body to the cell where Fr. Casimir had passed away (*sic*). They then prepared a dignified coffin, and on July 18, 1759,³²¹ they placed the body inside, along with some votive offerings that were present at the grave. To protect the body and the coffin from the influx of pilgrims who might seek to take a piece as a relic, the coffin was securely locked with two strong locks and placed in the exact location beneath the floor where it had been before.

The numerous pilgrims visiting the grave of Fr. Casimir and the miracles and graces were additional motivations to initiate the beatification process. As early as July 17, 1757, Fr. John of the Rosary informed the superior general in Poland by letter that a book of received graces and miracles had been established in Balsamão to document the signs of Fr. Casimir’s holiness.³²² From July 1, 1757, to September 16, 1759, 141

³¹⁹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 403; Prot. Bals., c. 86.

³²⁰ Prot. Bals., c. 87.

³²¹ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 403; Prot. Bals., c. 86-88. The document of exhumation was signed by Father Alexis Fisehr, Father John of the Rosary and two Portuguese lay brothers.

³²² Prot. Bals., c. 65.

“serious miracles” were recorded, extraordinary healings from epilepsy, tuberculosis, blindness, various wounds, and internal diseases. To authenticate the testimonies, they were given under oath, and each one was signed by the “healed” individual, the superior, and the vicar of the monastery.³²³ From April 16, 1758, to August 19, 1763, 132 healings and other graces were recorded, along with the acceptance of 77 vows and offerings of various values.³²⁴

The diligence and responsibility of the Portuguese brethren in preserving all the memorabilia, reports, and recollections related to Fr. Casimir were noteworthy. They also took great care in providing detailed descriptions of the graces and miracles received. The influx of pilgrims and the increasing fame of Fr. Casimir’s holiness compelled the superior of Balsamão and Fr. Fischer to submit a request to Bishop Miranda, asking him to appoint an official prosecutor for the case and to confirm the authenticity of the testimonies regarding the received graces, with the authority of the bishop.³²⁵ On May 18, 1763, the bishop appointed Fr. Fischer as the prosecutor of the case and designated three clergy delegates. Thus, on October 22 of the same year, the official sessions of the informative process began.³²⁶ During the process in Chacim, Portugal, eighty-five witnesses were examined, seventy-three of whom testified under oath that they had experienced a miracle through the intercession of Fr. Casimir. Simultaneously, a process was conducted at the Patriarchal Curia in Lisbon, where nine *ex visu* witnesses who had known Fr. Casimir were examined. Fr. Fischer’s commitment to the case was heroic. He grappled with numerous difficulties, such as a lack of funds, as the process was costly due to the large number of witnesses. Additionally, he suffered from illness. Nonetheless, the process was successfully concluded in 1768.³²⁷ In 1771, the process records were sent to the Holy See. A similar informative process was conducted in Poland and Rome. In a letter dated January 23, 1783, Fr. Fischer informed the

³²³ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 403.

³²⁴ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, passim; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 403. The Marians arriving from Poland entered records from the years 1758-1763 in a different book.

³²⁵ Alexis de Miranda Henriques was named the bishop of Miranda on March 13, 1758.

³²⁶ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 38; *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. IX, 403-405.

³²⁷ A. Lemos, *Da vinda de frei Casimiro Wyszyński*, in: *Marianos da Imaculada Ceonceicao*, Fatima 2004, pp. 54-57; *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 404.

superior general that further progress in the process seemed impossible due to the significant costs associated with it and the requirements of the Holy See, which demanded the examination of numerous additional witnesses in Rome, Poland, Balsamão, and Lisbon.³²⁸ After 1783, the process was interrupted due to political, religious, and financial reasons. In Poland, the downfall of the Commonwealth occurred, including its first partition in 1772, followed by chaos and the interference of non-Catholic powers such as Russia and Prussia. In Balsamão, the small Marian community could not cope with the high costs of the ongoing process, especially since they lacked the main inspiration behind these efforts, namely Fr. Alexis Fischer, who passed away at the end of 1783.³²⁹ The financial offer made by A. de Silva e Sousa in a letter to Fr. Fischer on August 14, 1768, is worth mentioning. In the letter, he offered to cover the costs of publishing a biography of Fr. Wyszyński and expressed his willingness to participate in the expenses of the process. He explained that “lack of money should not be an obstacle to conducting the process.” He stated that his personal acquaintance and friendship with Fr. Casimir and his *admirabiles virtutes* were the motives behind his offer.”³³⁰ We do not know why this offer was invalid in 1783; perhaps the generous donor had already passed away.

The Development of the Congregation in Portugal Under Father Alexis Fischer

Fr. Fischer, out of love for the Order and gratitude towards his spiritual master, Fr. Wyszyński, made various efforts in collaboration with Fr. de Buffo and the monastery's superior to establish the work that Fr. Casimir had instilled in Balsamão with such generosity and dedication on solid legal foundations. They also aimed to ensure the stability and continuity of Marian activities and spiritual formation in Portugal. The most important task was to obtain royal approval for

³²⁸ Vargas, *Memoria*., p. 38.

³²⁹ *Album zmarłych* gives the date of his demise as December 31, 1784. However, on that day, a letter was received from Balsamão regarding his death, which occurred approximately eight months earlier. The exact date of Father Fischer's death is unknown.

³³⁰ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 490-491.

the monastery in Balsamão and the approval of the Marian Order in Portugal. In this country, religious orders had no right to exist without royal authorization. A few days after the departure of Br. John of God, fearing his hostile actions, Fr. Alexis Fischer, along with Fr. John of the Rosary, went to Lisbon to seek the approval of the monastery in Balsamão.³³¹ They sought support from the papal nuncio, Bishop of Miranda, and magnates and benefactors from the time of Fr. Casimir. However, they faced a significant obstacle in the all-powerful minister of King Joseph I, José Pombal. Pombal was a supporter of absolutism and held considerable influence over the decisions of the weak monarch.³³² Among other things, José Pombal rebuilt the institution of the Inquisition, subordinated it to the state, and turned it into a formidable tool under his control. He also issued numerous decrees that infringed upon the freedom of the Church, mainly targeting religious life. In 1759, he confiscated the assets of the Jesuits and subsequently expelled them from the borders of Portugal in a cruel manner.³³³ In response to the requests of the Marian Order, Pombal cunningly replied, "The king does not grant the permission you request because there are already too many monks in Portugal."³³⁴ Additionally, the influential John of God hindered the efforts of the Marian Order. Fr. Fischer, realizing the royal court's hostility towards religious orders, returned to Balsamão. On the other hand, Fr. de Buffo remained in Lisbon to keep watch and make every effort to secure the legal foundation of the monastery.

It is important to note that thanks to Br. John of God, in 1756, the monastery in Balsamão obtained permission to accommodate a maximum of six religious. By the year 1760, there were already at least five priests and three lay brothers residing in Balsamão.³³⁵ Fr. Fischer tried to recruit candidates for the novitiate and sought to form them in the Marian spirit. A bitter surprise came in the form of a letter from Father

³³¹ Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 40-41; B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 56.

³³² Katarzyna Płonkowska, *Pombal Sebastiano José (1699-1782)*, in: *Enc. Katol.*, t. 15, col. 1352-1353.

³³³ Joseph Hajjar, *Wiek Oświecenia i rewolucja (1715-1800)*, in: *Historia Kościoła*, t. IV, transl. by T. Szafrński, Warszawa 1987, pp. 69-78.

³³⁴ Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 40-41.

³³⁵ B. Pires, *Ojciec Kazimierz*, *passim*. It contains short biographical notes of individual monastery residents.

General Hyacinth Wasilewski, which Fr. Fischer received on Christmas Day, 1763. The general informed him that the Chapter had decided for Fr. de Buffo to move from Portugal to Rome to assume the position of procurator general. It was also requested that a Portuguese Marian be assigned to assist him.³³⁶ For the ailing and extremely busy Fr. Fischer, this request was seen as a misjudgment and a lack of understanding of the Portuguese mission, which was still in its early stages of development. In 1763, four fathers (including two Portuguese) and five lay brothers were residing in Balsamão.³³⁷ Fr. de Buffo was involved in the beatification process and made efforts in Lisbon to obtain the king's approval for the Marian Order. However, the young Portuguese Marians were not yet intellectually prepared to handle all these matters. After consulting with Fr. de Buffo, Fr. Fischer wrote to the general despite his spiritual reservations, stating that they could not comply with the Chapter's directives.³³⁸ Despite many difficulties, Fr. Fischer continued to make earnest efforts to maintain communication with the Marian Order and the General Superior in Poland.³³⁹ It was not an easy task. In Portugal, as in absolute monarchies, there were attempts to subordinate religious orders to diocesan authority and sever their dependence on superiors abroad. Fr. Fischer complained to the superior general that the bishop of Miranda exerted strong pressure for the Marians to submit to his jurisdiction and sever contact with Poland fully. However, Fr. Fischer explained to the bishop that the Congregation needed to maintain an ecclesiastical and legal connection with the general government and the Order, as without it, they would lose their identity and reason for existence. In turn, the bishop of Miranda complained about the persistence of Fr. Fischer in a letter to the nuncio in 1781.³⁴⁰ Fr. Fischer, acting on behalf of the

³³⁶ Prot. Bals., c. 145-146. "25 Decembris 1763 [...] recepi epistollas a N. Praeposito Generali, in Capitulo 11 septembris celebrato, neo-electo scilicet P. Hiacynto Wasilewski. Cum hac epistola venerunt litterae obedienciales R. P. Rafaeli meo socio Lisbonae jam tribus annis residenti, ut se transferret Romam assumpto socio ex Congregatines Balsamensi [...] His obediencijs satisfacere impotes eramus, nam residentiam Ulyssiponae deserere, socium providere ex hac pauca familia, ac providentiam pro tam longo itinere, sola unica haec Congregatio nullo modo erat in statu."

³³⁷ A. Lemos, *Da vinda de frei Casimiro*, p. 54.

³³⁸ Prot. Bals., c. 145-146.

³³⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 42.

³⁴⁰ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 42.

superior general, tried diplomatically to reconcile the jurisdiction of his superior and the bishop, who completely disregarded the authority of the religious order. To strengthen the Marians and maintain unity with the Order, in 1764, Fr. Fischer sent a written request to Fr. General Hyacinth Wasilewski, asking him to send several zealous confrères from Poland. On July 20, 1764, during the General Chapter in Góra, a decision was made to send three Marians to Portugal to assist in developing the Order and restore the “spirit of religious life.”³⁴¹ They were Fr. Narcissus Richter, a Bohemian, and two Poles: Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz and Br. Emmanuel Szarosiek. During that time, Fr. de Buffo was supposed to travel to the monastery in Rome and bring Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz with him for further studies.³⁴² The Fathers arrived in Portugal in June 1765.³⁴³ However, their arrival did not improve the situation in Balsamão, and for Fr. Fischer, it became a source of misunderstandings and bitter reproaches from the superior general. This was due to Fr. Richter’s reluctance to stay in the remote and secluded monastery in Balsamão. He openly expressed his intention “not to remain in Balsamão.”³⁴⁴ According to A. José de Sá Vargas, Fr. Richter left Balsamão after a few days and returned to Poland.³⁴⁵ Similarly, Fr. Czubernatowicz also left Balsamão in June 1766, according to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz.³⁴⁶ The superior general, Fr. Hyacinth Wasilewski, “expressed great dissatisfaction with their return and complained in a sharp, admonishing letter to Father Fischer, to whom he largely attributed the blame.”³⁴⁷ The situation was further exacerbated by negative accounts from the Fathers who returned from

³⁴¹ Cap. Gen, 1764/11. “Decisum est a Venerabili Assessorio, ut mittantur duo Patres de ordine nostro Mariano una cum fratre in regnum Portugaliae. Quapropter per scrutinia destinatus est ad hanc sacram missionem pro augmento Sacrae religionis Admodum Venerandus Pater Narcissus Richter [...] pro socio vero itineris V. Pater Valentinus Czubernatowicz et V. Frater Emmanuel Sarosiek. Pro his vero Patribus commendatur omnibus Adm. Reverend Patribus Praesidentibus quam etiam aliis amantibus Sacram Religionem, quatenus velint charitativum subsidium praestare Adm. Vev. Patri N. Richter Praesidenti nec non Secretario Congregationis Nostrae Marianae et sociis eius pro tanto itineris spatio in Regnum Portugaliae.” Cf. Prot. Bals., c. 151.

³⁴² Ibid. Cf. Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 41.

³⁴³ Prot. Bals., pp. 153-154.

³⁴⁴ Prot. Bals., c. 156.

³⁴⁵ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 41.

³⁴⁶ B. Jakmowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 58; cf. Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 41. According to Father Fischer the abovesaid Marians left Balsamão shortly after their arrival and returned to Poland.

³⁴⁷ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 41.

their “trip” to Portugal. To justify their return, they attributed the blame to the prevailing conditions in Balsamão, which they claimed lacked the spirit of religious life and obedience.³⁴⁸ Fr. Fischer explained to the general that the fathers desired to return to Poland. He also expressed concerns that increasing the number of foreign religious without “royal permission and through a side channel could be risky and potentially compromise the vicar and the Order we intended to establish.”³⁴⁹ The government of the Order in Poland did not trust Fr. Fischer and Fr. de Buffo. The superior general accused them of disobedience and a lack of religious spirit,³⁵⁰ which caused bitter misunderstandings. In this situation, Fr. Fischer submitted a written resignation to the superior general from the position of the vicar general in Portugal. During the Chapter in Marijampole in 1776, his resignation was accepted, and Fr. Candide Spourny, also a Bohemian, was appointed as the new vicar. After attending to important matters in Rome, Fr. Spourny was supposed to travel to Portugal along with Fr. John Niezabitowski to assume the leadership of the Marians there.³⁵¹ The motives for which these two Marians never reached Portugal are unknown. However, after their arrival, they remained in Rome for several years.

In Portugal, the entire formational work, strengthening the Marian heritage and spirit instilled by Fr. Casimir, rested on the shoulders of Fr. Fischer and Fr. de Buffo. The personnel shortages were caused by limitations in recruiting new members to the community, as well as the deaths of several valuable religious. For example, on December 27, 1763, Fr. John of the Rosary, the zealous superior of the monastery in Balsamão, passed away. On December 11 of the same year, Br. John of Monte Policiano, one of the first Portuguese accepted by Fr. Casimir, also died. On September 19, 1767, Br. Emmanuel Szarosiek, who had arrived

³⁴⁸ Ibid. See Prot. Bals., c. 163. “21 Novem. [1766], epistola haec indicat non bonam opinionem de nobis, quatenus nostra culpa patres Poloni e, Balsamão redijssent ad Poloniam, et cum hactenus Visitatio canonica in hoc coenobio non fuerit peracta... brevis visitationem Generalem nobis minatur.”

³⁴⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 41.

³⁵⁰ Prot. Bals., c. 163.

³⁵¹ Prot. Bals., c. 207. “Praepositus Pater R. Nowicki STL. Cuius literae declarant acceptam fuisse meam resignationem ab officio Commissarii, et constituunt novum Commissarium P. Candidum Spourny, missum Romam cum Processiculo V.lis Patris Casimiri, et inde Portugalem cum socio P. Ioanne Niezabitowski.”

from Poland, passed away, and on December 25, 1771, Fr. John of John the Baptist passed away.³⁵²

In the meantime, significant changes took place in Portugal that benefitted the religious orders and provided the Marian Fathers with opportunities for growth and stability. After the death of King Joseph I, his daughter Maria (1777-1816) ascended to the throne. The despotic minister Pombal was removed from the court and power. The anti-Church and anti-religious laws were repealed. Fr. de Buffo, who made every effort to secure the approval of the foundation of the monastery and the Marians, despite numerous obstacles, finally obtained the queen's decree of approval for Balsamão and the Marian Fathers. The decree, issued on April 29, 1778, opened up broader possibilities for the development of the Marian Order.³⁵³ Although it contained unfavorable clauses, such as the dependence of the monastery on episcopal authority and the retention of previous royal decrees, it constituted a legal basis for the existence of the Marians in Portugal. The decree allowed up to twenty religious to reside in Balsamão, including twelve priests.³⁵⁴ The decree also contained a commendatory opinion about the Marians, who, by uniting with the hermits, strengthened them in their vocation, set an example of practicing virtues, and contributed to the improvement and spiritual growth of the local population.³⁵⁵ Having obtained royal approval, the Marians looked confidently towards the future. After appropriate spiritual preparation, on July 16, 1778, the first two Portuguese men made their solemn religious profession.³⁵⁶

In June 1776, Fr. Raymond Nowicki was elected as the superior general during the General Chapter. He evaluated the Portuguese mission

³⁵² *Album zmarłych*, under the date of Sept. 25, 1771.

³⁵³ A. Lemos, *Marianos da Imaculada*, p. 55 displays the entire decree in Portuguese.

³⁵⁴ Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 41-42. "After joining the above-mentioned Congregation of the lay and penitent men, the said professed of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God not only strengthened and firmly affirmed their vocation, but also, through leading them along the salutary paths of their own Institute (the Marians), set before the local population an example of edification and spiritual progress [...]. I consider it a good thing to allow the multiplication of their number, which has been permitted thus far, so that in the future, they may have a total of twenty members, including priests and converts. [...] They should maintain the clause of subordination to the Ordinary and the Diocesan Bishop." See B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, pp. 60-61; Prot. Bals., c. 228-229.

³⁵⁵ Vargas, *Memoria*, pp. 41-42.

³⁵⁶ Prot. Bals., c. 228-229.

positively and kindly looked upon the Fathers working there. In a letter sent to him on July 16, 1778, Fr. Fischer informed him about the progress in the formation and development of the mission. He mentioned that the entire community had made their vows, that there was already a separate house for novices, and that there were even several priests in the novitiate. However, he noted that the house was too small and did not provide enough space for aspirants.³⁵⁷ In the letter, Fr. Fischer also expressed concern about the dependency on episcopal jurisdiction and the bishop's interference in the affairs of the Order.³⁵⁸ Despite the difficulties, hope began to fill Fr. Fischer's heart. After years of struggles and uncertainties, favorable conditions for development arose, and it became possible to establish an everyday monastic life. He started making efforts to obtain new foundations.

In 1780, the Marians settled in the town of Sabadelhe, in the diocese of Lamego, where from 1782, a full-fledged and independent superior was elected. They left this location the following year and moved to Cedovim in the same diocese. Although they received much support from the bishop, the local population, and secular authorities, in 1789, they had to leave Cedovim due to the lack of government approval for that foundation.³⁵⁹ In March 1780, a candidate named Aloisius Bondi, an Italian, arrived in Balsamão. He was sent there by the procurator general to complete his novitiate. Fr. Fischer was troubled by this decision because strict Portuguese laws did not allow foreigners to reside in religious houses without permission from the authorities.³⁶⁰ Fortunately, Bondi completed his novitiate, and in June 1781, he returned to Rome for further studies. In January 1781, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Fischer and Fr. de Buffo, a Marian residence was opened in Lisbon, where Fr. de Buffo resided permanently with a Portuguese companion.

Magdalena Mascarenhas, a lady-in-waiting of Queen Maria, purchased the church of St. Peter in Lisbon along with its buildings, renovated them,

³⁵⁷ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 42.

³⁵⁸ B. Jakimowicz, *The Marians in Portugal*, pp. 79-80. The mentioned bishop, in his letter to the nuncio in Lisbon, accused the Marians of not adhering to episcopal jurisdiction, violating parish rights demanded by the parish priest of Chacim, and having excessive connections with authorities in Poland.

³⁵⁹ Prot. Bals., 239-241.

³⁶⁰ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 35-36.

and offered them to the Marian Fathers, whom she highly esteemed. This establishment was named the Hospice of St. Raphael.³⁶¹ It existed until 1834. In 1782, Fr. Rafael de Buffo fell ill and passed away on December 3. This was a great sorrow and loss for Fr. Fischer, as Fr. de Buffo had been his closest collaborator. After the death of Fr. Rafael, he was buried in the Capuchin church in Lisbon, and Fr. Fischer returned to Balsamão, where he encountered another hardship.

The Portuguese Vicariate under the Episcopal Jurisdiction

In the absence of Fr. Fischer, on October 29, 1782, the Portuguese Marians, encouraged and even pressured by Bernardo Pinto Ribeiro Seixas, the Bishop of Miranda,³⁶² held a Chapter in Balsamão,³⁶³ presided over by the bishop himself, who refused to acknowledge any form of jurisdiction over this community by the superior general from Poland. The Chapter elected Fr. Vincent of the Sacrifice, a Portuguese, as vicar and bestowed on him the title of general of the Marians in Portugal. The Chapter also denied obedience to Fr. Fischer.³⁶⁴ Fr. Spourny,

³⁶¹ Prot. Bals., c. 239, 240, 242.

³⁶² The mentioned bishop, Bernardo Pinto (born on October 8, 1717), while still a subdeacon, was ordained as a bishop at the age of 54 in 1771. He received priestly ordination only in 1773. He passed away on September 9, 1792. He pursued an uncompromising policy towards the Marians, demanding complete subordination from them. *Hierarchia Catholica medii et recentioris aevi*, Patavii 1913, vol. VI, p. 130.

³⁶³ Bishop Bernardo Pinto had serious doubts about whether his actions towards the Marians were in accordance with canon law because the decree *Injuncti Nobis Coelitus*, issued on March 27, 1787, which separated the Marians from the Reformates and approved the reformed Constitutions, created a new legal situation. There was uncertainty about whether it also applied to the Marians in Portugal. In this matter, the bishop wrote a lengthy letter to the nuncio, in which he explained his involvement in the separation of the Portuguese community from the general government. He then clarified that various legal acts, such as novitiate, vows, ordinations, relocations, and new establishments, were carried out under his jurisdiction. He asked the nuncio whether these acts had legal force and how to proceed after the issuance of the 1787 document. The nuncio responded to the bishop that regarding past actions, if there were any discrepancies, they should be rectified (*sanatio*), and regarding future proceedings, they should seek guidance from the decisions of the Holy See. "Mi sembra perciò che possano avere luogo delle sanatorie per gli atti di giurisdizione esercitati per lo passato. In quanto al avvenire, il Proposito con edificante sommissione, si rimette al giudizio, e sentimento della Santa Sede." The nuncio's letter to the bishop, quoted after: B. Jakimowicz, *The Marians in Portugal*, pp. 86-87.

³⁶⁴ B. Jakimowicz, O. Aleksy Fischer, p. 61; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 44; Prot. Bals., c. 241.

the procurator general of the Marians in Rome, explained the situation in a detailed letter to the general. He attempted to intervene with the bishop of Bragança and the papal nuncio. "I went with Monsignor Patriarch [Camuccio] to one cardinal and then another, and what was the response? That the matter was postponed."³⁶⁵ As in the biblical passage, he was sent "from Annas to Caiaphas." One of the reasons behind this situation, as Fr. Spourny saw it, was the lack of confirmation for the Marian Order. The process of separation from the Reformed Franciscans was already well underway. The Reformates, aware of this, according to Candide Spourny, decided to seize the opportunity to punish the Marians. To achieve this, one of the prominent members of the Reformates "slyly" arrived in Balsamão, incited the religious, and convinced the local parish priest that tithes from Balsamão were rightfully his, urging him to fight for them against the Marians. He also gained the support of the bishop of Bragança, who strongly insisted on a break with Poland and sought to exert his jurisdiction over the monastery in Balsamão.³⁶⁶

Thus ended the process of the Portuguese Marian community's independence from the Order in Poland. Some information about the Portuguese Marian Fathers is still preserved from 1786. In that year, Fr. Vincent, the vicar general, received information about the efforts of the Marians in Rome regarding the reform of the *Constitutions* and the separation from the Reformed Franciscans. Uncertain whether his actions were in accordance with the law, he sent a letter to the papal nuncio in Lisbon and the superior general in Poland.³⁶⁷ In his letter, Fr. Vincent explained the situation, stating that Bishop Miranda and the government authorities forced the Marians in Portugal to choose an independent vicar and break away from the general government. All his religious and administrative activities were based on the bishop's jurisdiction. The letter is filled with respect for the general. It also provides general information about the Marian establishments in Portugal, the Marians, their education, and their functions. According to the information provided, the "Portuguese Vicariate" consisted of twenty-six

³⁶⁵ Listy, Father Candide Spourny's letter to the general of July 19, 1783.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Prot. Rom., letter of Feb. 10, 1786 from Father Vincent, the vicar general in Portugal, to Father General in Poland.

members, including eight fathers, three theology students who were already priests, nine philosophy students, two who were already priests, and six lay brothers.³⁶⁸ During that time, Poland was experiencing an era of partitions and political unrest, greatly hindering communication. The independence of the Marian establishments in Portugal also resulted from cultural prejudices, religious differences, other traditions, neglect on both sides, and simple misunderstandings. The highest superiors of the Marians in Portugal referred to themselves as “General Superiors of the Marians in the Kingdom of Portugal.” In the early 18th century, the Marians in Poland were referred to as “Bogomolcy za dusze zmarłych” (Praying for the Souls of the Deceased). Similarly, in Portugal, they were called “Suffragadores das Almas,” which means “Helpers of the Souls in Purgatory,” reflecting the beautiful Marian tradition of offering assistance to the deceased. They also preserved the entire Marian legislation passed down to them by Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.

Fr. Fischer protested against unlawful actions and elections. He tried to bring an apostolic visitor to address the situation, but the further development of the matter is unknown.³⁶⁹ He likely resigned from that intention, realizing that the bishop, the nuncio, and most of the Marian community in Portugal supported the new independent vicar.³⁷⁰ Also, secular authorities sought to eliminate the communication between religious orders and their superiors abroad. In 1783, Fr. Fischer obtained another establishment for the Marians in Algosó, in the diocese of Bragança (formerly Miranda), which existed until the general suppression of religious orders in 1834.³⁷¹ The privilege for this foundation was signed by Bishop Bernard P. Seixas, who permitted sixteen religious to reside there in the founding act dated January 3, 1783. He also stipulated that the Marians should not infringe upon the rights of the local parish priest, faithfully observe their monastic constitutions, and remain under the jurisdiction and care of Bishop Miranda.³⁷² In addition to acquiring new foundations, the Marians experienced significant

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 44.

³⁷⁰ After the letter of the bishop of Bragança to the nuncio in Lisbon.

³⁷¹ B. Jakimowicz, *O. Aleksy Fischer*, p. 60; Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 44.

³⁷² Prot. Rom., letter of Candide Spourny to the general of July 19, 1783.

growth, including their numbers. While no detailed statistics are available, upon the request of the nuncio, Fr. Fischer provided the number of religious in Balsamão in 1781. According to his report, seven priests and eight lay brothers resided there. On the other hand, the *Album of the Deceased* indicated that in 1783, there were monasteries in Lisbon with six religious, in Algosó with eleven, and in Cedavim with four.³⁷³ Only the number of individuals in Balsamão in 1783 was not given. Still, judging by the monastery's size and importance, it was likely the largest community. Data from 1796 has also been preserved, stating that fourteen fathers, six lay brothers, two associates, and three servants were residing in the Balsamão monastery at that time.³⁷⁴ The document does not mention clerics and novices, but Fr. Vincent of the Purification, the longtime superior of the Portuguese community, was a very zealous priest who actively sought vocations to the religious life. Preserved data from 1786 list as many as twelve clerics studying in Balsamão.³⁷⁵ According to the cited earlier A. José de Sá Vargas, under the administration of Fr. Fischer, there was extensive expansion of the monastery and adjacent buildings in Balsamão. A new dormitory was constructed in 1779, which was described as "almost completely filled with cells," as well as a refectory, kitchens, cellars, chapter hall, and a "new choir to facilitate the recitation of the canonical hours according to the rules of the order."³⁷⁶ Four altars were added to the church, and other significant renovations were carried out. A. José de Sá Vargas, during his visit to these places, wrote with admiration and recognition: "It must be acknowledged that the temple lacked no valuable decorations,"³⁷⁷ despite the monastery's short existence and very modest income."

At the turn of 1783 and 1784, Fr. Alexis Fischer passed away in Balsamão. Following his death, Vincenzo Calozzi, a Roman lawyer representing the Marians in Rome, wrote to the superior of Balsamão: "I was deeply saddened by the news of the death of the distinguished

³⁷³ *Album mortuorum Patrum ac Fratrum* 1700-1890, the data are given after the note about Father Fischer's demise on Dec. 31, 1784.

³⁷⁴ B. Jakimowicz, *The Marians in Portugal*, pp. 88-89.

³⁷⁵ Prot. Rom., letter from the Balsamão superior to the general in Poland dated Feb. 10, 1786, pp. 92v -93 r.

³⁷⁶ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 43.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

religious, Father Alexis of St. Octavian.”³⁷⁸ The superior general of the Marians, Fr. Raymond Nowicki, also highly praised the merits, virtues, and religious zeal of Fr. Fischer. In a circular letter addressed to all the Marians, he emphasized the important achievements of the deceased, his love for the Congregation, his sincere devotion to the Immaculate Conception, and the Founder of the Order. He referred to Fr. Fischer as one of the most distinguished fathers in the Marian Order.³⁷⁹ The historian and expert on the lives of Fr. Wyszynski and Fr. Fischer provided the following testimony about the latter: “Following in the footsteps of the Servant of God Father Casimir, he dedicated his entire life to the Marian Congregation, dreaming of its growth. He made the ‘Saint Pole,’ Father Wyszynski, famous while remaining hidden in the shadows of oblivion, amidst suffering and work for the glory of God and the Immaculate.”³⁸⁰ The Marians, shaped in Portugal by the saintly Fr. Casimir Wyszynski and formed for fifteen years by his zealous successor, Fr. Alexis Fischer, thrived during their eighty-year existence despite the challenging times for the Church. They produced many enlightened, holy religious, and zealous priests, making significant contributions to Portugal. However, all Marian monasteries were abolished in 1834 during the general persecution of religious orders. At that time, there were four Marians in Algosó, five in Lisbon, and nineteen in Balsamão. Many candidates were eager to join the Order, but the royal authority limited the number of admissions.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Prot. Bals., c. 249.

³⁷⁹ Prot. Domus Skórc., p. 55. “Ille est Admodum R. P. Alexius Fischer olim Commissarius noster in Lusitania Generalis, qui disseminatis in Regno Poloniae boni Ordinis Germinis, pro bono Ordinis, ac ejus incremento Exterissis Regionum oris zelo promovendae Religionis suae ductus continuo plurima egit, et nos in Regno Lusitaniae plurimum semper adjuvit; ille est enim. Qui secutus vestigia Ven. S. Dei Casimiri Wyszynski ex obedientia anno 1756 non abhorruit longinquam petere Lusitaniae Regionem, ille est qui in officio existens Commissarij nostri Generalis per plurima annorum tempora apud magnates, quorum fruebatur gratia, pro gloria Dei Matris nostrae honore, ac docore Ordinis exantlatis licet viribus agere non erubuit. [...] plurima etiam sunt alia quae ille emeritus Pater cum laude et honore gessit et fecit, indefessus in Ordine operarius, ac Magnae Matris cultor, quae ist hic, enumerare longum foret.”

³⁸⁰ APPM, folder of B. Jakimowicz, biogram of Father Alexis Fischer.

³⁸¹ Piotr Gach, *Zakon marianów w XIX wieku*, in: *Marianie 1673-1973*, p. 84. The author stipulates that the given statisticals are estimates. Due to the persecution, some Marians left their monasteries as early as 1832 and 1833.

6

FATHER RAYMOND NOWICKI'S
WORK ON REFORMS:
ITS ORIGIN AND
IMPLEMENTATION

Marians in Rome: Searching for a Place

“All roads lead to Rome,” proclaims the ancient Roman proverb. In fact, throughout the centuries, this city has been the focal point of the entire Catholic Church. All the most important offices of the Apostolic See operated here, and various matters related to the activities and functioning of religious orders were addressed. Rome was the beating heart of the Church. Therefore, every religious order or congregation aspired to have its main general house, its own church, or at least a procuratorate in Rome to avoid relying on intermediaries or hired procurators. Their actions were often costly and not always effective, and the results of the missions entrusted to them were often difficult to verify. Fr. Papczyński, who experienced this firsthand, wrote about it, saying: “In seeking ways to establish the Society of the Immaculate Conception, I tirelessly sought the consent of the Holy See for two years, and this matter cost me a lot of effort and exposed me to certain expenses. However, the deceitful and treacherous procurator fed me promises without even attempting to resolve the matter.”¹ When a religious order did not have its establishment in Rome, they ultimately decided to send their representatives to the Holy See for essential matters. However, during those times, such expeditions involved significant costs, sacrificing many months to reach the destination, exposure to various dangers, and substantial physical and mental effort. Fr. Papczyński experienced this firsthand, undertaking such a journey twice, mainly on foot, enduring various hardships and humiliations. For the first time, he set out for Rome in 1667 as a Piarist, accused of causing unrest within the Order. The second time, in 1691, he traveled to Rome as a Marian, seeking papal approval for the young Marian Order. During his first visit to the Eternal City, Fr. Papczyński was provided with accommodation by the Piarists. On his second

¹ S. Papczyński, *Founding of the House of Recollections*, 9, 10, in: *Selected Writings*, pp. 905, 906.

journey, he stayed at the hospice near the Polish church of St. Stanislaus.² Fr. Joachim Kozłowski undertook this arduous journey with the official mission of the Marian Order on three occasions. In 1691, he traveled alongside Fr. Papczyński. Then, he journeyed from 1699 to 1701 and again in 1723 when he obtained papal approval for the Marian Order. Each time, he availed himself of the hospitality of the Reformates, to whom the Marian Order was affiliated, especially since Fr. Joachim had friendly relations with some of them. In the 1740s and 1750s, we could encounter several Marians “wandering” throughout the Papal State.³ In 1722, taking a circuitous route through France and crossing the Spanish border, a young pilgrim named January Francis Wyszynski unexpectedly arrived in Rome. On November 18, 1723, he received the Marian habit in the church of St. Stanislaus in Rome. Already as a Marian, he returned to Rome in 1731 following the recommendation of Father General Andrew Deszpot to “seek a remedy for the division within the Congregation” and to make efforts to acquire a church and establish a religious house there.⁴ He stayed in Rome for over two years, enjoying the hospitality of the Franciscans at the Ara Coeli monastery.

Fr. Wyszynski's two stays in Rome and his acquired experience in dealing with Roman authorities and handling various matters related to the Order made him realize the importance of having their own procuratorate in the city. Therefore, while in Poland, he urged the capitular fathers to organize one, especially since the Congregation had accumulated many problems and issues requiring urgent intervention and the decisions of the Holy See. On November 12, 1750, during the Chapter in Skórzec, Fr. Casimir was delegated to Rome as the procurator general to handle urgent matters of the Order. He arrived on April 30, 1751,

² It was a hospice founded in 1578 by Cardinal Stanislaus Hozjusz, which was intended to serve pilgrims from Poland and Lithuania who arrived here, as well as clergy delegates who came to Rome for church matters.

³ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, pp. 231, 253. Fr. Casimir Wyszynski wrote about it, saying that in Rome, “Father Peter and Father Michael [Marians] roam around like vagabonds. [...] Like little rascals, they wander the streets, ragged and dirty.” See Archives of the Polish Church of St. Stanislaus in Rome. *Liber nomina et cognomina Polonorum ad Almamdom*, (Mariani Pellegrini In Loreto).

⁴ *Positio*, Wyszynski, p. 77. “Videndo eum Ordinem nostrum diverse distrahere velle, seipsum quasi humus Ordinis Patriarcham faciendo et Venerabilis Institutoris memoriam depreddendo, Romam proficisci debui quibuslibet novitatibus obstaré in animo habens.”

accompanied by the appointed secretary, Fr. John Cantius Szkraffer, and a lay brother serving as their assistant. This was already Fr. Casimir's third stay in Rome. However, on August 28 of the same year, Fr. Szkraffer and the lay brother left Rome and returned to Poland due to the difficulties described earlier.⁵ Fr. Wyszyński remained in Rome and diligently carried out his duties as the procurator despite facing material and health-related challenges. He had to contend with various illnesses, possibly due, among other things, to the "dampness of the guest room" assigned to him. Despite facing difficulties from individuals who were hostile towards him and hindered his work in handling matters related to the Order, Fr. Wyszyński did not become discouraged. Before his intended travel to Portugal, he motivated Fr. General Cajetan Wetycki to maintain even a semblance of the procuratorate. He insisted on sending a "healthy, younger, and more resourceful person"⁶ as his successor to Rome, who would make efforts to secure a facility for the Marian Order if Fr. Wyszyński himself did not succeed before departing for Portugal.⁷

Knowing that no volunteers were willing to go to Rome or Portugal, Fr. Wyszyński emphasized to Father General the importance and significance of this matter. He stated emphatically, "It is important that someone remains in Rome to secure any potential foundations that may arise and safeguard our victorious cause. If they sense that no one is left in Rome [from our side], they may introduce something new and more powerful against us, and we would be unaware. The procurator must remain in Rome."⁸ Finally, on August 6, 1752, he received the joyful news that Fr. Alexis Fischer had been appointed as the procurator of the Marian Order in Rome, while Fr. Benon Bujalski was to accompany him to Portugal.⁹ The Marian Fathers arrived in Rome on November 2 of the same year. The Marian procuratorate in Rome was temporarily saved. From November 1752 to May 1753, Fr. Alexis Fischer, Fr. Wyszyński, and Fr. Benon Bujalski resided in the Franciscan monastery of Ara

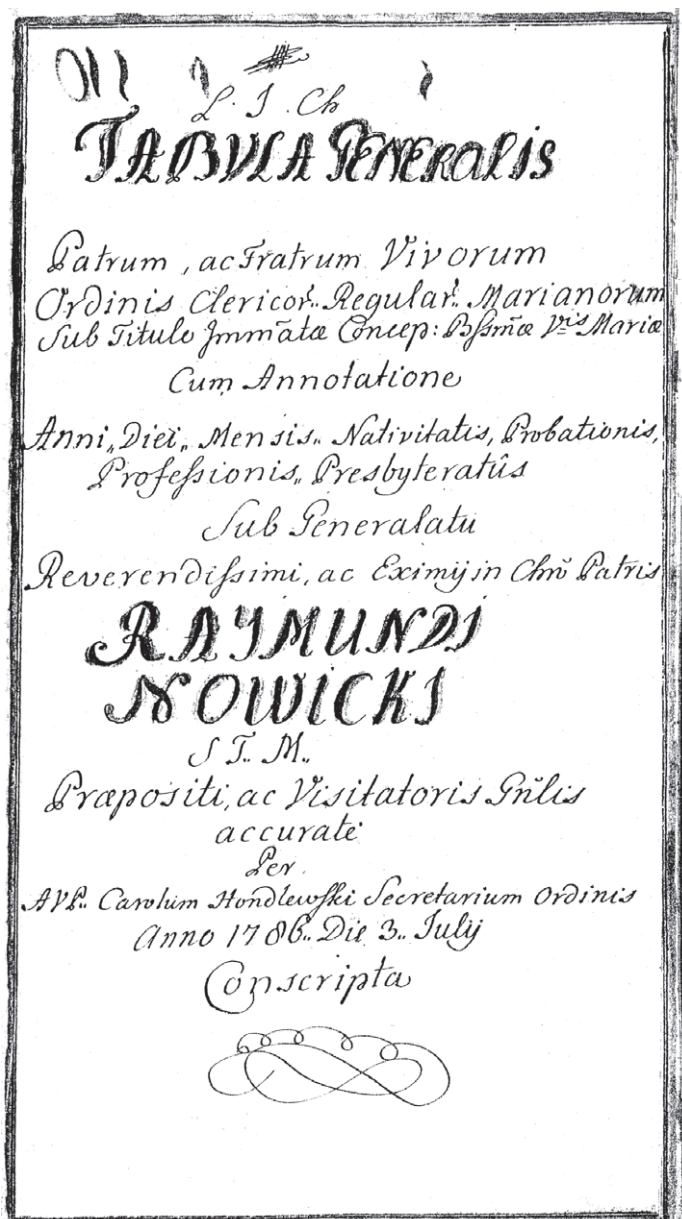
⁵ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 202.

⁶ Ibid, p. 264.

⁷ Ibid, p. 265.

⁸ Ibid, p. 313.

⁹ Cap. Gen., 1752/1. "Decisum est Romam mittere ad requisitionem tam Reverendissimi Generalis, quam Commissari Generalis ex forum perlectis litteris Reverend Patris Alexium Fischer pro Procuratore Generali In negotiis occurrentibus Congregationis nostrae."



Elenchus of the Marian Fathers and histories of the Marians' monasteries.

Coeli in Rome. Unfortunately, the rooms assigned to them were damp and unhealthy, according to Fr. Casimir. On May 10, 1753, he informed Father General that Fr. Fischer was continuously ill and his life was at risk. Therefore, he needed to return to Poland.¹⁰ In the same month, Fr. Fischer returned to his homeland, and shortly after his return, he was appointed as the master of novices during the Chapter on June 30, 1754. He diligently fulfilled this duty until the Chapter of 1757, when he was appointed vicar general in Portugal.¹¹

Despite Fr. Wyszynski's various efforts and endeavors, he could not establish a permanent foundation for the procuratorate in Rome. However, it is important to emphasize that his success lay in the friendship he formed in 1751 with Fr. Giovanni Allegiani, a Roman lawyer in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. From 1751 to 1783, as an influential figure, Fr. Allegiani achieved many vital matters for the Marian Order in the Apostolic See. He handled the case involving Fr. Turczynowicz, assisted in the search for a Roman facility, obtained the necessary documents for the legal existence of foundations in Portugal, and later provided testimony in Fr. Casimir's beatification process. Drawing upon their friendship, Fr. Allegiani attested to Fr. Wyszynski's spirituality and character.¹² Another Marian to establish a close working relationship with Fr. Giovanni Allegiani was Fr. Louis Zapalkiewicz, the first postulator general officially appointed for the beatification of Father Founder on January 1, 1767.¹³

Fr. Wyszynski's impassioned appeals did not go unnoticed. Fr. Cajetan Wetycki, the superior general (1752-1757), and his former pupil understood the need and significance of the beatification of the Founder. He ordered the collection of testimonies regarding the holiness of Fr. Papczynski's life and the miracles attributed to him. He also decreed that

¹⁰ Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, p. 385. "Father Alexis will soon have to leave here because the local air does not agree with him. He is currently lying in the infirmary. When his health improves somewhat, he will return to Poland." Fr. Casimir frequently complained about health issues, which were caused by the climate and unsuitable living conditions. He wrote to the superior general, saying, "Doctors claim that I cannot continue to live here [...]. If I hadn't moved, I would probably have already died."

¹¹ Prot. Bals., p. 68.

¹² *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 427, 491-492. See Wyszynski, *Diariusz*, pp. 142, 225, 370, 411, 418.

¹³ Navikevicius, p. 232.

Veni Creator be sung three times daily for this intention.¹⁴ The Superior General, Fr. Hyacinth Wasilewski (1763-1770), was also a fervent devotee of the Founder, and the cause of his beatification was sincerely close to his heart. Understanding the significance of their procuratorate in Rome, he made efforts to organize it. On September 11, 1763, during the chapter in the Korabiew Forest, he ordered that Fr. Raphael de Buffo be sent from Portugal to Rome as the procurator general, assigning a Portuguese brother to assist him.¹⁵ Due to significant personnel difficulties, that decision was not implemented. Therefore, on July 20, 1764, during the Chapter in Góra, another decision was made to send Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz to Balsamão, where he would later travel to Rome with Fr. Raphael de Buffo. Fr. de Buffo was to assume the position of the procurator general in Rome, while Fr. Czubernatowicz was to pursue his studies.¹⁶ It was the first attempt to send a Marian for studies in Rome. However, this decision proved unworkable, and as a result, Fr. de Buffo remained in Balsamão while Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz returned to Poland.¹⁷ Thanks to the efforts of Superior General Fr. Hyacinth Wasilewski (1763-1770), also Fr. Casimir's former pupil, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński's beatification process was opened on June 10, 1767, and its first session was held in Warsaw. That required a greater commitment of the entire Congregation — financial, spiritual, and organizational — and also made it necessary to seek opportunities to establish "some" foundation in Rome.

The ongoing difficult situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth hindered these efforts. In 1768, during the Sejm in Radom, under pressure from Russia and Prussia, a resolution was passed granting equal rights to non-Catholics. Catherine II of Russia was made the guarantor of this resolution, and Russian troops were subsequently deployed to Poland.¹⁸ The resolution granted significant privileges to non-Catholics, surpassing those in other European countries. Its defense became a pretext for armed intervention in Poland. In response to the

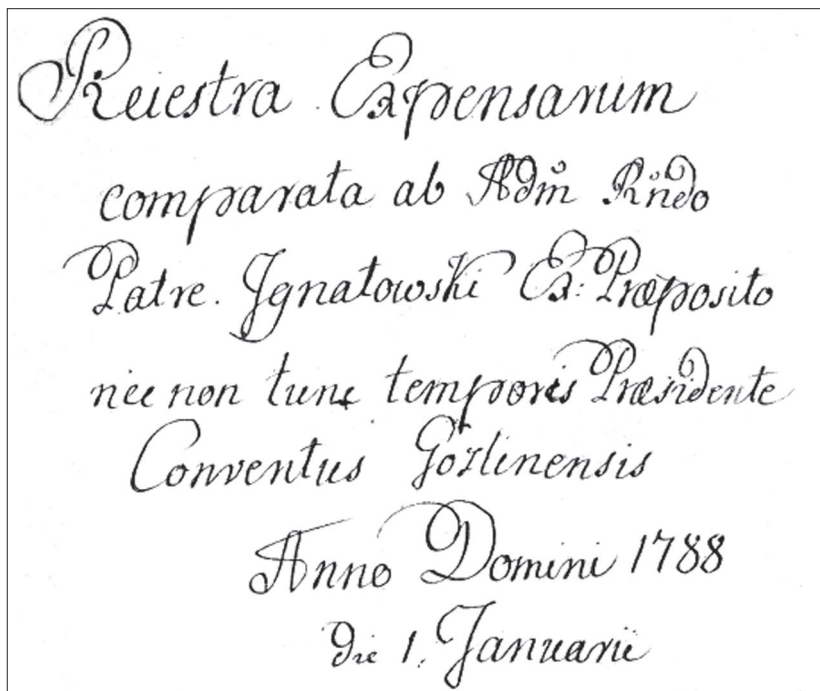
¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Prot. Bals., pp. 145-146.

¹⁶ Cap. Gen., 1764/11; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 34.

¹⁷ See the chapter *Development of the Congregation in Portugal*, p. 340 and the following.

¹⁸ J. Kłoczowski, *Średniowiecze i Rzeczpospolita*, p. 108.



Book of expenses from the monastery in Goźlin (see endnote 21).

Russian-Prussian machinations, the Bar Confederation was formed on February 29, 1768, in Bar in Podolia. Its goal was to “defend faith, freedom, and the country’s sovereignty.” The desperate and tragic struggle of the Confederates against the Russian army lasted for four years. It ended in defeat, the devastation of the country, and the First Partition of Poland.¹⁹ The Marian monasteries also suffered.²⁰ After several years, the nation and the Church began to recover from the trauma they had experienced. Despite the sad wartime experiences, the informative process

¹⁹ Cf. W. Czapliński, *Zarys dziejów*, pp. 355-360; P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 326-331.

²⁰ The accounting ledgers show many examples of larcenous actions of the Russian soldiers in monasteries, e.g.: “[Paid to] a sergeant so that he would not rob,” “[Paid to] Moskals for returning stolen oxen,” “[Paid to] Moskals for vodka,” “[Paid to] a Moskal for a stolen horse,” “[Paid to] a Moskal for a stolen cart.” We provide only the most colorful entries, but requisitions were made on a large scale. The Russian army took food, clothing, oats and hay for the horses. It stripped monasteries as well as peasant farms of goods. See APPM Goźlin, 7 A/24, *Rejestra expensarum*; APPM VII, A4/8, *Puszcza Mariańska, Regesta preceptarum et expensarum*, passim.

regarding the Founder of the Marian Order gradually moved forward in the country. On October 2, 1769, Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz was sent to Rome as the relator of the ongoing case. He resided in the Franciscan monastery, although the lack of documents prevents us from determining the specific matters he dealt with or the duration of his stay in Rome.

After the partition in 1772, patriotic institutions emerged within the Church and society. Individuals who were deeply aware of the impending threats to their country, faith, community, and the Church, including religious orders, became active. These individuals were part of the Enlightenment era, serving as inspirators and co-creators of reforms. They were wholeheartedly dedicated to religious, social, and national causes, engaging in education and promoting secular and religious culture. A significant percentage of them were clergy members. Among them was Fr. Raymond Nowicki, who played a crucial role within the Order during the second half of the 18th century.²¹ During his eighteen years of Marian priesthood, Fr. Raymond Nowicki held various positions and offices within the Order. In 1776, he was elected as the superior general of the Marians, a position he held four times. During his tenure, he implemented extensive reforms within the Order. These reforms were primarily the result of his energy, understanding of the situation, the needs of the time, and apostolic zeal. It is important to note that many religious orders experienced a crisis in the second half of the 18th century, which could be traced back to the Saxon era. Some representatives of the Enlightenment attacked the orders, accusing them of being useless. Bishops and various secular figures encouraged the orders to undergo reforms in line with the spirit of the times and actively engage in the work of religious, cultural, and moral renewal.

After a profound crisis in the state, signs of emerging from political and cultural impotence and a revival of religious life began to appear. The religious orders, including the Marians, were called upon to cooperate in

²¹ Raymond Nowicki was born on September 12, 1735, in Raśna, where his father worked as an estate manager for the wealthy Matuszewicz family. From childhood, he was involved in Marian affairs and the prestigious institution in Raśna. He entered the Marian Order in 1755 and was ordained as a priest on August 13, 1758. He passed away on April 6, 1806, and was buried in Marijampole, Lithuania. Tadeusz Górski, *Nowicki Rajmund*, in: PSB, vol. 23, 334-335; J. Kosmowski, *Nowicki Rajmund MIC*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 14, col. 57-58; B. Jakimowicz, *Stabilizacja*, p. 45.

revitalizing the country and the Church. Fr. Raymond Nowicki, through his reflections, discussions with his confrères, inspiration from bishops, prominent representatives of the Commission for National Education (KEN),²² and Marian benefactors — particularly Bishop Józef Kazimierz Kossakowski and Bishop Ignacy Jakub Massalski — concluded that the Marians, to survive in these unfavorable times, develop, and actively contribute to the moral, religious, and cultural renewal of society, needed bold and profound reforms, as well as a return to the legacy of Fr. Papczyński. During this time, the task of renewal and reform became of paramount importance for the Marian Order. Several fathers, under the leadership of Fr. Nowicki, became actively involved in its implementation. Among them, Thaddeus Białowiecki, Charles Hondlewski, John Niezabitowski, Norbert Gołkowski, Candide Spourny, and Isidore Taudt stood out for their significant contributions and active involvement in the process.

Fr. Nowicki was convinced of two things. Firstly, he believed that without breaking away from the Reformed Franciscans, it would not be possible to follow the Marian path or undertake the necessary reforms that would guarantee the survival and growth of the Marian Order. Consequently, he deemed it necessary to intensify the efforts related to the Founder's beatification process. Secondly, he acknowledged that the process of separation from the Franciscans should primarily be carried out in Rome through a special Marian delegate.²³ It can be inferred that Fr. Nowicki had a well-thought-out program of action and reforms in at least its outline. He made an important decision when he was elected as

²² KEN (Komisja Edukacji Narodowej), which stands for the Commission of National Education, was the central authority in the educational system, dependent only on the king and the Sejm (Polish parliament). It was the first modern "Ministry of Education" in Europe and was established on the initiative of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski on October 14, 1773. One of the reasons for the creation of KEN was the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773, which led to the closure of numerous Jesuit schools. Commission of National Education aimed to establish "parish schools" in every parish for the lower classes and organized universities in Kraków and Vilnius. It is worth noting that KEN was established just two weeks after the signing of the partition treaties that divided the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. See P. Jasienica, *Dzieje agonii*, pp. 359-363.

²³ The newly elected general government, led by Fr. Raymond Nowicki, came to the conclusion that reforms cannot be effectively implemented by relying on the Reformates or random church delegates. This was clearly stated by Fr. Candide Spourny, who wrote: "It would be good to have our own procurator in Rome, even an idle one." *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny [n.d. (1776?)].

the superior general during the Chapter in Marijampole on June 9, 1776. He appointed Fr. Candide Spourny as the delegate for the affairs of the Order in Rome and designated him as the general postulator for Marian candidates for sainthood. Additionally, he included the Marian painter John Niezabitowski as his socius, who was also a supporter of reforms and had the opportunity to refine his artistic skills further in Rome.²⁴ To maintain confidentiality regarding the opening of the procuratorate and the ongoing reforms, efforts were made not to disclose this information to the Reformed Franciscans. In the official decree, those concerned were informed that the religious were being directed to Balsamão in Portugal, where they were supposed to go after completing a few tasks in Rome.²⁵ However, upon arriving in Rome, Fr. Spourny wrote in a letter to the Marian general that the Reformates were already obstructing both matters. He stated, "However, once we arrived in Rome with Fr. John [Niezabitowski], we found traps set up by the friars [Reformates] who had arrived before us because they had already been informed and warned about this matter by the former vicar."²⁶ Both Marians arrived in Rome on January 11, 1777, and took up residence in the Ara Coeli monastery.

Candide Spourny embarked on the implementation of his assigned task with tremendous energy. Despite opposition from many brethren, he enjoyed the goodwill of Fr. Nowicki and Fr. Isidore Taudt, a "gray eminence" within the Order. Regarding Fr. Nowicki, he wrote, "The current general, who is quite understanding, gracious, and approachable in handling matters, which previously, with time and difficulty, we had requested in a beautiful but unnecessary way, has been accommodating."²⁷ Fr. Spourny set himself the goal of acquiring a church and monastery in Rome for the Marian Order, establishing a permanent general procuratorate, and, according to him, the most crucial task: separating

²⁴ Izabela Galicka, Hanna Sygietyńska, *Niezabitowski Jan*, in: PSB, X, p. 99.

²⁵ Prot. Bals., p. 207. "A. D. 1776, 9 Iunij in Conventu Mariampolensi sub presidentia p. Petri Jerzykowicz. In hoc capitulo electus Est praepositus Pater Raymundus Novicki S. T. L. Cuius litterae declarent acceptam Suisse meam resignationem ab officio Commissarij, et constituent novum Commiss. P. C. Spourny, mis sum Romam cum processiculo V. lis Patris Casimiri, et inde Portugaliam cum socio P. Ioanne Niezabitowski."

²⁶ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny of 1778.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, letter of Candide Spourny, 4 [n.d.].

from the Reformed Franciscans at all costs. When he presented his arguments to the Franciscan general, the latter responded, "If you want to obtain confirmation of your Order, you should be directly dependent on the Holy See. The procurator general [of the Marians] will always have to reside in Rome, but you cannot stay in this convent [Ara Coeli] any longer; you must seek refuge elsewhere."²⁸ For Fr. Spourny, this was a providential clue, and he immediately began searching for a suitable place for the foundation. He informed the Father General, "I have set aside urgent and crucial matters that I have been dealing with because an opportunity has arisen to fulfill the demands of the Marians in *hoc Urbe*, which is the head of the world, to have a presence here. I did not hesitate to make efforts with certain cardinals. I dared to approach the Pope with Fr. Secretary [John Niezabitowski] on August 31, 1777, and he entrusted our cause to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. [...] Considering the many churches and the difficulties in obtaining them since none are without a master and ruler, I have chosen two of them as our goals."²⁹ Fr. Spourny's interest was focused on the church of St. Sebastian, which was under the patronage of the Barberini princely family, and the church of St. Thomas, which was under the patronage of the Vatican Chapter. To acquire the latter, Fr. Spourny utilized the protection of Prince Tomaso Antici, an influential diplomat and minister in the service of Poland at the Holy See, with whom he had a personal acquaintance.³⁰

During this time, Fr. Spourny also established friendly relations with Archbishop Carlo Camuccio (Camuzio), through whom, as he wrote, he was "provided with another, even more beautiful place."³¹ Carlo Camuccio, the retired archbishop, lived in the convent attached to the church of St. Vitus.³² After several meetings with the archbishop, Fr. Spourny

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., letter of Candide Spourny of Dec. 15, 1777.

³⁰ J. Fijałkowski, *Antici Tomaso kard.*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 1, col. 643; *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny of Dec. 15, 1777.

³¹ *Listy*, letter of Candide Spourny of Dec. 15, 1777. Carlo Camuccio, also known as Camuzio, was born in Tolmezzo near Udine in 1706. He studied at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and completed his studies in 1726, earning a doctorate in both laws. He was ordained as a priest on July 11, 1729. On October 28, 1756, Pope Benedict XIV consecrated him as a bishop. In 1781, he was appointed as the Patriarch of Antioch. In the Roman Curia, he enjoyed high respect and esteem.

³² The commonly used name was "Church and Monastery of St. Vitus," but its full title was "Church of Saints Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia."

reported: "Knowing and hearing about our efforts, the old man, out of his kindness, made the following statement in front of us: because there is now a church and convent of the Conventual missionary priests [referring to the church of St. Ephrem] available for sale, he would like to assist us in acquiring such a good place."³³ During this time, an offer to purchase the church of St. Vitus for 2,400 scudi also appeared. According to Fr. Spourny, Archbishop Camuccio, who showed interest in the spirituality and history of the Marians, even requested written information about the Marian Order in Poland and expressed his appreciation for their spirituality and charism. He expressed his willingness to provide material assistance in this transaction. It is noted that Archbishop Camuccio had five thousand scudi in cash at a Venetian bank, which he promised to donate to the Marians to support the purchase of the foundation of St. Vitus. Initially, the offer from Archbishop Camuccio appeared advantageous, but it soon became apparent that it was intended to be a bequest (legacy). Under this arrangement, Archbishop Camuccio would receive an annual percentage of the dividends, while the Marians would only be able to benefit from the legacy several years after his death, which, in the end, proved to be entirely unrealistic. Archbishop Camuccio imposed the following conditions on the Marians: After his death, two daily Masses and an annual "anniversary" sung Mass were to be offered in perpetuity for his intentions. Secondly, during his lifetime, he would receive six percent of the sum mentioned above each year, amounting to 300 scudi annually, for his expenses. And thirdly, until the end of his life, he would be ensured decent accommodations and a refectory in the convent, for which he promised a substantial reward in his will. In response to these conditions, Fr. Spourny raised objections. Firstly, he questioned where the Marians would obtain the remaining two thousand scudi to pay the Cistercians for the church and monastery of St. Vitus. Secondly, he expressed concern about the practicalities of fulfilling the requirement of two daily Masses for the benefactor if there were a shortage of Marians in Rome. He also questioned how the Marians would sustain themselves financially if they could not accept intentions for Masses. Thirdly, he doubted their ability to pay six percent annually, equivalent to 300 scudi, from the donated sum.

³³ Ibid., letter of Candide Spourny of Dec. 15, 1777.

Initially, Fr. Spourny expressed serious concerns to the archbishop regarding the feasibility of the proposed transaction. He even believed that the undertaking was unrealistic, and only under Archbishop Camuccio's pressure did he write about it to the superior general. However, after reflecting on the archbishop's proposal, Fr. Spourny began to defend the idea of the purchase, stating that "it is the work of Divine Providence that presents us with such a great benefactor in this initial phase, someone who, for the introduction and establishment of our relatively unknown Institute in Rome and later throughout the entire Italian state, offers such a significant and much-needed sum so generously, something that not many others would easily dare to do."³⁴ In the further part of the letter to the general, Fr. Spourny did not hide his surprise that such a significant donation went to strangers, foreigners, and not to Italians, of whom thousands were willing to receive it. He believed that God's hand must be in this, which cannot be rejected. At the same time, he emphasized that the money invested in the buildings would not accrue interest, but "the good, benefit, and promotion of the Order should be taken into account." He also assured that in the future, there would be even ten priests there, including Italian vocations, and the monastery would be able to sustain itself solely from stipends for Mass intentions. To the Marians in Poland, he explained that they should not be afraid but rather accept the burdens and costs associated with housing and supporting the archbishop, and "this is not for the sake of receiving the generous bequest promised in the will but more for the honor, protection, and interests of the Order, as well as the promotion of the Order in the Apostolic See, where this prelate is highly esteemed and holds great significance."³⁵

For Fr. General Raymond Nowicki, acquiring two thousand scudi, equivalent to about sixteen thousand Polish zlotys, was an insurmountable problem. In this matter, Fr. Spourny also found a solution by explaining that although Marian monasteries were not wealthy and would not willingly contribute a penny to Rome, there were "smaller capital funds in the convents [...] which belong to the entire Order." He proposed to the Father General to withdraw eight thousand zlotys from

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

the capital funds of the Marijampole monastery, which would be equivalent to the value of one thousand scudi, “without unnecessarily referring to or seeking the agreement of the *Capitulum vel Congregationem*.” If this came out, “those less esteemed will criticize such a course of action, but I know that wise *AA. RR. Patres* will approve.”³⁶ Fr. Spourny promised to acquire the second thousand scudi from Roman benefactors he already had in mind. He firmly believed that for the Congregation’s development, “it is necessary for our own Procurator to always reside in Rome.”³⁷ To gain the favor of the Marian superiors, he painted a vision of the institution’s development and the opening of a convent for outsiders. This was to be done for “the happiness of our Order, which we should embrace. We would not be ashamed to admit it, but in part of the convent, although not so spacious, but sufficient for twenty [people] in need, and eventually, with the help of benefactors and their bequests, multiplied perhaps to the point where it would not be cramped or tight even for sixty or more individuals.”³⁸ He convinced the doubters of the excellent location of the church near the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the cardinal palaces, and the very healthy climate in that area. He also informed the general that this was a unique opportunity because acquiring a church in Rome was difficult.³⁹ The Cistercians were only selling it to save their important but declining institution in Constantinople. He also warned the Father General that if the Order did not take advantage of this proposal, which was an opportunity for the development of the Marians, they would “return to their originally intended private little churches, but we will never be able to grow the Order beyond having two or three [religious] there.”⁴⁰

To strengthen the Marians in Rome, Fr. Spourny resorted to various means and methods that were not always in accordance with the Order’s law. Towards the end of 1777, he applied for a title and position as the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Listy*, Father Candide Spourny’s first letter to the superior general of September 1777 [n. d.].

³⁸ *Listy*, Father Candide Spourny’s letter of Dec. 15, 1777.

³⁹ Prot. Rom., letter of Candide Spourny to Father Raymond Nowicki of July 12, 1782. Three years after the establishment of the St. Vitus institution, Candide Spourny, disappointed with the situation in Rome, wrote to the Father General, saying, “I wish I had rather occupied my thoughts with any other nonsense than thinking about a convent in Rome.”

⁴⁰ *Listy*, Father Candide Spourny’s letter of Dec. 15, 1777.

visitorator of the Marians in the Congregation for Religious and Bishops. He also arbitrarily appointed Fr. John Niezabitowski as the secretary of the procurator general, for which he received a reprimand from the Father General. Fr. Spourny explained that it was not for personal ambition, from which he was free, but to handle various matters, as every title held significance for Church officials in Rome. The appointment of Fr. John as his secretary was merely a maneuver. In Rome, no procurator was without a secretary, so Fr. Spourny explained: "I did so to avoid ridicule [...], especially considering that Fr. John lacks qualifications."⁴¹ For his actions, Fr. Spourny sincerely apologized to the general and asked for forgiveness for his arbitrarily made decision. Understanding the situation, the Father General, to strengthen Spourny's position within the Church and the Marian circles, and at his request, decided to announce it "*pro decore Religionis nostra Mariana ad Lauream Doctoratus promoveri*" in a circular letter to his confrères.⁴²

However, acquiring the church of St. Vitus remained at a standstill. The majority of the Congregation still did not understand the necessity of it, especially the significant costs associated with it. Fr. Spourny made various efforts and presented alternative proposals, such as acquiring a church and convent in Naples or the vicinity of Turin. On July 21, 1778, he sent his associate, Fr. John Niezabitowski, to Naples, as he reported in a letter: "My associate has set off for Naples, and from there to Sicily. If we successfully secure the place we have planned, we will need another priest from Poland to be dispatched to Rome."⁴³ Meanwhile, Fr. Niezabitowski, in a letter to the general, justified his actions by stating that he did not see the need to stay in Rome constantly. He expressed his desire to seek opportunities for the "happiness and expansion that I wish for the Order," which led him to travel to the Kingdom of Sicily.⁴⁴ Despite the favorable proposals, Fr. Niezabitowski had to return to Rome because Fr. Spourny had fallen seriously ill. Fearing for his life, he urgently summoned Niezabitowski to his side, especially since the Reformates,

⁴¹ *Listy*, Father Candide Spourny's letter of Dec. 16, 1777.

⁴² *Ibid.*; Cap. Gen., Father Raymond Nowicki's circular letter to all confrères on February 20, 1778.

⁴³ Prot. Rom., Father Candide Spourny's letter to the superior general of Aug. 5, 1778.

⁴⁴ *Listy*, Father John Niezabitowski's letter to the superior general of Oct. 8, 1778.

suspecting him of tuberculosis, had removed him from the Ara Coeli monastery.⁴⁵ During the same period, the general of the Franciscans proposed to the Marians the acquisition of the “little church and convent of St. Ephrem,” which belonged to them. However, the serious issue was the difficulty of obtaining the necessary money for the payment.⁴⁶

After various arduous searches and setbacks, both Fathers concluded in early 1779 that there was no better and more convenient place than the church of St. Vitus, and there would not be in the future.⁴⁷ On February 13, 1779, they wrote letters to the Father General, explaining: “The matter of acquiring the church of St. Ephrem from the Conventuals is complicated due to financial reasons.”⁴⁸ Fr. Spourny had expected that the Reformates would demand a reasonable price out of goodwill. However, the amount they proposed turned out to be impossible to accept. The purchase of the church of St. Vitus was a more advantageous offer because it was a cardinal’s diaconate, and according to privileges, its maintenance was always the responsibility of one of the cardinals, although this was not always fulfilled.⁴⁹ The church of St. Vitus, located in an important and convenient area near the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, was three times larger than the chapel of St. Ephrem. According to John Niezabitowski, it also held the promise of attracting Italian vocations because it was obligated to catechize young men twice a month in four languages: Italian, German, Spanish, and French. This provided an opportunity for direct contact with the

⁴⁵ Ibid. In the letter, John Niezabitowski reported the unpleasant attitude encountered by Candide Spourny from the Reformates during his illness, quoting his words: “When I was near death, the tenacious friars insisted to Father John [Niezabitowski] that he should immediately and necessarily remove me from their presence. Father John, considering that my life was nearing its end, deemed such a transfer unnecessary and delayed it day by day. However, upon receiving news of this inhumane behavior, the lawyer ordered me to be carried to his house in a sedan [...] and brought the best physician.”

⁴⁶ *Listy*, Father John Niezabitowski’s letter to the superior general of Oct. 17, 1778.

⁴⁷ *Listy*, an extensive letter containing serious arguments was dispatched to the superior general on July 15, 1778.

⁴⁸ Prot. Rom., Father Candide Spourny’s letter to the superior general, Father Raymond Nowicki of Feb. 13, 1779 r. The Reformates asked for their small church as much as 7,000 scudi.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Father John Niezabitowski’s letter to the superior general of Feb. 13, 1779. At that time, St. Vitus was a titular church of Cardinal Deacon Andrea Negroni.

youth and also brought tangible benefits.⁵⁰ However, the problem was the lack of proficiency in those languages by both John Niezabitowski and Candide Spourny. Therefore, they had to hire and pay foreign clerical teachers to assist them in the early years. Meanwhile, in Poland, despite the resistance, a thousand scudi had already been collected for the "Roman cause." Unfortunately, they were placed in the possession of Prince August Sułkowski, who, despite numerous urgings, was in no hurry to deliver them. In Rome, Archbishop Camuccio pressed the Marians to make a decision because other interested parties had emerged on the scene, expressing their desire to purchase the same church. On April 9, 1778, he also sent a letter to Fr. Nowicki, urging him to decide on the purchase since "other candidates are pushing forward." He also promised favorable financial arrangements⁵¹ and once again presented advantageous contract terms.⁵² During the General Chapter, which took place on March 29, 1778, in Marijampole, the Father General had already made the decision that all Marian monasteries should contribute in advance, for two years, the tax to the common⁵³ general treasury for the purchase of the monastery and church in Rome.

Many documents and three Chapters (April 1778, September 10, 1778, and April 5-6, 1780) were dedicated to the financial matters related to the acquisition of the property. Since it involved significant sums of money that the Marians did not possess, various guarantees and attestations were necessary. In Rome, on April 29, 1788, Prince August Sułkowski⁵⁴ again took on this legal role. However, he ultimately did not fulfill this

⁵⁰ Ibid., Father Candide Spourny's letter to Father John Niezabitowski of Feb. 13, 1779.

⁵¹ Protocollum, Literat. Jllmi Dni Caroli Archiepiscopi Tarsensis direct. Ad Rev.mum P. Raymondum Nowicki Praep.tum Gn.lem, Roma, Augustus 1778.

⁵² Ibid. Archbishop Camuccio to the Superior General Raymond Nowicki.

⁵³ Cap. Gen. of Apr. 1778. "Collectae ac cassam communem pro duobus annis (excepto Conventus Berezdoviensi, qui pro uno tantum anno debet) resolvere, satagant RR. PP. Praesidentes cumque istiusmodi peculium pro emendo coenobio Romae dispositum sit, idem modo graventur pro bono Congregationis hoc in negotio facilitatem praestare." Cap. gen., 1780/5. „Decidit etiam Ven. Definitorium ac statuit; cum pro emendo coenobio In Alma Urbe Romana ad Sanctam Vitum unum mille scutorum ex communi vassa, et alia duocenta scuda ex pia legatione suprafatae Magnificae Dominae Zajączkowska Romam transmisja non sufficiat [...]."

⁵⁴ Listy, Prince August Sułkowski' letter of guarantee of April 29, 1788. See Prot. Rom. Father John Niezabitowski and later also Father Candide Spourny complained in several letters about the behavior and dishonesty of Prince August Sułkowski.

obligation honestly, despite being friends with Fr. Spourny and a guest at the Marian establishment. On April 30, 1778, a preliminary agreement was concluded and recorded before the official notary.⁵⁵ In Poland, the finances for Rome were handled by Fr. Isidore Taudt, a chaplain to the Czartoryski princes. Efforts were still being made to seek assistance from various benefactors, but since the collected sum was insufficient, a radical step was taken. A loan of one hundred chervontsy (equivalent to two hundred scudi) was taken from the funds collected to reconstruct the burned church and monastery in Skórzec. The Marian chaplains in Powiśle, Służew, Grójec, and Proszów were obligated to repay this money to Skórzec.⁵⁶ Ultimately, by following the documents and Marian accounts, it can be observed that the church of St. Vitus and the monastery owe their establishment, partly, to Archbishop Camuccio, the contributions of the Marians, and the generosity of Marian benefactors in Poland.⁵⁷

Archbishop Camuccio treated the Roman Marians with friendship. Therefore, in July 1778, he decided that if they were to take over the Church of St. Vitus, he would additionally grant them a thousand scudi to establish themselves in Rome. Of course, all the recorded sums were highly interest-bearing legacies, from which the archbishop collected a commission until his death. The Marians had to act quickly yet cautiously and delicately simultaneously. Fr. Spourny wrote, "I must approach him very delicately as an elderly man, fearing that he may lose his affection towards us and change his good intentions and that he may not revoke what he has planned to bestow upon us."⁵⁸ Despite these concerns, everything seemed to go well. The funds were partially secured, the Marians were convinced of the good purchase of the church, and the archbishop remained friendly. On February 25, 1779, the Cistercians received a *breve* from the Apostolic See authorizing the sale of the church and monastery, and the Marians obtained permis-

⁵⁵ Prot. Wet. The notary signed that agreement as "de Nostra Curia Capitalij Notarium publicum, legale, Civilem fede signum [...] Joseph Simonetti."

⁵⁶ Cap. Gen., 1780/6. The necessary sum was obtained from various sources. From Helena Zajączkowska, a noblewoman from Dobrzyn 1,000 Polish zlotys was obtained upon the promise to celebrate each month a Holy Mass for the intention of her parents and herself. See Cap. Gen. of Apr. 1780. From D. Magnuszewski, a judge in Sochaczew, received 3,000 zlotys, see Cap. Gen. of July 1780.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁸ *Listy*, letter of July 4, 1778.

sion to purchase it. ("cum licentia vendendi et alienandi monasterium S. Viti cum adnexa ecclesia").⁵⁹ The Marians were obligated to cover all costs, official fees, legal expenses, and administrative fees towards the Church and civil authorities related to the acquisition of the property.⁶⁰ The challenge remained to overcome the resistance of the religious orders long established in Rome, who defended their rights and acquired privileges and were reluctant to accept the settlement of new religious congregations in the Eternal City. Let us recall the failure of attempts to purchase the church promised to Fr. Wyszyński by Cardinal Caraffa, who, for that very reason, concluded negotiations by saying, "There is a difficulty because in Rome they do not want any more new religious orders."⁶¹ Fr. Spourny also encountered similar opposition. Therefore, from the moment the agreement to purchase the church of St. Vitus was reached on February 25, 1779, until the receipt of papal approval and consent for the canonical establishment of the Marian convent, the Marians engaged in negotiations with representatives of various religious orders for a year and a half. They received assistance in this matter from important patrons, including King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, who, in a letter addressed to Pope Pius VI, recommended their cause and expressed the desire for them to have their headquarters in Rome.⁶² Prince Sapieha, the grand chancellor of Lithuania, also intervened with the nuncio in Warsaw, emphasizing the merits of the Marians and the need for their stability in Rome in a letter addressed to him.⁶³ The person of Archbishop Camuccio played a significant role in this matter. He enjoyed respect and authority in Rome and considered himself a friend of the Poles and the Marians. He remained faithful in providing them with assistance until the end. Fr. Spourny also sought the intercession of Fr. Tomas Antici, an influential minister in the service of Poland at the Holy See, with whom he had a friendly relationship.⁶⁴ Fr. Spourny

⁵⁹ *Bullarium Romanum*, t. VI. pp. 79-80.

⁶⁰ AGM, Conventus Romanus, *Percepta et expensa*, A. D. 1779; see the report on paid fees and expenses under the date of January 1780.

⁶¹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 376, Feb. 16, 1752.

⁶² *Listy*, the superior general's letter of May 6, 1778: "Last month I received a letter from the king..."

⁶³ ASV, Archivio Nunziatura di Varsavia, vol. 131. *Regolari-Lettere*, t. IV, da Mariani a Trinitari, an. 1780.

⁶⁴ *Listy*, letter of Dec. 15, 1777.

also personally knew the nuncio in Warsaw, Giovanni Archetti. Additionally, influenced by Fr. Nowicki, the clergy of the Garwolin deanery sent a letter of recommendation to the Holy See, praising the pastoral work and dedication of the Marians and requesting kindness regarding the Roman establishment.⁶⁵ In the end, the abbot of the Cistercians, who had jurisdiction over the monastery, showed genuine brotherly understanding and goodwill towards the Marians, knowing about their financial difficulties. In the final settlement, which took place at the end of 1778, he agreed that the Marians would only pay 2,400 scudi, the amount the Cistercians had spent on renovating the church and monastery of St. Vitus.⁶⁶

The Acquisition of St. Vitus Church and Monastery

After overcoming all the difficulties, on July 12, 1779, the Marians signed the final agreement with the Cistercians. They provided them with a thousand scudi as a down payment, which, according to the agreement, would be forfeited if the full payment was not made within a year. Two days later, on July 14, the Marians took possession of the monastery and the church.⁶⁷ The due payment was made with a delay in two installments, the first on August 4, 1781, and the second on December 29 of the same year. However, the Cistercians agreed to wait patiently. The monastery and church were in good condition but devoid of furnishings and liturgical vestments. Fr. Spourny dedicated the entire year of 1780 to acquiring the most necessary furniture and everyday items. In a report from 1780 addressed to the Nunciature in Warsaw, Fr. Nowicki wrote

⁶⁵ J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ The financial matters of the St. Vitus convent, managed by the Marian Order, are extremely convoluted. It appears that ultimately, the costs of purchasing the monastery were borne by the Marians from Poland. The 5,000 scudi promised to the Marians by Archbishop Camucio were taken over by Prince August Sułkowski and were never returned to them. See B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p. 60. A different account was given by Father Spourny. See AGM, Dom. rom. *Expensa et percepta*. Other sums also appear in the Polish expenses incurred in Rome. Fathers Julian Koprowski, Felix Hadrawa, Emeric Reubau, Norbert Gołkowski, and John Niezabitowski accused Candide Spourny of extravagance towards guests, especially those from higher spheres, as well as offensive stinginess in the monastery and meals, and also dishonesty. See Prot. Rom., letters, passim.

⁶⁷ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 60-61.

that three religious were residing in the new establishment near the church of St. Vitus. The document also included a request for the formal canonical establishment of the convent.⁶⁸ As a result of these requests and the intercession of various personalities on behalf of the Marians, on August 4, 1780, Pope Pius VI officially approved the religious house at the church of St. Vitus and Modestus and Crescentia through the apostolic *breve Studia et sollicitudines*. The Marians were granted all rights, privileges, graces, and indulgences enjoyed by other Marian monasteries, churches, and residences. They were allowed to administer the sacraments and engage in pastoral and formational activities toward aspiring candidates.⁶⁹ In 1779, three Marian priests were residing in the monastery of St. Vitus: Candide Spourny, John Niezabitowski, and Felix Hadrawa. In the middle of that year, Fr. Niezabitowski traveled to Poland for a year, taking with him an Italian candidate for the Marian novitiate.⁷⁰ At the end of that year, another candidate, Aloisius Bondi, presented himself. He received the Marian habit in the church of St. Vitus, and in March 1780, he began his novitiate in Balsamão, Portugal.⁷¹ After completing his novitiate, Aloisius Bondi returned to Rome and began preparations for his ordination to the priesthood. Within a few months, he received all the minor and major ordinations. With a

⁶⁸ ASV, Arch. Nunz. di Varsavia vol. 127, f. 129r-130r. "Insuper tres sacerdotes resident Romae ad ecclesiam S. Viti, quam obtinuit Ordo Marianorum una cum monasterio RR. PP. Ordinis Cisterciensium et ea propter humillime supplicat praefatus Ordo Illustrissimum ac Excellentissimum Dominum Episcopum Posnaniensem ac alios Illustrissimos Praesules Regni Poloniae, ut per gratiosas forum instantias praefata ecclesia s. Viti una cum monasterio a S. Sede Apostolica pro Ordine PP. Marianorum approbetur ac pro formali conventu declaretur."

⁶⁹ *Bullarium Romanum*, t. VI, pp. 220-221. Pius PP VI, *Ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, Brief "Studia ac sollicitudines" of Aug. 4, 1780. "Dicti monasterii cum omnibus illis adnexis emptionis et venditionis contractum necnon dictam concessionem ecclesiae sanctorum Viti et Modesti cum omnibus et singulis iuribus, privilegiis ac praerogativis [...] auctoritate nostra Apostolica tenore praesentium approbamus et confirmamus... ita ut monasterium praedictorum ac ecclesia Sanctorum Viti et Modesti eidem monasterio adnexa omnibus ac singulis gratis et indultis, quibus aliae domus seu conventus et ecclesia fratrum ordinis praedicti utuntur, fruuntur et gaudent, ac uti, frui et gaudere possunt et poterunt quomodolibet in futurum pari modo ... ac in eadem ecclesia religiosi praedicti omnia divina ministeria peragere, quae ad maiorem Christi fidelium utilitatem ac divini cultus incrementum iuxta memorati ordinis regulas ac institutum spectabunt, libere ac licite possint et valeant auctoritate et tenore praedictis concedimus et indulgemus."

⁷⁰ Prot. Rom., John Niezabitowski's letter to the superior general of Feb. 13, 1779.

⁷¹ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 43.

special dispensation from the Apostolic See⁷², on October 28, 1781, he was ordained a priest in the Marian church of St. Vitus by Archbishop Carlo Camuccio. These were the only ordinations of an Italian Marian in the church of St. Vitus, as other Italian Marians were ordained in Poland. After spending a year with the Marians, Fr. Bondi, with the permission of the Holy See, joined the Benedictine Order in Vallombrosa⁷³ in July 1782.⁷⁴

On September 17, 1780, Fr. Julian Koprowski and Fr. Emeric Reubau arrived at the Marian community in Rome. Besides taking on pastoral responsibilities, they started theological studies at the University of Rome, "La Sapienza," and worked on reforming the Order. However, the situation they found in the monastery filled them with pessimism and even fear, and from the very first day of their stay, they contemplated returning to Poland. Fr. Koprowski described it: "Clothes worn out from the journey, habit as well, shoes in tatters. It's cold and hungry in the monastery, with meager meals, and we don't have a single penny."⁷⁵ He pleaded in letters to the Fr. General to have mercy on him and allow him to return to Poland, but, as Fr. Emeric Reubau suggested, Fr. Spourny intercepted the letters.⁷⁶

The situation in the monastery was tense and oppressive, and on top of that, lawyer Giovanni Alegiani entered into a conflict with Fr. Spourny over financial and personal matters. Fathers Felix Hadrawa, Emeric Reubau, and Julian Koprowski persisted in pleading fervently to leave Rome,⁷⁷ especially Fr. Julian, who felt physically and mentally unwell in

⁷² ASV, Sez. Brevi, Pius VI-1781, Mariani Italiani, f. 248r.

⁷³ B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁴ ASV, Pius VI, 1781- Sez. Brevi 3962, f. 248r; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁵ Prot. Rom., Julian Koprowski's letter to Reverend Pe. Lector of December 20, 1780. His letter is filled with bitterness and accusations against Fr. Spourny: "Everyone here groans, and one would wish to fly back to Poland like a bird because, truly, no one would believe what we endure here. [...] When I arrived with Father Emeric, we spent several nights on the ground without bedding, like dogs, without a table, a bed, or even a stool."

⁷⁶ Ibid., Julian Koprowski's letter to the general of December 23, 1780: "Reverendissimus, please kindly put an end to further quarrels, because we can bear them any longer [...]; either he must be admonished or we ought to receive a mandate [to return to Poland], which should be sent to a lawyer, because the procurator [Father Spourny] won't give it to us."

⁷⁷ Ibid., Felix Hadrawa's letter to the general of September 23, 1780; *ibid.*, letter from Felix Hadrawa to the general of December 23, 1780; *ibid.*, letter of Emeric Reubau to the general of October 21, 1780.

the Roman monastery. "He planned to go to Poland forcibly, begging the Procurator for release from this place [...]. The Procurator extinguished these pleas with a single word."⁷⁸ Unfortunately, he fell seriously ill, and on September 22, 1781, at the age of thirty-two, he passed away.⁷⁹ His death and funeral occurred in the absence of Fr. Spourny, the procurator, who was then in Naples. Severe financial and administrative difficulties related to the burial fell upon two "inexperienced Romans," Fathers Emeric Reubau and Felix Hadrawa, who had only been in Rome for a year. Fr. Julian Koprowski was the first Marian to be buried in the underground crypts of the church of St. Vitus.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, after numerous requests, Fathers Hadrawa and Reubau received permission from the Father General to return to Poland, and on April 16, 1782, they left Rome and the convent of St. Vitus.⁸¹

Fr. Spourny, as the procurator general and superior of the monastery, maintained extensive correspondence and detailed notes regarding the income and expenses of the monastery. Thanks to this, we have a wealth of data concerning the Marians residing in Rome, their tasks, chapels and churches in which they celebrated Mass, and the guests they received at the convent of St. Vitus. From this data, one can infer that Fr. Spourny made efforts to maintain social connections, which, as he explained to the Fr. General, provided an opportunity to establish a strong presence within the Roman community. Among the guests, there were princes, clergy, and bishops. As for the list of celebrated Masses, it includes the churches of St. Bibiana at the Lateran, Santa

⁷⁸ Ibid., Emeric Reubau's letter to Father General. In a letter where Emeric Reubau informed about the situation in the monastery, the death, and burial of Fr. Julian Koprowski, he stated, "Spourny brought the religious to live here, without considering their maintenance. No wonder that some fall ill out of sorrow and torment, while others die. Therefore, [Koprowski], shedding tears, said that if he served as a laborer for a peasant, he would at least receive a shirt, shoes, and food. But serving the Order, this is the reward he receives." Emeric Reubau claimed that the correspondence with the superior was being withheld by Fr. Spourny.

⁷⁹ Ibid., a letter from Emeric Reubau to Father Raymond Nowicki of September 29, 1781. In the letter, he described the illness and death of Fr. Julian Koprowski, listed the costs of the funeral, and described how it unfolded. He asked the Father General to cover the funeral expenses, which they had borrowed money for, justifying it by saying, "We are not able to pay because with Father Felix [Hadrawa], from the two Masses we celebrate each day, we have to support five religious, and it is too heavy a burden."

⁸⁰ *Album mortuorum*, on Sept. 22, 1781; AGM, Domus Romana, Percepta et expensa, a. d. 1781; J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*, p. 28.

⁸¹ Prot. Rom., Candide Spourny's letter to Father Isidore Taudt of 1782.

Maria Maggiore, St. Lawrence, Holy Cross in Jerusalem, Sancta Sanctorum, St. Martin, and even, as recorded by Candide Spourny, twenty-six Masses were celebrated at the crib of Jesus.⁸² He meticulously noted the location of the celebrations and the number of Masses. For example, in January 1780, the Marians celebrated 120 Masses; in other months, the number ranged from 130 to 140.⁸³ This would indicate four or five priests residing in the monastery. In the same year, the account books of the monastery sporadically mention the names of two Marians, members of the St. Vitus convent, Fr. Aloisius Długolecki and Fr. Justin Skrzyński, about whom nothing else is known.⁸⁴ When recording expenses for the kitchen, Spourny mentioned the number of religious and their roles. For example: "In June, expenses were incurred for the kitchen for three priests...," "in August 1781, expenses were incurred for the kitchen for five priests and a sixth one who arrived from Portugal as a cleric (Aloisius Bondi), and a seventh one who was admitted to the novitiate on August 19th," "in November 1781, expenses were incurred for the kitchen for four priests and two clerics." Only three religious are mentioned in the financial report for 1782 and 1783.⁸⁵ Fr. Candide Spourny, criticized by his confrères and in poor health, was preparing to leave Rome. In a letter to Poland, he wrote, "Let the new procurator come quickly because I am sick and weakened. It would be good if he could meet with me. I am preparing to leave for Poland."⁸⁶ Before his departure, thanks to his connections, he obtained a *breve* in the Apostolic See for three years to search for evidence of the sanctity of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński's life and regain his health. The document granted him complete autonomy, subject to penalties reserved by the Holy See in case of any violation.⁸⁷ His successor, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, complained about this in a letter to the Fr. General, stating that he felt helpless in dealing with Fr. Spourny,

⁸² AGM, Dom. Rom., Percepta et expensa, 1780-1783.

⁸³ AGM, Domus Rom., Percepta et ex pensa, passim.

⁸⁴ Aloisius Długolecki, born in 1728, after returning from Rome served in Marijampole. He died on Nov. 11, 1794, and is buried in Marijampole. See *Album zmarłych*, note on Nov. 11, 1794. No information survived about Father Justin Skrzyński. Probably, after departing from Rome, he left the Marian Order.

⁸⁵ AGM, Dom. Rom., Percepta et expensa 1781-1783. In September 1782, Frs. Felix Hadrawa and Emeric Reubau left the Roman house and returned to Poland.

⁸⁶ Prot. Rom., Candide Spourny's letter to Father Isidore Taudt of June 20, 1783.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Aug. 7, 1784.

who had been residing in Venice for several months and was depleting the Order's funds.⁸⁸

The available documents show that, during this time, the Marian house in Rome was slowly developing. Apostolic work was being carried out in Rome and chaplaincies outside of Rome, and a school was being run. However, the Marians in Rome did not feel at home; they felt alienated and uncertain. Foreign priests were hired every two weeks for the mentioned earlier catechism, which had to be delivered in four languages. In his letters, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski complained that, despite the Marians having been in Rome for so many years, they had to hire Carmelites or other monks to hear confessions at the church of St. Vitus because none of the Marians were willing to pass the required exams and obtain permission. "Even Father Jan Niezabitowski, who had obtained a doctorate from 'La Sapienza,' was afraid of the *Examina ad excipiendas confessiones*, and I could not persuade him to take it. He explains that even Fr. Candide did not want to undertake this task and never heard confessions."⁸⁹ In the community at St. Vitus, there were seminarians and occasionally novices who were later sent to Poland for further studies. Both Italian candidates for the Order and ordained priests resisted being sent to monasteries in Poland and Lithuania, citing the severe cold weather in those countries and the significant distance as their reasons.⁹⁰ For example, Fr. Barnabas d'Ancona was not allowed to make his religious profession because he disagreed with going to Poland, fearing that he would jeopardize his health there. Based on this concern, he justified his request and complaint addressed to the Apostolic See.⁹¹ Similarly, Fr. Joseph Sarti "made his solemn religious profession after receiving a rescript from Pope Pius VI, who granted him the grace that he would not be sent beyond the borders of Italy [meaning to Poland]."⁹²

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Aug. 7, 1784.

⁹⁰ ASV, *Memoriali*, vol. 242, f. 257r. Barnaba d'Ancona; *Memoriali*, vol. 244, f. 110, Barnaba d'Ancona „supplica la S. V. ordinare, che sia subitamente messo alla professione, basta, che li concedesse a non andare alla Polonia per la rigidezza del clima dove certamente non li regege la salute.”

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² ASV, Congr. VV. et RR., Sez. Regolari, Maij 1802. Father Joseph Sarti's official letter to His Holiness Pius VI.

When Napoleon occupied Rome in 1798, he ordered all foreigners to leave the city, which meant that the Marians also had to leave the monastery and the church of St. Vitus. The only remaining Marian in Rome was Fr. Joseph Sarti, but the situation he found himself in at the monastery was far from desirable. Several preserved letters from Fr. Joseph Sarti from 1802 and 1803 depict the difficulties and dangers threatening the Church during those republican times. Fr. Sarti complained that the superiors had not transferred any rights or properties to him regarding funds deposited in the bank or the monastery. As a result, he felt like an intruder. Furthermore, he suffered from hunger, cold, and constant threats from various vagrants and republican soldiers. Considering his poor health and weak eyesight, the Congregation for Religious exempted Fr. Joseph Sarti from reciting the breviary and suggested that he could be transferred to another religious order. Shortly after that, it was recommended that the church, monastery, remaining funds, and small garden—all already abandoned—be handed over to the Passionist Sisters, who would care for Fr. Sarti. However, it appears that these suggestions were not implemented, as soon after, a rector moved into the church of St. Vitus, and in 1806, a center for retreats and spiritual exercises was opened in the monastery.⁹³ We also know that in his letter to the Holy Father, Fr. Joseph Sarti requested permission to reside in the monastery of St. Vitus along with his family as a full-fledged resident with rights to the church and monastery and to have control over the modest assets that remained after the Marians.⁹⁴ We do not have any further information about the subsequent fate of this last Italian Marian. There is also a lack of data regarding the number of candidates who wanted to join or joined the Marians in the monastery of St. Vitus. From the Roman letters, it appears that Italians were eager to join the Marians but were not warmly welcomed. Even Archbishop Camucio warned Fr. Spourny about them, stating that “they are *membra mortua*, insane people who, unable to live otherwise, entered the religious order out of poverty.” Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski also had a highly negative opinion of them, saying, “If ever our Order encountered a greater calamity, it was

⁹³ Giovanni Biasotti, *Le diaconie Cardinalizie e la Diaconia S. Viti In Macello*, Roma 1911.

⁹⁴ ASV, Reg. Regularium, vol. 206, Mariani — J. Sarti.

when these Italians were accepted.”⁹⁵ Fr. Norbert Gołkowski informed Fr. General, saying, “I reluctantly accept Italians because if there are more of them, they will take over everything and drive us out. I set two conditions (barriers) that the candidate must bring with him thirty scudi and that he should go to the novitiate in Poland and work as directed by the religious authority.”⁹⁶ In another letter, he requested the Father General, “Do not send [Italians from Poland] because these Italians are not fit for anything except perhaps celebrating Mass.”⁹⁷ From the preserved letters, it is evident that there was a lack of trust, understanding, brotherly kindness, and even basic respect between these two nationalities in the monastery of St. Vitus.

The preserved documents, especially those in the Vatican archives, allow us to determine at least the names of ten Italian Marians who were ordained and underwent some form of formation in the monastery of St. Vitus. The fact that nine out of these ten left the Order while only one, Fr. Joseph Sarti, remained is difficult to explain.⁹⁸ It is possible that Fr. Sarti remained in the Marian community in Rome only because he was unwell and had nowhere else to go. The first to leave the Marians in Rome was Fr. Aloisius Bondi, although he did so for noble reasons, joining the monastic Benedictine community at the Vallombrosa Abbey.⁹⁹ In 1786, Fr. Batta Scarzelli requested secularization, and in 1787, Fr. Domenico Scaravelli did the same.¹⁰⁰ Then, on August 8, 1788, Barnabas of Ancona also applied for secularization and left. He was followed on September 10, 1796, by Augustin Schneider, who wanted to return to his people as a secular priest and thus asked for secularization. On May 3, 1799, Diego Tichi petitioned to be released from the religious habit and

⁹⁵ Prot. Rom., Thaddeus Białowieski's letter to the superior general of March 28, 1786. In the letter he informed the general that the Italians did not observe any discipline. They used to leave the monastery without permission. They used to say with pride: “Io sono Romanus,” I am a Roman, not a Pole. Father Scarzelli, a Marian, twice publicly threatened to kill Białowieski.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Aug. 6, 1785.

⁹⁷ Ibid., letter of Aug. 7, 1784.

⁹⁸ ASV, Congr. VV. et RR. Sez. Regulari, Maij 1802, Padri Mariani; ASV, Memoriali, vol. 205, f. 512r.

⁹⁹ ASV, Pius VI, 1781 — Sez. Brevi, 3962, f. 248r; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰⁰ ASV, Archivio Della s. Penitenziaria Apostolica, vol 2 (M) - 1787.

the monastery.¹⁰¹ All their petitions were granted, and they went to serve in Italian parishes. The Marian documentation does not mention these religious at all. The only information about them came from the records of the Penitentiary.

The monastery of St. Vitus received religious from Poland who were more educated and socially adept. Fr. John Niezabitowski, a doctor of theology and a painter with a refined personal culture, resided there for eighteen years.¹⁰² Apart from Candide Spourny and John Niezabitowski, who were the originators of the Marian monastery there in the 1780s, Fathers Felix Hadrawa, Julian Koprowski, Justyn Skrzyński, Emeric Reuban (Reubau), Aloisius Długolecki and Norbert Gołkowski were also in residence there. We also know the names of the Marians who stayed in Rome in 1793. They were Thaddeus Białowieski, procurator general of the Marian Fathers; Silvester Lechniewicz, procurator general of "Totus Ordinis"; Candide Spourny; Didacus Tichi (an Italian); Valentine Czubernatowicz; and Joseph Sarti (an Italian). The monastery was sustained mainly by stipends from Mass intentions, with approximately fifteen baiocchi received for a single Mass (equivalent to one Polish złoty). Additionally, there was a modest subsidy from chaplaincies and occasional small offerings from the faithful and pilgrims. According to the information provided by the Marians, the cost of food in Rome was at least twice as high as in Poland, making it difficult to sustain themselves solely on the donations received for Mass intentions.

In 1783, a young and energetic Marian, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, was appointed procurator general in Rome. He reluctantly and hesitantly accepted this position. He often referred to his journey to Rome as "condemned to the Marian Siberia."¹⁰³ Upon leaving Rome, Fr. Spourny informed Fr. Isidore Taudt, saying, "Out of the received 136 scudi, I have paid each one, and not a single penny of debt remains."¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, after arriving at the monastery of St. Vitus, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski and Fr. John Niezabitowski calculated the state of the treasury. They found that

¹⁰¹ ASV, Reg. Reg. Vol. 207 — Mariani Italiani; Archivio Della S. Penitenziaria Apostolica, Indici alfabetici dei regolari, vol. 2, 4, Mariani.

¹⁰² I. Galicka, H. Sygietyńska, *Jan Niezabitowski*, PSB, X, p. 99.

¹⁰³ Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Aug. 7, 1784.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Candide Spourny's letter to Isidore Taudt of July 19, 1783.

the monastery's debts amounted to 154 scudi. Additionally, 1,500 Mass intentions remained to be celebrated after Fr. Spourny's departure.¹⁰⁵ For Fr. Aloisius, the financial situation proved extremely complicated, and he wrote desperate letters to the Order's authorities in Poland.¹⁰⁶ The financial difficulties, conflicts with Italian Marian clerics and priests, the immense tasks associated with ongoing beatification processes, and challenging dealings with Archbishop Camuccio and Prince Sułkowski undermined the fragile health of Fr. Norbert Gołkowski. Some support for him came from the kindness of Pope Pius VI (1775-1799), who received him in the papal audience on four separate occasions and, on October 23, made a personal solemn visit to the monastery and the church of St. Vitus. Because this event was extraordinary for the Roman Marians, it is worth providing a longer description of the visit. "The roofs of the church and monastery are completely repaired. As for the cost, I do not know because I left it all to the Pope, having three audiences with him. [...] He visited us at St. Vitus in public form, accompanied by many prelates and Roman princes. He prayed for quite a long time in the church, observed everything, walked everywhere, and asked many questions. Finally, I asked him to order the construction of a school for children since they have nowhere to study. He agreed and chose a place along the monastery, 50 cubits in length and 25 in width. Some materials for it have already been gathered [...]. The whole time, the Pope was with us, all the bells in the public churches were rung, and countless crowds gathered at St. Vitus to witness the spectacle. Numerous secular and religious priests admired the fact that the Pope visited us. [...] From now on, Italy regards us more highly because they have always held us in little regard. [...] In the last days, I had another audience with the Pope and presented him with two memorials."¹⁰⁷ One of the

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Feb. 10, 1784.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Norbert Gołkowski's letters to the superior general of Feb. 10, 1784 and of July 28, 1784.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of August 6, 1785. Upon submitting memorials to the Pope, he received a positive response. In one of the memorials, he requested the Holy Father for the allocation of Masses with specific intentions to the Church of St. Vitus, stating that "we do not have any." He was granted an allocation for three years by the nuns of St. Peter and Marcellinus, "although the nuns resisted strongly, but they couldn't do anything about it." The second memorial was a request for special and extensive indulgences and privileges for the Marians conducting missions in Commonwealth.

memorials concerned a request to grant indulgences to Marian missionaries. Fr. Gołkowski pleaded, "The Marian Fathers, following the custom in Poland, conduct missions wherever requested. They humbly implore Your Holiness to grant indulgences to the faithful who will participate in these missions."¹⁰⁸ In response to this request, the Holy Father granted indulgences "ad perpetuam."¹⁰⁹

However, his support to the Marians did not result in the construction of the promised school, financial assistance, or privileges. This was due to the revolutionary ferment that had reached the Papal State from France and, unfortunately, affected the masses of the clergy as well. The Marian patron, Cardinal of York, informed Fr. Gołkowski about this.¹¹⁰ Another reason for the lack of progress and support was the conflict between Marians of Polish and Italian origin, with the latter hurling various accusations against the Polish Marians. Fr. Gołkowski worked diligently for the Church and the Marian Order but struggled with the Roman climate, conflicts, and difficulties. Since his arrival in Rome, he had been suffering from various health issues, and his condition continuously worsened. In a letter dated August 6, 1785, he wrote to the Father General expressing his immense suffering and the doctors' helplessness. The only solution for him, he believed, was a change of climate and environment, which meant leaving Rome. In the letter, he humbly presented his accomplishments and achievements. "Please forgive me for distancing myself from Rome. Constant illness troubles me greatly. I know that even in my homeland, I will not find heavenly delights but purgatory. I would be glad to return before winter [to Poland] if illness or death does not stop me."¹¹¹ However, he was stopped by a severe and prolonged illness, and he passed away on January 30, 1788.¹¹² Since then, information about the Roman house, its members, and their activities has been

¹⁰⁸ ASV, Sec. Brev., Indulg. Perp., vol. 81, ff. 388-389.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. "Lisdemque Christi fidelibus, qui sacris missionibus a praesentis Fratribus (mariani) peragendis plerumque interfuerint si vere paenitentes, et confessi ac S. Communione refeci pro Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae exaltatione, Principium Christianorum unione, infidelium conversione, et haeresum extirpatione, prout unicuique suggeret devotio pias ad Deum preces effuderint, plenariam una vice durante tempore uniuscuiusque concedimus."

¹¹⁰ Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Feb. 25, 1786.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Norbert Gołkowski to Father General on Aug. 6, 1785.

¹¹² *Albym zmarłych*, note on January 30th.

scarce. Previous correspondence between the Polish Marians and the Roman house was abundant but costly. In 1780, due to the expenses and the "spread of rumors," the General Chapter prohibited writing to Rome without the permission of the Father General or at least the local superior. However, in this case, the letter's content had to be revealed to him.¹¹³ Another reason for the lack of documentation was the death of the distinguished secretary of the Marian Order, Fr. Charles Hondlewski, on April 19, 1787. He recorded all the letters and other documents in the protocol book.¹¹⁴ An obstacle to communication with Rome was also the catastrophic situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: conflicts, wars, partitions, and the Kościuszko Uprising.¹¹⁵ The last known letter from the monastery of St. Vitus, which we have today, dates back to June 14, 1786, and was written by Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski.¹¹⁶ Until 1790, the revenue and expenditure book contained very general remarks regarding the functioning of the monastery and the procurator's office.¹¹⁷ The last note made at the Chapter in 1793 informed the brethren that six priests were currently residing in the Roman house.¹¹⁸

During the Chapter in the Korabiew Forest in July 1785, Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski was elected as the procurator.¹¹⁹ He was one of the most outstanding Marians, who served as the superior general for thirty-four years in exceptionally challenging times. Due to the pressures and requests of Procurator Fr. Norbert Gólkowski, who desired to leave Rome as soon as possible, Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski, along with two Marians of Italian nationality who had completed their studies in Poland and were returning to Rome, left Poland shortly after the Chapter in early September. The journey to Rome, undertaken by hired carriage, took two months due to autumn rains and various unforeseen difficulties. They all arrived

¹¹³ Cap. Gen., 1780/20.

¹¹⁴ See *Album mortuorum*, the note for that day.

¹¹⁵ See the chapter *Religious and Political Situation in Poland in the 18th century*, p. ... and the following.

¹¹⁶ Prot. Rom., Thaddeus Białowieski's letter to the superior general. Noteworthy is the fact that on Sept. 14, 1788, Father Raymond Nowicki, the eminent superior general and advocate of the Marians' presence in Rome, completed his 12-year term in the office of the superior general.

¹¹⁷ Dom. Rom., *Praecepta et expensa*, passim.

¹¹⁸ Prot. Skorc., *Tabella generalis*, a. 1793.

¹¹⁹ Cap. Gen., 1785/22; B. Jakimowicz, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, pp. 53-54; Tadeusz Górski, *Tadeusz Białowieski*, in: Enc. Katol., II Lublin, c. 370; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 129-131, passim.

in Rome on November 10, as reported by Thaddeus Białowieski to the Father General, along with remarks about the challenging material and personnel situation at St. Vitus.¹²⁰ Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski served as the procurator in Rome for six years. In 1793, he was elected as the superior general and subsequently recalled from Rome. The last procurator in Rome was Fr. Silvester Lechniewicz, who held this position from 1791 to 1798¹²¹ until the closure of churches by Napoleon and the expulsion of the Marians from Rome.

There is no letter without a plea to the Father General for immediate financial support, as “the Marians are facing bankruptcy and defamation due to incurred debts.” It should be noted that there were two separate treasuries in the Roman house, the treasury of the Order’s house and the treasury of the procurator general, with the former constantly facing difficulties. Substantial amounts of money were collected for the procurator’s office from Marian monasteries in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This led to dissatisfaction and bitter complaints that “Rome is destroying Marian monasteries in Poland.”¹²² In 1783, the lawyer Alegiani charged Fr. Spourny 577 scudi for conducting the beatification process of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.¹²³ In the financial reports for 1776-1783, Candide Spourny reported that both beatification processes cost the Marians 2,260 scudi.¹²⁴ Giovanni Alegiani also handled other Marians’ matters for which he demanded compensation from Fr. Spourny. This led to a conflict between them and contributed to the recall of Candide Spourny from Rome.

The Marians in Rome sustained themselves through the Mass intentions, often in short supply. They lived modestly, on the brink of poverty, as reported by Fr. Julian Koprowski: “Sometimes we only eat once a day [...], the food is meager, clothes are worn out, including the habit [...], we

¹²⁰ Prot. Rom., letter of Nov. 26, 1785.

¹²¹ Cap. Gen., 1791-1919. “Ex candidatis ad officium Procuratoratus Generalis Romam per vota secreta eligitur, et est electus A. R. P. Silvester Lechniewicz S. T. L.”; J. Vaišnora in his article gives incorrect dates of the procurators’ terms in the office. According to him, Candide Spourny held this office in the years 1776-1782; Norbert Gołkowski in the years 1782-1788; Thaddaues Białowieski in the years 1788-1793, and Silvester Lechniewicz in the years 1793-1798. See J. Vaišnora, *Mariani Romae*, n. 21, p. 28.

¹²² Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski’s letter to the superior general of Aug. 7, 1784.

¹²³ Ibid., Giovanni Alegiani’s letter to the superior general of February 1, 1784.

¹²⁴ AGM, Dom. Rom., Percepta et expensa, an. 1783.

are hungry and cold.”¹²⁵ It should be noted that this was not an isolated complaint. National misunderstandings were also a painful matter. With the arrival of Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, Italian candidates were hindered from entering the Marian Order. No candidate was accepted in the last years of his stay in Rome (1790-1798). Cultural differences and a lack of fluency in the language did not contribute to mutual understanding and closeness. It seems that the Marians felt alienated from the Roman environment. They did not hear confessions either in their church or as hired confessors in the basilicas during pilgrimages because none attempted to pass the examination required for hearing confessions. They hired other religious for catechesis in the church of St. Vitus. Approaching the “Marian Italians” with reservation, they did not prepare a community consisting of at least three Italians, which would have saved the monastery and allowed them to return to it after the end of the Napoleonic campaign and the liberation of Rome.

In summary, it must be stated that the Marians did not fully capitalize on the “Roman opportunity” given to them. An advantage for them was the sincere goodwill of Pope Pius VI, expressed, among other things, by his promise to expand the monastery and finance the construction of a new school building. The support and kindness of the cardinal protector, Henry Stuart, a descendant of the Sobieski family, and the friendly sincerity of Archbishop Carlo Camuccio were also important, despite occasional less diplomatic behaviors and actions towards him by the Marians.

Endeavors for the Beatification of Fathers Stanislaus and Casimir

There have already been many significant works on the beatification processes of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński and Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, describing their development and analyzing the difficulties that arose during their progress. However, when speaking about the Roman fathers, it is important to mention their significant contribution to this

¹²⁵ Prot. Rom., Julian Koprowski, letter to Father Isidore Taudt, Rome Nov. 17, 1780:

crucial work for the Marian Order.¹²⁶ Fr. Casimir Wyszyński tirelessly advocated for the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, the Founder of the Marians, throughout his religious life. Even in Poland, he collected materials about his saintly life and saved his grave and the remains. While in Rome, he familiarized himself with the legal provisions and prepared the instructions for the informative process. He also motivated the Marians to gather testimonies about the Founder, to pray for his beatification, and to initiate the process itself. Fr. Casimir Wyszyński was deeply convinced of the holiness of the Founder and repeatedly emphasized that there would be no development of the Order if the Marians did not initiate the beatification process. He prioritized this idea and consistently worked towards its realization. In that spirit, he wrote these famous words to General Cajetan Wetycki: “Our Founder distinguished himself with holiness, teaching, theological and heroic virtues, the gift of prophecy and miracles [...]. However, we have neglected him so far, and our elders have received their ‘reward’ for this neglect. [...] Various difficulties have arisen for the Congregation due to this neglect. Therefore, the holy Order founded by our Father for the greater honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the much-needed service to the deceased is not flourishing. [...] Please cooperate in the efforts to initiate the process of our Founder and Patriarch so that the Lord God may bless us in the successful exercise of our governance.”¹²⁷

However, seeing that the matter was not progressing in Poland, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński took the energetic initiative and continued the work related to the beatification process, first in Rome and then in Portugal. He portrayed the Founder as a special devotee of the Immaculate and a religious of great holiness. From Portugal, he encouraged General Fr. Cajetan Wetycki to promote the cause of the Founder, who “enjoys a reputation of great holiness in Portugal,” and in Lisbon, there are “his magni veneratores,”¹²⁸ devoted worshippers who obligated Fr. Casimir to develop the biography of the Founder and commission his portrait.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ The primary and comprehensive works that include subject and object bibliographies are *Positio, Papczyński* and *Positio, Wyszyński*.

¹²⁷ Wyszyński, *Stróż*, pp. 166, 227.

¹²⁸ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. LXXXV.

¹²⁹ Wyszyński, *Diariusz*, p. 410. “[The devotees] bestow great graces upon me, to the extent that they even commissioned a painting of our Father Stanislaus. His biography, which I

Under the influence of Fr. Casimir's pressures and dramatic appeals, the General Chapter in 1757 ordered the preservation of the Founder's body, the preparation of a description of his life, and the graces received for the needs of his future beatification.¹³⁰ Two fathers, Norbert Gołkowski and Benedict Hoenig,¹³¹ were also sent to the Coronation Sejm of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski to convince the gathered deputies to support the cause of Fr. Papczyński's beatification. Furthermore, a resolution supporting these efforts was sent to the Apostolic See on December 9, 1764.¹³² On January 1, 1767, Fr. Louis Zapalkiewicz was appointed as the general postulator for the beatification process of Fr. Papczyński.¹³³ From October 2 to 4, 1769, the final session of the process took place, during which Fr. Valentine Czubernatowicz was authorized to deliver the acts of the process to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome.¹³⁴ On April 23, 1770, the acts of the process were handed over to the secretary of the Congregation.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, the lawyer Giovanni Allegiani compiled and submitted the *Informatio*, the *Summarium*, and theses entitled *Animadversiones* for printing.¹³⁶ In 1775, after studying Fr. Papczyński's writings, the Congregation of Rites issued a decree *super scriptis* declaring that nothing in his writings was contrary to faith and morality.¹³⁷ Fr. Raymond Nowicki,

had to compose in Latin due to their strong insistence, was handed over for translation into the Portuguese language." This translation was done by Father J. Teixeira, *Vida de Veneravel Servo de Deos Estanislao de Jesus Maria*, Lisboa 1757, and published at his expense.

¹³⁰ Cap. Gen., 1757/5. "Corpus Pii Fundatoris sub bona custodia et securitate; gratiae divinae conscriptae sive conscribendae sint ad glorificationem huius Fundatoris, in archivo conserventur. Et proces suus pro levatione corporis subsequenter pro beatificatione promoveatur."

¹³¹ The unsuccesfull Marian efforts undertaken in the matter of the process were criticized by Marcin Matuszewicz, the founder of the Marian Order in Raśna. M. Matuszewicz, *Diariusz*, t. 2, p. 623.

¹³² Wzniesienie się ad Curiam Romanam o kanonizację i beatyfikację Stanisława Papczyńskiego [Interpellation at the Roman Curia for the canonization and beatification of Stanislaus Papczyński], in: *Volumina Legum*, t. VII, Petersburg 1860, p. 168, n. 105.

¹³³ Navikevicius, p. 232.

¹³⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 792-793.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 793.

¹³⁶ Responsio ad animadversiones R. P. D. Fidei Promotoris, Super Dubio AT sit signanda Commissio Introductionis Causae In casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur, J. Alegiani- A. Alegiani [ok. 1775 r.]. Responsio ad animadversiones R. P. D. Fidei Promotoris, Super Dubio AT sit signanda Commissio Introductionis Causae In casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur, J. Alegiani- A. Alegiani [ok. 1775 r.].

¹³⁷ *Positio*, Papczyński, p. LXXXVII.

elected as the general of the Order in 1776, was also convinced of the holiness of the Founder and continued the actions initiated by his predecessor, making great efforts for the beatification of Fr. Papczyński. He saw this matter in a broader sense, understanding that all activities and actions undertaken in Rome would also strengthen the position of the Marians, especially during a challenging time when they were separating from the Reformates.

In 1775, the beatification procedure for Fr. Stanislaus was suspended in Rome. Some researchers pointed to economic and political difficulties related to the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the cause. However, the most significant obstacle was the texts in the Apologia and certain documents discovered in the archives of the Piarists, which the Marians were unfamiliar with. These texts portrayed Fr. Stanislaus in an unfavorable light as a rebel and troublemaker who had aroused much hatred towards himself among the Piarists.¹³⁸ The promoter also objected that the process had started too late, from which it could be inferred that the Marians were not entirely convinced of his holiness. Another problem was the lack of eyewitnesses, many of whom had already passed away, and the accusation of not providing all of Fr. Papczyński's writings and documents.¹³⁹ The Marians could not defend the Founder against the allegations and answer the posed questions. Even the lawyer Alegiani, who was leading the case in Rome, could not provide a suitable response to some of the objections raised by the Promoter of the Faith. It is important to note, however, that Poland was in a state of agony and losing its independence at that time, which made it difficult, if not impossible, to search for the necessary documents and send them to Rome.

In Rome, Fr. Candide Spourny was appointed to oversee the beatification processes of the Servants of God, Fr. Stanislaus and Fr. Casimir.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Navikevicius, p. 235; *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 844.

¹³⁹ Z. Proczek, *Śladami Założyciela*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 845-846. The decree of Fr. Raymond Nowicki: "Cum Venerabilium Servorum Dei Stanisłai Papczyński, Ordinis Nostri, Marianis Institutoris et alterius Casimiri Wyszyński maxima Sanctitatis fama, pluribus signis et prodigijs ab Altissimo illustrata constanter ad haec usque nostra tempora increbuerit, Nos totus [...] et mox dictorum Venerabilium Servorum Dei exaltationem procurandam de expresso Sanctae Sedis Apostolicae consensu in Ordine ad Beatificationem construi, et expediri fecimus Processum Iuridicum". See also: Prot. Balsam., p. 207.

This appointment demonstrated the readiness to bear all costs and efforts to bring the beatification process to a successful conclusion ("ad optatum ... finem et effectum"). Fr. Spourny, who was well aware of the difficulties associated with the process, wrote a letter from Rome to Fr. Raymond Nowicki on January 11, 1777, stating that he was making various diligent efforts to resume the case, "resuscitandi causa Ven. Servi Dei Institutoris."¹⁴¹ Above all, he held discussions with Giovanni Alegiani, expressing "the deepest sorrow" on behalf of the Marian Order caused by the unfortunate turn of events in the beatification process of the Venerable Founder. He pressured Alegiani to find any possible way to continue the process. However, after studying the *Animadversiones* prepared by the Promoter of the Faith, he concluded that there was hardly any hope of overcoming the difficulties and refuting the accusations, especially those related to the *Apologia* written by Father Papczyński.¹⁴² Despite this, he sought various possibilities and ways to continue the process. He reached out to Cardinal Protector Bernardino Giraud and the Promoter of the Faith, presenting his arguments. However, their response was negative, and the Founder's beatification process was ultimately suspended.¹⁴³ The Portuguese vicar, Fr. Alexis Fischer, deeply experienced and lamented this fact, expressing his feelings in letters written to Fr. Spourny: "Quo fatum tam infaustum ineffabili poena in animo sentio," as well as to Frs. Raymond Nowicki and Isidore Taudt.¹⁴⁴ He believed that the entire life and work of Fr. Papczyński, his heroic patience, and numerous miracles eloquently testified to his holiness. He saw the lack of eyewitnesses as the only obstacle to the progress of the process. However, he stressed

¹⁴¹ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter of Jan. 11, 1777.

¹⁴² Prot. Wet., f. 103v-104r; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 844-855.

¹⁴³ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter of Jan. 11, 1777 to Father General Raymond Nowicki, in which he concisely retold his conversation with the Promoter of the Faith: "Si Deus misericors Ven. Servum Stanislaum, suum utpote in coelis cohaerem pro exaltatione illius in hoc Mundo et majori sua gloria dignatus fuerit nunc et in posterum [...] Sancitatem Ven. Famuli miraculis comprobare et illustrare, ita ut ipsa voce populi In Polonia beatificaretur, numquid abtacula ex adverso adducta locum et valorem retinebunt? - La riposta del Promotore fu: „Imo semper valebunt in contrarium, nec unquam ulteriorem permissura progressum."

¹⁴⁴ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 850-854. "Porro, quod me ineffabili dolore afficit, est: infausta notitia, quo spes nondetur promovendi processus nostri Venerabilis Fundatoris Stanislai, ex cuius promotione aliquem progressum et prosperitatem nostrae Religionis sperare potuimus, hac deficiente gloria nescio quid dicam." *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter of Oct. 2, 1776 to Father General Raymond Nowicki *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 851.

the need to meticulously preserve all the documents so that when the opportune moment arrived, the process could be brought to a victorious conclusion, of which he was deeply convinced.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, he was right. However, a significant amount of time passed before the beatification process was resumed and successfully concluded with the canonization of Fr. Stanislaus in 2016.

The suspension of the beatification process of Fr. Papczyński in 1775 did not affect the progress of the promising beatification process of Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, which Fr. Spourny and Alegiani continued. The informative processes conducted in Poznań (1775-1776) in the diocese where Fr. Casimir came from, in Miranda — Bragança (1763-1768) where the Balsamão monastery was located, and in Rome (1779) provided hope for a positive outcome of the case.¹⁴⁶ It should be emphasized that these processes required efficient organization of the undertaken actions and significant funds. In the informative process in Miranda, as many as ninety-four witnesses from various locations were examined.¹⁴⁷ Finding witnesses who knew Fr. Casimir from his time in Rome posed a significant challenge for Fr. Spourny, about which he informed Father General with concern.¹⁴⁸ The Promoter of the Faith strongly insisted on obtaining the testimonies of these witnesses, as he believed it was necessary to have a complete picture of Fr. Casimir's life.

Finally, two witnesses were located and examined by virtue of a rescript from the Apostolic See. These witnesses were two Franciscan sacristans who remembered Fr. Casimir from 1751-1753.¹⁴⁹ However, according to the postulator, their testimonies did not bring anything new, as they could not say anything about his fame for holiness,¹⁵⁰ which he enjoyed during his lifetime, especially in Portugal, and after his death. This was a vital asset because many believed in his sainthood

¹⁴⁵ *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 850-854. "Porro, quod me ineffabili dolore afficit, est: infausta notitia, quo spes nondetur promovendi processus nostri Venerabilis Fundatoris Stanislai, ex cuius promotione aliquem progressum et prosperitatem nostrae Religionis sperare potuimus, hac deficiente gloria nescio quid dicam." *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter of Oct. 2, 1776 to Father General Raymond Nowicki *Positio*, Papczyński, p. 851.

¹⁴⁶ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 401-443.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. XCI-XCII, 406-408.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, XCIII; *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letters of Jan. 11, 1777 and May 20, 1778.

¹⁴⁹ *Positio*, Wyszynski, pp. 443-446.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XCIII.

and requested the Holy See declare him a saint.¹⁵¹ Fr. Spourny made persistent efforts in Rome to ensure the progress of the individual stages of the process. At the same time, Fr. Niezabitowski painted three large portraits of Fr. Casimir intended for the cardinals and three smaller ones for their deputies, the persons involved in the process.¹⁵² Thanks to these efforts, on January 15, 1780, Pope Pius VI signed a decree issued by the Congregation of Rites, authorizing the appointment of a commission for the formal introduction of the beatification case of Fr. Casimir to the official forum of the Holy See, known as the apostolic process.¹⁵³ One of the points in the beatification procedure was the conduct of the process *de non cultu*, in which it had to be established that no public cult was given to the Servant of God, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, after his death. Worth quoting is the testimony of a Marian Brother named Bondi, who lived in Balsamão from 1780 to 1781. He testified that there was a private cult, which, although not actively promoted, did not decrease but rather spontaneously continued to grow. In Balsamão, "he saw people of different status coming from distant places to thank the Servant of God for the graces and blessings they received through his intercession."¹⁵⁴

Fr. Spourny organized matters related to the process in Rome with the assistance of Archbishop Carlo Camuccio and, in Bragança, with Fr. Fischer. He was responsible for obtaining permission from the Congregation of Rites and the local bishop and organizing the venue and the people involved, including judges, a promoter, a secretary, and a notary. The Promoter of the Faith ratified the process in 1778, but it was not until September 14, 1782, that Pope Pius VI signed it.¹⁵⁵ After receiving the approving documents, Fr. Spourny, as the general postulator, applied to the Congregation of Rites to request the issuance of a decree for conducting the apostolic process concerning the virtues and miracles of Fr. Casimir, i.e., the process "super virtutibus et miraculis in

¹⁵¹ Petitions in this matter were sent by King August III of Poland, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the bishops of Tarsus, Smolensk, Poznań, Warsaw, Chełm, Bragança, Włodzimierz, Brześć. In addition, superior generals of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Piarists along with many magnates from Poland and other witnesses of his saintly life joined in the request. See *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. 332-347, 490-522.

¹⁵² Prot. Rom., John Niezabitowski's letter to the superior general of Mach 6, 1779.

¹⁵³ ASV, Archives of the Congregation of Rites, Reg. Decr., (1775-1778) f. 158-159.

¹⁵⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. XCV.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

specie.” The Congregation issued the expected decree, which Pope Pius VI approved on April 29, 1780. This led to the opening of the apostolic processes in the dioceses of Bragança and Poznań in the years 1781-1783.¹⁵⁶ There were no legal complications during their conduct, and it seemed that the beatification was within reach. The process in Poznań was concluded on July 21, 1783, sealed, and prepared to be sent to the Congregation of Rites. On September 30, 1783, upon leaving Rome, Fr. Spourny presented a financial statement of the conducted processes. He reported that the processes for the years 1776-1783 cost 2,260 scudi.¹⁵⁷ In September of that year, a new procurator general, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, arrived in Rome but did not bring the process documents with him. According to Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the political and social situation that arose in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the First Partition posed an obstacle. The occupying powers, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, prohibited the export of any documents and money from Poland without their consent.¹⁵⁸ The sealed records were, therefore, deposited in the Archdiocesan Archive in Warsaw with the clause: “Do not open without an explicit order from the Congregation of Rites.” They lay there, forgotten for nearly 200 years.¹⁵⁹ According to the author of *Positio*, for a long time, there was a belief among the Marians that such a process had not taken place at all.¹⁶⁰ It was only by a “criminal case, or rather a happy fault,” that the documents found their way into the hands of the Marians in 1969.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. XCV-XCVI.

¹⁵⁷ AGM, Dom. Rom., Percepta et ex pensa, an. 1783.

¹⁵⁸ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 461.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 462.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Fr. Ladislaus Kwiatkowski, a professor of Church History at the Warsaw Diocesan Seminary, discovered the documents in the archive before the Second World War and, recognizing their value, took them with him. During the war, the diocesan archive, along with all the documents, was destroyed in a fire. After the war, in the 1960s, Fr. Kwiatkowski approached the Marian Order, offering to sell the documents from the process of Fr. Casimir for a substantial sum. The Marians sought guidance from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński on how to proceed. Cardinal Wyszyński did not encourage the purchase of stolen property, so the Marians decided against acquiring the documents. In the meantime, Fr. Kwiatkowski fell seriously ill, and before his death in 1968, he graciously donated the documents to the Marian Order. He passed away on August 31, 1968. See *Kalendarz Liturgiczny Archidiecezji Warszawskiej* [*Liturgical Calendar of the Archdiocese of Warsaw*], Warsaw 1980, p. 288.

Similarly, the process in the diocese of Bragança, which began in September 1783, ended unsuccessfully, and it is unknown if it was completed because the documents never reached Rome. (The process had several stages; here, we refer to the apostolic process.) There were several reasons for this. In 1782, the Portuguese Marians removed Fr. Fischer from his position as vicar, unlawfully elected a Portuguese representative, and separated themselves from unity with the Order in Poland. A year later, Fr. Alexis, the main promoter of the cause for the beatification of Fr. Casimir in Portugal, passed away in Balsamão. During this time, the religious orders in Portugal, influenced by secular and liberal thinking, were experiencing a severe crisis. The influence of Jansenism was visible in Enlightenment circles. In a letter to Rome dated November 29, 1787, Nuncio Carlo Bellisoni warned: "The matters of the religious are being silenced and ignored, and it is unknown how it will all end."¹⁶² A vast number of religious wanted to leave the monasteries and request secularization. There were also financial difficulties. Three Portuguese monasteries were unable to bear the costs of the beatification.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, Poland, torn by wars, weakened by difficult economic conditions, and politically and militarily enslaved, fought primarily for its existence and survival. Similarly, the religious orders, threatened by various limitations and restrictions, struggled to find their place in the new political, social, and religious situation under the rule of Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia.

The conclusion of the apostolic processes "super virtutibus et miraculis in specie" was supposed to be a process conducted in Rome, for which the postulator general, Fr. Spourny, obtained the approval of Pope Pius VI. He prepared the appropriate articles and questions to be presented to the witnesses. According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, this stage of the process did not take place because the documents from Poznań and Bragança did not reach Rome.¹⁶⁴ Despite meticulous searches in the Vatican archives, no trace of the process was found. Due to political

¹⁶² *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 520.

¹⁶³ Vargas, *Memoria*, p. 38. In his letter of January 23, 1783, to the Superior General Fr. Raymond Nowicki, Fr. Alexis Fischer stated that the running of this process seemed impossible to him in view of the significant costs involved and the stipulations for examining witnesses in Poland, Rome, Lisbon and Balsamão.

¹⁶⁴ *Positio*, Wyszyński, pp. XCVI, 486.

and religious events in Poland and Portugal, there was complete silence until 1955. However, it should be emphasized that the veneration of Fr. Casimir, especially in the Marian shrine in Balsamão, remained alive. The belief in his holy life and sanctity continued to attract numerous pilgrims to his tomb.¹⁶⁵ This led to the resumption of the process in 1955, which concluded in 1989 with the declaration of the decree of heroic virtues of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.

Choosing Their Own Path; Separation from the Reformed Franciscans; Work of Father Candide Spourny

“When, by the will and order of the Chapter, I undertook efforts regarding negotiations in Rome for the confirmation of our Order, I consulted on this matter with the lawyer Allegiani, as well as with other wise and supportive men who were favorable towards our Order. They all unanimously advised against seeking confirmation or reaffirmation of the form of dependency on the Minister General of the Order of Observant Franciscans, in which we have remained voluntarily thus far [...]. However, they considered it necessary and highly useful for us to strive for such confirmation through which we would free ourselves from any Reformaté trickery, granting and seeking their authority over us.”¹⁶⁶

The Marians were aware of the burden of dependency on the Reformates, but some believed it had to be that way and saw no other option, while others were intimidated. Fr. Stefan Sydry summarized this dependency: “It was a barrier to free development. The Marians were aware of this and resisted it, but as long as they were weak and few, they could not overcome it.”¹⁶⁷ A few months after arriving in Rome and establishing closer contacts with various Church dignitaries, and after consulting with Roman canonists and analyzing the legal situation of the Marians, who enjoyed the privilege of exemption, Fr. Spourny, with the help of Fr. John Niezabitowski, began laying the groundwork for the Marians’

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. CVI.

¹⁶⁶ *Listy*, Candide Spourny’s letter, 4.

¹⁶⁷ S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 62.

independence from the Reformates. In his correspondence with Fr. Raymond Nowicki, Fr. Spourny informed him that after these consultations, he became convinced that such a degree of dependency was unlawful, and the jurisdiction exercised by the Reformates over the Marians was unfounded. In his letters, he explained the origin of this dependency, the process of its deepening, and its historical development. He included a highly critical analysis and negative assessment of the Marian-Reformat relationship, highlighting its harmfulness to the development of the Marian Order. He pointed out Fr. Joachim Kozłowski as the main culprit of this dependency, who, based on the influence of the Reformates, wanted to become the founder and patriarch of the Marian Order. In his letters to the general, Fr. Spourny listed numerous faults, neglect, and abuses committed by Fr. Joachim. As a conclusion of his arguments, he declared, "There are still many other, besides these evident proofs, that Fr. Joachim unlawfully incorporated our Order into another order, subjected our superiors to their authority, and introduced into the Constitutions the obligation to bring in Franciscan vicars to the Chapter [...]. To the ultimate detriment of our Order and to become the superior again, he brought a friar [Reformat] to the Chapter. He allowed these brethren to corrupt our rule in certain places."¹⁶⁸ He emphasized the necessity of separating from the Reformates and presented a program allowing the Marians to detach themselves from them. He explained that in Rome, canonists expressed their immense surprise at seeing the unlawful dependency of the Marians on the Reformates, explaining that many orders choose the rule of Saint Augustine or Saint Benedict, but there is no legal dependency between them. Therefore, his first task was to make the Marians in Poland aware and "knock it out of their heads and show them that such authority over them was imposed." However, this required the Marian government to approve his activities in Rome and the wide-ranging support of his confrères in conflict with the Reformates. The second task in this matter, as he wrote himself, was, "first of all, to show the friars sharply" that their jurisdiction over the Marians was utterly unfounded and then to prepare solid documentation and "cleanse the Reformates' darnel" from the

¹⁶⁸ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter, 4. See: Cap. Gen 1702/1-5. The first Chapter of the Marians presided over by a Reformat, Fr. Louis Borzewski.

Marian Rule and Constitutions.¹⁶⁹ It was not an easy task, as various obstacles piled up. One significant obstacle was the hostile reaction of some Reformates towards these endeavors. Fr. Spourny harshly assessed this situation, saying, "In some other secretariats, they intentionally, worse than devils, created obstacles for us as much as they could." He further explained, "There, in Rome, upon my arrival with Fr. John, I found various traps prepared by the friars who had arrived before us because they had been informed and warned about our case by their former vicar."¹⁷⁰ He also provides many facts about the extensive and ruthless interference of the Reformates in the life and activities of the Marians. Therefore, in the Congregation for Religious, he requested a "procurator as an authorized representative [...] because my Order still faces various difficulties from their side [the Reformates]."¹⁷¹ The accusations against the Reformates are grave and may seem exaggerated, but John Niezabitowski makes similar accusations in equally strong words in several letters addressed to the Father General. He writes, "How long will we bend under someone else's hammer, murmuring, having clear rights of our Patriarch [the Founder]? It is time to escape from this captivity that has been imposed on us in Poland [unreadable]. Let us not remain silent, for silence is not a virtue there. [...] We should not be afraid of Rome or the greatness of our guardians because the word of one bishop carries more weight than theirs."¹⁷² Similar statements can be found in his other preserved letters.

Fr. Spourny knew that separating from the Franciscans would not be easy or straightforward; indeed, it took ten years to accomplish. He informed Father General that although he received instructions on this matter from Poland, they were insufficient. It was necessary to have the support of all the Marians, so each Marian had to be convinced of this. He advised "gradually and systematically distancing ourselves from the jurisdiction of the friars over us and, by doing so, knocking it out of their heads and showing that we did not request such authority."¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid. John Niezabitowski's letters of Sept. 5 and 14, 1777; see also his letter 3 of Aug. 16, 1777.

¹⁷³ Ibid. Candide Spourny's letter 4. Also see similar allegations against the Reformates and

Fr. Spourny advised appointing people with appropriate qualifications to positions, following the example of other orders, and revising the Rule and Constitutions so that there would be nothing unworthy, harmful, or unnecessary for the Marians. From the correspondence of Fr. Spourny and Fr. Niezabitowski, it is evident that they encountered various difficulties in their activities, unjust accusations, and false interpretations of historical facts. To defend against them, Fr. Spourny, relying on documents from the time of Fr. Papczyński, composed a small booklet titled “suo stylo debito ad eundem effectum supplicem libellum,” in which he did not mention any “aggregation undertaken by Father Joachim.” He sent this booklet to the Holy Father, several congregations, and the Nunciature in Warsaw.¹⁷⁴ However, it turned out that the Reformates had preempted him and presented their position and point of view on the matter to the congregations. In response, the Congregation for Religious demanded documents from the Marians, namely the Rule, Constitutions, and all approvals. After analyzing the submitted documents, it was noted that “almost on every page, some form of authority of the friars over the Marians is visible.”¹⁷⁵ Fr. Spourny, concerned with such an opinion, went to the procurator general of the Reformates. However, the procurator further heightened his concern by convincing him that “beyond any doubt, the confirmation of the entire authority used by the friars over us will occur,” which, as interpreted by Fr. Spourny, meant “eternal subjugation, as long as the Order would exist, in the captivity that the friars desired to have over us. Then we would have to pay them annual dues and maintain their provinces.”¹⁷⁶ In defense of his position, Fr. Spourny embraced a fundamental truth presented in various circumstances: “Our Order, from its very beginning, has not known [...] any subordination and dependence on individuals in the Seraphic Order. [...] For the Venerable Father, our Order was established to be different from the Seraphic Order, whose Rule, Constitutions, purpose, attire, and obligations are different [...].

Fr. Joachim proffered in Poland in regards to the “Rostkavian dispersion.” The allegations call Fr. Joachim “a traitor who sold the Marians to the Reformates.” Doc. Vilnen., F4-A 166 (loose), fasc. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Candide Spourny's letter 4.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

We must always adhere to this foundation, according to the Venerable Founder. It was only about brotherhood, a special association with the Seraphic Order.”¹⁷⁷ With such a defense strategy and conviction, Fr. Spourny also approached the general of the Franciscans with a request for his intervention and assistance in overcoming the mounting difficulties. During the requested audience, he tried to convince the general that the Marians were truly an autonomous order, with their Most Reverend General Superior. He also wrote about it, stating, “I listed for him the officials, vicars, procurators, assistants, and other dignitaries in our Order, as well as twelve convents in addition to numerous residences.”¹⁷⁸ In the above presentation of the Marians, Fr. Spourny employed a tactic of exaggeration, which he would often resort to to fulfill his strong desire to detach the Marians from the Franciscan Observants, commonly known as the Reformates. It turned out that the general was not familiar with the situation of the Marians and their affiliations. After an “in-depth conversation and examination,” he expressed his surprise, questioning why and “how the Marians, being a fully-fledged order, had joined the Seraphic Order.” Following this meeting, both sides sought effective clarification and justification within their respective curias to support their positions, thus delaying a confrontation between them.

During this time, Fr. Spourny continued his efforts to obtain the confirmation of the Order, as instructed by his own General Chapter, as mentioned earlier. This action was necessary because one of the main objections raised by opponents of the Marians was that the Order had only been approved by a papal nuncio. Therefore, the Marians did not possess the privilege of confirmation through a papal bull, which carried a higher legal status. However, obtaining confirmation through a papal bull was associated with high costs, as Fr. Spourny wrote: “[We] would hardly be able to afford this Bull with our resources.”¹⁷⁹ Because of this, he believed that confirmation in the form of a papal *breve* would suffice, and he pursued this option. The new procurator, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski, also confirmed in a letter to Fr. Raymond Nowicki that the cost for a confirmatory bull for the Order was 150 scudi to be paid to

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Candide Spourny’s letter 3; cf. John Niezabitowski’s letter 4.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Candide Spourny’s letter, 4, conclusion.

the Congregation for Bishops and Religious. For a *breve*, it was only 50 scudi.¹⁸⁰

Regarding the confirmation of the Order, which was a necessary step towards becoming independent from the Reformates, Father Spourny once again approached the general of the Franciscans and asked for guidance, referring to their previous conversation. The general presented him with the conditions that needed to be fulfilled "to obtain the confirmation of the Order." First and foremost, the Marians should seek direct subordination to the Holy See; their procurator must permanently reside in Rome, and the Marians residing in Rome cannot live in a Franciscan monastery but should find their independent residence.¹⁸¹ After this consultation, Fr. Spourny went to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious, where he was informed that to address the presented matter, it was necessary to provide information from the papal nuncio in Poland regarding the Order, its status, incorporation with the Reformates, whether it was voluntary or forced, and the reasons behind it. Unfortunately, providing clarifications, interventions, and responses to the submitted requests took months, prolonging the waiting for a favorable conclusion into years. Seeing these difficulties, Fr. Spourny proposed to the Marian general, Fr. Raymond Nowicki, a path of *fait accompli* and a gentle, quiet departure from the Reformates. First, he suggested that for the upcoming General Chapter in 1779, they should not request a Reformat to serve as the presiding vicar but instead approach the closest canon or dean.¹⁸² It was a bold step because, based on the decrees

¹⁸⁰ Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Sept. 17, 1785. In the letter dated February 25, 1786, he says: "I earnestly request, for the love of God, the religious life, and our neighbor, that Reverendissimus promptly seeks funds according to the previous correspondence, as follows: 150 for the Bull and 50 scudi for the Breve, so that I can export them myself."

¹⁸¹ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter, 4.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, Candide Spourny's letter, 9. Fr. Spourny even provided the names of four religious who could potentially be entrusted with the role of president. In this extensive letter, he also proposed the course of the chapter according to the one "that took place in other religious orders." If the father general agrees, Fr. Spourny promised to personally handle all the formalities with the nuncio. Prot. Rom., Candide Spourny's letter to the superior general of Feb. 13, 1779. In that letter, Fr. Spourny explained in detail to the father general the method of gradually separating from the Reformates. He suggested starting by discussing with the authorities of their province in Poland and proposing that they voluntarily renounce this incorporation. If this approach fails, he recommended trying to utilize the Nunciature in Warsaw for this purpose, without revealing the specific details of their dependency.

regarding the incorporation of the Marians into the Reformates, the Reformat vicar would convene, preside over, and approve the Marian General Chapter.¹⁸³ Fr. Spourny discussed this matter with Fr. Nowicki, especially with the papal nuncio in Warsaw, Giovanni Archetti, with whom he had a good relationship.¹⁸⁴ The papal nuncio, not wanting to enter into conflict with the law and the Reformat, issued a letter on June 17, 1779, relieving the Marian of the obligation to convene the Chapter and extending Fr. Nowicki's term for the next three years. He justified his decision based on the difficult financial situation of the Marians, the complicated political and social circumstances, and the threats that had arisen in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and culminated in its first partition.¹⁸⁵ Another critical step in distancing themselves from the Reformates was the independent decision made by the Marian Chapter on October 1, 1780, to relinquish the obligation of using the Franciscan cord with their habit. Referring to the original Constitutions, known as the *Norma Vitae*, the Chapter obligated the Marians to wear a white woolen belt instead of the cord.¹⁸⁶ In this matter, Fr. Nowicki sent a special letter to his confrères, announcing the detailed changes in how Marians dressed. He concluded the letter with a strong appeal: "We command the strict execution and adherence to this order. Composed and united externally, you will be internally strong in what is important for monastic life. Therefore, let the local superiors ensure uniformity in

¹⁸³ Prot. Ord., "Inkorporacja do Zakonu Serafickiego" [Incorporation into the Seraphic Order], pp. 63-64; The Minister General of the Reformates convenes a Chapter in Goźlin in 1728 and appoints Father Anthony Rudzieński as the visitator and vicar, granting him the authority "to canonically visit, admonish and punish the erring, initiate legal proceedings, imprison, deprive of freedom, render judgments, and everything else [...]. We recommend to the fathers and brothers [...] under the penalty of a greater excommunication for any acts of disobedience [towards him]."

¹⁸⁴ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter, 9; also see S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, p. 94.

¹⁸⁵ Cap. Gen. "Prorogatio officii Praepositurae p. R. Nowicki. "Verum cum ob. penuriam temporum, et angustiam aerarii Congregationis, expensae propter conductionem Commissari ad praesidendum inevitabiles erogari nequeant, aliasque propter rationes In eodem supplici libello fusius expressas, celebratio eiusmodi capituli sit difficilis [...]. Nos celebrationem dicti capituli ad tres annos deferimus."

¹⁸⁶ Cap. Gen., 1780/18. "Prohibuit etiam serio Ven. Definitorium, quatenus non praesumant abhinc amplius religiosi nostri portare coronam Decem Beneplacitorum B. V. Mariae in funiculis cerulei coloris sicut usque hodie compertum est. Cassavit itaque illam inconvenientem coronam, neve amplius In talibus compareant, omnino proscriptis."

attire.”¹⁸⁷ After prior consultations between Fr. Spourny and Fr. Nowicki, the same Chapter, citing the decree of Pope Pius VI from December 15, 1779, without informing the Reformates, ordered all Marians to use the reformed breviary and Roman Missal instead of the Franciscan ones.¹⁸⁸ Another important matter conducted without informing the Reformates was acquiring the church and monastery of St. Vitus in Rome. In the letters, they committed to not telling the Reformates and not disclosing the negotiations with the Cistercians out of fear that they would interfere and either take over the church themselves or persuade the benefactor, Archbishop Camuccio, to redirect his donation to them.¹⁸⁹ The Reformates blocked the establishment of the Marian general procurator in Rome, as they unilaterally decided that all matters concerning the Marian Order would be handled by the Reformato procurator, and they attempted to impose such a resolution on the Marians. Although Fr. Wyszynski held the position of procurator in Rome from 1751 to 1753, it was a temporary office related explicitly to handling a specific matter. It was only through Fr. Spourny's relentless pressure on Fr. General Nowicki that the Marians established a permanent procurator's office¹⁹⁰ in Rome in 1779, following the opening of the St. Vitus monastery. This procuratorate and the general postulator's office functioned until the Marians left Rome in 1798. Thanks to Fr. Spourny's efforts, Pope Pius VI, through the bull *Studia ac sollicitudine* issued on August 4, 1780, approved the Marian foundation in Rome and granted them privileges and broad pastoral rights.¹⁹¹

During this time, John Niezabitowski from Rome informed Fr. Nowicki about the efforts of religious orders to take over the confiscated

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., letter of Father General Raymond Nowicki of Dec. 12, 1781, pp. 427-428. “Revo-cando in memoriam punctum Primus ex decretis convocatione anni proxime elapsi 1780, die 1 Octobri in Conventu Corab., [...] celebrata latum ac sancitum, ut religisi Ordinis nostri conformando se prostinis Constitutionibus non horda, sed cingulo ex lana, aut filis confectis, non tamen ex serico sese praecingant. Quod quidem punctum si pro festo Immaculatae Conceptionis anno elapso non suum (iuxta mentem Venerabilis Assessorii sortitus usu) effectum, ob. certas scilicet id contigisse causas ac rationes.”

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1780/1.

¹⁸⁹ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter, 13 of May 6, 1778; John Niezabitowski's letter, 5.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Candide Spourny's letter, 4. “It is necessary for our own procurator to always reside in Rome, in case we could directly depend on the Holy See. In order to expect such dependence in the future, we must first refrain from inviting those friars to visit us.”

¹⁹¹ *Bullarium Romanum*, t. VI, pp. 220-221.



Church in Wołpa.



Cemetery chapel in Wołpa.

monasteries and properties of the Jesuits in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He encouraged Fr. Nowicki, stating that if others could strive to take them over, why couldn't the Marians do the same? However, he asked Fr. Nowicki to keep it a secret due to concerns about the Reformates since their supervision was widespread.¹⁹² Fr. Spourny and the general administration in Poland also worked on this potential possibility. In this matter, they were supported by Bishop Józef Kossakowski of Livonia, who was friendly with the Marians. In response to their efforts and as a sign of respect for their apostolic spirit, he founded two monasteries on his estates, one in Wolpa and another in Janów in Lithuania. In a letter to Fr. Nowicki, Bishop Kossakowski wrote: "I offer to the esteemed Order, within my diocese, three principal residences and the remaining funds, previously belonging to the Jesuit Fathers. The obligations include teaching in schools and missions. With adequate provisions for everything, as soon as I receive authentic information about the approved regulations of these obligations [...], I solemnly promise to assist and serve the Order at any time[...]"¹⁹³ Unfortunately, this grant could not be realized. It was hindered by the difficult situation in the country, the increasing chaos, revolutionary turmoil emanating from France, anti-Church trends, and the progressive decay of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, culminating in the final partition in 1795.

Fr. Spourny dedicated the most time to separating from the Reformates. He prepared the necessary documents, explained to the Marians the unlawfulness and harmfulness of this relationship, and pointed out to the Reformates their usurpation and the imposed, strict observance of the religious order. "A cruel simplicity and severity have also crept into us [...], some understand that it was necessary to scold, distress, and inflict all kinds of lowest grievances on young religious, and they called it monastic observance, but in fact, it is only wickedness and despotism."¹⁹⁴ Fr. Spourny assured the general he would handle everything slowly and systematically in Rome if the general consented and the Marians in

¹⁹² *Listy*, John Niezabitowski's letter of 1778 to Fr. Raymond Nowicki.

¹⁹³ AGM, S. Sydry, *Odpisy* I, letter of Józef Kazimierz Kossakowski of Sept. 1782 to the superior general of the Marians, Raymond Nowicki.

¹⁹⁴ *Listy*, Candide Spourny's letter, 9, of July 15, 1778.

Poland accepted his actions. He also pleaded with him not to seek advice from anyone on this matter, “not to engage in any new deliberations [...], as what has been arranged here, Honourable Fathers will not change.” He informed him that everything was already prepared because “last month [June 1778] I handed over our Rule and Constitutions, revised and reduced to their original form, reviewed and approved by the consultors of the Congregation for Rites.”¹⁹⁵ Thanks to his efforts, both the Constitutions and the *Rule of the Ten Virtues* were published in Rome in 1778.¹⁹⁶ Concise information about the beginnings, development, and current state of the Congregation accompanied the printed Rule.¹⁹⁷ Fr. Spourny encouraged the general to have the revised Constitutions printed in Poland and assured him that he would clarify any changes and doubts in a detailed letter so that he would not have any “hesitations or scruples.”¹⁹⁸ He also asked the general to keep the matter confidential until the Congregation issued an appropriate approving rescript, which he believed would happen soon¹⁹⁹ because even though the enemies were watchful, “secretum est anima omnium negotiorum.” He wrote that he would be happy if the Congregation for Rites issued a rescript of approval. If the documents were sent to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious, he expected “enough mortification for myself [...]”. Therefore, I ask for our shared reliance on God’s help in this matter.”²⁰⁰ However, further difficulties and opposition from various individuals continued to arise. Ultimately, Fr. Spourny did not receive the desired rescript. It took a long time before it was finally obtained. Before that, they had to overcome numerous difficult legal obstacles and refute var-

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. “... reduced to their original form” means to be “cleansed from the weeds sown by the Reformates,” as Fr. Candidt used to write. All additions introduced to those documents by Frs. Joachim Kozłowski, Bonaventure Klein and Manuseto Leporini were removed.

¹⁹⁶ *Regula Imitationis Decem Beneplacitorum seu Decem Virtutum B. Virginis Mariae Congregationis sub titulo eiusdem Immaculae Conceptionis-Quam Clerici Regulares Mariani nuncupati, Defunctorum et Parachorum In cura animarum Suffragatores - approbante et confirmante Fel. Rec. Innocentio PP. XII et XIII - solemniter profitentur*, Romae 1778, XXIII: *Statuta Congregationis sub titulo Immaculae Conc. B. Virginis* [...], Romae 1778, XXVIII.

¹⁹⁷ *Brevis informatio de origine, et statu Congregationis Clericorum Regularium Marianorum*, in: *Regula Imitationis Decem Beneplacitorum* [...] B. V. Mariae, Romae 1778, pp. V-VI.

¹⁹⁸ Listy, Candide Spourny’s letter, 9, of July 15, 1778.

¹⁹⁹ Prot. Rom., Candide Spourny’s letters to the superior general of Feb. 13, 1779 and of March 17, 1779.

²⁰⁰ Candide Spourny’s letters to the superior general of July 15, 1778.

ious accusations. The Congregation for Religious and the Congregation of the Council of Trent were involved in resolving this issue, and it was not until 1787 that it reached a successful conclusion.

Fr. Spourny's position was unequivocally and decisively unfavorable towards the issue of dependence on the Reformates. It seems that even the general himself was concerned about the strong invectives directed by Fr. Spourny towards the Reformates, as well as the changes in the Constitutions, which were likely not so much proposed by Fr. Spourny as already developed and presented by him to the congregations for acceptance. In several letters to the general, Fr Spourny reassures him, but in a letter dated July 17, 1778, he urges him to take action: "I am waiting for a clear decision [unclear expression], as until now, in this matter, I have not received a decisive resolution from Rev. Padre."²⁰¹ He also insists that the general make an essential and final decision and write a letter to the general of the Franciscans, thanking him for his "kindness" and the sending of vicars and stating "that we no longer need them." Alternatively, if the general gives Fr. Spourny clear authorization, he will, as he writes, "in the name of our Order, appropriately thank him"²⁰² [...], as we are already in a state where we can walk on our own and therefore do not need a nursemaid, nor a nanny, I must thank the general of the Reformates for the protection he has shown over us."²⁰³ It might seem that the separation from the Reformates was just a matter of time, that all that was needed was to express gratitude and remove the vicars. However, even if some actions and solutions regarding the incorporation into the Reformates had been carried out with some legal manipulation, they were approved by the Holy See, the general minister of the Reformates, and the Nunciature in Warsaw. They could not be invalidated solely based on a rejection decision. The necessity to refer this matter to the Congregation for Bishops and Religious indicated its significance and the requirement for a normal canonical process. The Congregation instructed the Apostolic Nunciature in Warsaw requesting information about the Marian Order, its legal status, and activities.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., Candide Spourny's letter, 4.

²⁰⁴ ASV, S. C. Vescovi e Regolari, Posizioni, Sez. Regolari, Mariani 1789.

Upon the nuncio's request, many bishops, deans, and laypersons submitted their opinions about the Marian Order, which the nuncio informed the Holy See about. He issued a favorable statement about the Marian Order, "They receive recognition for their work, the evidence of which has been sent to me by the Primate as well as almost all the Polish bishops, especially many deans. I am enclosing the copies for Your Eminence. The religious works to which this Institute dedicates itself consist of pastoral assistance through preaching the Word of God and hearing confessions whenever called upon. They provide spiritual edification to the faithful through their good way of life."²⁰⁵ In this situation, Fr. Spourny sought support from the Polish king, the nuncio, and sympathetic bishops. He urged the general to make similar efforts in Poland. According to available sources, on September 11, 1779, King Stanislaus Augustus sent a letter to the Holy Father, requesting his kindness and the independence of the Marian Order from the Reformates.²⁰⁶

Father Norbert Gołkowski as the Superior and Procurator General

In September 1783, Fr. Norbert Gołkowski arrived in Rome as the procurator general of the Marian Order.²⁰⁷ On March 25, 1781, General Nowicki appointed him as the postulator of the cause of the Founder.²⁰⁸ In Rome, Fr. Gołkowski handled the beatification processes of the Servants of God, Fr. Papczyński and Fr. Wyszyński. He was also involved in the process that aimed to invalidate the incorporation with the Reformates. According to Fr. Boleslaus Jakimowicz, Fr. Spourny "due to his impulsive character, caused a misunderstanding on financial grounds with the lawyer [Fr. Giovanni Allegiani], who was handling the beatification

²⁰⁵ ASV, Arch. N. Varsaviae, vol. 76, f. 2r. 12 jan., 1781.

²⁰⁶ Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of Feb. 25, 1786: "Our monarch [King Stanislaus Poniatowski] wrote to the Pope on our behalf, asking him to graciously include us in his favor"; S. Sydry, O. *Stanisław*, p. 279; A. W. *Marianie* in: Enc. Kości., vol. XIII, pp. 536-542; Henryk Gapski, *Mecenat nad Marianami*, p. 66, also wrote about the support of the king in the matter of granting the Marian Order the right to autonomy.

²⁰⁷ *Positio*, Wyszyński, p. 461.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

matters, and had to leave.”²⁰⁹ Growing misunderstandings with the Marian community of St. Vitus and conflicts with Archbishop Camucci also influenced his departure. Before leaving Rome, in a letter to the general for the first time, he expressed his dissatisfaction regarding the taking over St. Vitus, stating that this decision was “an ill-considered nonsense that does not serve the development of the Marians, neither in Rome nor in Poland, and the significant expenses incurred in maintaining St. Vitus are ruining Marian monasteries in Poland.”²¹⁰ This is surprising, as Fr. Spourny was the leading advocate for acquiring that institution. Fr. Spourny left Rome and went to Poland. He returned to the St. Vitus monastery with the permission of the Holy See in 1790²¹¹ but did not hold any position there anymore.²¹² Fr. Gołkowski, a zealous Marian, completed the work on the Constitutions, taking into account the resolutions of the General Chapters, despite the mentioned earlier fact that the Constitutions and Rule, revised by Fr. Spourny and approved by the consultors, were sent to the Congregation for Religious for further consultation. Fr. Gołkowski also continued the negotiations initiated by Fr. Spourny regarding attaining legal independence from the Reformat Order. A significant milestone on this path was the appointment of a cardinal protector for the Marians. This fulfilled the Founder’s idea that the Marians would have their cardinal protector appointed by the Pope at the request of the superiors.²¹³ After the incorporation into the Reformat Order, this was not possible because, contrary to the wishes

²⁰⁹ B. Jakimowicz, *Ojciec Aleksy Fischer*, p. 59. He informed Father General Nowicki about his preparations to leave Rome and the difficulties encountered there. Prot. Rom., a letter of July 12, 1782 and a letter to Father Isidore Taudt of Aug. 24, 1782.

²¹⁰ Prot. Rom., Candide Spourny’s letter of July 12, 1782 to the superior general. Father Spourny voiced a similar opinion in several other letters. His frustrations contributed to the rise of interpersonal conflicts in the monastery of St. Vitus. In July 1782, Father Aloisius Długolecki, OIC, moved to the Benedictine Fathers for a trial period with the intention of joining them. Two Marians, Father Felix Hadrawa and Father Emeric Reubau, were to leave Rome in September of the same year.

²¹¹ B. Jakimowicz, *Ojciec Aleksy Fischer*, p. 59; Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski’s letter of Feb. 10, 1784 to the superior general.

²¹² Prot. Conv. Corab., *Tabella generalis* 1793.

²¹³ *Reguła dziesięciu cnót NMP* [The Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary], IV: “The Superiors are bound to ask the Holy Father for one of the cardinals of the Roman Church to be Protector of this Order. The members will owe obedience and reverence to him, and will be subject to the Apostolic See, to the Roman Church.”

of the Marians, this postulate was changed by the introduction of the following directive: "The Congregation [not the Order] should have the same cardinal protector as the Seraphic Order."²¹⁴ Fr. Spourny believed that this change had been introduced to keep the Marians unknown in Rome, without any support or assistance in their affairs, and to prevent them from "obtaining anything that would displease the friars."

After submitting a request to the Holy Father to appoint a cardinal protector, Pope Pius VI, through a rescript on September 24, 1784, appointed Cardinal Henry Stuart of York to this position. Cardinal Stuart was a great-grandson of King John Sobieski and a highly influential figure in the Apostolic Curia.²¹⁵ Fr. General Nowicki joyfully informed all his brethren by letter: "Beloved Fathers and Brothers, the Holy Father bestowed upon us a special grace when on September 24th of the previous year, he chose for our Order the Protector His Most Eminent Henry Duke of York, Cardinal and Bishop, Vice Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church [...] We received an authentic rescript informing us of this election."²¹⁶ Also, on behalf of the entire Order, invoking chapter IV of the *Rule*, which commanded the Marians: "Let all members show respect and obedience to this dignitary [protector],"²¹⁷ they expressed obligatory respect and declared their submission to the cardinal.²¹⁸ On

²¹⁴ Constitutions, 1723, IX/3.

²¹⁵ Henry Benedict Stuart of York, born on March 6, 1725, in Rome, was the son of James Francis Stuart and Maria Clementina Sobieska. He held a highly influential position in the Roman Curia. On June 30, he received the tonsure and entered the clergy, and just four days later, on July 3, he became a cardinal. He maintained the title of cardinal for 60 years, the longest in the history of the Church. His father bestowed upon him the title of Duke of York. He claimed the thrones of England and Scotland as Henry IX. From 1763 to 1807, he served as the head of the Apostolic Chancery, and from 1803 to 1807, he was the dean of the College of Cardinals. He passed away in 1807 in Frascati and was buried in the underground chambers of the Vatican Basilica. The selection of this cardinal as the protector of the Marian Order was a significant achievement.

²¹⁶ Cap. Gen., p. 461. It contains Fr. Nowicki's letter and the copy of the following rescript: "Dominus Noster dignatus est eligere et destinare in Protectorem Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis B. V. Mariae Dominum Cardinalem Ducem De York, habet hoc Nuntium, seu notitiam Pater Praepositus Generalis huius Congregationis, ut conscius sit huius enuntiatae Pontificiae dispositionis."

²¹⁷ *The Rule of the Ten Virtues*, IV.

²¹⁸ Cap. Gen., *Litterae pastorales*, p. 461. "Nos itaque tanta (Divina disponente utique Providentia) donati gratia condignam reprehendere cupientes vicem, Litteris Nostris Praelaudatum Serenissimum Protectorem nostrum appellavimus, submissionemque nomine totius Ordinis nostri (ad praescriptam Regulae nostrae Cap. 4 depraestanda eidem Serenissimo Protectori nostro debitae reverentia ac oboedientia) exhibuimus."

July 16, 1785, the cardinal protector arrived at the St. Vitus monastery, where he was received with due honors according to the prescribed ceremonial. Afterward, he celebrated a solemn sung Mass and "seated on a throne, took the Marian Order under his protection, while the Roman Marians, on behalf of the Order, paid him proper homage and declared their obedience."²¹⁹ On this occasion, the cardinal addressed a friendly pastoral letter to the Marians, in which he mentioned his ancestor and devoted patron of the Marians, King John Sobieski. He stated that he accepted this new responsibility out of respect for his great-grandfather's memory and sympathy for the Polish people. In the letter, he mentioned the Marian Founder and referred to the charism of the Order. He also noted that all of this came about thanks to the efforts of Fr. Norbert Gólkowski, about whom he spoke highly. He called on the Marians to remain faithful to the *Rule* and Constitutions and instructed that this letter be read in all Marian monasteries.²²⁰

The next stage of the undertaken reform was to achieve independence from the Reformat Order. For this purpose, Fr. Gólkowski gathered the required documents and explanations regarding the disputed points and prepared a legal act to separate the Marian Order from the Reformates. It should be noted that some Marians did not see the need for such a step or support these efforts, just as they did not see the purpose in the efforts to open a foundation in Rome or acquire the church of St. Vitus. During this time, a significant step towards independence from the Reformates was the confirmation of the Marian Order, which was already seriously considered during the tenure of Fr. Spourny as procurator. Unfortunately, Fr. Spourny downplayed the issue, considering that the Marians had already been approved by papal law and were a fully recognized religious order in the full sense. The problem unexpectedly resurfaced

²¹⁹ Ibid. "Quibus ita gestis, Serenissimus Protector noster die 16 Iulii anno currenti solemniter cum apparatu descendit ad Conventum Nostrum S. Viti in Alma Urbe situm, ibique Missa Solemni decantata, adhibitis solitis caeremoniis, sedendo in throno, in Protectionem suam nostrum Marianum suscepit Ordinem, cui etiam assistentes huius conventus religiosi, nomine sui ordinis debitam sub osculo sacrae purpurae praesistere reverentiam ac oboedientiam. Volens autem Serenissimus Protector noster Clementissimus, ut universo Ordini nostro illius altissima innotescat erga Ordinem nostrum Protectio, suas ad nos dedit Litteras Pastorales toti Ordini nostro communicandes."

²²⁰ Cap. Gen., pp. 462-463; Prot. Rom., Actus intromissionis Henricus Card. Protector to Father general, die 17 VII 1785.

in 1785 while separating from the Reformates and reforming the Marian Constitutions. When Fr. Gołkowski, believing that his mission in Rome was completed and preparing to return to Poland, appeared before the Congregation of Bishops and Religious to receive the necessary documents, the chief secretary raised concerns by asking, "Why don't you seek approval from the Apostolic See, as it is necessary for you to become true religious, because you are only approved as a confraternity or some kind of congregation by the nuncio in Poland? After all, you are separating yourselves from the obedience of the General of the Observants, to which you belong. I presented him with the *Rule* and Constitutions and the approval. He replied that they were some sort of legal compilations, etc., and spoke as he pleased."²²¹ I said that until now, no one, absolutely no one, has ever doubted our true Order in any matter, and until now, we have been regarded as genuine, serving God and people. This was the first time I had heard anything like this from anyone in any country [...]. He replied that there was a need for approval and confirmation [...], that we needed to have all the authentic evidence and submit a memorial to the Pope. The Pope would then send them to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious, where they would be deliberated upon, and everything would be decided. A positive opinion from the cardinals would also be necessary."²²² In light of the stance taken by the Congregation, Fr. Gołkowski had to restart the procedure regarding the confirmation of the Marians, the reform of the Constitutions, and the separation from the Reformates in many aspects. He had to gather the original copies of all necessary documents, seek the opinion of the nuncio, obtain letters of recommendation from Polish bishops and other important secular

²²¹ Prot. Rom. In the letter to the Father General dated March 28, 1786, Thaddeus Białowieski expressed a similar opinion about the Marian Order before their separation from the Reformates. He stated, "Only Father Gołkowski is now seeking a Bull for the approval of our Order because until now, we were considered a group of people not recognized as true religious by the Apostolic See."

²²² Ibid., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the general of Sept. 18, 1785. It is an extensive letter, full of concern and worries about funds and the progress of the case. Fr. Gołkowski expresses his fear that false opinions about the lack of papal approval for the Marian Order may reach Poland and Portugal. However, he believes that despite the costs and difficulties, the proposed matter must be pursued. His two subsequent letters describe the course of the undertaken challenging three-day trial, during which the representatives of the Congregation raised strong accusations. However, thanks to the steadfastness of the two Marian advocates, the trial ended positively for the Marian Order.

figures, and initiate a process that would only conclude after two years with the issuance of a papal *breve* in March 1787.

In 1786, a few months before the papal approval of the Order, a new problem arose in Rome, as discreetly reported by Fr. Gołkowski to the Fr. General. It was brought up by a Marian, identified only as N., who had arrived from Poland. N. proposed that the reform be carried out similarly to the Piarists in 1669. He suggested that before the formal approval of the Order, it should be announced to the brethren that those who wished to leave could do so, as many complained within the Order and sought to escape it.²²³ Fr. Gołkowski warned Fr. General to remain vigilant regarding this opinion and prevent its dissemination in Poland. At the same time, he took appropriate measures in Rome to block such a solution from being implemented.²²⁴ At the same time, another problem emerged. The secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Religious, who was reviewing the Marian Constitutions for approval, accused Fr. Gołkowski of not clearly articulating the main purpose of the Order. "Reading our statutes, he stated: 'I cannot discern which are the essential obligations of your Order. You have a choir, the obligation for the deceased, missions, schools, but,' he said, 'there must be one thing, one *objectum*, to which you must adhere; otherwise, you will not fulfill all of this adequately.'²²⁵ Similar objections were raised by Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski and Fr. John Niezabitowski. However, Fr. Gołkowski did not give in and invoked earlier traditions associated with the legacy of the Founder.²²⁶ Eventually, the long-awaited approval document was issued in accordance with the proposals presented by Fr. Gołkowski. It appears that the arguments presented, the sincere and "earnest request" made to the Holy See, and the support of Archbishop Carlo Camuccio

²²³ Prot. Rom., Norbert Gołkowski's letter to the superior general of May 20, 1786.

²²⁴ Ibid. See Thaddeus Białowieski's letter to the superior general of June 14, 1786.

²²⁵ Ibid. Thaddeus Białowieski's letter to the superior general of June 14, 1786.

²²⁶ Ibid. Fr. Thaddeus Białowieski and Fr. John Niezabitowski supported the opinion of the secretary of the Congregation regarding the narrowing of the tasks undertaken by the Marian Order. However, "Father Gołkowski did not want to agree to that, demanding to remain bound by all the old obligations that we have not been able to fulfill due to their excessive accumulation, and we will never fulfill them (*sic*). Let this matter end as he wishes, I will not interfere unless, with the consent of the *Rev. Patris* [Father General], we seek certain *objectum* for us in the Bull." This letter indicates that John Niezabitowski and Thaddeus Białowieski were not convinced that the Marian Order could carry out such numerous tasks. On the other hand, Fr. Raymond Nowicki supported this direction of action and backed Fr. Norbert Gołkowski.

played a significant role in this outcome. On March 10, 1786, Pope Pius VI granted permission for the Marian Order to become independent. He published a *breve* with the following content: “Moreover, as Norbert, the Procurator General, earnestly requested that we separate his Order *seu* Congregation from the Order of the Friars Minor of St. Francis of Observance, to which, as mentioned, he was aggregated and attached [...], we separate and detach.”²²⁷

For the Marian Order, this represented a new legal situation that required revising several points in the Marian Constitutions. This was because the Marians had now obtained autonomy and were under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic nuncio, the Holy See, and its delegate. Fr. Gólkowski took on the task of revising specific points of the Marian Constitutions, taking into account the recent papal decrees and the resolutions of the Marian Chapters in 1782 and 1785, which initiated reforming the Order. After consultations, the Marian Constitutions were sent to the Congregation of Bishops and Religious. On September 15, 1786, they were approved by the Congregation and forwarded to the Holy Father for final approval. On March 27, 1787, the Marians obtained papal approval for their Constitutions adapted to the new legal situation, along with the inclusion of the granted monastic privileges.²²⁸ From that point forward, the Marians began to follow their own path.

The reformed Constitutions did not differ significantly from the previous ones. The division into ten chapters was preserved, in the same order, as well as the literal wording of the titles. The number of paragraphs was reduced from seventy-three to sixty, each being equally extensive. All paragraphs indicating any dependency on the Reformates were removed, and as a result, chapter 11, “On the General Chapter and the Election of Superiors,” and chapter 10, “On Superiors,” were expanded.²²⁹ From then on, the Chapters were to be presided over by a delegate of the Holy See. In case of his absence, it was necessary to “request [...] the Apostolic

²²⁷ The full text was published together with the *Constitutiones Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis Beatae Virginis Mariae Clericorum Regularium Marianorum*, Romae 1787. Its original, along with the Constitutions and other documents related to this case, is located at ASV. Secretaria Brevium, N. 4090, 1787 martii, II, 197-281.

²²⁸ Privilegia a Pio Papa VI Ordini Marianorum concessa. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam [...]. ASV. Secretaria Brevium, N. 4090, 1787 martii, II, 197-281. “Privilegia” were attached to the Constitutions and made part of the entire collection.

²²⁹ *Konstytucje Apostolskie Kleryków Regularnych Marianów*, Wilno 1791, pp. 24, 36-41, 41-45.

Nuncio to appoint a secular or religious Prelate [...] who would have the authority and dignity to preside over the election of the new superior.”²³⁰ However, from then on, the General Chapter was to be convened, and its decrees were to be approved by the superior general himself. A significant change was the restoration of the six-year term of office for the general and all positions in the General Curia, following the provisions in the *Norma vitae*. The Reformates' requirement of annual resignation from local superiors was rejected. According to the new paragraph, a local superior should hold the office for at least three years. The Constitutions reflected social needs and certain tendencies of the Enlightenment era. The primary focus was on pastoral activities in their own and parish churches, assisting parish priests, while less emphasis was placed on spiritual assistance to the souls suffering in Purgatory. Some choral prayers were reduced in this matter, including the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Office for the Dead.²³¹ The Constitutions advocated that “on Sundays and seven solemnities of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as on certain other high-ranking feast days,” when there was a lot of work in the church, Vespers for the dead could be omitted.²³² This change significantly impacted the future shape of the Order's work.

Implementation of the Reforms

The implemented reform directed the Marians towards social tasks, national issues, and involvement in youth education. The Constitutions called upon the Marians “to provide education to the youth wherever there is an opportunity for it.” The Chapter of 1791, interpreting this paragraph, explained: “Although the Marian Order, with special care and effort, devotes itself to the education of youth following its Constitutions, it advises all local superiors, in particular, to serve, to the best of their abilities and efforts, the Most Serene Commonwealth with all their hearts and to expand elementary schools for the embellishment of the Order.”²³³ There was pressure from King Stanislaus Augustus and

²³⁰ *Konstytucje*, IX/1, p. 36.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26, 34-35; F. Bartecki, *Rozwój prawa*, p. 76.

²³² *Konstytucje*, VIII/1.

²³³ Cap. Gen., 1791/1; cf. *Konstytucje Apostolskie*, 1791, VI “O nauce chrześcijańskiej i misjach” [About Christian teaching and missions].

REGUŁA

BRACI MARYANOW

Zákonu Niepokalanego Poczęcia Błogossławioney

PANNY

MARYI



STATUTA

Patrum Marianorum Ordinis B. M. V. sub titulo Immaculatæ Conceptionis, Defunctis, & Parochis in Cura Animarum suffragantium Congregationis Polonæ.

W WARSZAWIE

w Drukarni J. K. Mł y Rzeczy Pospolitey Collegium Societatis JESU
Roku Pańskiego 1750.

The *Rule* of the Marian Fathers from 1750, or Statutes of their religious community.

R E G U L A
 I M I T A T I O N I S
 D E C E M B E N E P L A C I T O R U M
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 D E C E M V I R T U T U M
 B. V I R G I N I S M A R I Æ
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 S O L E M N I T E R P R O F I T E N T U R .



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R O M Æ M D C C L X X V I I I .

Ex Typographia Reverendæ Cameræ Apostolicæ.

P R Æ S I D U M F A C U L T A T E .

the Commission of National Education, supported by papal encouragement,²³⁴ for religious orders to engage in teaching according to the Commission's program. In response to this appeal, many religious orders answered positively. Among the first to do so were the Marians, who collectively joined the work of promoting secular and religious culture and fighting illiteracy by opening parish schools in almost all of their monasteries.²³⁵ At the monastery in Marijampole, in response to the requests and expectations of the nobility and bourgeoisie, a school was opened for approximately a hundred students. Latin language and an expanded curriculum were introduced, which, due to accusations from competing institutions, caused difficulties for the Marian school and even threatened its closure.²³⁶

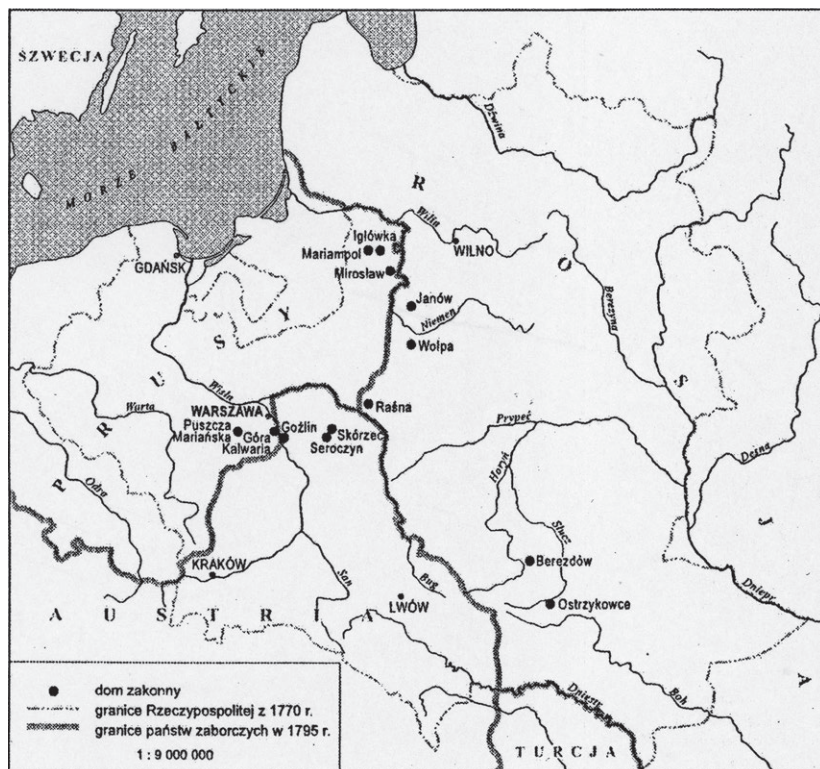
The separation from the Reformates required the Marians to break away from their former life practice, with its long choral prayers, numerous regulations, the Reformat lifestyle, and strict discipline. It was also necessary to abandon former customs and habits and the terminology adopted from the Franciscans. In many respects, they drew on the legacy and guidance of Fr. Papczyński. From a monastic order, a discreet transition was made towards a clerical and apostolic one. The separation inspired the Marians to seek new solutions in liturgy, discipline, teaching, formation, attire, jurisdiction, and parish work. For many Marians, this was a novelty. Some did not accept this opening to the outside world because their attachment to old forms and behaviors was deeply ingrained. As a result, the superior general faced significant difficulties in finding religious willing to teach in schools, preach sermons, or conduct missions. But it is also true that most of the Marians were not prepared for such work, and some preferred to lead a quasi-monastic life, reciting choral prayers and enjoying a peaceful existence as they did in the past.²³⁷ Despite this, all signs in heaven and on earth heralded

²³⁴ T. Mizia, *Szkolnictwo parafialne*, pp. 49-50.

²³⁵ The Chapters ordered the establishment of schools at all monasteries, and they were created accordingly, with the exception of Gozlin, where the church and monastery were burned down in 1769, and Góra Kalwaria, where a school already existed under the administration of the Piarist Order. About the schools run by the Marians, see J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 223-233.

²³⁶ J. Totoraitis, *Marianie*, pp. 9-10.

²³⁷ Due to the lack of volunteers for teaching, the Chapters encouraged the Marians by offering rewards and privileges. For example, they exempted teachers from communal duties and allowed them to accept private Mass intentions for themselves. The conscience of the



Expansion of Marian Fathers' posts throughout the lands of the Commonwealth in 1795.

hope for the remarkable development of the Marians. To expand the Order and better recruit candidates, novitiates were established in three monasteries: Berezdów for Ruthenia, Marijampole for Lithuania, and the Korabiew Forest for Poland. The approval of the Apostolic See was obtained in this matter.²³⁸

religious was also addressed by explaining to them that these activities were pleasing to God and deserving of reward from God. Cap. Gen., 1782/5/7; 1785/4/17; Cf. S. Sydry, *Organizacja*, pp. 91-92; J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 225-226. To encourage missionary work and preaching of retreats, the Chapter granted the Marians an additional Mass intention for themselves after six years of missionary work, as well as equal privileges with lectors of sacred theology.

²³⁸ ASV, Congr. VV. et RR.-Sez. Regulari, 1 luglio 1792, *Memoriale Procuratoris Generalis N. Gołkowski super fundationem novitiatus in Domibus Corabieviensi, Mariampolensi, Berezdoviensi et Balsamanensi: Rescripta Congr. VV. et RR. De die 30 maij 1788 et 2 Augusti 1788.*

There was also no shortage of candidates for the novitiate and studies, and the Roman house provided opportunities for studies and contacts at the international level. The atmosphere of the Eternal City and the connections with the structures of the universal Church immersed the Marians in the heart of Latin culture and the center of Church life. Upon returning to Poland, they brought with them spiritual and cultural values, which they then transferred to the monasteries and parish communities to which they were assigned. The growing prestige of the Marians in society created new opportunities for various forms of work. Nuncio Giovanni Andrea Archetti already spoke very favorably of the work of the Marians in 1781, saying: "In all the monasteries, they observe monastic discipline in an exemplary and precise manner. I can attest to the praise of this Order that I have never heard of any abuses by superiors or scandalous behavior by subordinates, which, unfortunately, cannot be said about other religious orders. The Marians set a good example for the faithful with their good way of life."²³⁹ The most telling opinion comes from the dean of Kamieniec, Fr. K. Piętka, who wrote: "Praise belongs to the Marians, for they have been the best preachers in the diocese for many years. In my church [Kamieniec Podolski] and others, they preached the Word of God, providing evidence of good morals through their words and example. I can never forget the three famous missions in the Kamieniec deanery."²⁴⁰ There are many similar positive testimonies. The testimony of Fr. Adam Rafałowski, the dean of Rawa near the Korabiew Forest, is noteworthy. On the request of the nuncio, he recommended the Marian Fathers on behalf of the deanery and various priests: "We recommend the fathers of the Marian Order [...], as true men full of apostolic spirit, based on the Rule, who help in pastoral work and assist the souls of the deceased, working tirelessly in their own and our parish churches. Therefore, we unanimously recommend them as indispensable and beneficial to the Church of the Kingdom of Poland, its true ornament."²⁴¹ As many as eight Marian institutions were granted parish status during this period. These were Marijampole, Mirosław, Iglówka,

²³⁹ AGM, Bolesław Jakimowicz, *Kształtowanie się celu Zgromadzenia Marianów w XVIII wieku*, manuscript 1-11. The article contains the nuncio's report.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ ASV, S. C. Vescovi e Regolari, Posizioni, Sez. Regolari 1787.

Goźlin, Skórzec, Berezdów, Wołpa, and Janów in Lithuania. Thanks to the reforms of Fr. Raymond Nowicki and his group of collaborators, the emphasis on apostolic work carried out externally outweighed the contemplative character of the Order. Particular emphasis was placed on the duty of conducting missions, especially among the rural population, serfs (*homines rudes*), the most oppressed and backward social class, and raising the level of their religious life.²⁴² The Constitutions called upon every Marian to teach the people the fundamental truths of faith. The reformed Marians, although not very numerous, became, in the opinion of many, a very needed Order in the Commonwealth. The Order had an international character, as apart from Poles, Lithuanians, and Bohemians, Italians, Portuguese, and Hungarians also joined. In addition to pastoral work in their parishes, the Marians undertook religious, educational, social, and national tasks required at that time. They assisted local parish priests, hearing confessions, preaching sermons, conducting missions, and organizing small hospitals near the monasteries for the poor and homeless. They also took on the roles of curates or administrators in diocesan parishes.²⁴³

²⁴² *Constitutiones Ordinis...*, I/1. "Praecipue quoad erudiendam in Doctrina Christiana rudem plebem quilibet incumbat."

²⁴³ About the Marians' participation in the abovesaid aspects of public life, see J. Kosmowski, *Marianie*, pp. 165-233.

CONCLUSION

“The Most Reverend Father Stanisław Świącicki [...] approved the Institute of the aforementioned religious Father Stanislaus [...]. He ordered that the hermits [...] observe fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays [...], that everyone strictly observe silence on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and that public flogging [...] takes place every day except on holidays and Sundays. He forbade everyone, under the penalty of excommunication, to leave the enclosure and receive laypeople.”¹

In the decree from 1679, when Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers, he described the character, charism, and tasks of the Marians as follows: “The Reverend Father Stanislaus of Jesus Mary by the surname Papczyński [...] desires to establish a Congregation of Fathers Recollects of the Most B.V.M., without the stain of the Immaculate Conception. [We decree] by judgment in absentia to erect with episcopal authority the congregation under the name of second-order hermits, permitted and approved by the Church, which desires to support in a friendly manner the suffering deceased and offer themselves entirely for their assistance.”²

In the report to the Holy See in 1782, Apostolic Nuncio Giovanni Andrea Archetti provided the following testimony about the Marians: “In all the described monasteries, they behave in an exemplary manner. [...] They set an example to the faithful with their good way of life. The pious works to which this Institute dedicates itself consist of pastoral assistance through preaching the Word of God and hearing confessions whenever called upon. They receive recognition for their work, as

¹ Act of the canonical visitation by Bishop Jacek Stanisław Świącicki and the establishing of a retreat house and community at the Korabiew Forest on Oct. 24, 1673, in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 159-160; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 392-400.

² The first approval of the Congregation of Marian Fathers granted by Bishop Stefan Wierzbowski on April 21, 1679, based on diocesan law, April 21, 1679, in: S. Sydry, *O. Stanisław*, pp. 159-160; *Positio*, Papczyński, pp. 392-400.

evidenced by the letters from the primate, almost all the bishops, and especially many deans, copies of which I enclose for Your Eminence.”³

The three important documents quoted above, from the years 1673, 1679, and 1782 — with the first one opening the chronological scope of this work and the last one closing it — illustrate the journey and evolution that the Congregation of Marian Fathers had to undergo from an eremitic and penitential order to an active apostolic one, as presented in the report of the nuncio from 1782. The Marians began their activity in the form of hermit life, which was imposed by the nature of the first establishment in the Korabiew Forest and rigorously directed during the canonical visitation in 1673 by Bishop Stanisław Świącicki. The severity of those regulations and social criticism of such a form of religious life made it difficult and even blocked the realization of the Congregation’s idea, which was developed and prayed upon by Fr. Papczyński. Adopting the 15th-century Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1699 by the Marians also did not help in realizing their mission. This *Rule* was originally intended for contemplative nun orders.⁴ It should be noted that the *Rule* was binding on the Marians until 1909. The situation was further complicated by the *affiliatio* to the Franciscan Friars Minor, known in Poland as the Reformates, which took place in 1699. As a result of this affiliation, after the death of the Founder, the Marian Fathers gradually became spiritually, formationally, jurisdictionally, and even developmentally dependent on the Reformates. According to some, this led to the perception of the Marians as a Franciscan branch or their third order. The evolution, or the shifting of emphasis, from the imposed characteristics of eremitic, penitential, and strictly contemplative life during the early stages of Marians’ history towards the apostolic character of the Congregation originally intended by the Founder was a difficult and serious effort. Phases of

³ A.S.V. Nunz. di Varsavia, vol. 340, c. 4.

⁴ This is how it was assessed by Fr. Witold Nieciecki: “*The Rule of Ten Virtues*, composed in the late 15th century by the Franciscan Blessed Gilbert Nicolas at the request of Saint Joan of Valois, the founder of the female order (the Annunciation Sisters), did not possess and could not possess the marks of apostolic and priestly authority. This Rule was originally intended for enclosed nuns. Despite its piety towards the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is characterized by a certain generality and artificiality, attempting to encompass the entire monastic life—both its spiritual and organizational aspects—within the framework of ten chapters corresponding to the ten virtues associated with [Mary].” W. Nieciecki, *Główne cechy*, pp. 17-18.

decline and growth, internal divisions, and conflicts accompanied these transformations. This became most evident during the period of the so-called Rostkovian dispersion. At that time, some Marians, upon leaving the Congregation, justified their decision with the statement, "I do not want to be a Reformaté." Previous research by historians did not fully consider the impact of the very strict dependency of the Marians on the Reformates. From 1702, a Reformaté vicar took over the presidency of the Chapters. In the same year, the vicar issued a decree that prohibited the establishment of new foundations. Although the small number of Marians justified this decision at the time, its effect led to stagnation and a halt in the creation of new foundations for fifty years. It is also surprising that during those years, the Marians did not produce even a short biography of their Founder. It was only the Reformaté Mansueto Leporini who eventually accomplished this task. The course of the Rostkovian dispersion is also bewildering. As soon as the opportunity and legal possibility arose, over half of the members of the Congregation left. This may indicate a rejection of the form of religious life prevailing at that time and a lack of attachment and love for the Order. This issue is connected to the question of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is linked to fidelity to the legacy of Fr. Papczyński. In *Norma Vitae* of 1672, Fr. Papczyński recommended the establishment of such a confraternity in all Marian churches. Only in 1734, under the influence of Fr. Casimir Wyszynski, the first Confraternity was founded in the Korabiew Forest.⁵ Those three circumstances — the imposed penitential-hermit life, the adoption of the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, and the lack of their constitutions, along with the dependency on the Reformaté Order — greatly hindered the realization of the Founder's original vision. These challenges led to internal conflicts and divisions within the Order. In this work, we have sought to demonstrate how some Marians, faithful to the legacy of Fr. Papczyński, developed new Marian religious laws while maintaining the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*. These laws included the Statutes of 1723 and the Constitutions of 1786, which largely reiterated the guidelines contained in *Norma Vitae* while adapting them to the Congregation's own promulgated regulations, decrees of the Apostolic

⁵ Cap. Gen., 1734/12.

See, and the expanding scope of their geographical, material, and numerical undertakings. Positive transformations had already begun to take place in the 1740s. They were closely associated with the person and activities of the venerable Marian, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński. His selfless work in formation and education, his reforming decrees, and his life example led to the spiritual growth and strengthening of the Marians. Young and zealous disciples of Fr. Casimir joined the ranks of religious life. The outstanding vocations from Bohemian lands also inspired new works and pastoral activities. In the 18th century, approximately fifty Bohemians joined the Marian Congregation. In the second half of the 18th century, the expansion of the Marians began, reaching its peak during the tenure of the dynamic and zealous Superior General, Fr. Raymond Nowicki (1776-1788). During this period, the geographical reach of the Congregation changed. Several new establishments were founded in the eastern territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This systematic movement eastward extended from the Korabiew Forest to the farthest reaches of Ostrzykowce in present-day Ukraine, which could be seen as a cultural and religious mission, as the establishment of a monastery itself created a new and often significant center for religious, cultural, and settlement-economic activities. The opening of new establishments in Rome, Portugal, and the acquisition of the Marian sanctuary in Balsamão appeared to be achievements but ultimately proved to be setbacks for the Marian Fathers.

It is also worth emphasizing that the Marians made efforts to adapt without delay to significant cultural, economic, pastoral, and social changes occurring in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. These achievements should not be overshadowed by the cracks in the structure, heralding a severe and profound crisis within the Order, which fully manifested itself during the Napoleonic era. The dynamism of the Marian Order in the second half of the 18th century was expressed through expansion and multifaceted pastoral work. There was a visible revival among the Marians, who showed concern for healing society and promoting education. Discrete yet profound changes took place within the Order, resulting in the establishment of parish schools and small hospitals and the conduct of missions and retreats. Simultaneously, the reforms underwent a painstaking legal process, culminating in the

separation from the Reformat Order and the approval of the reformed Constitutions by Pope Pius VI. However, the promising development of the Marians did not last long. The partitions, uprisings, persecution of religious orders, and national calamities contributed to its setback and crisis.

Despite extensive research in archives and meticulous studies in Marian historiography of the 18th century, there are still many gaps and uncertainties. The actions of Fr. Joachim Kozłowski require further explanation, as some accused him of acting to the detriment of the Order and attempting to appoint himself as the founder of the Marian Fathers while erasing the memory of Fr. Papczyński. In his machinations, he relied on a few Reformat priests who were his allies and whom he invited to take charge of the Marian order.⁶ The complete lack of documents from 1715-1722 regarding the “Rostkavian dispersion” prevents a thorough understanding of this painful issue. There is also a lack of documents concerning court and noble chaplaincies and the spiritual fruits of these chaplaincies. It is surprising to note a high percentage of departures of chaplains from the Order, often around fifty percent. Archives from the monasteries in Berezdów and Ostrzykowce have not been preserved. Similarly, personal records of the Marians and those related to the functioning of novitiates and studies are exceptionally scarce. The author was unable to access the rich collections in St. Petersburg, which house documents from the general archive in Skórzec. This also applies to archives in Lviv and Lutsk, which contain records from the monasteries in Berezdów and Ostrzykowce.

⁶ *Najstarsze świadectwa*, p. 45; K. Wyszyński, *Stróż*, p. 107, 143-144, 162-164, 227; F. Koralewicz, *Additament*, p. 175, 176, 189, 190, 192.

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INDEX OF PEOPLE

A

Albani, Anibal — 217
 Aleksandrowicz, P. — 455
 Alexander VII — 37
 Alexander VIII — 91
 Alexis Henriques de Miranda — 349
 Allegiani, Giovanni — 369, 399, 406, 418
 Andrea Mariani — 305
 Anthony of Francis — 90
 Antoni of Panormo — 130
 Anthony of Padua — 91
 Antici, Tomaso — 375, 446, 456
 Archetti, Giovanni Andrea — 285, 303, 384, 412, 430, 433
 Arias, Francis, SJ — 227, 454
 Armini, Aleks, SP — 89
 Artjomovs, D. — 445
 Aubert, R. — 156
 Augustajjty, Fr. — 455
 Augustus II — 142-143, 144-145, 208, 218
 Augustus III — 145-147, 208, 257-258, 344

B

Badowski, Fr. — 290
 Bajer, Wacław, OIC — 268
 Barberini Family — 260, 375
 Bardi, Hieronim de — 255
 Bartecki, Felix, MIC — 96, 184, 188, 191, 425, 445, 455
 Bartoszewicz, J., OIC — 455
 Basileu, Pires dos Anjos, MIC — 328-329, 331-332, 335, 339, 341, 347, 349, 351, 452
 Bayer, Wacław, OIC — 265
 Bednarski, Stanisław — 150, 455

Bellisoni, Carlo — 405
 Benedict XIV — 147, 258, 259, 291, 375
 Berliński, Iwo, OIC — 289
 Bertone, Tarcisio — 32, 445
 Białowieski, Tadeusz, OIC — 67, 297, 302, 306, 324, 373, 390-392, 395, 396, 422-423, 453
 Biasotti, Giovanni — 390, 445
 Błazkiewicz, A. H., OFM — 455
 Bogdan, Franciszek — 126
 Bohmann, P. — 454
 Bohomolec, Franciszek — 150, 159, 455
 Bonaparte, Napoleon — 67
 Bondi, Aloisius, OIC — 356, 385, 386, 388, 391, 403, 440
 Bonikowski, Casimir, OIC — 62, 237
 Borkowska, Małgorzata, OSB — 64, 101, 245, 445, 455
 Borzewski, Ludwik, OFMRef — 115, 129, 131, 407
 Brazys, F. MIC — 445
 Broliński, Mateusz — 108, 110-111
 Brucki Family — 111
 Brucka, Marianna — 111
 Brucki, Marcin — 111-112
 Buba, Inocenty Jan, SP — 150, 455
 Bujalski, Benon, OIC — 282, 309, 312, 327, 328, 331, 367, 369
 Bukowicz, Jan, MIC — 12, 19, 59, 135-136, 228, 441, 446-449, 456
 Buonvisi, Francesco — 72
 Burdziej, B. — 445
 Butler, Countess — 269, 296, 319
 Butler, Frances — 310, 493
 Butler, Józefina — 301
 Butler, Zofia — 275
 Butler Family — 274, 300

C

- Calasanaz, Joseph — 36
 Calozzi, Vincenzo — 360
 Calvin, John — 103
 Camuccio (Camuzio), Carlo — 358,
 375-377, 381-383, 386, 393, 397,
 403, 413, 423, 493
 Carafa, Luigi — 259-260
 Catherine II — 147, 151, 285, 370
 Cenci, Krzysztof — 216-217
 Charles Gustav — 31
 Charles XII — 143
 Charles of Varesio — 195
 Chełchowski, Roch, OFMRef — 218-
 221, 226, 229, 342
 Chełstowski, Aloisius, OIC — 294
 Chiara, Cosmas, SP — 37
 Chlebowski, B. — 22
 Chodyński, S. — 455
 Chojecki, Francis Casimir, OIC — 451
 Chotkowski, Władysław — 300, 455
 Chromiński, Stanislaus, OIC — 294
 Chrościechowski, J., MIC — 446
 Chruszczewski, Adam — 156, 455
 Cieciszowski Family — 118, 122
 Cieciszowska, Siennicka Anna — 118
 Cieciszowski, Wojciech — 118, 122
 Ciński, Anthony of
 St. Martin, OIC — 94
 Clement IX — 38
 Clement VIII — 190
 Clement X — 40, 72
 Clement XI — 246
 Clement XII — 217
 Clement XIV — 152
 Colloredo, Leandro — 93
 Colonna di Sciarra, Jerome — 257
 Constantine of St. Casimir, OIC —
 107, 116-117, 159
 Cyprian of St. Stanislaus, OIC — 7,
 36-37, 45, 57, 60, 90, 159, 223, 240,
 282, 289, 313-316, 322
 Czapliński, Władysław — 31-32,
 143-144, 146, 148, 371, 446, 459
 Czartoryski Family — 244,
 271-274, 298-299, 301-302,
 305-306
 Czartoryska, Aleksandra — 301
 Czartoryska de Waldstein, Eleonora
 — 271, 273, 297, 301
 Czartoryska of Württemberg, Maria
 — 302-303
 Czartoryska, Zofia — 301
 Czartoryski, Adam Kazimierz — 301
 Czartoryski, Teodor Kazimierz — 326
 Czartoryski, Fredric Michał — 257,
 270-271, 273, 297, 301, 311
 Czartoryski, Teodor — 304
 Czermak, John, OIC — 227, 264-265,
 268, 276, 286
 Czubernatowicz, Valentine
 (Placide), OIC — 294, 353, 370,
 372, 392, 399

Ć

Ćwikliński, H. — 455

D

- Davia, Gianantonio — 111
 D'Ancona, Barnaba — 389
 De Buffo, Raphael — 282, 315, 342,
 344, 350-357, 370
 De Pasculo, Fr. — 252
 Deszpot, Andrew, OIC — 179, 182-
 183, 185-186, 194, 196-197, 218, 223,
 231, 240, 244, 264, 267, 269, 366
 Dębowska, Maria — 173, 446
 Diaz, Francis, OFM — 96, 190
 Długolecki, Aloisius, OIC — 388,
 392, 419
 Dłużewski-Nowak, Juliusz — 150, 458
 Duchińska, Seweryna — 305, 446
 Dydwalewicz, Fr. — 295
 Dziewierski, Norbert — 130

Dziewulski, John, OIC — 302-303,
305-306

E

Estreicher, Karol — 87

Emmanuel de Jesus

Maria Jose, OIC — 336

F

Fajkowski, Cz., MIC — 122

Fijałkowski, Cyprian, OIC — 36-37,
45, 60, 90, 240, 282, 289, 313, 315-
316, 322

Fijałkowski, J. — 375, 446, 456

Fischer, Alexis of St. Octavian, OIC
— 21, 165, 176, 178, 206, 209, 237,
241, 265, 267, 280-283, 286, 309,
315, 327, 330, 342, 344-357, 359-
361, 367, 369, 401, 403, 405, 419,
443, 446, 447

Flaga, Jerzy — 155, 288, 292, 456

Flatt, Oskar — 65, 66, 456

Fogarty, W., MIC — 446

Francis of St. Valentine, OIC — 161

Frederick August — 142

Frederick II — 148

Friszek, Benjamin, OIC — 267

Fulgentius of Jesus — 161

G

Gach, Piotr — 361, 446, 456

Galicka, Izabela — 374, 392, 446

Gapski, H. — 299, 301, 418, 446

Gargalski, Alexis, OIC — 229, 232

Gaspar, D. — 155

Gawroński, L. — 446

Germain, Wanda — 150, 457

Gibler, Michael, OIC — 223, 264, 268

Giedroyc, Franciszek — 33, 446, 456

Gierowski, Andrzej Józef — 146

Giraud, Bernardino — 401

Giżycki, Jan Marek — 243, 312, 446,
456

Gloger, Zygmunt — 107, 446, 456

Gólkowski, Norbert, OIC — 97, 104,
284, 286, 299, 320, 373, 384, 388-
389, 391-397, 399, 404, 410-411,
418-419, 421-424, 429

Gonzalez, Fr. — 339

Górski, Karol — 144, 446, 456

Górski, Konrad — 153

Górski, Ludwik — 57, 79, 447

Górski, Tadeusz, MIC — 12, 135-136,
144, 228, 372, 395, 446-447, 449, 456

Gregory XIII — 246

Grisans, J., MIC — 269, 454

Gryglewicz, F. — 447

Grzebień, Ludwik — 273, 457, 458

Grzybowski, Izydor — 112

Gustaw, Romuald, OFM — 215

H

Hadrawa, Feliks, OIC — 268, 277-
279, 281, 384-388, 392, 419

Hajjar, Joseph — 351, 456

Herald, Mark, OIC — 268

Hoening (Hoennig), Benedict, OIC —
37, 76, 244, 265, 269, 271, 273-274,
277, 293, 297, 299, 320, 399

Hondlewski, Charles, OIC — 22-23,
183, 197, 229, 266-267, 270, 313,
318-319, 373, 395, 442, 444, 447

Hozjusz, Joseph Stanislaus — 308, 366

Hubryk, Boniface, OIC — 294

I

Ignacio of St. Martin, OIC — 161

Ignatowska, Anna — 321

Ignatowski, Hadrian, OIC — 224,
298, 301, 321-324

Innocent XI — 77-78, 86, 97

Innocent XII — 36, 68, 92-94, 97,
106, 115

J

- Jabłonowski, Kajetan Jan — 312
 Jakimowicz, Boleslaus, MIC — 10-11,
 135-136, 155, 168, 176, 204, 215-
 218, 220-221, 228, 231, 238, 250,
 264, 273, 277, 280-283, 288-289,
 297, 300-301, 308, 312-314, 316-
 318, 321-322, 340, 346, 351, 353,
 355-357, 359-361, 370-372, 384,
 386, 391, 395, 405, 418-430, 447
 Janowski, Maciej — 159, 456
 Jarra, E. — 447
 Jarzyna, Mr. — 70
 Jasienica, Paweł — 33, 142, 144-145,
 148, 152, 155, 157, 159, 371, 373,
 447, 456
 Joan of Valois — 434
 Jemielity, W. — 456
 Jerome of the Holy Trinity, OIC —
 334-335
 Jeske-Choiński, T. — 457
 John the Baptist — 234, 355
 John of the Cross, OIC — 333, 340-
 341, 347
 John of the Immaculate Conception
 (John of God), OIC — 329-330,
 332-334, 339-346, 351
 John of the Rosary, OIC — 315, 340-
 341, 346-348, 351, 354
 John III Sobieski — 60, 70, 76, 79, 110,
 141-142, 397, 420-421, 459, 491
 Joseph I — 344, 351, 355
 Joseph of All Saints, OIC — 49, 90,
 131

K

- Kałowski, Julian, MIC — 73-74, 94,
 97, 125-27, 129, 246, 248-251, 253,
 256, 311, 442, 447-448
 Kanobrocki, Ladislaus, OIC — 7, 223,
 244, 315-317
 Kantak, S. K. — 306, 457

- Karolewicz, G. — 448
 Karski, James — 42
 Karski Family — 42, 289, 306, 316
 Katyll, Andrew, OIC — 481
 Kisieliński, Dionisius, OIC — 39, 45,
 60, 70, 76-77, 162, 223
 Kitowicz, Jędrzej — 297, 457
 Klauza, K. — 448
 Klein, Bonaventure, OFMRef — 129,
 133, 137, 161, 172, 187, 193, 416
 Klein, Kapistran, OFMRef — 287
 Kłoczowski, Jerzy — 67, 80, 154, 156-
 158, 300, 370, 448, 455, 457-458,
 459
 Knowles, D. M. — 156
 Kobielski, Antoni Franciszek — 247,
 249, 311
 Koceniak, Jan — 158, 448
 Kociński, Antoni, OFMRef — 231
 Kołłątaj, Hugo — 152, 457
 Kołodziejski, M. — 448
 Komorowski, Ignacy Adam — 248, 304
 Konarski, Stanisław, SP — 144, 150,
 158, 457-458,
 Konopczyński, Władysław — 142,
 148-149, 153, 159, 297, 300, 457
 Konstanty of St. Casimir, OIC — 112,
 464
 Koprowski, Julian, OIC — 277, 384,
 386-387, 392, 396-397
 Koralewicz, Aleksy — 128-129, 171,
 448
 Koralewicz, F. — 437
 Korytkowski, J. — 457
 Kosmowski, Jan, MIC — 3, 9, 55,
 78-79, 141, 151-152, 158, 243, 267,
 279, 292, 294, 297, 301, 306, 310-
 311, 322, 372, 395, 428-429, 431,
 448-449
 Kossakowski, Kazimierz Józef — 157,
 324, 373, 415,
 Kossakowski, Nepomucen Jan — 300
 Kowalski, OFMRef — 135

Kozak, Michał, MIC — 40, 449
 Kozłowski, Joachim
 of St. Ann, OIC — 69, 90, 94-
 98, 116-117, 125-133, 136-138,
 159-160, 164-173, 176-180, 183,
 185-188, 194, 197-198, 203-208,
 213, 215-216, 222-223, 229-230,
 289, 345, 366, 407, 416, 437
 Krajewski, Matthew, OIC — 14, 44-46,
 48, 160-162, 164-167, 173, 176-181,
 183, 185, 190, 213, 223, 289
 Krajewski, Stanislaus, OIC — 41, 43,
 83
 Krasiński, Kazimierz — 303, 459
 Kraus, Michał — 40
 Kraushar, Aleksander — 247, 457
 Kreyczyk, Nicholas, OIC — 268, 286
 Królikowski, Joseph, OIC — 215-216,
 218-219, 223, 229
 Krzywicki, J. — 22
 Krzyżanowski, Kazimierz
 [Casimir], MIC — 10, 31, 34, 72,
 91, 442, 447, 449
 Kumala, Janusz, MIC — 27, 204, 235,
 328, 445, 449, 451-452
 Kumor, Bolesław — 55, 156, 266, 456-
 457, 459
 Kupis, B. — 449
 Kurczewski, Jan — 245, 249, 457
 Kuźmak, K. — 457
 Kwiatkowski, Władysław — 404

L

Lagotta (Łagott), Augustine, OIC —
 267, 280
 Lasocki Family — 112
 Lasocki, Cecylia — 107-108, 111
 Lasocki, John — 107-108, 111
 Lasocki, Konstanty — 112
 Lechniewicz, Silvester, OIC — 392,
 396
 Lemos, A. — 349, 352, 355, 449

Leporini, Mansueto, OFMRef — 20,
 27, 31, 34-38, 42, 48-49, 80-83, 88-
 89, 91-92, 94, 103-104, 137, 160,
 169, 172, 186-187, 192-193, 207,
 222-223, 416, 435, 442
 Leszczyński, Stanisław — 143, 145,
 218
 Liczbiński, Andrzej — 64, 449, 458
 Lipiński, T. — 449
 Litak, Stanisław — 156-157, 273, 296,
 458
 Louis de Bourbon Conti — 142
 Luther, Martin — 103
 Łętowski, Ludwik — 288, 458
 Łopaciński, Jan — 249
 Łoziński, Władysław — 297, 458
 Łubieński, Feliks — 301
 Łukaszewicz, J. — 458
 Łukaszyk, R. — 464

M

Machaczek, Bernard, OIC — 265, 267
 Machaczek, Florian, OIC — 265, 267
 Machaczek, James, OIC — 268
 Mackiewicz, Stanisław — 155
 Magnuszewski, D. — 382
 Magnuszewski, Franciszek — 112
 Magnuszewski, Wojciech — 104, 162,
 168, 178, 263, 450
 Muhammad — 103
 Makoś, Wacław, MIC — 10, 14, 19,
 138, 159-161, 172-173, 204, 222,
 309, 441-442, 448, 450-452
 Makulski, Eugeniusz, MIC — 64-66,
 450
 Marescotti, Galeazzo — 37
 Mariani, Andrea — 305
 Marianus, N.N. — 268
 Marylski, Antoni — 247, 458
 Mascarenhas, Magdalena — 356
 Massalski, Jakub Ignacy — 156-157,
 373

Matoga, Adam — 150, 455, 458
 Matthew of St. Stephen, OIC — 96, 195
 Matulewicz, Adam, OIC — 275
 Matuszewicz Family — 231, 372
 Matuszewicz, Jerzy — 311
 Matuszewicz, Marcin — 243, 292, 399
 Mauersberger, J. — 450
 Mączyński, Andrzej, MIC — 450
 McCormack, J., MIC — 450
 Micewicz, Stefan, MIC — 294
 Michalski, Jerzy — 147
 Mises, Mateusz — 255, 458
 Miller, Wawrzyniec — 154, 156, 458
 Mizia, Tadeusz — 152, 428, 458
 Młodziejewski, Andrzej — 156
 Mogień, Stanislaus, OIC — 274, 300
 Molina, Jan Piotr, OFM — 340
 Morze, Gabriel, OIC — 264-265, 267
 Mraas, Alexander, OIC — 115, 267, 269, 323
 Mraas, Joseph, OIC — 274-275, 300
 Mrozowska, Kamilla — 151, 450
 Müllerowa, J. — 300, 457
 Müllerowa, Lidia — 459
 Mysłkowski, Onufry — 206-207, 222, 228

N

Naruszewicz, Adam — 159
 Nassalski, Olgierd, MIC — 450
 Navikevicius, Georgio, MIC — 21, 30, 41, 44-45, 49, 50, 58, 60-61, 71, 73-74, 83, 85, 91, 95-97, 100, 105, 112, 124, 128, 161-162, 168-169, 171, 184, 196, 213, 369, 399-400, 442, 450-451
 Nicholas of St. Martin, OIC — 62, 187, 237
 Nieciecki, Witold, MIC — 99, 124, 434, 451
 Nieć, J. — 451

Niezabitowski, John, OIC — 126, 132, 136-137, 193-195, 198, 283, 354, 373-375, 379-381, 384-385, 389, 392, 403, 406, 408-410, 413, 415, 423, 446
 Nitecki, Piotr — 45, 68, 94, 151, 157, 181, 451
 Nowacki, Józef — 181, 458
 Nowak-Dłużewski, Juliusz — 150, 458
 Nowicki, Raymond, OIC — 9-10, 17, 22, 126, 130, 136-137, 192-194, 282-284, 286, 293, 300, 307, 324, 354-355, 361, 363, 365, 372-374, 377-381, 384-385, 387, 395, 400-401, 405, 407, 410-413, 415, 418-420, 423, 431, 436, 444, 447, 448

O

Obertyński, Zdzisław — 273, 457-458
 Obirek, Stanisław — 155-156, 456-457, 459
 Oborski, Mikołaj — 39, 41
 Ogińska, Aleksandra — 301-302
 Ogiński, Michał — 152
 Olszewski, Daniel — 266, 312, 458
 Opatowski, Wacław — 35, 37-38
 Oskiera, B., MIC — 451
 Ostrowski, Antoni Kazimierz — 246, 304, 326
 Ostrowski, B. — 112
 Ostrowski, Bernard, OIC — 183, 218, 223-224, 231, 304
 Ostrowski, Nicholas, OIC — 215

P

Pachta, Severin, OIC — 301-302, 439, 441
 Pakuła, Andrzej, MIC — 28, 39, 40-41, 129, 442, 445, 449, 451
 Panin, Nikita — 148
 Papczyński, Stanislaus, OIC — 9-10, 12, 16-17, 20-23, 27-51, 55-64, 66-

- 74, 76-103, 105-106, 108, 110-112, 115-116, 122, 124-129, 131-133, 136-137, 138, 141-143, 149-151, 159, 164, 167-174, 181, 186, 188, 194-195, 197, 203, 205, 211-212, 214, 216, 222, 236-237, 244, 246, 254, 256, 272, 287, 289, 298, 300, 304, 306-307, 309, 314, 320-321, 324, 333, 336, 338, 342, 345, 365-366, 370, 373, 397-402, 409, 418, 428, 433-435, 437, 440-445, 447-454, 476-477, 480, 492
- Paris, Constantine — 107
- Pasek, Chryzostom Jan — 146, 458
- Pasiński (Paszyński), Charles, OIC — 238
- Paszkowski, Michał — 232
- Paul of Purification, OIC — 160
- Pek, Kazimierz, MIC — 451, 452
- Peter of St. Mary Magdalene — 90
- Peter of Alcantara — 35, 332
- Pietusko, Józef, MIC — 215, 451
- Piętka, K. — 430
- Piętka, R., MIC — 271
- Pignatelli (Pignatello), Francesco — 77, 130, 493
- Pinto, Bernardo — 357
- Pirchman (Pierzchański, Pirchmański), Paulin, OIC — 267-268, 278-279
- Pius V — 246, 333
- Pius VI — 303, 383, 385-386, 389, 391, 393, 397, 403-405, 413, 420, 424, 437, 439, 440, 479
- Płonkowska, Katarzyna — 351
- Poczobutt, Marcin — 159
- Podoski, Gabriel — 156-157, 458
- Podpusz, John (January), OIC — 265, 268
- Polak, Casimir, OIC — 244, 264-267, 269, 281
- Policiano, Monte John de, OIC — 331, 338, 354, 465
- Pombal, Sebastião José — 329, 351, 355
- Poniatowski, August Stanisław — 147, 149, 150-151, 156, 269, 270, 272, 298-299, 373, 383, 399, 418
- Poniatowski, Jerzy Michał — 296
- Popławski, Mr. — 296
- Potkańska, Kolumba — 61, 101
- Potocki, Teodor — 145, 304
- Pórzycki, Stanislaus, OIC — 306
- Proczek, Zygmunt, MIC — 11, 23, 27, 147, 203-204, 224, 235, 240, 243-244, 256, 347, 400, 445, 450, 452-453
- Przygodzki, Jan — 115-117, 122
- Puzyna, Józef — 249
- ## R
- Raabe, Xavery Francis, OIC — 265, 267
- Radziwiłł, Michał — 245, 247, 255
- Radziwiłł Family — 273, 459
- Rafałowski, Adam — 430
- Ranuti, Angelo — 42
- Repnin, Mikołaj — 148
- Reubau (Reuban), Emeric, OIC — 267, 278-279, 384, 386-388, 392, 419
- Richter (Rychter), Narcissus, OIC — 265, 268, 286, 353
- Rogalewski, Tadeusz, MIC — 10, 27, 39, 40, 44, 48-49, 59, 76, 92, 149, 168, 453
- Rogier, J. L. — 156
- Rokosz, Jan, MIC — 28
- Rostkowski, Adam — 97, 161-162, 165-167, 173-175, 446,
- Rostworowski, Emanuel — 146-147, 156, 458
- Rudziński, Anthony, OIC — 210-211, 229, 412
- Rugia, Gaspar — 155

S

- Salazar, Fr. — 329-332
 Saluzzo, Maria Ferdinando — 286-287
 Sapieha, Prince — 301, 383
 Sarnowski, Stanislaus — 35
 Sarti (Sarto), Joseph, OIC — 389-392, 439
 Saxon times — 144, 149, 153, 208, 217-218, 316, 320
 Scarzelli, Batta, OIC — 391
 Schneider, Augustine, OIC — 391
 Scotus, John Duns, OFM — 232
 Senel (Sendel, Seydel), Michael, OIC — 265
 Siedlaczek, Matthew, OIC — 286
 Sienkiewicz, Henryk — 33
 Sikorski, A., MIC — 453
 Silva e Sousa, A. da — 335, 350
 Skarbek, Jan — 157, 300, 457, 459
 Skrzyński, Justyn, OIC — 388, 392
 Skutans, S., MIC — 453
 Skwierczyński, A., MIC — 453
 Smoleński, Wł. — 459
 Sobieski Family — 397
 Sobieska, Klementyna Maria — 420
 Spinola, Niccolo — 193, 221
 Spourny, Amandus, OIC — 268
 Spourny, Candide, OIC — 20, 126, 130, 134, 136-137, 160, 168, 172, 175, 177, 185, 187, 192-195, 222, 260, 268, 278, 283-284, 286, 354, 358-359, 373-376, 378-381, 384-385, 387-388, 392, 396, 400-402, 406-413, 415-417, 419-421
 Sroka, Bronisław Albin, OFMRef — 138, 211, 453
 Starzyńska, M. — 453
 Stojek-Sawicka, Karolina — 273, 459
 Strach, Adalbert, OIC — 265, 267, 269, 310
 Stuart, Henry — 397, 420, 493
 Suffczynski Family — 296
 Sulimierski, F. — 22, 459
 Sułkowski, August — 381, 384, 393
 Sułowski, Z. — 477
 Svirnickas, Kristupas, OIC — 453
 Sydry, Stefan, MIC — 19, 34, 36-38, 40-41, 45-46, 48-49, 56, 58, 60-61, 64, 70, 76-77, 80, 83, 88-89, 95, 97, 102, 104, 110, 124, 126, 129-131, 135, 161-162, 178, 183, 185, 196-197, 212, 221, 226, 230, 233, 298-300, 306, 313, 320, 406, 412, 415, 418, 429, 433, 442, 453
 Sygietyńska, Hanna — 374, 392, 446
 Szadkowski (Szatkowski), Felician, OFMRef — 207, 222
 Szafrński, Tadeusz — 351, 456
 Szaławiecki, Jacek — 307, 466
 Szarosiek, Emmanuel, OIC — 347, 353, 354
 Szczepkowski, Leon — 303, 466
 Szczygielski, Wacław — 303, 459
 Szembek, Antoni Krzysztof — 174-175, 304
 Szkraffer, John Cantius, OIC — 245, 252, 258, 259, 265, 268, 279, 280, 325, 326, 367
 Szwermicki, Christopher, OIC — 445
 Szybiak, Irena — 294, 459

Ś

- Śliwiński, Dominik, MIC — 294
 Śrutwa, Jan — 156, 459
 Świętek, F., CSSR — 453
 Święcicki, Jacek Stanisław — 45-46, 48, 72, 80, 82-84, 99-100, 102, 105, 186, 189, 433, 434

T

- Tarło, Bartłomiej Michał — 97, 117, 154-155
 Tarło, Joachim Jan — 193
 Tarło, Peter — 174, 181-183, 186, 212

Tarnawska, M. — 453

Taudt, Isidore, OIC — 22, 36, 43, 49,
104, 110, 128, 187, 206-207, 209,
214, 227, 265, 268-269, 272, 274,
276-278, 281, 293, 299-300, 311-
312, 324, 373-374, 382, 387-388,
392, 397, 401, 419, 443

Tazbir, Janusz — 154, 156, 459

Teixeira, João — 28-32, 36, 66, 83, 92,
96, 126-127, 132, 162, 168, 174-
175, 179-180, 188, 213, 333, 338,
342, 344, 399, 444

Tempi, Melchior — 332

Tichi, Didacus, OIC — 392

Tichi, Diego — 391

Totoraitis, Jonas, MIC — 10, 243, 269,
274-275, 292, 300, 310, 313, 319,
321, 428, 454

Triplin, L. — 454

Trojan, Krzysztof — 118, 454

Trzciński Family — 70

Trzciński, Felician — 70

Trzciński, Wacław — 70

Trzebicki, Andrzej — 39

Turczynowicz, Stefan Józef — 12, 16,
245-256, 259-260, 311, 369, 439,
440

Turski, Feliks — 288, 323

Tyzt (Tyzt, Tyc), Honorius, OIC —
268

Tyzenhauz, Antoni — 153

V

Vaišnora, Juozas, MIC — 10-11, 224,
234, 283, 299, 382, 384, 387, 396,
441, 454

Van Adrichem, Christian Kruik — 59

Varesio Francesco Carlo de — 124,
195, 462

Vargas, A. José de Sá — 327, 329-332,
334-336, 340-341, 344-347, 349-
357, 359-360, 385, 405, 454

W

Walewski, W. — 22

Wasilewski, Hyacinth, OIC — 215,
217, 311, 318-321, 352-353, 370

Wawrau, Leopold, OIC — 268, 280,
281

Wegner, Jan — 31, 459

Wetycki, Cajetan, OIC — 7, 114, 240,
244-245, 252, 272, 307-313, 318,
336, 367, 369, 398

Wierzbowski Family — 89, 90, 181

Wierzbowski, Hieronim — 94, 106,
111, 129, 190

Wierzbowski, Stefan — 39, 41, 43,
45-46, 56-60, 63, 65, 69, 71-79, 81,
83-90, 94, 95, 100-101, 104, 106,
110, 190, 193, 433, 454, 459

Wierzbowski, Teodor — 152

Wietz, J. K. — 454

Wilga, Franciszek, OSBCam — 43

Wiśniowiecki, Korybut Michał — 141

Witwicki, Stanisław Jan — 89-90,
93-94

Wojewódzki, Fulgencjusz, OFMRem
— 232

Wokal, Damazius, OIC — 267, 280

Wolski, Jakub, OFMRem — 133, 198-
199, 206, 222

Wójcik, Zbigniew — 141-142, 459

Wrzesiński, Ambrose, OIC — 244,

Wyczański, Andrzej — 291, 459

Wysocki, Jan — 156, 459

Wyszyński Family — 176, 178, 205,
318, 321-322

Wyszyński, Joseph (Alexander) — 21,
162, 164-165, 176-178, 204

Wyszyński, Francis January — 55,
204, 366

Wyszyński, Casimir of

St. Joseph, OIC — 9-12, 16-17,
21-23, 27-30, 37, 39, 49, 51, 55,
59, 61-63, 71, 78-79, 88, 91, 94-95,

98-101, 104-105, 108, 110, 114,
 118, 122, 126-128, 132, 134, 143,
 147, 155, 161-162, 164-168, 170-
 171, 174-180, 183, 187, 194, 201,
 203-210, 213-218, 220, 222-224,
 227-228, 230, 231, 234-246, 248-
 260, 263-265-266, 269, 273, 276,
 280-282, 284, 297, 304, 307-312,
 316-318, 321-322, 324-337-342,
 344, 346-251, 354, 359, 361,
 366-370, 383, 388, 396, 398-400,
 402-406, 413, 418, 435-437, 439-
 440, 443, 445, 447, 449, 451-456,
 489-490

Wyszyński, Stefan — 404

Z

Zachniewicz, Mikołaj — 182-183,
 185, 222
 Zahorski, Andrzej — 142-143, 145,
 459
 Zalewski, R., MIC — 454
 Załuski Family — 69-70
 Załuski, Alexander — 68-70, 115
 Załuski, Andrzej Stanisław — 151, 304
 Załuski, Józef Andrzej — 148, 151
 Zamoyski, Adam — 32, 143-144, 146-
 148, 151, 459
 Zamoyski, Andrzej — 152-153
 Zamoyski, General — 303
 Zapalkiewicz, Louis, OIC — 76, 321,
 369, 399
 Zawadzki Family — 214
 Zawadzka, Jadwiga — 55, 214
 Zawadzki, Jan — 55
 Zielińska, Zofia — 150, 459
 Zienkowicz, Jan Michał — 249, 251,
 256
 Zienkowicz, Mikołaj — 245

Ż

Żmijewski, Augustine, OIC — 289

INDEX OF PLACES

A

Ancona — 391
 Asia — 33
 Austria — 14, 145-147, 149, 404
 Austrian Empire — 324

B

Balsamão — 55, 204, 267, 282, 315,
 327, 333-361, 370, 374, 385, 402-
 403, 405, 406, 436, 443, 445, 454,
 496
 Baltic (sea) — 153
 Bar in Podolia — 149, 371
 Belarus — 12, 255, 272
 Berdyczów — 444
 Berezdów — 243, 279, 285, 290, 292,
 310, 312, 429, 431, 437
 Biała Podlaska — 218
 Bielany — 11, 46
 Black Sea — 153
 Bohemia — 263-264, 279, 283
 Bolimów — 291-292
 Boston — 20, 33
 Braganca — 454
 Brazil — 324, 336
 Brest — 231
 Brzozów near Rzeszów — 35
 Bug (river) — 153

C

Castile [Kingdom of] — 347
 Cedovim — 356
 Cenacle — 50, 55, 58-67, 69, 73, 76,
 78, 80-81, 83-86, 88, 90, 92, 98,
 100-101, 103-104, 131, 162, 236-
 238, 317, 320-323, 440
 Chacim — 346, 349, 356

Chojnata — 48, 104, 292
 Cielądz — 292
 Commonwealth — 14, 33, 50, 56, 60,
 68-69, 141-146, 148-149, 152-154,
 156-158, 173, 208, 247, 269, 278-
 279, 285, 298, 303, 306, 316, 320,
 322, 324, 347, 350, 370, 373, 393,
 395, 396, 400, 404, 412, 415, 425,
 429, 431, 436
 Constantinople — 378
 Cyganka — 108
 Czersk — 90, 104, 107, 111, 303
 Częstochowa — 318

D

Diocese of Augustów
 (former Diocese of Sejny) — 455
 Diocese of Chełm — 45, 104
 Diocese of Gniezno — 154
 Diocese of Kamieniec — 116
 Diocese of Kraków — 104
 Diocese of Łomża — 12
 Diocese of Łuck — 116, 456
 Diocese of Płock — 155
 Diocese of Podlasie — 12
 Diocese of Siedlce — 12, 455
 Diocese of Warsaw — 404
 Diocese of Vilnius — 70, 245, 249,
 256
 Diocese of Poznań — 56, 89, 96, 175,
 301
 Diocese of Samogitia — 154-155, 161
 Diocese of Żytomier — 456
 Dnieper (river) — 153
 Dresden — 146-147
 Duchy of Mazovia — 104
 Duchy of Warsaw — 67

E

Europe — 144-146, 149, 152, 247,
300, 324, 373, 472

F

Fatima — 349, 449, 454
France — 143, 145-146, 366, 394, 415
Frascati — 420
French Empire — 67

G

Gaul [Gallia, i.e., the country
of the Gauls] — 347
Garwolin — 291-292, 384
Gdańsk [Danzig] — 156, 458
Germany — 142
Gietrzwałd — 11
Glew Lasocki — 107
Gnojno — 292
Goźlin — 14, 17, 67, 107, 108, 109,
110-116, 180, 182, 186, 243, 267,
268-269, 280-281, 290-294, 302,
310, 312, 314, 316, 323-324, 371,
412, 428, 431, 496
Góra Boboda [Mount Boboda] — 330
Góra Kalwaria [Mount Calvary] —
55, 64, 67, 81-82, 87, 143, 162, 240,
267, 268, 279, 322, 428, 449, 454,
458
Górzno — 292
Grała — 117
Grodno — 321
Grzybów — 71

H

Holy Cross Mountain — 59
Holy Land — 59

I

Igłówka — 430
India — 146, 324

J

Janów — 146, 324, 431
Jarosław — 34
Jasieniec — 104
Jazgarzew — 61
Jerusalem — 59
Jeruzal — 45
Jeziora Wielka — 55, 318, 321

K

Kaluga — 148
Kamieniec Podolski — 430
Kamion — 292
Katowice — 266, 458
Kłoczew — 292
Komorniki — 174
Końskie — 153
Korabiewice — 51, 303
Korytnica — 29, 292, 294
Korchev — 153
Kozienice — 153
Kraków — 31-32, 39, 64, 67, 87, 104,
138, 143, 144, 150, 152, 156-167,
211, 247, 273, 297, 300, 373,
445-446, 448, 451, 453, 455, 457,
458-459
Królewiec [Königsberg] — 274
Krzeslin — 117

L

Leszno — 71
Lewiczyn — 104
Licheń — 32, 118, 147, 204, 235, 256,
328, 347, 445, 451, 452, 454
Lithuania — 11, 14, 68-70, 115, 143,
154, 161, 245, 250, 252, 254-255,
270, 281, 292, 297, 303, 324, 366,
372, 383, 389, 415, 429, 431
Lisbon — 282, 329-332, 336, 338, 341,
346-347, 349-352, 356-361, 398,
405, 478
Lower Bullingham — 243, 450, 454

Lublin — 20-21, 27, 39, 78, 144,
154-155, 173, 277, 296, 301, 395,
446-449, 451-458
Lubocza — 42-43, 45, 289, 306, 313,
316
Lwów [Lviv] — 42-43, 45, 289, 306,
313, 316

Ł

Łaskarzew — 291-292
Ług — 117
Łomża — 12
Łódź — 156, 458

M

Maciejowice — 61, 292, 294, 301, 303
Magnuszew — 162, 192
Marian Forest (Korabiew Forest) — 302
Marijampole — 10-11, 70, 243, 267-
269, 272, 274, 285-286, 292, 293,
310-313, 318-319, 321, 354, 372,
374, 378, 381, 388, 428-430, 450,
480, 482
Mazovia — 48, 55-56, 69, 103-104,
108, 115, 118, 122
Mertola — 330
Minsk — 12
Miranda — 333, 335, 337, 340, 344,
347-349, 351-352, 357-359, 402
Miroslaw — 10, 322, 430
Mniszew — 292
Monte Policiano — 331, 338, 354
Mszczonów — 104, 290, 292

N

New Jerusalem — 14, 17, 49, 55-60,
63-64, 66-67, 73, 75, 81, 86, 89,
100-101, 143, 181
Nineveh — 142
Niwiska — 118, 122
North America — 146
Nowy Dom — 272

O

Osieck — 291-292
Osuchów — 292
Ostrybor — 108
Ostrzykowce-Samczyki — 243
Ozorów — 118, 303

P

Panormo — 130
Paris — 107, 301, 303
Piaseczno — 61, 268
Płock — 20, 57, 155, 456
Podegrodzie — 30, 34
Podlasie — 116, 118, 231, 318
Podolia — 149, 371
Podoliniec — 34-35
Poland — 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 22, 32-33,
36-38, 66, 70-73, 79, 91-93, 96-98,
106, 115, 117, 129, 138, 141-149,
151-156, 158, 161, 165, 180,
190-191, 197, 206, 208-210, 217-
218, 223, 227-228, 232, 247-248,
252, 257, 259, 263-265, 277-285,
299-300, 304, 306, 321, 324-331,
336-337, 340-342, 344-346, 348-
350, 352-360, 366-367, 369-371,
375-377, 379, 381-396, 398, 400,
403-409, 411, 415-416, 418-419,
422-423, 429-430, 434
Porta Angelica — 257
Portugal — 16-17, 23, 27, 55, 175, 178,
246, 260, 280-283, 285-286, 309,
315, 318, 324-331, 333, 337-338,
340-341, 344-345, 347-361, 367,
369-370, 374, 385, 388, 398, 402,
405-406, 422, 436, 447, 449, 478
Powsin — 61
Poznań — 42, 56, 73, 74, 89-90, 94,
96, 104, 106, 108, 115, 117, 122,
143, 149, 154-156, 158, 164, 175-
176, 181, 215, 301, 303-304, 326,
402-405, 448, 451, 456-459

Praga — 145
 Prażmów — 292
 Prussia — 14, 143-144, 146-147, 149,
 153-154, 285, 324, 350, 370, 404, 405
 Prużany — 271-272, 439
 Prypiat (river) — 153
 Przygody — 117
 Puławy — 301-302

R

Radom — 148, 370
 Radwanków — 108, 112, 289
 Radziejowice — 292
 Raśna — 12, 231, 243, 268-269, 272,
 274, 277-280, 286, 290, 297, 309-
 311, 314, 320, 323, 341, 399, 494
 Rawa Mazowiecka — 34, 291-292,
 303
 Rome — 12, 14, 16-17, 19-20, 23, 28,
 37-38, 55, 65, 78, 83, 90-96, 105,
 116, 124, 127-128, 130, 134, 137,
 154, 156-157, 164-165, 168-169,
 171, 176-177, 186-188, 194, 195,
 197, 203-206, 209-210, 214-218,
 220, 223, 237, 244-246, 252-260,
 268, 272, 277-286, 298-299, 303,
 309, 324-330, 340, 345, 349-350,
 352-354, 356, 358, 360, 365-367,
 369, 370, 372-379, 381-392, 394-
 408, 411, 413, 415-416, 418-423,
 436, 447
 Russia — 11, 14, 68, 142-149, 153-
 154, 157, 278, 324, 350, 370,
 404-405
 Ruthenia — 69, 115, 158, 429
 Ryczywół — 292
 Ryki — 268

S

Sabadelhe — 356
 Saxony — 143, 145-146
 Siberia — 11, 149, 392

Sieciechów — 292
 Siedlce — 12, 19, 301-303, 441
 Siedzów — 303
 Skierniewice — 292, 303-304
 Skórzec — 14, 17, 19, 107, 115-119,
 121-123, 174, 220, 229-232, 239,
 244, 267-268, 278-280, 292-293,
 301-302, 307-310, 314-316, 318,
 323, 366, 382, 431, 437, 482-483,
 485-487
 Skrzyszew — 318
 Służew — 62, 382
 Sobotniki — 268, 275
 Sochaczew — 292, 303, 382
 Sokołów Podlaski — 318
 Solec — 71
 Spain — 146, 325, 333, 336, 338, 347
 Suchożebry — 116, 117, 289
 Stany — 117
 Stara Rawa — 104
 Staropole — 243, 269
 Stary Konstantynów — 243, 312, 446,
 456
 Stary Sącz — 34
 Stockbridge — 23, 27-29, 39, 131, 162,
 204, 224, 234, 243, 269, 327, 333,
 441, 444-445, 447, 449-450, 454
 Studzianna — 104
 St. Petersburg — 151, 285, 437
 Sucha — 303
 Sweden — 143, 146, 153-154

T

Tarczyn — 174
 Targowica — 285
 Tarsus — 403
 Tolmezzo — 375

U

Ukraine — 68, 115, 436
 Udine — 375

V

- Venice — 389
 Vienna — 19, 142, 303
 Vilnius — 12, 19, 22, 70, 115, 152,
 245, 247-249, 251, 256, 373, 441
 Vitebsk — 12
 Volhynia — 68, 255, 312

W

- Warsaw — 11, 19-20, 28-29, 31, 34,
 36, 41, 45, 48, 56, 58, 67, 70-72,
 79, 104, 111, 143, 145, 151-153,
 156-157, 159, 161, 172, 174-176,
 180, 182, 206, 214, 222, 243, 246,
 267-268, 273, 285, 287, 296, 298,
 301-303, 370, 383-384, 403-404,
 409, 411-412, 417
 Wilga — 43, 108, 292, 469
 Włocławek — 20, 456
 Włodzimierz — 403
 Wołczyn — 270-271, 297, 301
 Wołpa — 267-268, 279, 414-415, 431
 Woraszczce — 68, 115
 Wólka Jagodzińska — 117
 Wrocław — 31, 65, 151-152, 156, 288,
 294, 297, 450, 457-459
 Wyględówka — 65
 Wyszomierz — 117

Y

- York — 394, 420

Z

- Zalesie — 107
 Zion — 59

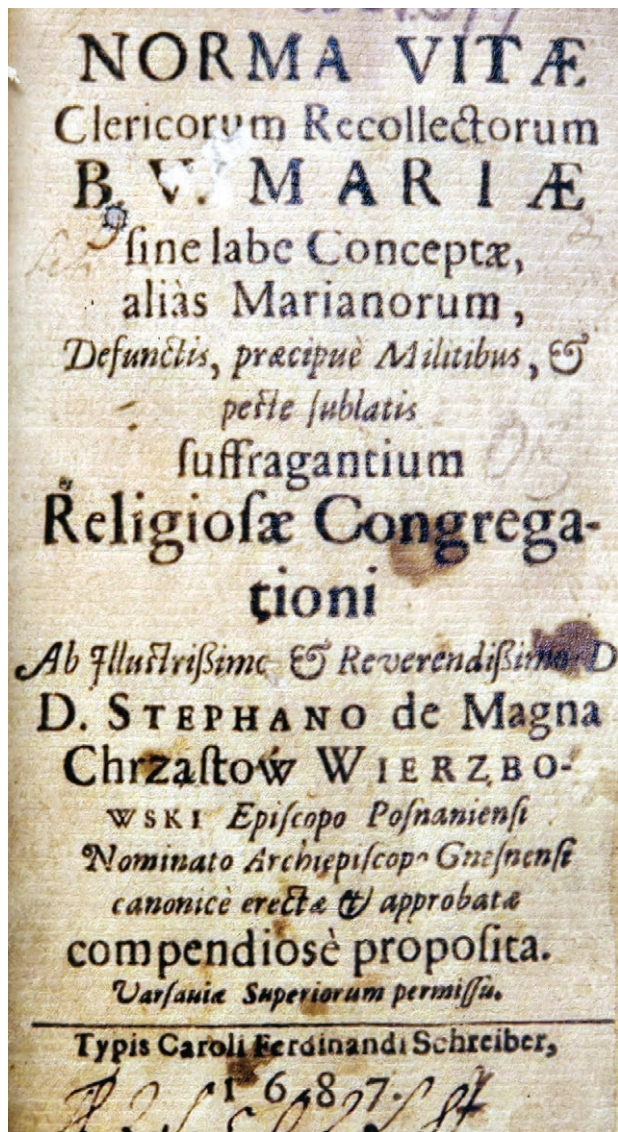
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- Żelechów — 292
 Żemosław — 275, 301

APPENDIX



Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński (1631–1701). Painting by an unknown artist from the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Marian Fathers' monastery in Skórzec, Poland.
This is the oldest surviving image of St. Stanislaus.



Rule of Life, written by Fr. Papczyński in 1671. It was to serve as a Rule and Constitution for the nascent Congregation of Marian Fathers. Printed edition from 1687.

CONFRARIA
DA IMMACULADA
CONCEIÇÃO

Do Escapulario, e das dez
Virtudes de
MARIA SANTISSIMA,
Erecta, e noticiada com suas proprias
Indulgencias pelos

RELIGIOSOS MARIANOS

*Da immaculada Conceição, suffragadores
das almas do Purgatorio, e coadjutores dos
RR. Parocos, em virtude da confirmação
da sua Ordem debaixo da Regra das dez
Virtudes Euangelicas de N. Senhora, in-
corporada na Religião Serafica com os seus
privilegios, e indulgencias pelos SS. PP.
Innocencio XII. e Innocencio XIII.*

Offerecida à mesma Senhora
DA CONCEIÇÃO,
PADROEIRA DESTE REINO,
Pelas Reaes mãos
DO SERENISSIMO SENHOR
DOM PEDRO,
INFANTE DE PORTUGAL

LISBOA, Na Offic. de Miguel Manescal
da Costa, Impref. do S. Offic. An. 1758.
Com todas as licenças necessarias.

Title page of the Portuguese edition of a booklet about the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception and the Scapular of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, approved for the Marians in Portugal (Lisbon, 1758).

CONSTITUTIONES
APOSTOLICÆ
ORDINIS IMMACULATÆ CONCEPTIONIS
BEATISSIMÆ VIRGINIS MARIÆ
CLERICORUM REGULARIUM
MARIANORUM
Regulæ Decem Virtutum Ejusdem Mariæ
Concilio Tridentino Summorum Pontificum Decretis
CONFORMES
Per Eminentissimos S. R. E. Cardinales in Sacra
Congregatione Episcoporum & Regularium
post Innocentium XII. Innocentium XIII.
ITERUM REVISÆ.
Et una cum Ordine per Diploma Apostolicum
A PIO PP. SEXTO
Confirmatæ, & approbatæ
Die 17. Novembris Anno 1786.



ROMÆ MDCCLXXXVII.

Ex Typographiâ Reverendæ Cameræ Apostolicæ.

Reformed Constitutions of the Marian Order
approved on March 27, 1786, by Pope Pius VI.

111

PROTOCOLLUM
Conventūs
Mariampolensis
Sub
Præsidentia R. Patris Victoris
Polagiewicz
Anno Dñi 1783 Q 6. Febr.

COMPARATUM
Ex Successore sub Præsidentia R. P. Michaelis
ab Anno 1817. quoddam Notula a signat
et inseribantur p. M. M. M.

Title page of a collection of Marian documents written
in the monastery in Marijampole.

PROTOCOLLUM

R. P. Andreæ Katyll pro tunc electi Actualis
Definitoris, ac Secretarij Provinciae Manuale.
Tempore Capituli Provincialis, Anno Dni 1799.
Die 15. mchoatiuè, et per sequentes completivè
Tres Dies Mensis Octobris.

In Conventu Mariampolensi sub Dominio
Serenissimi ac Potentissimi Friderici
Vilhelmi III Borussiae Regis,
Celebrati.

In quo
Electio A. R. Patri Provincialis, quàm
aliorum Officialium, Formae Juramentorum,
ac Obedientialium, nec non Ceterorum id generis
similium ingrossata Continentur.

Comparatum Anno Domini
Eodem ut Supra. Die 26. 8bris.
Ad Majorem D. I. O. M. Gloriam. s.
Bismarq. 1^o Mariae Honorem
Advis Inceptis Virgo MARIA meis.





Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński. Painting from the second half of the 18th century whose author in all probability might have been Br. Francis Niemirowski, MIC (1735–1795). Marian Fathers' monastery in Marijampole, Lithuania.



Church and monastery in Puszcza Mariańska (Korabiew Forest) before the fire of May 2, 1993.



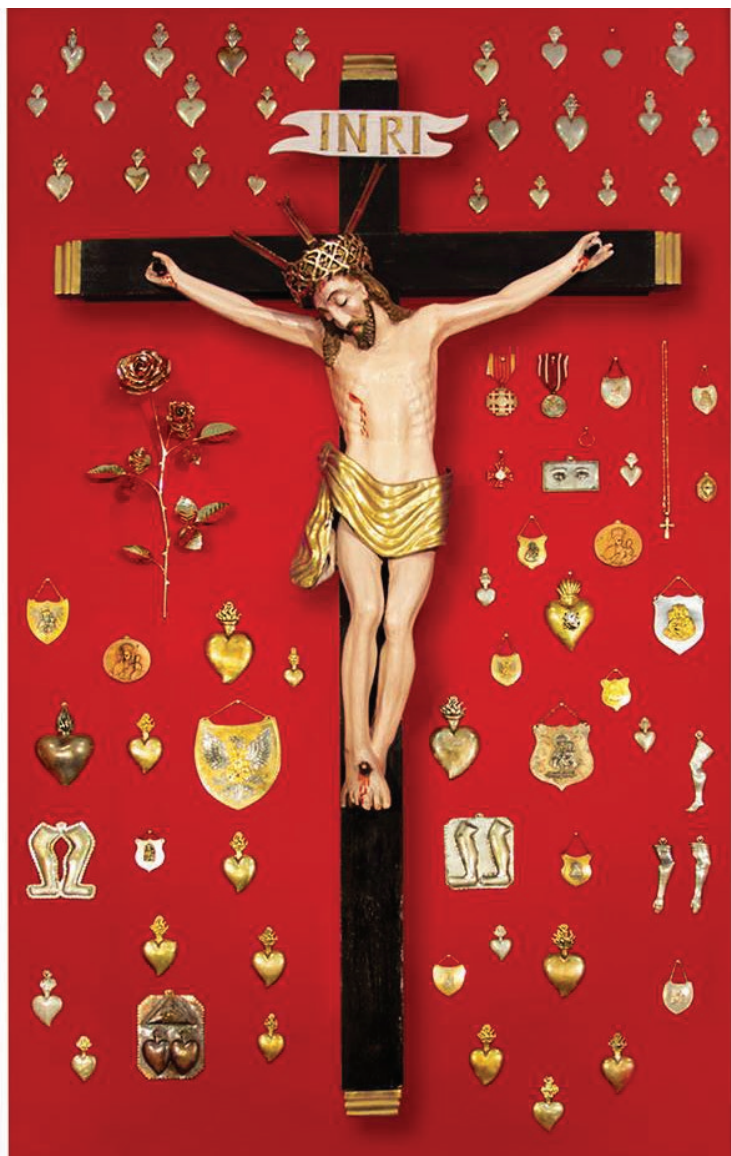
Historic church in Skórzec from 1794, before expansion in 2012–2014.



Present-day appearance of the church in Skórzec after its extension.



The interior of the shrine after the extension.
In the altar is the "Miraculous Cross".



"Miraculous Cross" from the mid-17th century in the Shrine of the Holy Cross in the church at Skórzec.



The historic chapel of St. John of Nepomucene in Skórzec.



Father John Raymond Nowicki, MIC (1736–1806). Painting from the second half of the 18th century, attributed to Fr. John Niezabitowski, MIC (1744–1804).
Marian Fathers' monastery in Gozlin, Poland.



Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński (1700–1755).
Painting from the second half of the 18th century, attributed to Fr. John
Niezabitowski, MIC (1744–1804). Marian Fathers' monastery in Gozlin Poland.



Venerable Casimir Wyszyński's signature as the Superior General of the Marians – together with the Great Seal of the Order – on his circular letter from May 18, 1748.



The “wafer” imprint of the great seal of the Marians from the last quarter of XVIII c. This seal was embossed on the protocol of the so-called Three-year Chapter, which took place in Marijampole in September of 1838. On the rim the seal bears the Latin inscription:
 SIG: MAIUS: ORD: CC:REGL: MARIANORUM•SUB•TIT: IMMTÆ•CONCEPT: B.V. MARLÆ:



John III Sobieski, King of Poland (1674–1696), savior of Christianity at the Battle of Vienna in 1683. A great protector and benefactor of Fr. Papczyński and his community, he gave his approval for the Order on June 2, 1679. It may be surmised that during Fr. Stanislaus's stay in Warsaw (1663–1669), Sobieski, who was a Senator at that time, consulted him in various matters and availed himself of his spiritual direction in the confessional.

Later, in Nowa Jerozolima, he did the same as a king.



This canvas, called *Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Founder*, is either from the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century. The work is attributed to Fr. John Niezabitowski, MIC (1744–1804). Marian Fathers' monastery in Skórzec, Poland.



Card. Francesco Pignatelli (1652–1734).
Apostolic Nuncio to Poland in 1700–1703.
On 6 of June 1701 in Warsaw, he received
solemn vows from St. Stanislaus on the *Rule*
of the 10 Evangelical Virtues of the B.V.M.



Card. Henry Benedict Prince Stuart de
York (1725–1807). On September 24, 1784
he was named Cardinal Protector
of the Marian Order.



Abp. Carlo Camuzi or Camucio (1706–
1788). Special benefactor of the Marians.
His financial support helped them to
acquire in 1779 the church of St. Vitus in
Rome, along with the adjacent monastery.



Countess Frances Butler (1690? –1767).
Foundress of the Marians' church and
monastery in Marijampolė.



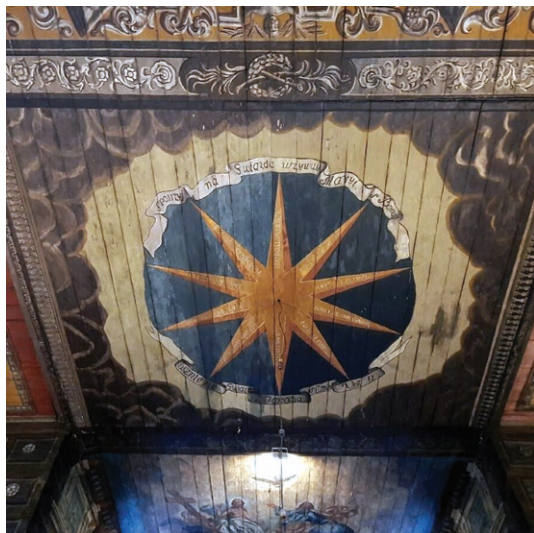
The now non-existent Marians' church and monastery in Raśna from 1749, nowadays Belarus. A view from the beginning of the 20th century.



View of St. Vitus church in Rome. Lithography by G. Vasi from 1756.



The side altar of the Marian's church in Gozlin with the grace-famous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Sorrows. A gift of St. Stanislaus to this shrine.



Ten-pointed star – the symbol of the 10 evangelical virtues of the BVM on the ceiling of the Marians' church in Gozlin.



Interior of the Marians' church in Balsamão, Portugal.
In the wall on the left the tomb of Venerable Fr. Casimir Wyszynski is visible.

Marians in 1670-1788 is a fascinating account of the founding and early history of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first native male religious order to be established on Polish soil in the 17th century. Many interesting historical facts are presented by the author for the first time, and its message is extremely relevant to today.

Here God conveys to St. Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński His Will to establish a community whose members are to undertake fervent prayer for the Holy Souls suffering in Purgatory; participate in parish ministry; teach the truths of faith to the people; and enlighten the youth by running rural schools. This labor has been undertaken for centuries – despite many adversities – by successive generations of Marian Fathers and Brothers faithful to the Will of God, constantly finding inspiration in the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In *Marians in 1670-1788*, the century unfolds when all Marian monasteries and residences were established and organized. Three key figures played essential roles: the Founder, Stanislaus; the Renewer, Casimir Wyszynski; and the Reformer, Raymond Nowicki. This book highlights their roles as inspirers of the religious path; the discipline of their confreres; and fidelity to their vocation and Rule. It also introduces other Marians, bringing to light the little-known, pious individuals who were faithful followers of the Founder, and depicts periods of spiritual revival, development, achievements, struggles for fidelity to the monastic ideals, as well as periods of stagnation, decline, and crisis, and the efforts to overcome them.



Fr. Jan Kosmowski, MIC, PhD, is a graduate of the Catholic University of Lublin and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. For years, he has been making efforts to preserve the history of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception by organizing the archives of the Polish Province; participating in the beatification processes of Marian candidates for sainthood; and writing books. His publications include *Marianie w latach 1787-1864* (Marian Fathers in the years 1787-1864) (2004); *The Marian Fathers' Mission of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite in Harbin* (1928-1948) (2011); *The Marian Fathers' Charity Work in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (2017); and the album *The Cenacle* (2019), about the church where the tomb of St. Stanislaus Papczyński is located.



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