



**FATHER  
CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI**  
**HIS LIFE AND MISSION**



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# Father Casimir Wyszyński

## His Life and Mission

Selection of texts by  
Andrew R. Mączyński, MIC



MARIAN  
HERITAGE

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## INTRODUCTION



*I come to serve you ...* With these words Father Casimir Wyszynski began a circular letter to his confreres as the newly-elected Superior General of the Marian Order. These words reflect his manner of being a member of this particular religious community and of the entire Church. All his life he strove on the pathway of faith to serve both God and his neighbor, without letting any difficulties or adversities deter him. He knew that he had been called and sent by the Lord to fulfill the mission of proclaiming the Good News to his fellow Marians in order to rekindle the community's religious charism and to help—through communal effort—the people suffering in those difficult times to maintain hope and to trust completely in Divine Providence after the example of the Virgin Mary.

What kind of man was he? Why do we wish to preserve his memory? What makes his message relevant today? These are just a few questions that led to the publication of this book, the aim of which is to bring the person of Father Casimir Wyszynski closer to the modern world through reflection on his life's journey, his Marian vocation and his mission in the Church.

We find in Father Casimir the spirituality of a Servant of God, that is, of someone who is sent by God. In the life of a Servant, the most important thing is to fulfill the will of God as his sole inspiration, nourishment and purpose. We admire Father Casimir's lifelong submission to the will of God; he lived to fulfill his mission and not for himself or his personal glory.

Father Casimir humbly accepted God's plan for his life and strove enthusiastically to implement it. In this way, he demonstrated the beauty of a humble heart and pure intention, both of which provide room for God to work. That is why we see his life as a sacred pursuit, a pursuit not aimed at filling the emptiness of one's own heart or appeasing human ambitions, but which generously employs time and effort in the service of the "One who sends."

The attitude of service in regard to God's plan of salvation finds its expression in a readiness to recognize the signs of the times and to undertake challenges, even if they seem difficult or impossible to complete. For a Servant hears the same assertion that Mary once heard: "For nothing will be impossible for God" (Lk 1:37).

A Servant is able to heed human hearts in which God's love works from the beginning, so that this love can be manifest in their lives and assume a Christian countenance. To serve the life-giving Father means to persevere in steadfast hope that this gift of life would not go to waste but would come to full blossom.

The road of service is always a paschal road on which salvation appears as the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection. For this reason, while this road is not devoid of suffering and dark experiences, it is always marked by the joy of new life. That is how Father Casimir lived out his vocation of service in which the anxieties of life did not eclipse the radiance of God's love, but urged him to a more fervent effort in fulfilling God's plan.

Serving the Father means dedicating oneself to one's brethren, even if the repayment may come only in the form of ingratitude, incomprehension, rejection, and persecution... And Father Casimir tasted all of these. Yet he did not deviate from his path, nor give up or become discouraged, for a Servant knows that his faithfulness to the will of God transforms him into a sign of contradiction. And this sign is what shows the way. Father Casimir was the sign that pointed the way of renewal and development of the Marian community in its service to the Church.

A Servant does everything out of love, not from calculation or heartless assessing of "gains and losses." A Servant not only proclaims the Gospel as a beautiful way of life, but gives a witness of love for people and assistance in their achieving the fullness of life in love. Father Casimir went to people not to lecture, but to serve them. Because of this, he could write to his brethren: "I come to you not only filled with zeal, but also bound by this task: to retrieve with pastoral care what was lost; to guide with fatherly love that which was stumbling; to embrace in love and without

fear what was damaged; to strengthen with gentle care that which is weak; and to protect with proper vigilance all that is healthy and strong” (cf. Ez 34:2.4.11).

Serving people does not mean only “doing good,” but helping them above all to discover their true dignity, which can often become overshadowed by sin. Father Casimir was fascinated by the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, which shows the truth about every person loved by God and endowed with the grace of salvation. Father Casimir zealously demonstrated the beauty and splendor of the grace of Mary Immaculate in such a way that human persons marred by sin would not lose hope, but instead would open themselves up to the salutary work of God while entrusting themselves completely to God’s mercy.

A Servant is someone who heeds God and contemplates His Face. In Father Casimir we admire a deep spirit of prayer and a love of the Eucharist. Thus, his service was persuasive and fruitful, while a person not attentive to God would not have anything to convey to others and would lack any way to help them.

Father Casimir, who has been deemed “Venerable,” proved to be the very person to guide the Marian community out of the spiritual and organizational crisis of his day and succeeded in placing it on the road to a deeper faithfulness to its religious charism and a more fervent service to the Church. Undertaking this transition was not easy, but his efforts bore fruit. Father Casimir stood beside his Marian confreres as he encouraged them to “put out into deep water,” where they discovered a “new presence” in the Church and the world, and were inspired to live out the charism of the Cenacle as they were swept forward by the wind of the Holy Spirit to serve the contemporary world towards a future in Christ.

Venerable Casimir Wyszynski is the model of a man who devoted himself completely to the service of God and neighbor and who faithfully fulfilled his calling. Let us endeavor to follow in his footsteps!





Zygmunt Proczek, MIC, PhD

**THE SERVANT OF MARY IMMACULATE**





**O**n May 15, 1968, the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stephen Wyszyński, arrived at the parish of Jeziórka near Grójec to venerate a saintly Marian, Father Casimir Wyszyński. In the homily which the Primate delivered that day, he emphasized that the example of the Servant of God Father Casimir, of two centuries ago, speaks to us even today, particularly as his life relates to a life of faith, love of God, of Mary Immaculate, and of our neighbor.

In the Primate's observation, Father Casimir nurtured his faith through frequent meditation upon the Lord's Passion, and cultivated his love for Mary Immaculate by dedicating himself to serve her in the Order of Marians and by promoting devotion to her in Poland, Lithuania, and Portugal.

Father Casimir did not limit his activities to the work of his personal sanctification or the growth of the Marian Order, but he made efforts to bring about the spiritual rebirth of all of Polish society during the difficult time of Saxon rule. He pointed to Mary in whom he saw salvation from the deluge of evil which was destroying the Polish nation. Father Casimir's zeal and love extended beyond the borders of his homeland. In his desire to strengthen Christ's Kingdom and to spread devotion to Mary Immaculate among other nations, he went as far as Portugal, where a lively memory of his saintly life survives there even now as evidenced by pilgrimages to his tomb in Balsamão and by requests for the speedy beatification of that "saintly Pole."

### *In Search of a Way of Life*

**T**hree hundred years ago, the village of Jeziora Wielka and adjacent towns in the district of Grójec, Poland, belonged to the family of John Casimir [Jan Kazimierz] and Hedwig [Jadwiga] Wyszyński. They were distantly related to powerful noble families of Poland and were spiritually associated with various religious orders. It is noteworthy that John Casimir's brother, Joseph,

joined the order of the Dominicans. and spent the last years of his life at the church of St. Hyacinth in Warsaw where he led the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. At the same time, Hedwig's three brothers, Ignatius, Waclaw, and Dominic Zawadzki, became members of the Piarist order.

Eight children were born from the marriage of John Casimir and Hedwig, out of which three sons dedicated themselves to the service of God: Andrew John (1684-1754), joined the Piarists, John (1699-1773) joined the Vincentians, and Januarius Francis, joined the Marians. The latter child, their seventh and the future Father Casimir Wyszyński, was born on August 19, 1700. He was baptized Januarius Francis but was commonly called Francis in later years. At the parish church in Jeziora one can still see the water font in which he was baptized and the image of Our Blessed Mother which previously belonged to the Wyszyński family's house chapel. The parishioners still offer prayers before this image for the beatification of their compatriot.

Francis' parents' joy over the birth of another offspring was overshadowed by a war raging in Poland at that time. Swedish, Saxon and Russian armies marched through Poland, marking their passage by fires, ruin, plunder and the forcible draft of local farmers. The sweeping devastation was furthered by armed confrontations between supporters of Augustus II<sup>1</sup> and Stanislaus Leszczyński<sup>2</sup>, resulting in ravaging epidemics which diminished the number of the Polish population.

Anthony, one of Francis's brothers, served in the Polish army, and the Wyszyńskis, fearing reprisal from the Swedes, sought refuge in the southern part of Poland. It was not until 1708 that

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<sup>1</sup> Augustus II the Strong (May 12, 1670–February 1, 1733) also known in Saxony as Frederick Augustus I, was Elector of Saxony from 1697, Imperial Vicar, and elected King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania in the years 1697-1706 and from 1709 until his death in 1733.

<sup>2</sup> Stanislaus I Leszczyński (October 20, 1677–February 23, 1766) was King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Duke of Lorraine, and a count of the Holy Roman Empire. After the death of Augustus, who died in 1733, Stanislaus sought to regain the Polish throne with the help of French support for his candidacy.

the family was able to return and rebuild their ruined estate. Their even greater concern was for the proper nurturing and education of their children. The youngest boys, John and Francis, were sent to the Piarists' school in the nearby town of Góra Kalwaria. The proximity of about 40 kilometers between the school and the family home allowed the parents to inquire frequently as to the boys' progress in their studies. Relations between the Wyszyński family and the Piarists were close and cordial since Mrs. Wyszyński's three brothers were members of that order. One of them, Father Waclaw Zawadzki was rector of the school in Góra Kalwaria from 1711 to 1714.

Francis soon became noted for his piety and uprightness, although at first he struggled with learning. Annoyed at this, his father brought him back home and began treating him harshly. One day, without his parents' knowledge, Francis set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. However, his older brother Michael caught up with the young pilgrim, who agreed to go back only out of concern for his worried mother and with the promise of his father's forgiveness. Indeed, from that day forward his father showed him more kindness and allowed him to renew his studies.

In 1714, due to public unrest and epidemics, the school was closed and Francis was sent home. Three years later, he resumed his studies at the Piarists' College in Warsaw, where he stayed at a hostel for students of gentry's families.

Following his father's wish, he was trained to serve at the Warsaw municipal chancellery. Having worked a year there, he suddenly pledged to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. This time he wished to have his parents' blessing, so he revealed his plans to his brother Michael, who informed their parents.

Mr. Wyszyński came to Warsaw, hoping to talk his son out of making this pilgrimage, but Francis would not be dissuaded. He also kept secret the reason for making this vow. At that point his father turned for help to a Warsaw official, Father Wężyk. After a conversation with Francis, Father Wężyk recommended that the

young man make a retreat at the nearby Vincentians. Shortly however, the ecclesiastical authorities pronounced Francis's pledge irrevocable, so his father had to give consent for the pilgrimage to Compostela.

Francis put on pilgrims' clothes and, travelling probably with a group of Polish pilgrims, started on his journey to Spain by way of Rome. The group arrived there in October of 1721. Francis was 21. There are documents indicating that 28 people from Poland, among them Francis and his older brother, Joseph, were at the Eternal City around that time. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, they went to confession to Father Sebastian Mulinowicz at St. Peter's Basilica. Perhaps at least some members of that group intended to make the pilgrimage to Compostela.

From the Eternal City, Francis took the road to Spain. He managed to reach its borders, but fell gravely ill. Doctors resolutely opposed all further travel plans. The unfortunate pilgrim returned to Rome where he obtained permission to exchange his vow of going to Compostela for visiting Roman shrines and performing works of mercy. He remained there for a while, indulging in pious practices while earning his living by copying documents at a lawyer's office and working for a time at the desalination plants administered by the Vatican.

Francis never revealed his reasons for attempting the pilgrimage. In the words of his biographer, Fr. Alexis Fischer, "He (Francis) felt greatly repulsed by the ways of the world and was searching for a more certain path to salvation." He was not attracted to any secular career since it often entailed injustice and humiliation of the lowly. Instead, he wanted to get more fully involved in God's work, to which two of his older brothers were already committed: one as a Piarist, the other as a member of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul. He may also have been shocked by the suicide of his colleague's servant. By going on pilgrimage he sought divine enlightenment as to his road in life; he discovered it in Rome.

***In Atonement for His Brother***

In the fall of 1723, Francis met Father Joachim Kozłowski, a Marian who had come to Rome on his Order's business, connected indirectly with the Wyszynski family.

According to the intentions of the Founder of the Marian Order, St. Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701), the Marians were to spread devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, bring help to the souls of the departed suffering in purgatory, and assist parish priests in their ministry. He obtained from the Holy See the approval of his institute as a community dedicated to active apostolic work. However, after the Founder's death the Marians experienced difficulties which nearly led to the dissolution of their Order. In 1715, Father Matthew Krajewski was elected Superior General of the Order. The members of the electoral chapter expected this young, energetic and well-educated man to contribute greatly to the dynamic growth of the Marians. To their dismay, it happened otherwise. The new Superior General, "enraptured by a desire of procuring lay prelatures," began to lay blame on the Order before ecclesial and lay authorities, even insisting on its termination and suggesting that the Marian priests abandon all work in parishes.

One of Father Krajewski's allies was Francis' older brother Joseph, who entered the Marian novitiate around 1716, and received the religious name of Alexander. Having spent time in the military service of King Augustus II, and still used to the customs of soldierly life, he couldn't adjust to the demands of religious discipline, particularly the Marians' regulation prohibiting the consumption of hard liquor. Therefore, he supported Father Krajewski's reformist aspirations.

Finally, following instructions from the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Adam Rostkowski conducted a visitation of the Marian monasteries. Unfortunately, he was a reformist sympathizer and, using the lack of official papal approval of the Order's Constitutions as a pretext, he forbade admitting new candidates to the novitiate and dispatched younger priests to serve in parishes of the Diocese of Poznan that had been without pastoral care due

to epidemics. Just a few Marians, mostly the elderly ones, remained at the monasteries. This difficult period in Marian history lasted six years, from 1716 to 1722, and became known as the "Rostkovian dispersion."

The new bishop of Poznan, Peter Tarło, by a decree on August 1, 1722, ordered all Marians to return to their monasteries to elect a new Superior General and to prepare new statutes to regulate their way of life. The General Chapter convened on August 31, 1722, in Góra Kalwaria, and elected Father Andrew Deszpot as the Superior General. The new statutes were drawn up and Father Joachim Kozłowski was dispatched to Rome to seek papal approval of the Order. It was during this visit to Rome that he met Francis Wszyński and told him about his brother Joseph's harmful acts against the Order. Upon hearing his account, Francis made a decision almost immediately and said to Father Joachim: "I wish to repair what my brother has destroyed. I ask for the [Marian] habit."

For some time Father Joachim closely observed this new candidate, trying to decide if his desire to join the Order might be merely a whim. It was not until November 18, 1723, that he admitted Francis into the Marian Order and gave him the religious name of Casimir of St. Joseph. The ceremony took place at the Church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop and Martyr, in Rome. Father Kozłowski also ordered Francis to undergo a yearlong novitiate in Poland. There is a document preserved at the archives of the Archdiocese of Poznan, which states among other things: "... he was vested in a white religious habit by the Very Reverend Father Joachim of St. Anne, who at the time was Assistant and Procurator General of the Order in Rome, and who directed Casimir to complete a year of novitiate at the Korabiew Hermitage in the Polish Kingdom at a place appointed by the Most Reverend Father Andrew of St. Matthew, the Superior General, and beginning on the feast of St. Joseph the Confessor."

Francis' period of indecision and search for a way of life was now ended with the act of investiture and admission into the Marian Order and his acceptance of the new name Casimir of St. Joseph.

Many years after, Father Casimir wrote to his brother Valerian, a priest in the Piarist Order, about some mystical experiences that influenced his decision to join the Marians: "Like a second Saul, I came to this Congregation which one of our own, namely our brother Joseph, had attacked. The Blessed Mother said to me: 'Francis, why do you persecute me?' Not daring to kick against the goad, I felt impelled to take the habit in Rome" (August 5, 1752). And just like St. Paul who after meeting the Risen Christ gave himself entirely to spreading the faith and strengthening the Church, Francis also decided to repair the wrongs caused by his brother and dedicated himself entirely to the service of God in the Order that promoted honor to Mary Immaculate.

### ***Faithful to the Founder and His Work***

**I**n December of 1723, having obtained the approval of the Marian statutes by the Holy See, Father Joachim Kozłowski and his companion, Brother Nicholas of St. Martin, set out on their return journey to Poland. They took with them a new candidate for the Congregation, Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński.

On this trip Casimir found the courage to point out to his superior the latter's transgression of fraternal unity and charity by making Brother Nicholas carry excessive burdens. Angered, Father Joachim ordered his travel companions to continue the trip on their own. They traveled on foot, hauling the luggage and praying together. As they were passing Casimir's family home, he learned that his mother lay dying. He had the chance to bid her farewell and attend her funeral. Then he continued to the Marian hermitage in Korabiew Forest, currently the Marian Forest, and on March 19, 1724, the solemnity of St. Joseph, he was admitted into the Marian novitiate. "After the demise of his worthy mother he followed the salvific voice and dedicated himself to imitating the life of Mary Immaculate" (A. Fischer).

Consumed by the mission of mending the wrongs caused by his brother to the Marian Order, Casimir did his best to abide

strictly by the rule and its constitutions. The spirit of mortification marked him: he did not take meat with his meals, and water was his only beverage. He noted with sadness that not all the brethren were faithful to the prescribed regulations. He even urged Father Joachim, then superior of the monastery in Korabiew Forest, to be more zealous in watching over the observance of the statutes, the approval of which he, Father Joachim, had personally endeavored to obtain in Rome, and to personally practise what he taught to others.

Casimir's zeal stirred a dislike in his brethren who had acquired some unbecoming habits during the years of the dispersion. Therefore, they tried to ridicule him. One day someone splashed red paint over the crucifix in Casimir's cell, trying to create the appearance of a miracle having taken place. Casimir did not rise to this deception. He simply cleaned the crucifix and kept silent about this spiteful act. "He bore much oppression, hatred, and persecution. Amidst all of this he preserved his peace of mind as befits a venerator of Mary and a good Marian" (Fr. A. Fischer).

At the time, there was a custom of sending novices on various errands outside the monastery; this greatly interfered with their formation. Being once dispatched to deliver some letters, the zealous novice Casimir used the opportunity to restore religious discipline in the Order. He stopped at his family home and with his brother Michael's assistance, he asked the Franciscans to conduct an official visitation. At that time the Marians were under the jurisdiction of the Franciscans. Hoping to be of assistance, the Visitor, Father Jacob Wolski, appointed two Reformed Franciscans, Father Mansueto Leporini and Father Felician Szadkowski to work with the Marians in Korabiew Forest, the first as the novice master and the second as the instructor of theology.

By advocating strict religious observance such as this, Casimir exposed himself to the displeasure of certain brethren. It is no wonder then that negative voices could be heard among the opinions of him during his time in the novitiate. There were even attempts to prolong his novitiate and postpone his profession of religious vows. Even on March 19, 1725, when his family arrived



to participate in the ceremony of his profession, yet another vote was hastily organized to decide whether he should be admitted to vows. Nonetheless, Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński made his solemn religious profession before Father Joachim Kozłowski in the presence of Frs. Michael Gibler and Ignatius of St. Matthew, who was the confessor of the community and a member of the house council.

Then Brother Casimir began his intensive preparations for the priesthood. It should be emphasized that—while preparing for the priesthood—Casimir also assisted other members of his community in their education by fulfilling the duties of philosophy instructor. On Holy Saturday, March 31, 1725, he received the tonsure and four minor orders at St. John’s Collegiate Church in Warsaw. On December 22 of the same year he was ordained a sub-deacon and then, on March 16 of the following year, a deacon. On April 20, 1726, John Joachim Tarło, Bishop of Poznan, ordained Casimir to the priesthood at the Collegiate Church in Warsaw.

Mindful of the significance of his priestly obligations, Father Casimir insisted on receiving proper training. He recalled later: “When he [his superior] was reluctant to send me for further education, I spoke up. It is not fitting to be a priest without education, and it is dangerous to engage in hearing confessions without proper experience. Therefore, I had to steer him cleverly into organizing studies for us.”

In 1725-28, Father Casimir studied theology under the guidance of Marian and Franciscan priests, at the same time filling in as the Philosophy Instructor for his seminarian confreres. Soon after, the Franciscans entrusted him with the offices of Novice Master and Theology Instructor and went back to their monasteries. The Franciscans noted this young priest’s great spiritual and intellectual gifts, which he gladly shared with his confreres.

The Marian General Chapter of 1728 entrusted Father Casimir with the duties of Assistant House Superior in Korabiew Forest, General Secretary of the Order, and Novice Master. Unfortunately, Father Casimir felt he wasn’t able to fulfill his duties properly with

regard to the novices, because he was sent frequently to minister in parishes.

By joining the Marians, Father Casimir wanted to mend the harm caused by his own brother. Now, as a Marian, he noticed the great harm caused to the community by the unfaithfulness and bad example of his brethren, especially of those who had found themselves outside the community during the “Roskopian dispersion” and were reluctant to re-adjust to the strict rules of religious life. Such individuals brought great suffering upon him. At one point they even planned an attempt on his life, as his brother Michael later recalled.

Nevertheless, Father Casimir persevered in his vocation and was true to his decision to restore fidelity to the Marian way of life in the Order as founded by St. Stanislaus Papczyński. The Founder’s once-closest collaborator, Father Joachim Kozłowski, began ascribing the role of Founder to himself, which stirred up a disagreement among the Marians. Because of these circumstances, Father Casimir went to Rome, where he planned to seek a remedy for the rift within the Order and settle other important matters. He arrived in the Eternal City in 1731, with two companions—Father Dionisius Kisieliński and Brother Wszyński Wasilewski—and took up residence at the Franciscan monastery of Ara Coeli.

During this stay in Rome, Father Casimir was able to confirm the identity of St. Stanislaus as the Founder of the Marian Order. He left the following account: “Being finally convinced that Father Joachim plans to transform our Order and appoint himself its Founder, while obscuring the memory of its rightful Founder, I had to go to Rome to put a stop to all these novelties. Although Father Joachim tried to interfere in all possible ways, he did not attain the end he desired. I also had to impede his efforts in Rome when he tried to obtain certain documents for our Order without my knowledge which would have brought about great turmoil in the Order and would have repelled our benefactors because of our irresoluteness. However, God Himself exposed his machinations in Rome and I was able to prevent his efforts.”

Father Wyszyński also undertook efforts to establish a permanent Marian house in Rome which could facilitate watching over the matters of the Order. An opportunity occurred to purchase a chapel in which a miraculous image of Mary was venerated; the Blessed Mother's scarred face was reminiscent of the icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa. Father Casimir took up residence near this chapel and busied himself with accepting candidates to the Order. On July 9, 1731, he came very close to signing a contract for the perpetual lease of the Madonna die Cerchi Chapel with Marquis Christopher Cenci, its owner. However, his superiors in Poland did not consent to the transaction: first, because of the great expense involved, and second, because the chapel's location in a damp, malaria-infested location would be harmful to health. Candidates to the Order could not bear staying there, and it turned out that Father Casimir himself contracted malaria, which ever since then continued to ruin his health. Unfortunately, no other site for a Marian monastery was found in Rome at that time.

Father Casimir dedicated much time to prayer, visiting Roman churches and meditating on the Scriptures. He was in the habit of reading the whole of the Scriptures in the course of an entire year. As he tended to the matters of his Congregation, he also became acquainted with the lives of other religious communities. He also undertook pastoral work among the shepherds in the vicinity of Rome. He taught them the truths of the Faith, prepared them for the sacraments, and celebrated the Eucharist. In addition, his apostolic work involved the preparation and publication in 1733 of his reflections on the life of St. Ignatius of Antioch, whose devotion to Christ was sealed by his martyrdom in Rome. The book was entitled *Vestigia æternæ felicitatis* or *Traces of Eternal Happiness*.

During this time in the Eternal City, from 1731 to 1733, the Servant of God Casimir studied books on Marian topics and even copied one of them entirely. In 1749, he translated this book and having first adapted it to the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*, published it under the title of *Morning Star*. In order to more fruitfully pro-

mote Marian devotion, he instituted confraternities of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and to foster honor to Mary, he obtained from the Theatine Fathers in Rome the privilege to bless and confer the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.

In the beginning of 1734, Father Casimir returned to Poland and on July 3<sup>rd</sup> of that year he participated in the General Chapter celebrated in Korabiew Forest, during which he fulfilled the duties of the Chapter secretary. He was very pleased to note a higher level of spirituality in the life of the Marians, to which Father Raphael Chełchowski, the Franciscan Visitor, had greatly contributed.

The Chapter elected Father Casimir the Vicar General of the Order and re-assigned him as Novice Master. In the years to follow, he also served as the Assistant Superior in Korabiew Forest, instructor of Moral Theology, and Spiritual Director of that monastery. He always gave great example of religious zeal. The number of the members who advocated relaxation of religious discipline gradually declined and the new generation of Marians, formed by Father Casimir and marked by similar zeal and enthusiasm, wanted him for the office of Superior General.

### *Superior General of the Marian Community*

**O**n December 12, 1737, the General Chapter of the Marians in Skórzec unanimously elected Father Casimir Wszyński to the office of Superior General. The young and dynamic Superior General fulfilled this honorable duty for three years and was instrumental in the growth of his religious family. After the assignment of offices, the Skórzec Chapter was concluded, but the new General asked its delegates to stay for deliberation and discussion on a program of work which he had drawn up in 29 points. The Capitular Fathers approved the program in its entirety. The General declared that he did not intend to exercise his authority like a dic-

tator, but in consultation with the General Council. He also noted that he accepted the responsibility of carefully upholding the statutes and the rule. He promised to make sure that the Chapter's decisions would be implemented, not just remaining on paper.

In December of 1737, after his election to the office of Superior General, Father Casimir issued a letter to all his subordinates in which he wrote that God chose him in spite of his unworthiness and placed on him the duty of shepherd. He accepted this office to serve God and prepare the flock in his care for the coming of the Lord. Following the example of St. John the Baptist, he called upon the Marians to make straight pathways and prepare new roads for the Lord. He strongly encouraged all Marians to imitate the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Father Stanislaus Papczyński, the Founder of the Marian Order. As no one else before, Father Casimir endeavored to promote honor to Father Papczyński.

Father Casimir realized that the religious vocation made sense only if men in vows steadfastly followed the road of the evangelical counsels as prescribed by the statutes of their community. Therefore, his first and most urgent concern was to lay solid foundations for his brethren's interior life and their striving for holiness. He urged the house superiors to set an example of good religious life, to ascertain the conscientious fulfillment of all religious practices, and to watch over the young brethren. The superiors were to treat their subordinates in a fatherly manner, without undue impatience or ambition. They were to supply their subordinates with necessary provisions, thus protecting them from any transgression against the vow of poverty. The General required that house superiors and treasurers submit reports on managing the communal property. Professors were obliged to use time assigned for classes diligently and to watch over the recreation of their pupils. Father Casimir also stressed the importance of the proper preparation of the pupils for carrying out their future duties. The professors were to set a good example to their pupils and admonish, even publicly, those who failed in their studies.

Father Casimir fully realized the significance of a good religious formation and fervently watched over the formation of the novices. He ruled that the Superior General alone was allowed to supervise the Novice Master. He issued appropriate regulations for the novices and separated their quarters from those of the professed members. He demanded that no one leave the monastery without the expressed permission of the Superior or his vicar. Those among the brethren who were to make a lengthy trip had to be supplied with letters of recommendation.

In order to gain new candidates for the Order, he dispatched Father Casimir Polak, a native of Bohemian lands, to Prague several times. As a result, six Bohemian candidates joined the Order in 1738, five in 1739, and as many as 11 in 1740. These men made a valuable intellectual and spiritual contribution to the Congregation and became a credit to the Marians and to their homeland. The new community members worked with great dedication in Poland, Rome, and Portugal. Three of them in particular rendered great service to the Order. Father Candid Spourny, one of the most courageous Procurator Generals of the Marians, was very enterprising and endowed with an exceptional ease of winning over friends and benefactors. He managed to procure for the Marians the Church of St. Vitus in Rome together with the adjacent former Cistercian monastery. It was there that the permanent office of the Procurator General was established. It existed at that location until 1798, when all foreign religious orders were expelled from Italy by the Napoleonic troops. Another Bohemian, Father Joseph Mraas, a splendid organizer, was always warmly received by various people and particularly welcomed in homes of magnates. He served as the Superior General of the Marian Order for four years. The third man, Father Clement Reddig, served as the Novice Master for many years, educating young generations of Marians in the spirit of Father Wyszynski.

Father Casimir hoped to attract candidates of other nationalities as well. In his plans to develop the congregation, he reached out to Lithuania and Ruthenia, from where new candidates would arrive as time passed. The Congregation of Marians owes its more

universal character to Father Wyszyński. Bohemians, Italians, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Hungarians, and Frenchmen applied to join the Marians. Consequently, they would spend their novitiate in Poland and get acquainted with Polish culture, language, and traditions. During the years 1786- 1790, after the Marians gained their independence from the Reformed Franciscans, novitiates were opened in Poland and Lithuania. Later, Father Casimir personally travelled to Portugal and established a Marian monastery there. He also had plans for settling the Marians in Brazil, but those plans would not come to pass until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Attracting these new and valuable vocations to the Order drew the attention of Polish society to the Marians and to the person of Father Wyszyński. Father Isidore Taudt, a “Father of the Order Emeritissimus,” known for his learning and virtuous life, testified during Father Casimir’s beatification process: “The Congregation flourished to such a degree that this numerous community of religious earned the admiration of Polish magnates who congratulated Father Wyszyński, since it was through his work and efforts that the Marians, little known until now, grew to such numbers in Poland.” Father Casimir had great love for the community and its Founder, which he was able to instill in the hearts of the younger generations. During the years 1751 to 1781, the number of Marians would triple.

Father Casimir set a great example of faithfulness to his religious vocation and while visiting the Marian monasteries, strengthened his confreres in their zealous service to the Lord in the spirit of the Marian charism. As his letters show, during visitations he paid special attention to the manner in which the love of God and fraternal love were practiced and the Church’s regulations on religious life were observed, and the Marian virtues fostered as depicted in the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the B.V.M.*

“I would like to find you adorned with spiritual, heavenly, and everlasting desires, instead of entangled in earthly and transitory matters. I hope you can present yourselves as such religious during this canonical visitation! (...) During this visitation my task

will be to evaluate everyone's adherence to their Superiors' directives; to see if the brethren live in fraternal love and abide by our Rule and Constitutions, Papal Decrees and the Chapter's laws. I must find out if they make retreats, pray in choir and meditate; I must know if they lead a harmonious life inside their monastery and behave in an exemplary way outside of it" (1738).

"During the forthcoming visitation I would like to find out in particular if love of God and neighbor is filling your hearts because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. This I shall demand, encourage, and examine. For we love God truly only when we fulfill His commandments, as well as the regulations of our beloved Marian Institute, and when we abstain from personal whims. We truly love our neighbor if we do not deny him anything that is his by right and do not wish him harm. If we have no love, everything else is nothing. Everything can be achieved with love" (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3) (June 1, 1739).

"It is necessary to see if we can safely show our hearts before Christ the Judge along with the Virgin's virtues radiating in us—the subject of our vows. During this visitation we are going to see if all of this is carried out with God's help so that we may fearlessly give the most detailed account of ourselves before God. For the Apostle of the Nations admonishes us in these words: 'Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers to shepherd the assembly of God (Acts 20:28)'" (November 21, 1739).

Being himself a great and zealous venerator of Mary Immaculate, Father Casimir called his confreres to imitate her life faithfully: "Like a well-grounded plant, the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived*, which we vowed to uphold, must radiate, bloom, and bear fruit in our Marian hearts. For it is not in speech, but in truth and fact that we must imitate and practice the virtues of the most elect Virgin described in the *Rule*. I recommend to all the Marians that they partake in the most delectable fragrance of these virtues. I declare my intention to examine your conscience in this respect soon" (June 10, 1740).



### ***Caring for the Tomb of the Holy Father Founder***

**T**he Superior General of the Marians was allowed to reside at any monastery of his choice. Most frequently this was the Korabiew hermitage. In 1739, Father Wyszyński settled in Góra Kalwaria, near the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle—the site of the Marian Founder's burial. The area was marshy and flooded in spring so much so as to render the church and monastery accessible only by boat. Buildings were gradually falling into ruin and the lack of steady income made repair work difficult to achieve. Father Casimir was eager to remedy the situation, thus he took up residence at the local monastery, also assuming the office of local Superior. He counted on help from his brother Michael and other benefactors.

One of Father Casimir's first actions was to safeguard the remains of St. Stanislaus Papczyński, deposited in the church's wet ground. Upon receiving the consent of Church authorities, he had the Founder's bones placed into a new casket, donated by his brother, and placed it in a new tomb. In this regard, Father Alexis Fischer, an eyewitness to this period of Father Casimir's life, reported a most amazing intervention of the Marian Founder himself: "Father Wyszyński found the monastery and church in a state of great ruin; the Founder's tomb was also damaged. Prompted by filial reverence, Father Casimir decided to exhume the bones and place them in a new casket. While delaying the realization of this plan because he wanted to fix the monastery first, he fell ill. Almost losing his life, he went into the church to pray. Once there, he felt strongly reminded about the promised casket and heard in his spirit a voice, saying: "Where is my casket?" He procured a new casket at once. It was the one that his own brother, Michael, had kept on hand for himself. Father Casimir ordered a new tombstone to be erected for the holy Father Founder and placed his bones there, after exhuming them with permission of a Warsaw official, from the watery, muddy ground. Next, he drained water out of the church by having a trench dug and putting up a tall flood bank, a work greatly admired by everybody. He built a new monastery and repaired the church with his brother's help."

Further, he resolved to spread honor to Father Stanislaus Papczyński. Since Father Joachim Kozłowski was to a great degree accountable for failing to start the beatification process of the Marian Founder, Father Casimir undertook to open the beatification process of what would be the first Polish founder of a religious order. With the consent of the Chapter, Father Casimir managed to have printed and distributed a prayer card with the picture of the Founder of the Marian Order.

On August 8, 1741, a new Superior General was elected, but Father Casimir remained in the office of Superior of the monastery in Góra Kalwaria for another six years. Thanks to his good example and mild manner of admonishing, he was instrumental in increasing religious fervor in his confreres. Seeing him tidying up the church and doing all sorts of menial tasks, residents of Góra Kalwaria admired his industrious and humble manner. They benefited from his pastoral ministry, his service in the confessional and in the pulpit. For several years the Servant of God was the confessor to the Dominican Sisters, just as Saint Stanislaus had been in his time. Many years later, the Sisters testified to Fr. Casimir's prudence and great zeal.

Father Casimir had a great devotion to Divine Providence, which found its practical expression in his establishing the Confraternity of Divine Providence at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria.

### *Shepherd of the Marian Community*

**O**n June 19, 1747, the General Chapter which was celebrated in Skórzec, elected Father Casimir the Superior General for the second time. Accepting the office, he announced that he would carry it out in the spirit of service to the community and he called his confreres to be faithful to the grace of vocation:

“Do not be afraid, little flock; 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, resisting which would be more than disobedience and persisting in stubbornness would be more than ingratitude.

"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. Dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, may your hearts be at rest. Just as by the will of heaven Joseph was once made the governor of all of Egypt in order to save his brothers, so am I the Superior of this holy Congregation for no other reason than by Divine Providence. I shall use Joseph's words spoken at the meeting with his brothers: 'Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God'" (Gen 45:8, Vulgate). God made me your father as it were; He appointed me the steward over you, not as one of you, but just as I am: a gentle Father, loving Brother, managing Superior, caring and watchful Shepherd.

"Therefore, sheep of the little flock, heed my voice. This is the voice of your Shepherd speaking from the seclusion of the Marian hermitage in Korabiew Forest. Pave the way for the Lord with your worthy deeds of spiritual living. Make straight pathways for God by staying on the road of the vocation to which you have been found worthy. May any erroneous and unlawful deviations from the Rules and Statutes, any irregularities in upholding religious discipline, turn into straight paths of God's commandments. All this is so that you may find yourselves in the pasture with your Shepherd, to which you are called by the Lamb that grazes amidst lilies" (July 27, 1747).

During this second term as the Superior General, Father Casimir demonstrated truly great commitment to the matters of his Order. Above all, he made sure that the novices were provided with proper conditions for their spiritual life and were prepared for carrying out their future duties, since he fully realized that "the entire well-being of our wretched little Order depends upon it." Placing his trust in God, he encouraged the brethren to fight evil and to opt for good. He pointed out the role of the Holy Spirit in nurturing fraternal love and urged everyone to follow the Immaculate Mary, patroness of the Order. He expressed his inten-

tions in circular letters to the confreres, in which he announced the specific goals of his inspection of the monasteries: “Strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we set out on the road of canonical visitation, asking ourselves: did anyone of us depart from the way of love, truth, and peace? Are we all following the same course in spreading the glory of God and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without Original Sin? Did we depart from abiding by our laws and Roman Statutes, as well as the approved and practiced recommendations of our Chapters? I order you: prior to my arrival, make sure that your churches, sacristies, and monasteries are orderly, neat, and adorned” (1748).

“I will check to see if we are realizing all that the Holy Spirit has placed in us. Shall I find the Marians truly following the example of Mary and diligently observing the Rule and the Constitutions? Do they act in love and fraternal peace? Do they properly observe poverty, chastity and obedience? Is praise being properly given to God day and night, as per regulations? And finally, are the principles of religious discipline being strictly followed?” (1749).

Father Casimir also endeavored to obtain new foundations for the Marians. He did not spare efforts to put in order the legal status of both existing monasteries and new foundations. A friend of Father Casimir, Adalbert [Polish: Wojciech, which will be used in the text because of footnote references – note of the translator] Magnuszewski, a *Wojski*<sup>3</sup> of Czersk, who presented him to the presidium of the Diet, recalled that the MPs “recognized his great holiness, seriousness, and humility—values that they highly appreciated. They promised their willing assistance in securing the approval when the memorandum would be submitted for debate.” Father Casimir’s personal zeal and concern for the quality of the Marians’ spiritual life made the Order noted by the public, which resulted in the founding of new monasteries.

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<sup>3</sup> A *Wojski* [pronounced: voyski] was an officer in medieval Poland, responsible for the security of *voivodeships* or districts at times when *voivods* and *castellans* had accompanied the *szlachta* (nobility) to war.

After meeting Father Casimir, George Matuszewicz, a Cześnik (cup-bearer) of Mińsk, the Subprefect of Stoklin, and heir to the estate of Raśna, decided to bring the Marians to Raśna. His son Martin wrote in his memoirs: "My father, God rest his soul, always had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, such that after Father Casimir Wyszyński, a very pious priest from the Order of Marians, visited him in Bębnów in 1753, in response to his inquiries about their Rule, my father decided to found a monastery for them in Raśna." Martin supported his father's plans, but his mother Theresa, the daughter of the chamberlain of Płock, opposed the idea. She reproached her husband for being a spendthrift and excessively generous towards pious causes. She did not wish to deplete the family property. She also reproached her son Martin for supporting his father's idea and for even encouraging his father in the matter. In the end, when the foundation was finally established, Theresa Matuszewicz left for Goślice in the Płock district, never to return to Raśna.

The Bishop of Łuck, Francis Anthony Kobielski, was also opposed to the Marians' getting this foundation because he wanted it to go to Father Stephen Turczynowicz who was in the process of creating a new religious order. He even imposed a 1,000-zloty fine on George Matuszewicz and excommunicated him for beginning to build the church and monastery without permission of church authorities. Father Wyszyński, in his writings mentioned this bishop's negative attitude. He recalled that the bishop rather favored Father Stephen Turczynowicz, who was attempting to establish illegally a community of baptized Jews, using the Marian rule for its foundation. Bishop Kobielski even tried to persuade Matuszewicz to relegate to that community his foundation in Raśna. All of these efforts having failed, the bishop imposed ecclesiastical sanctions against Matuszewicz.

Martin Matuszewicz appealed to the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw, asking to lift the excommunication imposed upon his father by the bishop and requesting permission to continue the work on the foundation. In this matter, he received the support of Prince Michael Czartoryski who considered himself Father

Wyszyński's friend. The fine and the excommunication were revoked and Martin Matuszewicz was told to turn to the local church authorities for permission for that foundation.

It was not until 1747 that the bishop allowed the Marians to settle in Raśna, and two years later, in 1749, he arrived to consecrate the church personally and solemnly install the Marians in their new foundation. Father Casimir personally attended this event. In his letter to all the Marians he shared the following message: "I also ask your fervent prayers for the installation of our fathers at Raśna, which occurred on Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi. As I was returning from Vilnius, I unexpectedly received the decision of the most noble Bishop of Łuck, stating that due to other engagements this matter should not be postponed any longer." During the first session of the annual meeting at the Korabiew Forest, in June 1749, Father Wyszyński informed the general council that Bishop Kobieslki had granted permission for establishing the Marian monastery at Raśna. When he asked the councilors whether they would consent to do so, they unanimously answered positive. Not only did they give their consent, but they also thanked the Superior General heartily for all his efforts. It was ordered that the report from the celebration and the ceremony of installation of the Marians in Raśna be read at the refectory in the presence of the entire community.

Shortly after however, in 1750, the first Superior of the Marians in Raśna, Father Isidore Taudt, a tactful and pious man, had to overcome quite a number of difficulties with their benefactor. George Matuszewicz felt that the Marians were not fulfilling the conditions accepted by Father Wyszyński, which stipulated that eight Marians were to reside at the new monastery. In accordance with this agreement, the General Council sent four priests and four seminarians. Matuszewicz did not want to accept the seminarians who were still completing their studies, but demanded to have instead eight priests. Moreover, he felt offended by the fact that a Marian priest was assigned as a chaplain to Princess Czartoryski, while the same honor was denied to him. In time, these matters were rectified and following their benefactor's

death in 1754, relations with the Matuszewicz family stabilized. For many years the monastery in Raśna served as a House of Study for seminarians and it was one of the most prospering monasteries until its suppression by tsarist authorities in 1864.

The second foundation acquired by Father Wyszyński was also located in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in the town of Staropole, later renamed Marijampole after the Marians. Due to his friendship with Theodore Czartoryski, the Bishop of Poznan, Father Casimir became acquainted with the bishop's brother Michael, later the Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As Prince Michael got to know Father Wyszyński better, he also grew appreciative of his spiritual and intellectual abilities and formed a positive opinion of the Marians as well. He asked them to send an appropriate candidate for the office of his court chaplain and theologian. Father Benedict Hömig, of Bohemian descent, was selected. Not only was he an outstanding theologian, but also a man of great intellectual aptitude who spoke several European languages and was endowed with an affable nature. The Marians would serve as court chaplains for the Czartoryski family from 1749 until 1853. After Prince Adam Czartoryski emigrated, Father John Dziewulski, the last chaplain, faithfully kept him company on his many trips to various European capitals.

Prince Michael Czartoryski was a frequent guest of Count Butler and their hunting companion of Prienai, Lithuania. Father Hömig, who stayed at the Prince's side, made acquaintance with Countess Frances (born Szczuk) Butler who conceived the idea of building a church on her estate and establishing a religious community there. These religious would be in charge of providing pastoral care for the local residents since the Butlers' estate was located at a considerable distance from Prienai. At Father Hömig's suggestion, the Countess wrote to Father Wyszyński, Superior General of the Marians at that time, offering a foundation in Staropole. Father Casimir wished to study personally the possibility of establishing a Marian house there. He had already made plans to travel to Lithuania because Rev. Stephen Turczynowicz, who was organizing a religious association, known by the name of "*Mariæ vitæ*," was making an illegal use of the Marian rule and

statutes. Father Wyszyński took this opportunity to meet with the Butlers and after examining the location, he promised to send one priest there immediately and six more after the monastery would be built.

During the annual General Council meeting at the Korabiew Forest, Father Casimir asked the conciliar fathers to consider the proposal of a new foundation in Lithuania. The council gave its consent in view of the greater opportunity to spread devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In fulfillment of the contract, Father Wojciech Strach, a Bohemian by birth, and a religious Brother, arrived at Staropole in April of 1750. On September 26, 1752, another priest, Father Hyacinth Wasilewski was dispatched there to assist them. In 1755, Father Francis Raabe, another Bohemian, and a religious Brother, Thomas Dering, also came. At first they all resided in a house next to the log church. Then Countess Butler ordered the construction of living quarters for them and bequeathed to them about 11 acres of land as well as the grounds between the Rivers Śešupe and Jeś, where the Marians would later begin to build the town of Marijampole. The construction of the monastery, capable of accommodating a large number of religious, was finished only in 1758. The solemn installation of the Marians in Marijampole by the Dean of Olita, Father Wnorowski, attended by Countess Butler and her son Michael, as well as pastors of the local parishes, took place on September 13, 1758.

The monastery in Marijampole would play an important role in the history of the Marians. A novitiate was established there where new candidates were prepared for their life of service to God and Mary Immaculate. The official permission for opening the novitiate was granted by Father Clement Panormitano, the Apostolic Commissary of the Franciscans, who by the authority of the Holy See, drew up the erection document. This was the crown jewel of Father Wyszyński's efforts, who attended to this matter while staying in Rome in 1752. There are grounds to believe that the novitiate was opened as early as December 5, 1754, and most of the prospects were Lithuanian-born. Father Casimir



remembered this foundation and its benefactress: from Rome he sent relics of the Holy Cross for the church which bore that title, and to its benefactress he sent relics of her patron saint, St. Frances of Rome.

The Marians received other pastoral posts in Lithuania where they contributed to the strengthening of faith and the growth of Marian devotion. However, the monastery in Marijampole was the only one which the tsarist authorities left standing after suppressing all other monasteries in 1864. The majority of the Marians from their other posts were transferred to Marijampole.

Prohibiting the admission of new candidates into the Order, the tsarist authorities condemned the community to a slow death. However, Divine Providence would save the work which Father Casimir had served with such dedication all his life. In 1909, when all of the other Marians had been dispersed or died, only the Superior General remained alive in Marijampole. Secretly, he admitted Father George Matulewicz into the community, and soon after the death of the Superior General, Father George assumed leadership of the Order, thus opening a new stage in its history known as the Renovation.

The third foundation due to Father Casimir's efforts was a monastery in Berezdov in the Volhynia region of Ruthenia. Circumstances not clearly known to us brought Father Casimir Wyszynski into contact with Prince John Cajetan Jablonowski, the governor of the district of Bratslav in present-day Ukraine. The Prince decided to found a church and monastery for the Marians on his estate. For this purpose he chose Berezdov, a little town on the River Korczyk, a few kilometers away from the town of Korzec.

During the preparatory process for the beatification of Father Casimir, conducted in Poland, Frs. Taudt, Czermak, Wasilewski, and Bujalski unanimously testified that Father Wyszynski endeavored *to obtain this foundation in order to spread devotion to God and to honor the Immaculate Conception of His Mother. He found pious benefactors, who upon seeing in his person a fullness of virtue and other attributes, founded the monasteries in Raśna,*

*Marijampole, and Berezdov.* This statement was found confirmed in the letter of John Cajetan Jabłonowski of April 14, 1755, sent to Father Cajetan Wetycki, the Superior General of the Marians. By this letter the Prince took upon himself the obligation to build a monastery that would accommodate seven religious.

The monastery in Berezdov must have been ready by the first half of 1755 because at the annual meeting of the Marians in Goźlin on June 28<sup>th</sup> of that year, Frs. Benon Bujalski and Joachim Stanisławski were selected as its residents. A year later, at the annual meeting which was held in Raśna on June 26, 1756, Prince Jabłonowski's letter in regard to the foundation in Berezdov was read, and Father Aloysius Długołęski and Br. Onuphrius Kierski were sent to live in the new monastery. The solemn installation of the foundation in Berezdov took place on May 20, 1760, after the construction of the monastery and the church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was completed.

The Marians served in Berezdov until 1832, in which year many of the small monasteries (with fewer than eight members) were closed down by the Russian tsarist decree. The Marians in Berezdov had carried out pastoral work and assisted the local clergy. They had quite a number of vocations from the Volhynia region. With new vocations in mind they tried to open a novitiate between the years 1787-1790 and petitioned Rome for this purpose. The reasons unknown, this project was abandoned. It seems that the partitioning of Poland might have posed an obstacle. There were some Ruthenians of the Eastern Rite living at the Berezdov monastery, most of whom later joined the Latin Rite. For a period of time the Marians also had a monastery in Volhynia, which they called a residence. It was located in Ostrykov or Samczyki. These two towns were situated on either side of the River Słucz, but were part of one community.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century these lands belonged to the Chojęcki family. Most likely one of the Marians, Father Peter Chojęcki, belonged to that family. He died in Goźlin, on November 28, 1759. According to Father Benon Bujalski's testimony, this second foundation also was due to Father Wyszyński's efforts, even though it came

to fruition only at a later time: *During the lifetime of the Servant of God Casimir and his governing of our monasteries in Poland, a new foundation—the monastery in Ostrykov in Ruthenia—was added, but this foundation was realized only in later years.*

On the strength of a document drawn up on January 5, 1752, Prince Sanguszko approved the borders of the farm, the garden, and the grounds, on which the monastery and church were to be built. However, the contract for the foundation was concluded between Francis Casimir Chojecki and Father Hyacinth Wasilewski, the Superior General of the Marians, only on March 4, 1767, in Policzyńce. Chojecki's son, Joseph, joined the Marians in Ostrykov and received the religious name of Vincent. He remained a religious brother because he suffered from epilepsy, which he bore with great patience during the entire 10 years of his membership in the community. He died on May 25, 1780, in his native Ostrykov. It is probable that it was for his sake that the Chojecki family conceived the idea of a foundation on the estate they administered.

The monastery in Ostrykov did not last long because in 1782 the Chojecki's lost Samczyki to Stanislaus Lubomirski. Although the official documents described the monastery as a "residence in Ostrykov," it was actually located in Samczyki. Once he had taken possession of Samczyki, Lubomirski refused to recognize the foundation and all that had been bequeathed to the monastery. The Marians had to leave Samczyki in 1789. Two years later the walls of the church and the monastery were torn down and all traces of the Marians' presence in Samczyki disappeared.

Finally, on November 12, 1750, Father Wyszynski turned over to the new Superior General, Father Cajetan Wetycki, the task of caring for the Marian Order. The Servant of God must have felt extremely grateful to God for allowing him to contribute to the renewal and spiritual vigor of the Marians. Having divested himself of the duties of Superior General, Father Casimir then proceeded to Rome and Portugal where he renewed his efforts to establish the Marians throughout the world. This would be the last and extremely fruitful stage of his life.

Father Casimir regarded his work for the Order as a public service because its goal was to save people from the clutches of evil. Along with his brethren he strove for its realization through fervent pastoral ministry and printed materials that fostered spiritual values upheld by his Order. In addition to releasing the book *Morning Star*, based on the treatise by Francis Arias, in 1749, Father Casimir also saw to the publication of the work of St. Stanislaus Papczyński, the Marian Founder, called *Templum Dei Mysticum* or *Mystical Temple of God*.

### ***Working for the Order in Rome***

**W**hen the General Chapter which was celebrated in Skórczec on November 12, 1750, elected anew Superior General, Father Casimir was sent to Rome as the General Procurator to negotiate important matters for the Order. Together with another Marian, Father John Cantius Szkraffer, he started on the journey to Rome in winter. We lack any detailed reports regarding this trip except for a reminiscence of hospitality accorded to them by a Father Bixy in the vicinity of Vienna. Although the church building there had perished in a fire shortly before their arrival, the pastor gave them shelter in the quarters that remained. A few days later he bade them farewell outside Vienna and set them on the right road to Rome. At that very time, the ceiling collapsed in the room where they had spent the night.

Father Casimir learned about this incident only several months into his stay in Rome. In his letter to Father Bixy he said: "We give thanks to God for shielding us from danger of which I was informed by the brother-hermit. We were able to reach Rome and to accomplish many good things for our Congregation, which would have been impossible should we not have been saved from danger. Accordingly, we received everything for which we petitioned the Holy See. What is more, the King of Portugal invited us to his kingdom so that devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. might grow there through the ministry of our Marian

Congregation.” Father Casimir was deeply convinced that he survived that incident in Vienna thanks to the intercession of Father Founder and that the matter could be brought forth as a proof of Father Stanislaus’s holiness.

The travelers from Poland reached Rome on April 30, 1751, and took up residence at the Franciscan monastery of Ara Coeli. Shortly after, Father John Cantius returned to Poland, while Father Casimir, although frequently suffering from poor health, fervently carried out all the tasks entrusted to him.

His first task was to resolve the Marians’ dispute over their title and habit with Rev. Turczynowicz. The latter had endeavored in Vilnius to convert Jews to Christianity. From 1744, he was the pastor of St. Stephen Parish in Vilnius and chaplain at the hospital associated with that church. He founded an association of about 30 newly converted Jews, both men and women, and placed them in this hospital. He supported them with his own means and with solicited donations. Members of that association, called “*Mariæ vitæ*,” whom Turczynowicz clothed in a white habit similar to that worn by the Marians, were sent out to collect alms. However, their immoral behavior and religious views astonished, scandalized and confused the public who took the new converts to be Marians.

Father Casimir had to travel to Vilnius twice, in 1748 and 1749, in an attempt to peacefully resolve this matter which was so very detrimental and unpleasant for the Marians. When all efforts failed, the General Chapter delegated him to the Holy See to decide the matter in Rome. This step was necessary because Father Turczynowicz applied for approval of his association under the title of the Marians.

Father Wyszyński’s intervening on behalf of the Marian Fathers with the Roman Congregation took from May of 1751 to July 15, 1752. After he obtained a statement on November 12, 1751 from the Bishop of Vilnius denying that he had ever given consent to this association, the Congregation for Bishops and Religious issued a decree instructing the Ordinary of Vilnius “to order them [the Mariavites, as the association members were

called] to abandon the habit and title immediately that do not befit a foundation of St. Lazarus and which were adopted without the consent of the Ordinary for the purpose of collecting alms.”

Reverend Turczynowicz’s lawyer appealed to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith under the pretext that this institution was the only authority empowered to rule on the neophytes. After studying the documents, this Congregation also issued a final decree on July 3, 1751, forbidding their use of the title and habit as incompatible with the foundation. Earlier, Father Casimir had made a pilgrimage to Loreto and prayed for the intercession of the Marian Founder. It is alleged that a Marian appeared to Cardinal Bardi, the judge in this matter, and talked with him at length. Returning from Loreto, Father Wyszyński, who knew that he himself was the only Marian in Rome, showed the Cardinal’s servants a picture of Father Stanislaus and they recognized the person in that picture as the Cardinal’s guest.

Father Casimir fervently strove for the beatification of the Marian Founder. While still in Poland he searched for witnesses, collected their testimonies, and visited places where Father Papczyński had lived. In Rome, he wrote down all that he had heard from various people about Father Stanislaus’s life, work, and extraordinary signs of holiness. He appealed to the Marians and their powerful friends to search intensively for people who had known the Founder and urged them to raise funds for his beatification.

He also insisted on taking steps towards safeguarding the log Church of Our Lord’s Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria—the site of Father Stanislaus’s tomb. He frequently exhorted that Father Founder’s writings and memorabilia needed collecting. He encouraged the Marians in Poland to raise funds for the cost of the beatification process. He personally studied the laws regulating beatification procedures. With help from a lawyer he composed a highly detailed instruction on conducting the process on the diocesan level. He petitioned the Ordinary of Poznan for his support in the Marian Founder’s beatification process, since Father Papczyński had worked and died in his diocese.

Father Casimir saw a strict correlation between the efforts made towards the Founder's beatification and the growth of the Order: "God imparts His blessing unexpectedly on those who remember their ancestors and forefathers. It is quite evident that after the exhumation and placement of the bones of our Father in a new casket, which the Marians in Poland did upon my urging, in turn the Lord God provided me with a comfortable cell in Rome. And as soon as I sent to Poland the instructions for opening our Father's process and confirmed the readiness of the Marians to do so—the Father Pastor [Superior General] himself corroborated their intention of doing their utmost for this process—a great blessing from God came upon us at once: the unexpected invitation from the highly esteemed Portuguese monarch."

"It was much the same during my stay in Poland as an unworthy Superior of our Congregation. When I first petitioned the Ordinary for the exhumation of our Venerable Father from the muddy grounds at the church of The Lord's Cenacle and for placing them in a new casket, the Lord God helped us raise this very church from nearly total ruin. And yet I had previously no help before all this came to pass. When the Chapter decided to have his picture painted and printed and when we had it done, soon after two foundations in Lithuania were made available to us, which we took over even before the picture was completed. And to think how many problems from various sides we had encountered previously while trying to obtain the same foundations! Having the picture completed, everything started to go without a hitch. Even those people who previously impeded us from procuring the foundations, later began to help" (April 10, 1752).

Having obtained this ruling, auspicious for the Marians, Father Casimir wrote: "Now that the Lord deigned to let us rejoice in this matter, we must begin working assiduously on spreading our Order and the honor of the Blessed Mother by fostering the process of the Venerable Father Founder. For it is certain that this victory also came to pass through his intercession. Here we did not have any patrons, only antagonists, very numerous and powerful at that. I commend myself to our saintly Father" (July 15, 1752).

Father Casimir called upon his confreres in Poland to take the cause of the Founder's beatification into their hearts: "We offend this great Servant of God and venerator of the Blessed Mother by not fostering devotion to him. After all, he earned this honor from us as our Father and our Leader" (March 14, 1752).

And again, "It grieves me deeply that our Venerable Father's process has not yet been opened. I fear very much that the remaining eye-witnesses will soon leave this world. This would do damage [to the process] as has already happened because of the negligence of our predecessors, who did not open the process even though there were available a great many eye-witnesses to the sanctity of the Servant of God. In spite of all this, thanks to Divine Providence, which is mysterious and unfathomable, the success of our Order has not been impeded" (July 19, 1752).

Father Wyszynski also took care to commission an appropriate portrait of Father Founder. He had a lot of trouble with this project because the artist did not render Father Stanislaus' likeness very well. Moreover, the artist fell ill and it became necessary to find another artist who made some alterations.

Ultimately, it was not until 250 years later that Father Casimir's wishes came to pass. On September 16, 2007, Father Stanislaus Papczynski was declared a Blessed and on June 5, 2016, was declared a Saint.

One of the goals of the Marian Order was to bring spiritual help to the souls suffering in purgatory. Father Casimir obtained special indulgences for the benefit of the deceased which could be earned at Marian churches. He sent to Poland all the documents pertaining to these privileges along with his own instructions about devotion on behalf of the deceased.

Witnesses to Father Casimir's sojourn in Rome emphasized his great devotion to the Eucharist, which found its expression in lengthy periods of adoration and meticulous celebration of Holy Mass. It was the same in every place he stayed: he celebrated each Mass as if it were the very last one of his life. He also composed a two-week series of meditations for before and after Mass.



His devotion included visits to shrines as well as various pilgrimages, especially to Loreto. He brought back from that shrine a candle which he took with him to Portugal since he wished to have it lit at the hour of his death. He also obtained relics for Countess Frances Butler: one of the Holy Cross and another of St. Frances of Rome.

The Marian Founder had instructed his followers to take special care of the country folk. This very numerous social group was devoid of legal protection and frequently of spiritual care as well. The Marians made every effort to help the farmers “come to know God and learn to praise and love Him and to fulfill their Christian duties.” In their sermons and parish missions, they also strove to make the upper classes more sensitive and kind towards the rural dwellers.

Father Casimir engaged in this work with great fervor. His pastoral ministry and writings were aimed at influencing the conscience of the gentry in such a way that they would treat their servants in the spirit of Christian love. Recalling the Marian devotion of his compatriots, Father Casimir wrote: “The one who attaches himself to Mary must imitate her virtues and stay on the road that she followed, in Christ’s footsteps (...) How can one be considered charitable or merciful who does not perform acts of mercy, who does not take pity on his neighbor or help him when the opportunity arises, who does not pray for his neighbors and who does not come to the rescue of the souls suffering in Purgatory by participating in Masses, prayers, and giving alms?”

Witnesses testified that Father Casimir zealously supported the needy and that he personally worked at the construction site of the monastery alongside the laborers. For him it was an occasion to teach them catechism and church hymns. Also, while in Rome he intervened in the matter of the clergy who sometimes abused their authority on the occasion of Easter confessions. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a great number of peasants had died because of wars and epidemics. Since hands for hire were scant, certain country pastors would set a day for confessions prior to which peasants had to work long hours on the presbytery farms. Then,

hungry and tired, talking and joking, people could not properly prepare for receiving the holy sacraments. Many paid for this with their health, while others took to heavy drinking in taverns, which scandalized non-believers. Father Casimir presented a report on this abuse of authority to the Pope, who ordered the matter to be investigated and the practice stopped.

During his two-year stay in Rome, Father Casimir did everything in his power to find a place for a Marian monastery there. Prior to leaving for Rome he had obtained letters of recommendation from King Augustus III and Prince Czartoryski to Cardinal Colonna, the protector of the Franciscans, under whom the Marians were affiliated at the time, asking the Cardinal to look into the possibility of obtaining a foundation for the Marians in the Eternal City. Father Casimir's initial attempts to arrange an audience with Cardinal Colonna and Pope Benedict XIV brought no results. Therefore, having secured a letter of recommendation from the Polish minister Lagnasco, Father Wyszyński set out for Naples to ask the Queen of Naples, who was the daughter of King Augustus III, to intercede in his cause before the Pope. This trip also proved to be futile: the Queen refused to help the Marians.

At the end, Father Wyszyński managed to submit a letter to His Holiness, asking him for a place for his community to settle in Rome. He also petitioned Cardinal Colonna for his support in purchasing the Church of St. Bibiana that belonged to the Chapter of the Blessed Mother Major Basilica, of which the cardinal was a member. Father Casimir also found a lawyer, Peter Pruski, who agreed to negotiate the matter with the Chapter on his behalf. In addition, he secured the assistance of Father Pepe, a Jesuit, who was very influential in the Vatican. But all of his efforts were to no avail: in early November of 1751, Father Casimir was informed of the Chapter's refusal to sell the church.

Still, the General Procurator did not give up. He turned his attention to the Church of Santa Maria in Dominica or Navicella, located just outside the city. This church was very much to his liking. In his diary called "*Personal Record of Activities*" in Rome, the Servant of God presented his opinion as to why the Marians

should try to obtain this place: it is a church dedicated to the Blessed Mother; it holds a mosaic which cannot be found anywhere else in the world, depicting the apostles all dressed in white—the color of the Marian habit. Further, Father Casimir learned from Br. Gianbattista, a Franciscan whom he had befriended, that the church belonged to the Basilian monks who were having trouble maintaining it because their Eastern Rite was foreign to the local people. With the permission of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, the Basilians were presently collecting contributions from Christian countries in order to purchase a different place. In the meantime, the church was almost completely abandoned and it was only occasionally that some priest would celebrate Mass there.

For these reasons, Father Wyszzyński again engaged the lawyer, Peter Pruski, to acquire this church for the Marians. Alas, all of the information proved to be misleading: not only had the Basilian monks never abandoned the church, but they had never intended to sell it either. The above-mentioned Franciscan friar took Father Casimir to see another church that belonged to the Brotherhood of Saddlers, but again they were unsuccessful.

What a joy it was then for the Procurator General to finally be received by the Holy Father Benedict XIV at an audience on November 29, 1751, during which he had a chance to speak to the Holy Father about his Order's present situation and to discuss the matter of Rev. Turczynowicz. He also asked for special indulgences and relics and submitted three reminders, one of which dealt with the matter of the Marians' settling in the Eternal City: "The Holy Father discussed the matter with me and when I told him that we did not have a place to live here in Rome, he said: 'Look for the place and we will help you.' When I mentioned to him the Church of Santa Maria in Navicella, he said: 'You are doing the right thing; I approve and give you my blessing,' and he patted me and made the sign of the Cross on my head. Oh, how I rejoiced and felt revived after this audience..."

Nevertheless, the purchase of the Church of Santa Maria in Navicella proved impossible, so Father Casimir was forced to look

for another place. He found a church and a house even with a vineyard on the estate of Prince Barberini, but he was unable to make an immediate payment in the amount of 110 sequins [golden coins, each weighing 0.12 oz], which was about 2,000 Polish zlotys. Again, in March of 1752, negotiations regarding the purchase of the Church of St. Sebastian were successfully under way when they had to be suspended because it was necessary to attend to the matter of Father Turczynowicz. It was not until 1779 that the Marians were able to establish a residence in the Eternal City by purchasing St. Vitus's church with the adjacent Cistercian monastery.

### *Defender of Peasants<sup>4</sup>*

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period in Polish history that saw the decline of the status of peasants, the most numerous of the social categories. Deprived of legal protection, they suffered severely as a result of wars and frequent epidemics. Additionally, land was often taken away from the farmers, while the workload on their lord's property increased. There were cases of peasants being sold for money or exchanged for draft animals. Polish intellectuals called for reforms in this respect. Among them was Stanislaus Garczyński, the governor of the Poznan district, who composed in the years 1733 to 1736 the "Anatomy of the Polish Republic." In this book, he exhorted the clergy to promote social justice in keeping with the Christian spirit, and to attend especially to the educational and cultural needs of the rural people.

"As a faithful son of the holy Father Founder and the guardian of his spiritual legacy," Father Casimir Wyszynski cared for peasants who were despised by magnates and the gentry and who frequently lacked proper pastoral care. Father Casimir's concern for peasants will be examined in three respects: the Marian Fa-

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<sup>4</sup> The word is used in its primary meaning, which describes a member of a chiefly European class that tills the soil as small landowner or hired laborer—Webster Dictionary.

thers' concern for the rural people, Father Casimir's social activity, and his intervention in the matter of the clergy's abuse of their position in performing their pastoral ministry.

### **Concern of the Marian Fathers for Peasants**

**F**ather Stanislaus Papczyński, the holy Founder of the Marians, came from the rural class himself. Therefore, he insisted on justice and charity for this social group. He taught that higher social classes ought to “develop a great and truly noble spirit in order to regard the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania as a union, to which we all shall give and dedicate ourselves totally.”<sup>5</sup> (*Prodomus...*) In another place in this same book, Father Stanislaus condemned the willfulness of the powerful, “who claim not to be bound by any laws,” and who boast: “Who can put shackles on me? Who can force me to observe the law? Who can punish me as a criminal?”<sup>6</sup> Father Stanislaus dared to censure social injustice: “You believe that a peasant who dares to raise his hand to a nobleman ought to be whipped. But you allow a nobleman, who might have cruelly murdered many people of peasant origin, to be merely slapped. You declare him free; you attack the tyrant's purse but not his head! Is this your kind of freedom, O Poland! I am ashamed of your dishonor!”<sup>7</sup> Another work of Father Papczyński—*Mystical Temple of God*—contains an extremely strong admonition: “Woe to you, who perhaps feed many dogs and yet allow men to die of hunger!”<sup>8</sup>

The situation of rural laborers was even more difficult in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Father Casimir Wyszynski lived

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<sup>5</sup> S. Papczyński, *Prodomus Reginae Artium*, Cracovia 1669, quoted in Polish after: S. Papczyński, *W drodze do domu Ojca. Antologia*, Warszawa-Stockbridge 2002, 136.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Vae vobis, qui cannes forte multum alitis, et homines mori fame patimini!* In: S. Papczyński, *Templum Dei Mysticum*, Varsoviae 1998, 88-89. [Translation comes from *Mystical Temple of God*, Stockbridge, 2013, 104.]

and worked. Foreign armies marched through Polish lands, ravaging and ruining the country. They imposed taxes and tributes, forced citizens to provide food and lodging to stationed soldiers, and forcibly recruited peasants into their armies. The horrors of war were magnified by the Asian plague. Rural folks bore the worst sufferings during these wars and frequent epidemics. Being forced to hide in forests to escape the invaders, they could not work on the land, which resulted in deprivation and famine.

This situation was further aggravated by moral corruption, particularly drunkenness. In the pursuit of wealth, the gentry turned to bribery and support of foreign countries. Public morals were very low.<sup>9</sup> All these factors weighed heavily on the fate of rural laborers. Their farms were confiscated, but their feudal duties increased. There are known incidents when peasants were sold for money or exchanged for beasts of burden. Frequently, a peasant was treated worse than cattle. The gentry and magnates were getting richer at the expense of the poor. Peasants were assessed fees to farm land and were taken to court when unable to pay, and were charged a “mark-up” on drinks consumed at the landlord’s inn.<sup>10</sup>

The Marian, whose monasteries were established mainly in the countryside, answered in some measure the Polish intelligentsia’s call for reforms in this regard, and in accordance with their primary objectives, took care of the local people. In the *Rule of Life* which the Marian Founder composed, he emphasized: “The soul of this Institute is love,” and he instructed: “On all occasions you will not neglect to show outsiders every possible charity. You will surround with devoted love not only those you find benevolent to you, but your adversaries as well and enemies.”<sup>11</sup> Teaching the principles of Faith according to which Christians are to act is a special manifestation of this love. For this reason, the *Rule of*

<sup>9</sup> K. Górski, *Od religijności do mistyki. Zarys dziejów życia wewnętrznego w Polsce*, Part. I, 966-1795, Lublin 1962, 187.

<sup>10</sup> E. Rostworowski, *Historia Powszechna, wiek XVIII*, Warszawa 1994, 75-79.

<sup>11</sup> S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, II, 4 and 5, in: *Constitutions and Directory of the Marian Fathers*, 267-268.

*Life* puts an obligation on house Superiors to watch over the quality of sermons: “This task is to be given by the Superior to members who have been instructed in the necessary doctrine and who have virtuous qualities, so that their preaching may bring salutary fruit to the listeners, enlightening them by their teaching, stirring them by their persuasion. Let them always attempt to speak those things which would bring forth more praise of God than of themselves; those things which with God’s help would call forth in the people edification, correction of behavior, love and fear of God, exercise of virtue and good works.”<sup>12</sup>

The Marian Constitutions, ratified in 1723, contain instructions about the manner of performing pastoral ministry through teaching and missions. The instructions emphasize that many people in Christian countries are ignorant of the principles of the Faith because of the shortage of priests. Therefore, with permission from the bishop, the Marian Fathers ought to teach the truth of the Faith to the simple folks both in their own as well as parish churches in the surrounding towns and countryside. The regulations also stress that this teaching is not to dwell upon complicated issues, but instill the knowledge necessary for salvation, namely: “Coming to know God, learning to love and praise Him, as well as to fulfill Christian duties.” All this should be taught in “such an understandable manner that everybody can grasp it.” For this reason, starting from the time of the novitiate, it is important to prepare the Marians to teach catechism and to “deliver efficacious sermons.”<sup>13</sup>

### ***Father Casimir’s Social Works***

**F**ather Wszyński’s social works were conducted primarily among the simple, poor and mistreated peasants. Although he

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 282.

<sup>13</sup> *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis BMV sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis, Defunctis et Parochis in Cura Animarum suffragantium Congregationis Poloniae, ab Innocento XIII aprobata Anno 1723, caput 6, 1.*

himself came from a family of gentry, he did not hesitate to extend a helping hand to people in the greatest need of assistance.

During the Venerable Casimir's beatification process, witnesses unanimously testified that he would work alongside the laborers at the construction of the monastery in Góra Kalwaria; he would teach them catechism and would sing hymns, thus enlivening the work. In his testimony, Father Taudt emphatically underscored that Father Casimir dedicated his time to simple folks: he proclaimed the Word of God, encouraged reception of the holy sacraments and assisted the poor and the lonely in particular.<sup>14</sup>

The annual congress held on July 1, 1749, in, instructed the house Superiors to supervise the teaching of catechism at their monasteries, engaging students for this task. In cases where a monastery had no students, this task could be entrusted to the confraternity's promoter or to young priests. The time for this work was every Sunday afternoon from the end of Easter confessions until October.<sup>15</sup>

Father Casimir's apostolic work among peasants was but one facet of his care for the people. We should not forget his personal influence on some of the magnates and gentry with whom he was either acquainted or chanced to meet. Pointing out to these people the ways of Christian living must have undoubtedly created an influence on their attitude towards the rural dwellers.

Wojciech Magnuszewski, Father Casimir's schoolmate, described the impression his friend exerted on the environment: "He was a medium-sized man, neither thin nor fat, with a face that was neither sad nor overly cheerful; moderate in everything; very merciful towards the poor, with whom he spoke with a friendly manner. He was respected and valued by other religious orders, by the gentry, magnates, princes and Primates of Poland such as Theodor Potocki and Christopher Szembek."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Posnanien. Proc. Inform.*, art. 15, c. 25.

<sup>15</sup> Fr. Waclaw Makoś, MIC, collected and printed all the decrees and recommendations of the General Chapters, in: *Decreta-Ordinationes*, Puszcza Marińska 2001. The aforesaid ordinance was issued on July 1, 1749, and it may be found in this publication on pp. 210-211.

<sup>16</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywoć Czciogodnego Sługi Bożego Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego*,



Magnuszewski recalled the impression that Father Casimir exerted on senators during the time he endeavored to secure the approval of Marian monasteries in 1747: "I brought him to the Sejm [also called Diet—the Polish Parliament]. When the Speaker saw him, he rose from his chair and all the deputies fell silent. After expressing his respects, Father Casimir humbly commended himself and the entire Marian Congregation to their good graces. Deputies of my acquaintance, even strangers asked me who this religious was and from what province he came—whether Lithuanian, Ruthenian or Małopolska. They perceived his great holiness, his solemnity and humility, which they valued very much. He handed his petition to the Speaker, the legates, and the secretary. They promised their willing assistance in obtaining approval when the petition would come up for deliberation."<sup>17</sup>

Venerable Casimir's influence upon the wealthy was manifested through the fact that they founded three new monasteries for the Marians. The Servant of God's influence on the rich also beneficially impressed their morals. Wojciech Magnuszewski left the following testimony: "When in my youth I was commending myself to his prayers in some secular matters, he asked with a smile whether I would like to be afflicted—similar to Saint Job—with loathsome sores or would I rather that we should meet in heaven, and he used to add: 'Seek the kingdom of God first, and all else will be given to you.' As a reprimand he used to say: 'Cast away the faults you know you have in you and God will fulfill your desires. The Almighty God knows your needs.'"<sup>18</sup>

Also, by means of the book *Morning Star*, Venerable Casimir endeavored to promote Marian devotion so that it might lead the readers to establishing an attitude of kindness towards other people, especially the less fortunate. Evoking Mary's virtue of mercy, he suggested the following topic for examination of conscience: "How can one be considered compassionate or merciful

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in: *Najstarsze świadectwa o Słudze Bożym o. Kazimierzu Wyszyńskim*, selected, translated and edited by Fr. Z. Proczek, MIC, Warszawa-Stockbridge 2005, 46-47.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 48-49.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 47.

if he does not perform works of mercy, has no compassion for his neighbor, and does not help him in need despite having the means and the opportunity, does not pray for his neighbor and does not help the suffering souls in Purgatory by offering Holy Masses, prayers, and alms?”<sup>19</sup>

Venerable Casimir employed various means to create the formation of a Christian attitude toward one’s neighbor, especially the less fortunate and people who were snubbed, especially the rural laborers.

### ***Interposition in the Matter of Improper Use of Ecclesial Office***

The state of the Polish Church in the first 25 years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was very sad. In his report to the Holy See in 1712, the Bishop of Poznan, Bartholomew Tarło, wrote: “Many priests have perished during the plague that reigned for four years. Some others cannot fulfill their pastoral duties because of their age. At the same time, there are only one or two candidates for the priesthood, so that during the past two years since I received episcopal consecration, I ordained only six or seven candidates to the priesthood and I was the only one performing ordinations. The shortage of priests is felt not only in my diocese, but throughout the entirety of Poland [...]. Furthermore, there are a few priests who cannot be tolerated, due to either lack of education or deplorable morals, and yet the bishops cannot remove them because they have no replacements.

“The shortage of priests is due above all to the fact that for the entirety of four years, schools in the whole country were closed on account of the plague, and the young people were drafted either into the army or by big landowners. In addition, benefices are completely ruined and presbyteries destroyed. What is more,

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<sup>19</sup> C. Wszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, Stockbridge, 2017, 24.

even those priests that continue their ministry are burdened with taxes that exceed their means.”<sup>20</sup>

In Father Wyszyński’s time, some of the Polish clergymen, especially those serving in the countryside, did not always properly discharge their duties. For example, some pastors continued to receive an income from their parish without even residing there, having transferred their obligations to their vicars. Their income was derived from landed property, tithes and sacramental services.<sup>21</sup>

There were instances—on the occasion of Easter confessions—when peasants were made to work on the presbytery farm before being allowed to receive the sacraments. Those were times when laborers were in highest demand due to their reduced numbers desiccated by wars and plague.

Father Casimir was aware of such abusive practices and during his residency in Rome he took the opportunity to intercede before Pope Benedict XIV. This has been recorded in a document preserved at the Vatican Archives and Father Casimir’s handwritten entries in his *Diariusz* [Diary].

In the entry of November 29, 1751, Venerable Casimir described in detail his meeting with Pope Benedict XIV, during which he delivered a few petitions, including the following: “[...] a petition against malpractices in Poland in relation to Easter confession. Certain priests have the habit of taking people to work their lands prior to administering Holy Communion to them, thereby delaying the distribution of Communion. Meanwhile, people worn out and wearied by working at the presbytery farms would leave church without due piety, which caused scandal among non-believers and heretics.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> ASV—S.C. del Concilio, *Relationes ad Limina, Posnaniensis (1612-1819)*, N. 6. *Bartholomeus Tarło (1712)*; per canonicum Gasper Ruggia. Cf. B. Jakimowicz, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży Kazimierz Wyszyński*, in: *Polscy święci*, vol. 9, Ed. J. R. Bar, OFMConv, Warszawa 1986, 131-132.

<sup>21</sup> See M. Zgórnjak, *Wieś małopolska a plebania*, in: *Studia z dziejów wsi małopolskiej w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku*, Ed. C. Bobińska, Warszawa 1957, 444-445.

<sup>22</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii*, in: *Stróż duchowego*

It would appear that the matter remained in practice, because another note appeared in Father Casimir's *Diariusz* on January 13, 1753: "I submitted a petition to the Holy Father about the burdens imposed on Christian people in the Kingdom of Poland on the occasion of Easter confessions."<sup>23</sup>

The entry of January 20<sup>th</sup> reads thus: "I received back from the Holy Father my petition in regard to people of both genders placed under additional burdens by parish pastors in the Kingdom of Poland on the occasion of Easter confessions. The Holy Father wrote on my petition 'For the Cardinal Secretary of State.'"<sup>24</sup>

On the following day Father Casimir showed this petition to the Defender of the Faith: "He was pleased with the fact that there was a note 'For His Eminence, Cardinal Secretary of State, to demand information from the Nuncio to Poland.'" Next, Father Wyszyński provided detailed reasoning behind this petition: "I was motivated to submit this petition as follows: When I would be assisting parish pastors with confessions or delivering sermons to the country folks, or simply passing through [some parishes], I could not help but notice that parish pastors or their vicars in various dioceses had introduced the practice—as if it were a tradition related to Easter confessions—according to which people were put to work prior to going to confession. Some of the men were given axes, previously borrowed from somewhere with this intention, and they had either to cut wood or make caldrons or fence posts. Other men had to flail grain or do similar work. Women were employed breaking the material for the spinning of the distaff, or cleaning the gardens, or—if the ground was already defrosted—digging or other work. It was only after such "preparation" for confession that people were admitted in groups—some going to confession while others continued working. Those who had made their confession would return to work before receiving Holy Communion. Therefore, Communion

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*dziedzictwa marianów...*, 219.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 362.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 367.

ion was delayed until afternoon, sometimes even until the hours of 3 or 4pm. It was only then that people, worn out by such preparation, were admitted to receive Holy Communion. Priests refused to hear confessions on a holyday. It was even forbidden to ask for confession on such a day, so the poor people would have to go to confession on weekdays and had to work hard before confession and Holy Communion. It happened that many people who were working on an empty stomach since the day before, suffered various pains and nausea so strongly that they were barely able to receive Holy Communion. Others went to confession and Communion without proper preparation, because they did not have time after work. The youths involved in these works were not only unprepared, but after exchanging gossip and jokes during work time they would go straight from work to Communion. The women also, after joking around, even having arguments while working at distaff, went to Communion very disrespectfully, as if they were ignorant of the truths of faith and were not told how to receive such a great sacrament worthily. They would be returning home, some laughing, others gossiping and others quarrelling. The weaker became ill, weary of such toil. Others, having worked the day before, were hungry the day after, so after receiving Communion they ran quickly to the Jews' inn, where tired and with empty stomachs, they drank vodka and became instantly drunk and went away shouting. I have often witnessed that there was no use in offering confession and Holy Communion associated with additional work; I heard people complaining or lamenting because of nausea and pain. When Holy Communion was delayed they had no chance to eat. As I was looking at all this, my heart ached for the people so unnecessarily and unjustly tormented, and for the disrespect inflicted on the great sacrament by making imperfect confession and improper reception of Holy Communion, because they had to work during the time they should have been given to prepare for these sacraments.

“This situation was scandalizing the Jews and heretics who were convinced that this Church commandment was instituted for nothing else but the greater enrichment of priests. Therefore, when I was in Poland I looked for a way to put an end to such mal-

practices, but failed to come up with anything. As the Lord God brought me happily to Rome, I submitted a petition on this matter to the Holy Father. In 1752, I was granted an audience. When I met with some religious from Poland, I asked them if these improprieties had been stopped in Polish parishes, or if the dioceses had issued a ban on such works. They replied that they had heard nothing on this matter and that people continued to work as they did before and had to work while waiting for confession and Easter Communion. In 1753, I submitted to the Holy Father the following petition: "Holy Father! This is to inform Your Holiness most humbly, that certain malpractices have been established in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by many reverend parish pastors, their vicars and rectors of parish churches in connection with the Church commandment about Easter Confession and Holy Communion. Many times when the faithful, very poor people, both men and women, come from their villages to the parish church, wishing to satisfy this commandment, they receive an unduly heavy duty, even impossible to fulfill, to work either in the houses or farms or gardens belonging to the parish pastor prior to being admitted to Confession and Holy Communion.

It so happens frequently that some of those people, being spent in such works, can hardly make a sincere Confession and receive Holy Communion with proper deference. What is even worse, due to the delay in administering Communion, since the aforesaid works stretch well into midday and even later, these poor wretches who have been fasting from the day before and who have become worn out by additional work, become weakened and sick, it is only with a great effort that they are able to receive Communion. Because of illnesses resulting from their hard toil, they complain and lament with bitterness and they say to themselves—especially the country bumpkins—that such a commandment must have been issued not for purification from sins in the sacrament of penance and pious reception of the Body of Christ, but only to profit greedy priests. In a word, it is difficult to express the strain put on visiting confessors when they hear confessions; and how much harm is done to the poor people by

imposing this work on them and deliberately postponing Confession and Holy Communion. Even the non-believers and heretics keep on ridiculing the abuses and improprieties perpetrated in regard to this sacred and salutary Church commandment as they hear people constantly grumble amongst themselves and complain about their pastors.

Therefore, [speaking] on behalf of the faithful, both men and men, in this Kingdom of Poland, without any regard to myself and being driven only by the Divine commandment of loving one's neighbor and caring for his salvation, I humbly beg Your Holiness to rectify these improprieties and abuses and put an end to them by sending your apostolic letter to all the dioceses of the aforesaid Kingdom."<sup>25</sup>

On January 24, 1753, Father Casimir recorded: "I submitted the same petition to the secretariat of His Eminence, Cardinal Valenti, Secretary of State, because the document had an inscription written by the Holy Father: 'For His Eminence, Cardinal Secretary of State, to request information on this matter from the Nuncio in Poland.' I asked if I should submit the petition personally or by post. I was told not to worry about it anymore because the letter would be sent by Papal mail. When the answer arrives, inquiries can be made about the results."<sup>26</sup>

The petition was sent to the Apostolic Nuncio in Dresden, who wrote to Cardinal Valenti, Secretary of State, on February 19, 1753: "There are numerous and serious irregularities in the Kingdom of Poland, but I have never heard about what is claimed in the petition sent to me by your Eminence, i.e., that many parish priests do not allow the faithful to Confession and Easter Communion until these people do work at the priest's home, garden or property. This is indeed a serious misdeed, which seems to be extraordinary and simply unbelievable at the same time. Nevertheless, I will immediately seek information that I will submit accordingly to Your Eminence."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 367-370.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 370.

<sup>27</sup> Father Boleslaus Jakimowicz, MIC described further developments in this

Upon obtaining the information, the Nuncio sent news to the Vatican, confirming that in some dioceses, especially in places distant from the episcopal see, there were indeed incidents of malpractice that corroborated the facts of the deplorable situation mentioned in the petition. In view of the approaching Easter holy day, he decided to write to the Bishops on behalf of the Holy Father, calling them to put an end to these practices. If this did not help, then more effective measures would need to be applied according to the instructions of the Holy Father. The idea of sending such a letter to all the bishops in Poland was considered. However, in the end it was decided against this motion, since such a letter could unduly hurt those bishops in whose dioceses there were no such abuses.

A month later, on March 8, 1753, the Nuncio wrote to the Secretary of State, giving more detailed information about misdeeds. They took place mainly in the dioceses of Gniezno, Krakow, Kujawy, Poznan, Płock and Łuck. Apart from the Bishop of Poznan, who had aspirations for extraordinary titles and who for a year did not reply to the Nuncio's letters, other Bishops responded about the matter of those abuses. Special edicts were issued in print and made public in individual dioceses. Copies of these edicts were sent to Rome. The Bishops of Kujawy and Płock, who had taken over dioceses only recently, did not manage to collect information on the matter. The Nuncio promised to gather further information through trusted people, especially in regard to misdeeds that happened during Easter the year before.

The Nuncio's letter of May 28, 1753, was read to the Holy Father in Castel Gandolfo in June of the same year. Benedict XIV stated that he would write a special letter to the Nuncio on the matter of the misdeeds in Poland. We failed to uncover in the archives the Holy Father's letter to the Nuncio. But another of the Pope's letters to the Nuncio dated May 5, 1753, was found. By this letter the Pope encouraged his representative in Poland to write

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case concerning proper administration of the sacrament of penance before Easter on the basis of Vatican documents. See *Czcigodny Sługa Boży Kazimierz Wyszyński...*, 163-164.



letters specifically to the Bishops of the dioceses in which these abuses were perpetrated, ordering them to straighten things out. Should that measure be to no avail, then the Holy Father intended to send a circular letter about this matter to all the Polish Bishops.

Thus, Father Wszyński's intercession before the Holy Father on behalf of the poor people in Poland is the best proof of his social concern. Sensitive to the wrongs inflicted on the peasants, he sought justice from the highest moral authority and there he found understanding and appropriate efforts to alleviate the harm inflicted on the victims. Corrective measures were applied to ensure that the Christian and human dignity of the Polish peasants was respected.

In light of the collected material it is clear that Father Casimir undertook and carried out faithfully the heritage of the Marian Founder, namely a concern for improving the condition of the rural laborers. He used his personal influence with magnates and the gentry to shape their Christian and civic attitude. He did not hesitate to intervene with the Pope regarding some priests' abusive practice connected to the fulfillment of the duty of Easter Confession. Father Casimir's personal kindness and assistance to the poor and oppressed made it easier for them to tolerate difficult living conditions with dignity.

### ***Propagator of Devotion to Mary Immaculate***

**F**ather Wszyński was a man of action who would resort to writing mainly for practical reasons. His "Records of the Activities in Rome" and "Notes Regarding the Canonization of the Founder," and his diary are proof of the care he took to preserve and propagate the Marians' spiritual heritage and his concern for the spiritual growth of the members.

As mentioned above, Father Casimir was an ardent propagator of the devotion to St. Stanislaus Papczyński. While working in Rome and in Portugal, he wrote the Founder's biography to help

the Marians of other nations get to know the person and life of their holy Father Founder.

The Servant of God also translated from Latin into Polish the “Rule of the Marian Brethren of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” He supplemented his translation with questions and answers regarding religious vows, along with some remarks on the “Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” and a brief account of the Congregation of Marians. This work was released in Warsaw, in 1750.

Father Casimir was reputed to have written a book titled *Information About Religious Articles or the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which Is Distributed to People in All Walks of Life by the Most Reverend Marian Fathers*. The book contained a description of the Marian Congregation, various prayers to the Blessed Mother Conceived Without Sin, and prayers for the souls suffering in Purgatory. The book was released in Berdichev with an annotation that it was already in its fourth edition. It is assumed that the first edition appeared in 1750.

The purpose of Father Wyszynski’s literary activity was not only to promote the Congregation of Marians, but also to instill a proper Christian attitude in his native land. We have already mentioned the book which he published in Rome about St. Ignatius of Antioch, a steadfast believer and martyr from the beginning of the second century of Christianity. Father Casimir’s notes about the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, the priesthood, the religious life, the Word of God, and other truths of the faith, which can be found now in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, were probably his preparatory notes for a book on asceticism.

Father Wyszynski came to love the Immaculate Virgin Mary in a very particular way. When he joined the Congregation of Marians he made efforts to bring about the growth of his Order for the greater glory of the Mother of God. He encouraged others to imitate her virtues. To this end he propagated information about the Marians and their rule of life. He also published in Warsaw in 1749,

a book entitled *Gwiazda zaranna na horyzoncie polskim nowo wschodząca* [Morning Star Newly Rising on the Polish Horizon.]

Father Casimir mentioned that he had translated from the Latin a book by Francis Arias, S.J., *De imitatio Mariae Virginis*. But when the original text which he edited in Rome in the years 1731-1733, is compared to the translated text, considerable differences are possible to perceive. Therefore, Father Casimir was not a mere translator of someone else's thoughts, but poured out on paper the results of his own meditations and experiences which he wished to share with his readers. He adapted the book *Morning Star* not only to the Marian Rule but also, as he himself indicated on the title page, to "various groups of people, both religious and secular." His 46-page long introduction to this book is an invaluable contribution, enabling his readers to become acquainted with the way Polish people perceived the Blessed Virgin in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The enthusiasm of a zealous apostle and propagator of a properly understood devotion to Mary Immaculate becomes clear on the pages of the Introduction.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary had not yet been proclaimed, although this truth had already become the subject of reflection for many theologians and the object of veneration for many Christians. Many religious orders, among them the Order of Marians, had been founded to defend and propagate this truth. During his stay in Rome from 1751 to 1753, Father Wyszynski attentively followed everything concerning devotion to the Immaculate Conception. The spread of Jansenism, which attacked the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, greatly pained him. He was sorry to learn that—due to the lack of funds—Abbot Louis Andruzzi could not publish his work entitled *Perpetua Ecclesiae doctrina de Immaculata Conceptione Beatæ Virginis Mariæ*, i.e., *The Church's Eternal Teaching on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*.

It was a great joy for Father Casimir to meet Pope Benedict XIV, which he mentioned in his *Diary* on November 29, 1751: "It was only today [...] that I was fortunate to be received by the Pope. As it was my desire to attain this honor, I put pusillanimity

aside. Moved by zeal and being in fact the Procurator of the Order, I asked for my name to be entered in the register as *Padre Procuratore Generale di Religiosi Mariani [...] Polacco*. Requesting an audience as such, I was received, and I gave the Holy Father a report on our Order, on my duties and activities, and I asked his blessing for our Congregation. The Holy Father answered: ‘Benedico tibe et Congregationi’ [I bless you and the Congregation]. Then I said: ‘This Congregation was founded for the greater honor of the Immaculate Virgin.’ The Holy Father asked: ‘Immaculate Conception? Good!’ and he nodded.”

Father Wyszyński’s insistence that the Marians not miss an opportunity for the beatification of their Founder, included the possibility of expediting the solemn promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. On February 26, 1752, he wrote in his *Diary*: “They are urging us to begin efforts for the elevation of our Founder to the honors of the altar. That would help us to refute the attacks of the enemies of this holy mystery, and the Holy Church would have a reason to proceed with the definitive pronouncement of this truth. I am here like a thorn in the side of these enemies, so they do not like to look at me, but we expect to conquer all of these adversities soon, as long as we all become worthy of and useful for the promotion of the honor of the Most Holy Virgin.”

In his letter of July 15, 1752, addressed to the Superior General, Father Cajetan Wetycki, he returns to this matter: “Nobody hides a candle under a bushel basket, but puts it on a stand so that it can give light. If we want the Order of the Virgin Mary to flourish, we should busy ourselves with noble and praiseworthy deeds. It is not we who are the concern here, rather it is the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed virgin Mary. Therefore, her Order should be spread and the venerator of this mystery, our Venerable Founder, should be particularly praised and efforts be made to bring about his beatification. He is worthy of it and deserves it, and it is our duty to do this for him. Nobody will condemn us, rather they will praise us for it. The Lord God Himself demands this from us when He blesses us unexpectedly

in many things whenever we do what we intended in the beatification cause of our Founder.”

In his introduction to *Morning Star*, Father Casimir emphasized that devotion to Mary was one of many graces which God bestowed upon the Polish nation. The manifestations of this devotion are the churches, altars, pictures, religious orders, and fraternities dedicated to the Mother of God. The devout “give constant praise to her in prayers, hymns, and songs, and ask her intercession with God for their needs, relying on her most effective help [...] There are many faithful too, who undertake the effort to make pilgrimages to her holy and miraculous pictures. There are also quite a number of women and men who, having abandoned the goods of this world, give themselves to Mary for eternal service in a religious order under her name [...] Many a time did the Polish knights enter a battle with the enemies of her holy name [...]”

The imitation of Mary’s virtues and life must be mentioned as the most important feature of all of these manifestations of devotion to her. God endowed her in a special way. Jesus praised His mother for listening ardently to the word of God and keeping it in her everyday life. Hence, Father Casimir emphasized what St. Augustine had declared, namely: Mary was much more blessed for her deep faith than for the fact that she was the mother of God.

The Servant of God Casimir reminded his countrymen: “[...] if we want to show real veneration for the Virgin Mary and be her servants, it is not enough to have knowledge about her majesty, nobility, privileges, and the virtues with which she shone. We must not be satisfied with simply proclaiming her praise in prayers and hymns, with making sacrifices and vows, but we must imitate her life and virtues whereby we will become like her and thus become loved by her. I write after St. John: ‘He who says he abides in Christ ought to walk the same way in which He walked’ (1 Jn 2:6). Similarly, he who would associate himself with Mary ought to imitate her virtues and walk the way she walked, following Christ. This is how true venerators of Mary, whom she acknowledges, may be recognized, as it is expressed in the book

of Sirach in these words: 'Whoever obeys me, will not be put to shame, and those who work with my help will not sin' (Sir 24:22). Hence it is clear that we venerate Mary most perfectly when we imitate her virtues as described in the Gospels."

Father Wyszyński emphasized later: "We want then to point to the evangelical virtues of the Virgin Mary only so that they might be imitated. Although our Most Beloved Lady shone with countless virtues, apart from these they would be not only difficult to imitate but also to understand, for she surpassed in virtue not only the holiest of people, but even the holiest of the angels." By using various comparisons, Father Casimir wanted to show the precise meaning of the Virgin Mary's virtues for Christian living. He remarked that they are abilities given by God which can be redoubled by imitating them. They are lamps by which the whole world can be illuminated. They are capable of purifying not only the ten lepers, but also all sinners. For we are all in need of God's mercy: "By imitating the Mother of God we will obtain the forgiveness of our sins and God's mercy and deliverance from the hands of the enemies of our soul and of our earthly life, who lie in wait especially in recent times for the undoing of our distressed Homeland."

Mary is the "Morning Star" which leads to Christ the "Sun of Justice." Father Wyszyński got the idea of such a title from the book written by Francis Arias, SJ. Father Wyszyński quotes his words: "She is the noble Star rising from the House of Jacob whose rays illuminate the whole world, the light which shines from high above penetrating the depths and piercing the earth. It warms the soul more than the body; it preserves virtue and destroys bad habits. She is the brightest and most magnificent star above the vast sea of the world, shining with virtue and illuminating with merit. If someone is immersed in the turbulent waters of this world, more than walking on solid ground, he should not turn his eyes away from this star if he does not want to drown. When the gales of temptation rise against you and you fall into the trap of your senses, look up to this Star and call upon Mary. When anger, greed, or covetousness shake the vessel of your mind, look to Mary. When you become inundated by the waves

of pride, insolence, slander, and hatred, look at the star, call upon Mary. When you become distressed by the number of your sins, ashamed of the impurity of your conscience, frightened by the harshness of the Judgment, and plunged into the abyss of sadness, think on Mary. When you are oppressed or in danger or besieged by doubts, remember her and call upon her name. May it never disappear from your lips or withdraw from your heart. Follow her example if you want to receive her help. If you imitate her you shall never lose your way. You will not be disappointed if you ask her. If you think about her you will not commit a sin. You will not fall when she supports you. Under her care you will not be afraid. You will not get tired when she leads you. You will reach your destination with her help and guidance" (*Hom. 2 super Misus est, sub finem*).

This quotation demonstrates Father Casimir's familiarity with the opinions of popular writers about the Blessed Mother. From himself he added: "Let us, then, watch attentively the ascent and motions of this brightest star. Let us follow her. Let us rise up from the sleep of death by sin. If we wish to see this Morning Star rising, we must zealously imitate the Ten Virtues of the Virgin Mary. For just as a star once led the three wise men to Jesus as He lay in a stable in Bethlehem, so will this Morning Star, shining with the ten rays of the evangelical virtues, lead us to Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly kingdom. For Mary is the living Star of the evangelical law and of the Holy Church, and her example should be followed by all the faithful. Those who by Satan's deceit have been persuaded to break God's ten commandments, will resist the evil spirit by imitating these ten virtues and thus will be spiritually reborn."

Father Wyszynski re-worked Arias' book, adapting it to the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, which was binding for the Marians at that time. Therefore, he combined the chapters of this book written by the Spanish Jesuit, into 10 separate "treatises," each being dedicated to a different virtue. In this manner, the following virtues are discussed: chastity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, charity, and

compassion or sorrow of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. The outline for this book, prepared for print by Father Casimir, seems to be a continuation of the thought of the Marian Founder. Father Papczyński wrote a book called *Templum Dei Mysticum* [Mystical Temple of God], which contains the principles of life to be followed by any Christian who truly wishes to be a temple of God. Virtues are the ornaments of this temple.

Further, Father Wyszzyński discussed in greater detail the role played by the virtues in the spiritual development of a person. He also emphasized that because of these virtues, Mary has a share in the work of the redemption of the world. He wrote: "When we recall the virtues with which the Virgin Mary crushed the head of the dragon from hell, we fill all of hell with fear. By imitating and practicing these virtues, the faithful cannot stray from the path of salvation, for they have received deliverance and help from their Lady."

Evidently, even in Father Casimir's time there were people who opposed devotion to Mary, validating their position by citing one's duty to imitate only Jesus Christ. Therefore, Father Casimir quoted the words of St. Paul who encouraged us to embrace Christ's own view on the matter, adding this: "Since the Apostle to the Nations tells us to imitate himself and the other Apostles because he and the others imitated Christ, why, then, should we not imitate Mary who was closest to Christ and most intimately involved in the matters of His life[...]? Furthermore, we are to imitate Mary not only in the manner in which she imitated Christ the Lord, but also in all things to which He, being both God and man, was not obliged. We are to respect and love Him, trust Him, and believe in Him. In our gratitude for the grace of redemption, we should imitate not Christ, but Mary—the first participant of redemption, free from the stain of original sin."

Can it be, then, that Father Casimir's thought about changing the world through a true and complete devotion to Mary might be applied to our own times? "I gave the book on the imitation of the evangelical virtues of the Virgin Mary the title of 'Morning Star' because I saw how the entire world is plunged in evil, has



many bad habits, is unaware of what is good and beneficial, and through its errors and heresies becomes separated from Christ, the Sun of Justice. Just as the morning star, Aurora, announces the rising of the Sun, so will the virtues of the Virgin Mary point the way to Christ, the Sun of Justice, for those who readily undertake to practice them.”

These ardent recommendations flowed from the heart of a man who put into practice what he proclaimed by word. He lived a life full of mortification. Throughout his 30 years of religious life, he slept only five hours a day and wore a hair shirt all the time. His attitude towards other people expressed a special love of neighbor. He lived and worked during difficult times. The period under Saxon rule was one of widespread material, spiritual, and moral degradation. Spiritual emptiness and mediocrity were covered up with the glamour and lavish lifestyle of the upper classes. The rich did not hesitate to oppress the less fortunate and impose ever heavier burdens upon the peasants. Father Wyszynski, witnessing the behavior of the times, never gave up the fight to change the situation, never lost hope. The Primate of Poland, Stephen Cardinal Wyszynski, emphasizing Father Wyszynski’s role in the awakening of hope for the nation’s survival in those difficult times, due to Mary’s particular protection, spoke about him thus: “To a nation of people who were losing their freedom, Father Casimir revealed their very Mother. He tied this nation personally to her through the veneration of her Immaculate Conception and Sorrowful Heart. He began by preaching to the nation that all abandon themselves to Mary’s maternal bondage [...] He knew that anything entrusted to her care would never perish.”

*Father Casimir’s Merciful Deeds  
for the Souls in Purgatory*

**H**aving asked for admission to the Marian Order in November of 1723, Francis—afterwards Father Casimir—lived more than

30 years as a Marian, all the while growing in personal holiness and faithfully fulfilling the duties of his calling. The decree on his heroic virtues, proclaimed December 21, 1989, emphasized among other things his eschatological commitment: "As a faithful [spiritual] son of the Founder and a guardian of his spiritual legacy, he [Father Casimir] also endeavored to bring help to the souls suffering in purgatory." This is particularly underlined in Father Casimir's biography, written by Father Alexis Fischer, his disciple and successor in Portugal: "He [Father Casimir] assisted the souls in purgatory in every possible way and recommended others to do the same. In order to intensify this help, he obtained from Pope Benedict XIV the perpetual privilege that in all of our churches plenary indulgences could be obtained during the octave of All the Faithful Departed. (n. 26)

In those times, Marian devotion was closely associated with prayerful assistance for the souls in purgatory. This was particularly true for the members of the movement of people who dedicated themselves to Mary. These "Mary's Slaves" not only sought to free themselves from sins and the devil, but also carried out apostolic works, buying back Christian captives from the infidels' custody, assisting prisoners, and praying for the souls suffering in purgatory.

Venerable Casimir closely followed Father Papczyński's teachings set forth in his textbook on spiritual life, *Mystical Temple of God*: "[...] it is the greatest charity to pray earnestly to God for the freedom of the souls remaining in purgatory or to assist them by merciful alms and various other means. Quite impious and foolish is he who is not moved by their torments and does not help those who suffer when he is able. In the Scriptures, the leader Judas Maccabees, vigorous and noble-minded, "took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing so he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view" (2 Mch 12:43). This was done by a man who was occupied with continual wars, which usually extinguish pity, and who may well have

known that the Synagogue did not have as much power as our Holy Mother the Church to apply the merits of Christ the Lord to the faithful departed. What is appropriate for us to do, we who can obtain much from Jesus and have such frequent incentives to bring assistance to the souls of the faithful who are destined for temporary torture? Therefore, I am greatly amazed how it is possible that a Christian does not begin to feel deeply the entreaty of those souls who cry aloud in these words: "Pity me, pity me, O you my friends!" (Jb 19:21). What about the fact that we shall have in heaven as many patrons and helpers as the souls we have brought there, thanks to our help, from the furnace of purgatory! I do not relate many things on this subject; let it suffice to consider and follow what the Holy Spirit declared: 'It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be delivered from their sins' " (Mc 12:45-46).

Therefore, a few days after his arrival in Rome in May, 1751, Father Casimir started efforts for having the community of hermits from Saint Egidio Church near Porta Angelica, associated with the Marian Order, because that community was linked to the Archconfraternity of Souls in Purgatory, founded in 1687, and endowed with indulgences and privileges by Popes Innocent XI and Benedict XIII. Although his efforts failed, he obtained a book with a list of privileges, such as permission to have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the octave of the memorial of All the Faithful Departed and to impart indulgences for the dead on specified liturgical feast days.

Venerable Casimir felt a great joy from personally meeting Pope Benedict XIV on November 29, 1751. On that day he received a blessing for himself and for the entire Congregation. He informed the Holy Father that the Congregation had been founded "for the greater glory of Mary Immaculately Conceived" and "for bringing help to the souls suffering in purgatory, especially the victims of wars, epidemic diseases, famine, and forgotten persons." Among petitions submitted to the pope, there was also the one related to that goal. The Holy Father accepted the petition and said: "Good, we shall try to give you these indulgences." He

then patted [Father Casimir] on the head and made a sign of the cross over him. After this audience, Father Casimir wrote, "I dried my tears and felt very reassured."

Of special importance are instructions of February 20, 1752, entitled "The Manner of introducing at our churches indulgences for the dead during the octave of All Souls Day." These instructions were composed according to the Church laws and pious practices of the period as found in the churches of Rome. Although in some aspects they are no longer timely, they testify to Father Casimir's dedication to bringing assistance to the dead, as well as to his apostolic spirit in guiding the still-living faithful to God. For those reasons, the instructions are given here in full: "First, you need to present to the Ordinary in whose diocese the monastery is located, the special Privilege granted to our Order by the Holy See. Then you should ask for approval, doing so by a separate document, because the brief was given in perpetuity. Therefore, it would not be possible for every bishop to write his approval on the original copy. They can, if they wish, sign on the (apostolic) brief.

"Earlier, you should announce the introduction of this devotion, assigning a day. It seems appropriate to introduce it in the afternoon on Saturday in the octave of All Souls Day, so that the celebration would go uninterrupted until the next Sunday morning. This would be more convenient for people going to confession and for an increased turnout. You should commission a painting on canvas—done perhaps in some inexpensive paints—of the same size or larger than the painting on the main altar, so that it can be carried during enthronement. This image is to show the Blessed Virgin clad in white and totally surrounded by clouds. Underneath, there should be Purgatory with suffering souls, two Marians kneeling on a rock above Purgatory and holding in one hand a small book and a rosary, and in the other some vessels from which they pour water to extinguish Purgatory's flames. Such an image has already been painted and is about to be put on display on All Souls Day at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle. Due to the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, make sure that

no skulls are painted on that image. After having this painting blessed, place it along with the [written] privilege on a temporary altar, decorated with twigs of spruce or fir or some drapery, and place this structure outside the village or cemetery. Have here and there images of souls in flames, even if painted only on paper. Inside the church you can place images of souls from various social strata, mainly people wearing helmets, scapulars, etc.

“Our entire church in Góra Kalwaria must have funereal décor. All side altars are to be in funereal trimmings, displaying skulls, Death and various souls in flames. On the other hand, the main altar is to be ornamented solemnly in view of a daily, one-hour-long exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The antependium<sup>28</sup> of the main altar may not be dressed in black, not showing skulls or Death, but only—and sparingly—souls in flames. On the other hand, let the entire church be in mourning, accessorized with skulls, pictures of Death and souls in flames, so as to motivate the faithful to give assistance to the deceased. For this same reason, you should have various Scriptural quotes here and there reminding the faithful of All Souls Day and the holy souls.

“Later, organize a procession with the image and [the written] Privilege; you may carry funeral banners and sing the Little Office or some other devotion for the dead. It seems to me that Father Alexis ordered to have a song printed [for this purpose]. Let our confreres dressed in dalmatics carry the painting, while other people may carry the document of Privilege. Naturally, this should not be the original—first, because it must be carefully preserved *in perpetuum*, and second, because it cannot be in various places at once—but its copy made out in large letters. Upon arriving at the church, place the image on the main altar, where it should stay for the duration of the entire octave. The copy of the document of the Privilege should be placed somewhere near so that everyone literate can read it. You are to deliver inspirational talks to arouse compassion for the souls: the first one upon raising the painting from its appointed location, and the other after placing

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<sup>28</sup> Antependium or altar frontal is a decorative piece, usually of textile, but also metalwork, stone or other material that can adorn a Christian altar.

it on the main altar. At a prominent place in the church, erect a mausoleum-like structure in mourning, with inscriptions, Death, and deceased bodies. It should have something like an urn—not an ordinary coffin—standing on a large catafalque. However, this structure should not obstruct the view of the main altar with the Blessed Sacrament in exposition encircled by a few candles.

“The celebration in the church should proceed thus: a solemn Mass should be sung daily—even on a holy day, for which there is permission provided by the decree—as if for an anniversary for the intention of the deceased; a private holy Mass should be celebrated according to the formulary for the feast of the dead. After Mass, according to the formulary for an anniversary, the priest should remove his black vestments and put on a celebratory white cope; his assistants also put on white vestments and arrange the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which should continue for an hour. At the conclusion, a short devotion for the dead should also be celebrated, followed by benediction of the faithful with the Blessed Sacrament. However, no procession with the Blessed Sacrament should take place. On the other hand, you should deliver daily teachings that would inspire the people to have compassion for the holy souls and bring them help, which they need so badly. Since the teachings are to be delivered after Mass, celebrated solemnly according to the formulary for the anniversary, they should be brief. The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is to take place right after the homily, at 11 o’clock.

“During the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Mass may be celebrated only at a side altar. At that time, two brothers or seminarians should be kneeling at the main altar throughout the whole time; if none of them are available, two laypeople in surplices should kneel there. Every afternoon, you should recite or sing the office of Matins for the benefit of the people arriving for confessions from the morning hours. This is suggested in order to free priests for hearing confessions instead of reciting the breviary. They can do the same in the afternoon when the faithful would be preparing for confession. It is necessary to remind people in sermons and during confessions, to offer their

confession, communion, and their pilgrimage to this location as well as the celebration to follow, for the intention of the deceased.

“These instructions regard the churches already in our care. There is no need to worry about their application at our new foundations, should the Lord God grant us such. The aforesaid devotion can be introduced once our Order settles there. It is enough to announce and introduce this devotion without asking permission of the local Ordinary. Other religious Orders introduce their devotions in the same way. However, permission is needed now, since we are introducing something that has not existed before. Our failure to notify bishops would cause their great concern. On the other hand, it is assumed that when they install us in a new location, we would come with all the privileges granted to our Congregation.

“I send you a sample of the urn for your catafalque. It ought to be made by a carpenter, not in the form of a square but rather longer than wider. It can be made also out of papier-mâché and painted to imitate stone or marble, as if it were a stone vessel topped with stone. The [vertical] line running through the center ought to be approximately five inches, the horizontal about three or slightly less. Four skulls may support the urn placed on the catafalque.

“Solemn holy Mass, by the anniversary formulary, cannot be celebrated while exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place. Exposition should begin after the sung Mass is concluded and the homily delivered. At first, the exposition should have no singing or blessing of the faithful, but only the exposition and silent incensing of the faithful. Fifteen minutes before noon, a sung devotion for the dead or a song from Father Alexis’s book should be performed before the Blessed Sacrament. The blessing with the Blessed Sacrament follows, without the priest’s singing, only with the organ playing softly. During the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament people can sing three times “Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.” Therefore, it is necessary to make the sign of the cross slowly so as to give time for singing this invocation three times. Such is the custom here in Rome.”

While in Rome, Father Casimir went to see the Promoter of the Faith on the Congregation's business, especially in regard to Father Stanislaus Papczyński's beatification. The *Diariusz czynności* [The Diary of Activities] contains the following entry under the date of September 28, 1752: "On that same day, I delivered the Rule and Constitutions to the Promoter of the Faith who greeted me thus: 'Thank you, Father, for coming to see me. I am already a supporter of your Order because you bring assistance to the souls in Purgatory and I love the holy souls and do for them all that I can. I very much like the devotion for the dead which you practice.' I gave him the Rule and Constitutions and offered as a gift the book by our Founder, *Mystical Temple of God*. He told me to come to see him again in four days, adding: 'I shall return your Rule and Constitutions as soon as I have read them, but I will keep *Mystical Temple* since it was your gift to me. Come back Sunday, because I will go away afterwards. However, once I return, you shall be able to see me whenever you want. You will always be welcome at my place because you bring help to the holy souls.'"

In his letter of January 19, 1753, Venerable Casimir appealed to his brother, Father John Wszyński, to increase efforts in Poland towards the beatification of the Marian Founder: "I do not understand why they would have doubts about our saintly Father, for even if he were a private person, even then—on account of the evidence of his holiness that is left behind—he should be elevated to the altars, and not only by his own [brethren], but by the entire diocese. And our Father is not a private person, but the founder of a Congregation which pursues such godly goals as helping the souls in purgatory. No other religious order has yet been founded for this purpose, although many have been established for various other pious purposes—such as missionary work, work in education, the ransom of slaves, assistance to the sick and dying, and the performance of other godly works. Our Venerable Founder took upon himself the obligation to help the souls in purgatory to the utmost of his ability, and this should be persuasive enough to support such a founder and such a congre-



gation, which also bears the special title of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.”<sup>29</sup>

In the *Foreward* to the book by Francis Arias, S.J., already mentioned above, which Father Casimir translated, edited, and published in 1749, and to which he gave the title of *Morning Star*, Venerable Casimir spoke about the Marians as the venerators of Mary and advocates for the poor souls in Purgatory. Discussing the virtue of love of neighbor which Christians are to practice, supported by Mary’s intercession, he goes beyond Arias’s text and adds his own comment: “We can greatly help the souls of our neighbors who repay God’s justice in Purgatory. It can be said that our coming with greater love and compassion to the rescue of our neighbors in their greatest journey is the noblest act of love. It is impossible to think of any greater earthly need of our neighbor than the relief of the souls of the departed in the flames of Purgatory. We give a great witness to love of neighbor when we come to their rescue with prayers, holy Masses, alms and other pious deeds. By rescuing our neighbors’ souls, the souls of God’s friends, we gain great merit from God. The Scriptures confirm this salutary counsel and teaching as they say in the Book of Maccabees: “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins” (2 Mch 12:46, Douay-Rheims, American Edition Bible, 1899; i.e. from the restraint of their sins.) Hence, for centuries the Holy Church has been opening the great treasure of love for the redemption of souls through the merits of Christ’s Passion. Through special privileges the Church grants also to us, Marians, the means to rescue them, namely: apostolic permission to found confraternities, to have privileged altars and indulgences for certain prayers. To neglect these means, causes great damage to our love of neighbor. If someone refuses this kind of assistance to the souls in Purgatory, he knows no love of neighbor and thus he has no love of God. On the other hand, we faithful sons and daughters of the Holy Catholic Church, do not suppress our love for the souls of our neighbors and our ancestors. Moreover, hoping to gain merit

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 366-367.

through the Lord's Passion, we combine our prayers and pious deeds with the salutary ordinance of the Holy Apostolic See. Often, we assist the souls who repay God's justice in the fires of Purgatory, by saying with heartfelt compassion: 'Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.' Let us not forget to repeat frequently this witness to our righteous love of God and neighbor."<sup>30</sup>

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger laments that in our time the word "soul" is sometimes placed on the list of forbidden words. Attempts have been made to prove that segmenting the human person finds no place in Christianity, because it contradicts the unity between the Creator and His creation. The cardinal stresses that the word *soul* in Christianity expresses the fruit of faith: "[it] expresses the uniqueness of the human being intended by the Creator; man is such a creation in which spirit meets matter and forms a totality. By pushing the word *soul* aside, we inevitably fall into materialism, which does not exalt the body, but deprives it of its dignity."<sup>31</sup> Vatican II teaches thus: "Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven—through a purification—or immediate and everlasting damnation" (CCC 1022). "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (1030). "From the very beginning, the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead" (1032).

Father Casimir's niece, Michalina Ignatowska, a Sister of Saint Clare, while testifying about the life of her uncle, recalled her trip

<sup>30</sup> The above fragment was omitted in the recent publication of *Gwiazda zaranna [Morning Star]*. The excerpt is translated by Father Z. Proczek, MIC.

<sup>31</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Bóg jest blisko nas*, Kraków, 2002, 169-170.

to her family home in the village of Jeziora which she made as a postulant together with the prioress. On their way, they stopped at the Cenacle of Our Lord in Góra Kalwaria. They told Father Casimir that they were very cold and would like to warm up inside. He led them to the church, saying that it was a place to be warmed up by God's love. After prayer, the women went on their way. He showed more mercy towards the souls in Purgatory. His driver, Stanislaus Sekuła, testified during the same process in Poznan that during every ride Venerable Casimir always prayed for the deliverance of souls suffering in Purgatory and encouraged him to pray for them also.

### *Zealous Apostle*

**T**he year 1723 turned out to be very good for the Marians. On September 3<sup>rd</sup> Pope Innocent XIII ratified the Statutes of the Marians and approved anew the Marian Order. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, Januarius Francis Wszyński, a young man of 20, received in Rome the religious habit of the Marians along with his new religious name of Casimir of Saint Joseph. In spite of winter, Father Joachim Kozłowski together with Brother Nicholas and the candidate to the Order, Casimir, made their return trip to Poland in great spirits. They went to Mass on December 15, 1723, in Loreto and in Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice on January 5, 1724. In Venice, they parted with Father Joachim Kozłowski, and Casimir continued his trip to Poland in the company of Brother Nicholas. They arrived in March and Casimir started his novitiate in Korabiew Forest on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. A year later he made his religious vows and actively joined in the life and work of the Marian community, contributing to its external growth and the strengthening of its spirituality. He also proved to be a zealous apostle, concerned for people's spiritual growth and salvation.

The Second Vatican Council recapped the truth which had been realized for centuries, that the profession of evangelical counsels places upon vowed religious an obligation to pray and zealously cooperate in order “to implant and strengthen the Kingdom of Christ in souls and to extend that Kingdom to every clime.”<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Saint John Paul II repeatedly reminded consecrated persons to re-ignite in themselves the original zeal and enthusiasm of the Apostles in response to the challenges of the New Evangelization in the Church.

Already during his years as a student at the Piarist schools, Father Wszyński treated matters of faith with great deference and motivated his classmates by word and example to do the same. They witnessed his piety and exceptional love of neighbor. He encouraged his classmates to venerate God and Mary properly and to fulfill their school duties conscientiously: “Francis, who was applying himself to studies together with us, was usually the first to start a litany service; he sang during Masses or pious meetings. No one ever saw him joking or [aimlessly] looking around while in church. He had a special dedication to Christ the Lord and to His Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. Every day he attended the six o’clock Mass [...]. He was never idle during his free time, but was either praising God in pious devotions or reading pious books that he always sought or else sketching icons with a pen for strengthening his spirit. He treated professors with due respect and never played tricks on them, as students used to do. [...] He admonished at once those of his classmates who would speak heedlessly or improperly. I personally witnessed this. He attached no importance to his garb and spurned all splendors. He endured silently the harm inflicted upon himself, but would strongly contest everyone who would speak against the veneration of God. He knew almost no anger except perhaps the wrath of God. He often spent time in solitary meditation. He recited prayers, various litanies, a chaplet, the Little Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and encouraged other students to follow suit during recreation. When he was

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<sup>32</sup> *Lumen gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vat. II), 44.

made responsible for order, he would not report anyone [misbehaving] at a meeting or at recreation, but would admonish him privately.<sup>33</sup>

From the beginning of his life in the Marian community, Venerable Casimir endeavored to fulfill precisely the duties set forth in the Statutes. The Statutes, approved by Pope Innocent XIII in 1723, contained the following instruction: "There are many simple folks in the Kingdom of Poland who are ignorant of the mysteries of the Faith. The Marian Fathers shall endeavor to instruct such folks either in their own or in parish churches, in the villages or in hospices, whenever an opportunity arises. They [Marians] are obliged to convey Christian teachings according to the Roman Catechism and the customs of the Saintly Fathers, doing so with simplicity so that all can understand it and with zeal so that no one would leave without spiritual benefit. They shall teach not subtle mysteries or scholastic debates, but only the truths which are necessary for salvation, namely: how best to come to a knowledge of God, to venerate and love Him and fulfill their Christian obligations. In a word, it is about showing to all social strata the path that leads to heaven in accordance with their ability to grasp it."<sup>34</sup>

Venerable Casimir even opposed his Superior General who wanted to admit him to ordination right after finishing the novitiate: "After [I made] profession of vows, he wanted me to be a dunce and without considering further studies for me or for the others, would have admitted me to ordination. As he showed no intention of sending me to study, I requested it. For it is not fitting to be a priest without education and it is dangerous to hear confessions without proper training. Therefore, tactfully I had to rouse him to organize studies for us."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> A. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis BMV sub titulo Immaculatae Conceptionis, Defunctis et Parochis In Cura Animarum suffragantium Congregationis Poloniae, ab Innocento XIII aprobata Anno 1723, caput 6, 1.*

<sup>35</sup> *Relacja o duchu proroczym Czcigodnego Ojca Stanisława*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów. Wybór pism o. Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego*, translated [into Polish] and edited by Fr. Z. Proczek, MIC, Warszawa-Stockbridge 2004, 163.

After receiving priestly ordination, he studied the Holy Scriptures with great zeal: "He strictly observed the sage's custom to draw on ancient wisdom and on the prophets. Therefore, he read the Holy Bible attentively from beginning to end throughout the year and took notes."<sup>36</sup> He also studied theological books so that later, through his own writings, he could reach a broader public. Above all, he cultivated a lively contact with God in order to become a better instrument for communicating God's truth. Thus, just like it used to be at school, people from various social classes began seeing him as a man of God and sought contact with him. All this came as confirmation of his faithfully following the recommendations of the Marian Statutes, which stipulated that care for the salvation of people must be preceded by one's own perfection and proper knowledge. Priests are expected to be patient in adversity, humble in relations with others, have patience for all, mortify the senses and persevere in prayer. In their contact with people, they should stimulate them through conversation and advice to lead a good Christian life.<sup>37</sup> Among the recommendations on mortification there is a command to lead a diligent life and to develop solid preparation for pastoral duties.<sup>38</sup> There is also a rule that confessors must deepen their knowledge of moral theology and join zeal with gentleness in administering the sacrament of penance. They must be careful in scrutinizing peoples' conscience, especially of the simple folk, and be reasonable in imposing penance.<sup>39</sup> In his apostolic work, Father Casimir faithfully adhered to these guidelines."

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<sup>36</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta Wielebnego Ojca Kazimierza*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa...*, 59.

<sup>37</sup> *Statuta Patrum...*, VI, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, III, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, V, 3.

### **Father Casimir's Apostolic Activity**

When he prayed in preparation for Holy Mass, Father Casimir used to ask for the gift of love of neighbor. Witnesses in the beatification process (Dominican nuns from Góra Kalwaria, Martin Matuszewicz, and Balsamão residents) testified that he possessed this love of neighbor. It was found in a special way twice in his intercessions before Pope Benedict XIV on behalf of the rural laborers in Poland. He was motivated by an understanding of his duty to guide people to salvation and to show them the road leading there.

Toward his community Father Casimir manifested his apostolic zeal primarily by encouraging his confreres through word and example to serve God and neighbor sacrificially. We mentioned this earlier; now we are going to talk about his service to other religious Orders and to lay people.

The testimony of witnesses in the beatification process emphasized Venerable Casimir's ability to use all opportunities to fulfill the mission of teaching the truths of faith. Working alongside laborers in the construction of the monastery at Góra Kalwaria, he taught them the catechism and sang with them the Little Hours and other songs. Father Taudt emphasized in his testimony that Father Wyszynski involved himself with the simple folks: "He proclaimed the word of God, encouraged them to receive the holy sacraments, and attended especially to the poor and neglected."<sup>40</sup> The same witness emphasized that the Servant of God used every opportunity to lead people to God, admonishing especially the stumbling and sinners, usually doing this in a gentle manner but also using strong words when called for.<sup>41</sup> When he stayed in Rome on his Order's business, in 1731-1733, he taught the truths of faith and celebrated Mass for the shepherds and farmers in the vicinity of the Eternal City.<sup>42</sup> During his

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<sup>40</sup> *Posnaniem. Proc. Inform.*, art. 15, c. 25. See B. Jakimowicz, *Sługa Boży Kazimierz Wyszynski*, in: *Polscy święci*, vol. 9, Warszawa 1986, 161.

<sup>41</sup> *Positio super virtutibus...Casimiri a S. Ioseph Wyszynski*, Romae 1986, 512 (here and after: *PositioWysz*).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

second stay in Rome, in 1751-1753, he received permission to hear the confessions of the Polish pilgrims.

He gladly served religious sisters and lay people in the confessional, bringing peace and consolation to their souls. Marianna Wrzorskówna, a Dominican nun from Góra Kalwaria, testified that he helped another nun, Margaret Charzyńska, who was struggling with feelings of guilt, to regain inner peace.<sup>43</sup> Father Alexis Fischer, well acquainted with Father Casimir, accentuated: "Due to Father Casimir's exemplary life, he was proposed to the Most Reverend Bishop of Poznan and the Warsaw official, for the position of spiritual director and confessor of the Dominican Sisters living near the Cenacle, to assure their better spiritual guidance. In the past, Father Stanislaus Papczyński had carried out the same ministry. Obedient to the Bishop's orders, Venerable Casimir performed this task with extreme fruitfulness for several years, talking to the Sisters exclusively in the confessional."<sup>44</sup>

In accord with the aim of the Marian community to provide pastoral care to simple folks unfamiliar with the principles of faith, Father Casimir, as Superior General, made provision at the annual congress convened on July 1, 1749, in the Korabiew Forest, that all house superiors provide for the teaching of catechism at the Marian churches. It was stipulated that they could appoint seminarians to this task if there were any at the monastery, or to the younger priests or even members of the confraternities. It was emphasized that "Out of consideration for love of God and neighbor they should accept this duty willingly because this obligation was imposed by virtue of their vows and vocation." The catechism instructions were given on Sunday afternoons and lasted four months, from the end of Easter confessions until October.<sup>45</sup>

To secular people, unduly concerned with temporal matters, Father Casimir reminded them of Gospel teachings. Wojciech

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 477-478.

<sup>44</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 58.

<sup>45</sup> *Capitula Generalia Marianorum (1702- 1999)*, Puszca Mariańska 2001, 210.



Magnuszewski testified: “Laity commended themselves to his prayers. When I would be talking a great deal about temporal matters, he would remark: ‘Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things will be given to you.’ He also used to say: ‘Pray that we may meet in heaven.’”<sup>46</sup>

The same witness stated that—in an effort to further spiritual growth and create communal spirit—Venerable Casimir “founded confraternities at many of the Marian churches, such as the Confraternity of Consolation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, of Divine Providence, of Saint John Nepomucene and many others. He also prepared printed books with the litanies, the Little Hours and prayers for these confraternities.”<sup>47</sup>

Faithful to the Marian heritage, Venerable Casimir endeavored to instill in people a genuine devotion to Mary Immaculate, the best manifestation of which would be the imitation of her virtues. He wanted to convey to others the values by which he lived. For the benefit of the faithful, he translated and edited a book entitled *Morning Star*, in which he discussed imitating Mary in the way in which she dedicated her life to God and neighbor. Against the backdrop of Mary’s virtues, explored in this book, he suggested ideas for an examination of conscience:

- “1. We cannot believe someone to be pure if he or she frivolously risks the loss of purity, does not courageously fight temptations, and calmly looks at things that should not be looked at; who does not train his body by fasting, vigils and moderation in eating and drinking.
2. How can a man consider himself to be prudent if he is unable to restrain his speech so as to say nothing against God, neighbor or virtue; if he does not avoid false and vain words, is not in control of his laughter, or does not strive to preserve noble customs and behavior worthy of a child of God?

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<sup>46</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 46.

<sup>47</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 366.

3. How can anyone call himself humble if he raises himself above others and disrespects his neighbor; if he avoids humble service or performs it with great sorrow, reluctance, and complaining whenever he is forced to do it?
4. How can a person have deep faith if he doubts the truths of the holy faith and does not fulfill the obligations commanded by faith? Faith consists not so much in words and thought, but in the fulfillment of the commandments of our holy religion.
5. How can a man be considered pious if he is too lazy to attend devotions, spends more time in idleness than in prayer, and lets his thoughts wander somewhere else while praying; if he does not remember that God is present everywhere and breaks the commandments of God and the Church?
6. How can one be called obedient if he does not obey his parents, superiors, and teachers; if he does things only under coercion or because it pleases him, refusing to do anything contrary to his own likes and whims? The virtue of obedience consists in doing what we are instructed to do and not what we like.
7. How can we call someone poor in spirit who continues to cling in his heart to earthly goods, placing his hope and the goals of his life in these things instead of in God; or someone who, despite taking a vow of poverty, still possesses or desires to possess what he should have renounced; who complains upon finding himself in poverty or does not agree with the will of God?
8. How can a man be considered patient if he does not accept willingly all difficulties and crosses that God in His goodness sends him, so that he could grow in perfection, but complains and even curses instead? Or who, should he suffer any wrong from his neighbor, desires revenge?
9. How can one be considered compassionate or merciful if he does not perform works of mercy, has no compassion

for his neighbor, and does not help him in need despite having the means and opportunity to do so; who does not pray for his neighbor and does not help the suffering souls in Purgatory by offering Holy Masses, prayers, and alms?

10. Finally, how can anybody grieve over the crucified Christ and commiserate over His Passion if he does not recognize the immeasurable blessing of salvation and all that Christ suffered for him; if he does not reflect sincerely and gratefully and grieve over the many souls who perish, despite being redeemed by His precious Blood; if he does not care that the number of the enemies of the Cross is growing, as if it did not affect and hurt Christ?

Therefore, how can those who do not practice or acquire the virtues with which the Virgin Mary shines, but only talk about them, regard themselves as devoted to the Mother of God?"<sup>48</sup>

Wojciech Magnuszewski, the previously mentioned friend of Father Wyszyński, wrote thus about the way to sanctity which Venerable Casimir wanted to convey to others: "He also had his special devotions such as: the Little Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary which he recited daily since his childhood; the Rosary and chaplets, especially the one of the Ten Evangelical virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He directed that there should be printed in Poland several thousand prayer cards with this prayer: 'Blessed be the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.' From the Holy See he obtained permission allowing both the religious and laypeople to add in the 'Hail Mary' after 'Holy Mary, Mother of God,' the words 'conceived without sin,' pray for us ..."<sup>49</sup>

The mission of the Marian Fathers was not only to show people the way to heaven, but also to pray and perform mortification for the release from purgatory of the souls of the deceased who—during those times of wars, brigandage and epidemic diseases died suddenly and without settling properly the matters of their

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<sup>48</sup> C. Wyszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, Stockbridge, 2017, 22-24.

<sup>49</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 43.

Christian life. This task, particularly emphasized by the Marians' Founder, was deeply imprinted in Father Casimir's heart. During his stay in Rome he obtained special indulgences for praying for the dead, which indulgences could be obtained at the Marian churches. From the Eternal City he sent instructions on how to introduce special services for the deceased so that these devotions would benefit as much as possible both the living and the dead who suffered in purgatory. Many entries dedicated to this subject can be found in his *Diary of Activities* and other notes from the time of Father Casimir's stay in Rome in 1751-1753. Also, *The Life of Father Papczyński*, which he composed and his efforts for the Founder's beatification, show us an ardent venerator of Mary Immaculate and a great advocate of the souls in purgatory.

The Holy sacraments, received consciously and with reverence, are one of the most efficient means to attain salvation. In that light, Father Casimir censured abuses discovered in some parishes on the occasion of Easter confession. In those times, due to the shortage of laborers, many parish priests demanded that men and women work on the pastor's property before receiving the sacraments. Two times Father Casimir interceded in this matter before Pope Benedict XIV, so that these improper practices would be eliminated. Venerable Casimir's concern for proper pastoral ministry had no room for "exploiting the faithful," but sought only the benefit of the people.

A fervent love of God, meditation on the Passion of the Savior, and following the example of Mary's life, were Father Casimir's guides to zealously serving his fellow man. He was able to skillfully combine a personal spiritual life with great pastoral activity.

Not everyone succeeds in this today. How often does it happen that outside activities dominate what is most important—contact with God. Father Casimir's example reminds us that all of our apostolic activities should have prayer and a relationship with God as their source.

***Mission in Portugal***

In March of 1752, Father Wyszyński received news that the King of Portugal invited the Marians to his country. In response, the Servant of God wrote a joyful letter to his Superior General: “Glory be to God, our Lord, that for the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, He does not forget us who bear this same title; rather in all adversities He consoles the humble ones and those scorned by all; and He raises up the poor from their misery to place them among princes. The King of Portugal wrote to the Procurator General in Spain, directing that he should bring our friars from Poland to Portugal as he wants to honor us with a royal foundation.” Father Casimir also urged the General to make a decision immediately in the matter. He insisted that someone should be sent from Poland as soon as possible and suggested that he himself with Father John Cantius Szkaffer, a Bohemian, and “another Pole with him for the honor of the Polish nation, should be sent.” He described in detail what they should take with them to Portugal and suggested that they “... seek the recommendation and support of the Polish magnates, so that they would assist us in this undertaking and sponsor our journey to Portugal for our Homeland’s greater honor and respect. For it is a great honor for the Polish Kingdom that a Polish religious Order should be summoned by such a monarch.”

On this subject, Father Wyszyński wrote to an official in Warsaw, Father Anthony Casimir Ostrowski (later the Primate of Poland); to the Bishop of Poznan, Theodore Czartoryski; to the Castellan of Rawa, Felician Trzeciński, his close friend; to his alumnus, Father Casimir Polak; and to his own brother, Michael. He also addressed several letters to the Superior General, Father Cayetan Wetycki.

While still in Rome, Father Casimir kept insisting that a final decision be made soon. He did not want to forfeit the opportunity to spread the honor of Mary Immaculate. Concerned about the lack of news from Poland, Father Casimir poured out his worries in his letter to the Superior General on July 15, 1752, saying that everyone was asking whether the Marians had already arrived

from Poland and he could not even say whether they had left at all. For this reason, some regarded Father Casimir as an irresponsible person, acting on his own. Therefore, he remarked in his letter: "I wish that such matters which are to serve God's greater glory and the promotion of the Order, would not be postponed until later, until a council or a chapter meeting. The Superior General may decide these matters on his own authority."

When Father Wszyński finally received the news that Father John Szkraffer was appointed to go to Portugal, he insisted that the latter should hurry and get there as soon as possible, even if he had to borrow money for the trip. Father Casimir claimed that they could not delay taking over the foundation in Portugal and spreading devotion to Mary Immaculate. When he found out that Father Szkraffer tried to excuse himself on account of his poor health, Father Casimir reproachfully confided to the Superior General that he did not know who would do the work when the young ones excuse themselves due to their poor health or unwillingness.

On August 6, 1752, Father Casimir was instructed to go to Portugal along with Father Benon Bujalski. He made a pilgrimage to Loreto to implore the Blessed Mother's protection for the Portuguese mission. Coming back from the pilgrimage in early November, he found two Marians from Poland waiting for him at the monastery of Ara Coeli: Father Bujalski and Father Fischer. The latter was to assume the duties of Procurator in Rome. Since it was inadvisable to set off for Portugal at this time of year, they had to stay in Rome until spring.

Father Casimir was writing farewell letters to his brethren and friends in Poland, with the inkling that he would never see them again. He pleaded with them not to neglect the cause of the Marian Founder's beatification. To the Superior General he wrote thus: "I shall confess, Very Reverend Father, that I don't dare to leave Rome until I hear that the process has been opened. After all, it should be our utmost concern. The growth of our community depends upon it, otherwise we shall go into extinction. Definitely, if things in Poland cannot be managed without me, and

should my return and direction of the process be necessary, I do not shirk the task, and I am ready to renounce Portugal. For the love of God, I am not alone in the Congregation after all! Why cannot something of the utmost benefit and necessity for us come to pass without me? (...) It is necessary to remember that by planting our Congregation in Portugal yet failing to have our Founder's process begun, we run the risk of having the Portuguese community of Marians dissociating from us. It is the glory of the holiness of our Founder that will keep us united. At the same time, so wealthy a country could help with the beatification, even though the process may continue for some time. It is necessary to carefully consider all this. Thus, I advise and plead for the love of God to have this cause opened as soon as possible. Let us not be deterred by privation or unfavorable circumstances. Let us not stop even if a disaster, God forbid, were to strike the Kingdom of Poland. In all troubles let us take our Father Founder for our Patron, and God will not refuse graces to those who honor Him in His servants" (July 19, 1752).

In May of 1753, Father Casimir and Father Benon set off for Portugal. At first, they traveled on foot from Rome to Genoa, where they boarded a ship to Spain. It was not until October that they arrived by land in Lisbon, Portugal. In his diary Father Casimir recorded details of this journey, which lasted as long as five months and abounded in adventures and perils. He was convinced that he owed his survival amidst all dangers to the protection of Mary Immaculate and the intercession of Father Stanislaus Papczyński, who is now a Saint.

The first piece of information about the Polish Marians in Portugal dates back to October 2, 1753. Antony da Silva e Sousa, Procurator General of the State Archives and the guardian of the royal children, wrote: "As I was travelling on October 2, 1753, from the city of Beja to Mertoli, a place located on the outskirts of the Kingdom, I came across the Servant of God, Father Casimir and his companion, sitting on a hill in the shadow of a leafy oak tree, sheltered from the heat of the sun. I approached and greeted them. I did not know their language and they did not speak a word

of Portuguese. Nevertheless, I understood the Servant of God perfectly. He said that he was coming from Poland and going to Lisbon, having been called there to establish his religious order; that he was carrying letters to the king; and that he was travelling on foot all the time." This testimony was obtained during the information process conducted in Portugal in regard to the holiness of Father Casimir. It should be mentioned that the writer, Anthony da Silva e Sousa, remained a great friend and benefactor of the Marians in Portugal until his death. Father Casimir also described the beginnings of the Marian mission in Portugal in two letters to the Superior General of the Marians in Rome.

When on October 10, 1753, the two travelers reached Lisbon they discovered that neither the royal court nor any person of note in Portugal had even thought about a foundation for the Marians. The entire matter proved to be a fabrication of Father Anthony de Souza Salazar who had himself tried to establish an Order of the Immaculate Conception. His efforts so far were not yielding any results.

Father Salazar learned from the Franciscans of the existence of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception and decided to bring them over to Portugal to carry out his own plans. The Marians from Poland were to be only a tool in his hands. Actually, he treated them very badly, insulting and degrading their dignity, thus submitting to trial their humility and sanctity. Father Benon Bujalski could not bear such treatment and fell seriously ill. His return to Poland had become imperative. As soon as his health allowed, on December 26, 1753, he set out in spite of the elements on a return trip to Poland by land.

That left the Servant of God, Father Casimir, alone in Father Salazar's house, destined to endure sufferings, offences, insults and brutality. He was tested and sorely tried as if he were the worst of novices, in the hope that he might apply himself to founding a new and different religious order. Years later, Salazar came to regret his behavior and intended to go to Balsamão to Father Casimir's tomb to beg forgiveness for his harshness.



Our Lord rewarded the heroic dedication of the Venerable Servant of God. In a letter of June 13, 1754, to the Superior General, Father Casimir related that two of his Portuguese friends—Salvador Marcel de Figueiredo y Sylva, a landowner and one of the king’s courtiers, and João de Deus da Conceição (John of God of the Immaculate Conception) who had also made attempts to found a religious order in honor of the Immaculate Conception—obtained from Cardinal Melchior Tempi, the Apostolic Nuncio, a letter of safe conduct by the power of which Father Casimir was delivered from Salazar’s hands and settled at the Reformed Franciscans’ monastery of St. Peter of Alcantara in Lisbon.

In his letter of June 13, 1754, he wrote to the Marian Superior General in Poland: “Following Father Benon’s departure, I had to break with Father Salazar because I could not arrange anything with him regarding the promotion of our Order. The Lord God, however, gave me protectors who delivered me from Salazar’s hand almost by force and opened for me a way to better promote our Order.”

Father Casimir was finally able to put into effect the plans which he had brought with him to Portugal in the first place. Soon after he arrived at the Franciscans’ monastery, on March 25, 1754, John of God of the Immaculate Conception was vested with the white Marian habit.

This first Portuguese Marian was instrumental in the erection of the Marian monastery in Balsamão. He knew about the existence of some Tertiaries of St. Francis at the local Shrine of Our Lady and that they were looking for a religious order to join. Upon learning this, Father Casimir wrote to the Bishop of Miranda, John of the Cross, a Carmelite, including information about the Marians and a picture of their Founder. On July 1, 1754, the Bishop replied: “Your Reverence, I received your letter and the memorandum regarding the project of founding the new Order in Balsamão. I did not respond immediately because I had to consider the entire project and obtain information about your institute, also asking the opinion of the Balsamão residents and the pastor of the Chacim parish. I enclose the letter of the house superior in Bal-

samão and the petition of the hermits. For my part, I will not fail to assist you in any way, insofar as I am able, so that your project may be realized. I think it is advisable that you go and take up residence there to allow the residents to get to know you. I am certain that they will receive you with love because they wish to join an institute that has already been approved.”

Father Hieronimus of the Holy Trinity, a zealous and saintly priest, was the hermits’ superior in Balsamão. He not only attended to the welfare of the tertiaries’ spiritual life, but also to their finances and the outward appearance of the hermitage. Due to his efforts, the outdoor Stations of the Lord’s Passion were built there, which still adorn the mountainside and even today attract pilgrims from the area.

Father Casimir also received a letter from the leader of the community in Balsamão, containing a heartfelt invitation: “Please come quickly for my heart and my embrace are open to receiving you.”

The Servant of God and his companion, Father John of God, arrived in Balsamão on September 6, 1754, and were heartily welcomed by the residents of the monastery and the dignitaries of Chacim.

Shortly afterwards, Father Casimir, accompanied by Father Hieronimus, whom he had vested with the Marian habit, and Brother John of God, went to Bragança to meet the Bishop of Miranda who was visiting there. During their stay in Bragança Father Hieronimus died unexpectedly, having first made his profession of vows before Father Wyszynski, whom the Bishop now appointed as the superior of the hermitage in Balsamão.

On October 1, 1754, the Servant of God Casimir began the religious formation of the hermits in Balsamão. After six months of preparation, on April 13, 1755, he vested five Portuguese, one of whom was a cleric in minor orders, with the white Marian habit. More candidates applied. Father Wyszynski acquainted them with the Marian Rule, customs, and the person of the Founder.

He joyfully informed his superior in Poland about the new candidates for the Order and about his plans of founding a

monastery in Spain. He added that a certain Franciscan had been healed through the intercession of Father Stanislaus. Out of gratitude for the healing, the Franciscan translated into Portuguese Father Stanislaus's biography composed by Father Wyszynski: "We expect a successful progress of our Reverend Founder's process for he has many venerators here. As soon as the matter reaches the Sacred Congregation of Rites, then undoubtedly this kingdom rich in gold will help us, being aware that it is a matter of the beatification of a holy man. Even as I am writing this letter, my great benefactor, having visited an artist, has commissioned a statue of our Father Founder" (August 3, 1754).

By the word and example of his own life the Servant of God Father Casimir laid the foundations for permanently establishing the Marians on Portuguese soil. However, he sensed that the end of his laborious life was approaching. It was his wish that the ties between the Marians in Portugal and the Order's government in Poland would not be severed at the moment of his death. Therefore, he wrote to the Superior General: "We have to take into serious consideration the fact that the Congregation here will undoubtedly grow and ought not to separate from us after my death for lack of contact with Poland..."

Indeed, Father Casimir's premonition of his approaching death shortly came true. On Friday, September 19, 1755, an attack of malaria put him to the sickbed. With great difficulty he managed to celebrate Holy Mass that day in honor of St. Januarius, his patron saint. The time to struggle with the final sufferings that lasted a month came upon him. On Saturday, October 4, the liturgical commemoration of his second patron, St. Francis of Assisi, Father Casimir could not rise from bed.

Witnesses of the Servant of God's last days spoke of his extraordinary patience and gratitude towards those attending to him. He remained mentally fit, of peaceful mind, and assenting to God's will until his last moment. He wished to stay united with the Suffering Christ. He calmly prepared himself for passing from this life to another, believing firmly that Satan was powerless in the face of a venerator of Mary Immaculate. He frequently repeated: "Blessed be the Name of the Lord!"

He comforted the weeping novices, telling them not to lose heart: "Do not weep! The Most Blessed Virgin is your Foundress. When I will leave this body and my soul will be led to God, as I hope will happen, having put my trust in Divine Mercy and the merits of my Savior, I will assist you even better" (Fr. A. Fischer).

Devastated by malaria, he left this world on October 21, 1755, mourned by the small group of Portuguese Marians. According to local custom, he was buried on the same day in sand without a coffin, in the presence of only a few participants at the funeral. His body was placed under the floor of the church in Balsamão. It was not until 1759, that his earthly remains were exhumed from the sand and placed in a coffin, where they rested until 1955. Then they were moved to a specially prepared niche in the church wall where they remain to this day.

Eight days after Father Casimir's death, Father John de Rosario Diaz arrived in Balsamão with the intention of joining the Marian Order. The Bishop appointed him the superior of the Marian community. Father Diaz delivered the eulogy in Father Casimir's honor on the 30<sup>th</sup> day after his death. He expressed his conviction that Father Casimir heroically served God and the people and that God had called Father Casimir to Himself to reward him with eternal glory.

Father Diaz added that the purity and sanctity of Father Casimir's soul were confirmed by the fact that birds used to flutter into his cell and would not leave until Father Casimir signaled. As Father Casimir lay dying, everyone was astounded to hear a bird's sweet song. The bird instantly disappeared at the moment of his death. Another sign of his sanctity was the unusual elasticity of his body parts after death, along with the beauty of his face and the sweet aroma pervading his cell.

Father Casimir's death was a great blow to the Portuguese Marians. None of them had yet made a profession of vows. They immediately besought the Superior General in Poland to have some Marians dispatched to continue the work started by Father Casimir. The Marians in Portugal passed the news of Father

Casimir's death to Poland through the Polish Franciscans who were attending their General Chapter in Spain in 1756. The Marians asked the Superior General to send a "second Casimir," who would help them properly prepare for entering the Marian way of life.

The Portuguese men also related that the most important documents regulating Marian religious life: the *Rule of the Ten Virtues, Statutes*, the *Horology* (the Book of Ceremony) and the Marian prayer book, along with the list of indulgences attached to the holy scapular, had been sent to print. They asked for details of Father Stanislaus's life and information on the foundations of the Order. In addition, they requested particulars of Father Casimir's life and work in Poland; in Portugal he was called a saint. In a letter to Michael Wyszynski, expressing their unity with the pain caused by his brother's death, they emphasized that in Father Casimir's person their community lost a father, a teacher, and a superior.

In September of 1757, the Marian General Chapter decided to send Father Alexis Fischer and Father Rafael de Buffa to Portugal. They arrived in Balsamão on March 8, 1758. Until his death on December 31, 1783, Father Alexis fulfilled the duty of superior of the Marian community which counted several monasteries.

In view of the many pilgrims coming to Balsamão to implore the intercession before God of the "Holy Pole," Father Alexis petitioned the Bishop for permission to exhume Father Casimir's body and place it in a more worthy location: "After all, the opinion of his holiness is growing; at his tomb people receive miracles that God allows His saint to perform." The Bishop gave consent for the exhumation process which took place June 26–July 18, 1759. Father Casimir's bones and bodily remains were transferred to a double-walled casket and placed under the church floor.

For some time the Marians in Portugal continued to contact the Polish Marians directly. Later they did so through the procurator General in Rome or through the apostolic Nunciature in Lisbon. After 1798, when the Marians were expelled from Rome by the Napoleonic troops, such contacts came to an end altogether.

The Vatican Archives preserves requests of the Portuguese Marians from the period between 1819 and 1820 that they be recognized as a separate branch of the Order with their own Superior General. Officially, however, they were left under the authority of the Superior General in Poland, even though the superiors in Balsamão were still referred to as "Superior Generals in the Kingdom of Portugal."

Tragically, the suppression of religious orders in Portugal in 1843, hindered the growth of the Marian community in this country and terminated the use of this title. The last "Superior General," Father Joseph of the Cross, left Balsamão in January of 1851, and died in his native village of Lagoa, not far from Balsamão, probably in 1856.

It would not be until 1955 that the Marians returned to Balsamão. They felt great joy in discovering that the memory of the "Holy Pole" was still alive, which was testified to by numerous pilgrimages to his tomb and the fact that the cell in which he had died remained intact along with his memorabilia. They also lived to see the happy day when the Holy See proclaimed Father Casimir's virtues to be heroic. Through the assistance of the Marians in the United States the monastery building was enlarged and the church repaired. Now the Marians throughout the world wait in hope for the beatification of the man who planted the Marian Order in Portugal 255 years ago.

### ***Man of Faith, Hope and Love***

**F**ather Casimir Wyszynski, a Marian priest of medium height and swarthy complexion, enjoyed the respect and admiration of members of other religious Orders and of the gentry, aristocrats and princes of his day. Wojciech Magnuszewski documented this in his memoirs of 1747, speaking of the assistance he gave to his friend, Father Casimir, in obtaining the Diet's approval for three Marian monasteries. The members of the Diet "perceived his great holiness, solemnity and humility, qualities that they greatly

valued.”<sup>50</sup> The Venerable Casimir enjoyed similar opinions in Rome and Portugal. He was regarded as a man fully dedicated to God and faithfully realizing the ideal of both Christian and religious life. This found confirmation in the decree testifying to his heroic virtues of December 21, 1989, which was proclaimed as the result of a lengthy examination of Father Casimir’s documents and written works: “It is considered certain that the Venerable Casimir of Saint Joseph Wszyński practiced to a heroic degree the theological virtues of faith, hope and love of God and of his neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude along with their related virtues.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, let us now trace the development of Father Casimir’s spiritual life, especially his practice of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.

It is possible to speak of a triple analogy between a man’s natural and spiritual life. A person cannot come into being all by himself, but is brought into the world through parents. To grow he requires a gratuitous and unbiased love. Finally, to attain the full maturity of a free person capable of love, he must learn to love others. The spiritual life of a person progresses through similar stages. First, this life is initiated by God’s goodness and love. God is the One who endows a person with life and a share in the divine nature, and who establishes with a person a community of friendship. This stage begins with the sacrament of Baptism, in which one receives—along with the grace of sanctification—a new supernatural dynamism that enables him to cooperate in a voluntary and conscientious manner with God’s grace. At that time, in making his life’s daily choices, a person is gifted to draw from the power of God Himself.<sup>52</sup>

A Christian’s spiritual life consists of a personal relationship between God and the person, which is initiated, supported and deepened exclusively by the grace of God. We call this a **spiritual**

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<sup>50</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot ...*, 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Dekret o heroiczności cnót*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 11.

<sup>52</sup> J.W. Gogola, OCD, *Teologia komunii z Bogiem*, Kraków 2001, 21-22; Ch. A. Bernard, *Wprowadzenie do teologii duchowości*, Kraków 1996, 55.

**life.** Saint John Paul II, as Pope, clearly explained this during his general audience on October 21, 1998: “The life of Christians, who through faith and the sacraments are inwardly united with Jesus Christ, is ‘life in the Spirit.’ Indeed, the Holy Spirit, poured out in our hearts (cf. Gal 4:6), becomes in us and for us ‘a spring of water welling up to eternal life’ (Jn 4:14).

“We must therefore let ourselves be guided docilely by God’s Spirit, to become ever more fully what we already are through grace: sons of God in Christ (cf. Rom 8:14-16). ‘If we live by the Spirit,’ St Paul urges us again, ‘let us also walk by the Spirit’ (Gal 5:25).

“This principle is the foundation of Christian spirituality, which consists in accepting the fullness of life that the Spirit gives us. This concept of spirituality protects us from the misunderstandings that sometimes obscure its true nature.

“Christian spirituality does not consist in an effort to perfect oneself, as if man could further his overall personal growth and achieve salvation by his own strength. The human heart, wounded by sin, is healed only by the grace of the Holy Spirit and only if sustained by this grace can man live as a true son of God.

“Nor does Christian spirituality consist in becoming ‘immaterial,’ disembodied as it were, without responsible involvement in human affairs. Indeed, the Holy Spirit’s presence in us, far from urging us to seek an alienating ‘escape,’ penetrates and moves our entire being— intellect, will, emotions and bodily nature, so that our ‘new nature’ (Eph 4:24) will imbue space and time with the newness of the Gospel.”<sup>53</sup>

Christian spiritual life is based on the word of God, by which God calls us to a community of friendship and love. “In the strict sense, it is possible to speak of spiritual life, when a man recognizing this call, responds in a free manner to the love of God which is imparted in Christ, with his own faith, hope and love.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Saint John Paul II, General Audience on Wednesday, October 21, 1998 (from: [w2.vatican.va/holy\\_father\\_john\\_paul\\_ii](http://w2.vatican.va/holy_father_john_paul_ii))

<sup>54</sup> J.W. Gogola, *Teologia komunii z Bogiem...*, 23.



Being essential characteristics of Christian life (see 1 Cor 13:13), faith, hope and love are called **virtues**. Virtues constantly urge man to morally good conduct. Since above all, these virtues are the gift of grace, they are thus defined as **infused virtues**. And because they are directly related to a man's relationship with God, they are also spoken of as **theological virtues**.<sup>55</sup> "A man receives new light through **faith**, which enables him to learn of God's salvific plan and adhere to Him in a personal manner. Thanks to **hope**, the man wishes to possess God by obtaining His help in order to overcome all trials and adversities which would otherwise impede his realization of the Kingdom of God in himself and in the world. Finally, the **virtue of love** captures God as love (God is love, 1 Jn 4:8.16), becoming a response to His love and allowing a man to speak directly to God and to people created in His image."<sup>56</sup>

The theological virtues which enliven the life of grace, which is the beginning of eternal life, differ in accordance with the manner in which they move a soul towards God. Through *faith* we receive the word of God, revealing to us the plan of salvation, and we set out on our road towards God. Through *hope* our intention and fervent desire are directed to God in order to possess Him by relying on Him during our difficult journey. Through *love* we are already united to God, even if this union always depends on the imperfection of our knowing the faith and the danger of succumbing to the power of sin. And yet, as St. Paul says: "Love never fails" (1 Cor 12:8), because that same love will be realized in the contemplation of and possession of God during life eternal.<sup>57</sup>

A German biblical scholar, K. Shlier, remarked, after analyzing St. Paul's statement concerning faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13): "If we consider the main direction of Christian existence, we see that the center of gravity lies with hope. If we examine the sub-

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<sup>55</sup> J. Piegsa, MSF, *Człowiek istota moralna*, vol. 2, Opole 2002, 9-10; H. Misztal, *Prawo kanonizacyjne według ustawodawstwa Jana Pawła II*, Lublin-Sandomierz 1997, 55.

<sup>56</sup> Ch. A. Bernard, *Wprowadzenie do teologii duchowości...*, 56.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

stance of Christian existence, then we must give priority to love. But if we seek the root of Christian life, it always turns out to be faith.”<sup>58</sup>

The Holy See proclaimed the aforesaid decree on the heroic virtues of Venerable Casimir after examining the processes of a concrete realization of faith, hope and love in his spiritual life. Regulations for such examinations were set forth by Pope Benedict XIV, and slightly altered, are still binding for the canonization process. Pope Benedict XIV emphasized that a long-lasting practice of virtues in a manner beyond an ordinary way of life is necessary because of a supernatural goal, and not for human self-aggrandizement. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Benedict XV stated that Christian perfection must be realized in the concrete circumstances of life and must indicate an adherence to Christ even when other people would be incapable of adopting this attitude. The perfection of spiritual life does not consist in “adjusting to lower standards” but in “looking up to higher ones.” It is about the outstanding performance of duties imposed by one’s state, including a greater commitment of human will to the works of God. In turn, Pope Pius XII drew attention to the updated teachings on holiness and saints, making it more comprehensible for modern man and for various ways of thinking. He further indicated that only certain concepts and aspects of sanctity might be subjected to updating. If the extraordinary and miraculous elements in the biography of candidates for the altars were brought forth in the past, presently the social or ecclesial dimension of holiness is more emphasized.<sup>59</sup> In the case of Father Casimir, his encouraging of his confreres to greater efforts in the beatification cause of the Marian founder, indicated that the first stage demanded examination of the presence of specific principles of Christian life and only then could it be reaffirmed through reported miracles.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted after J. Piegsa, MSF, *Człowiek istota moralna...*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> H. Misztal, *Prawo kanonizacyjne...*, 57-65. This author also provides formularies of questions regarding the life and virtues of the candidates for the altars, see pp. 494-515 and 555-573.

The first biographers of Venerable Casimir emphasize that the treasure he received upon Baptism on October 4, 1700, was not squandered but—as the years passed and his cognizance grew—became ever more deeply nurtured. His great esteem of the religious way of life was instilled in his family home, which may be testified to by the fact that his two brothers, Valerian and John, also joined religious Orders. While still a youngster, Januarius Francis became known for his extraordinary piety, unusual for his age, which was manifested in his love of prayer, his profound experience of the Eucharist, and his filial devotion to the Blessed Mother. He did not follow the example of people who wished to be resplendent with wealth or who sought life's pleasures; instead, he persistently searched for ways of growing closer to God and positively influencing other people. His going on pilgrimages showed his understanding that life on earth was only a journey towards the fullness of being with God in eternity. Pilgrimages also provided him with an opportunity to atone for the sins of others. It seems that his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was meant as an atonement for his failure to prevent the suicide of one of his friend's servants. Also, his decision to enter the religious way of life as a Marian was at least partly motivated by his desire to atone for his brother Joseph's misdeeds.

As a Marian, Father Casimir advanced steadfastly on the road of heroic adherence to the laws of God and the statutes of the Order. Thanks to this attitude which, incidentally, won him a few adversaries, he contributed to the improvement of his religious family's spiritual life as well as to its growth in numbers and acquisition of members from other nations.<sup>60</sup> Just as the compass needle always points north, so Father Casimir's entire life was always pointing towards God and was manifested by his longing for the fullness of being with God in eternity.

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<sup>60</sup> Three oldest Latin-language accounts (memoirs) about the Venerable Casimir Wyszyński, left by his brother Michael, a friend of W. Magnuszewski, and also by Father Aleksy Fischer, who was Father Casimir's disciple and continuator of his work in Portugal, may be found in: *Beatificationis et Canonisationis Servi Dei Casimiri a S. Joseph Wyszyński, Positio*, Romae 1986, 353-354. Their translation into Polish appeared in: *Najstarsze świadectwa ...*17-77.

It may be difficult at times to identify signs of Venerable Casimir's increasing growth in faith, hope, and love, as observed by witnesses of his life and work and corroborated in his written works, because these signs could have been the manifestation of various other virtues.

Witnesses testifying in the informative processes emphasized that the Venerable Casimir lived in a state of constant respect for God's presence. He endeavored to know better the truths of the faith and even opposed the premature ordination that was to take place before completion of his theology studies. In later years he deepened his understanding through reading the Holy Scriptures and other carefully selected works, choosing particularly those on Mariology. He taught to others the things by which he himself lived, whatever could help them grow closer to God. He was a man of deep prayer, which he never neglected even during his travels. He was marked by his great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as well as by his scrupulous attention and care in celebrating Holy Mass. Father Casimir frequently pondered the Passion of Christ which, it was observed, often brought tears to his face. He strove to deepen his Marian piety through devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, thanks to which he and other people could give honor to God and glory to His Blessed Mother not only with their feelings and words but above all by their imitating Mary's virtues. He gave a particular witness to this during his last illness and preparation to meet God after death.

The testimony of Father Benon Bujalski (1722-1788), who resided with Father Casimir at Góra Kalwaria and later was his companion on the trip to Portugal and their first months in that country, is particularly important. During the informative process conducted in Poznan, Father Benon testified to Father Casimir's practice of theological virtues: "He had a deep faith in God, which was evident in his preaching of Christian doctrine and the fulfillment of ecclesiastical duties, which he constantly recommended to others. I was personally a witness to that. Further, I was informed of the following occurrence: The children of a worthy family of Thomas Suffczynski, the Ensign of Łuków, and wife Marianne, died one after another, leaving them with only one son

Adam, a sickly child. At that time the Venerable Casimir happened to visit the Suffczyńskis'. He became aware of the parents' dismay over their sickly child, and without delay he turned to God in heartfelt prayer, asking the healing of that child. As he completed his prayers, everyone present noticed that the child fully recovered his health. Mrs. Suffczyńska, the mother of the healed child, personally related this story to me a few years ago."<sup>61</sup>

Also, Father Isidore Taudt (1715-1792), superior of the monastery in Raśna and later long-term chaplain to the family of Prince Czartoryski, testified twice to Father Casimir's holiness of life: "I know that he possessed the theological virtues, which is indicated by the fact that he believed in a steadfast and unhesitating way everything that God said and that the Church declared as revealed. He availed himself of the Sacraments in the most pious manner and was dedicated to prayer, especially by particular devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and spent long hours in adoration. He held the Holy See in great esteem and three times visited the Sacred Apostolic Threshold. He was always obedient to his superiors, scrupulously fulfilled God's commandments and gladly bore injustice, insults, and persecutions."<sup>62</sup>

"I have known him as practicing his faith, initially instilled by his Catholic parents, and later continuously deepened through his personal cooperation and intelligence. His faith, manifested through his outward deeds since childhood, demonstrated the maturity and solemnity of an adult. He loved silence and solitude, and gave everyone an example of modesty and control over his senses. He availed himself regularly of the Sacraments and devoted himself to pious and religious practices, including an uncommon devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. From all of this, I conclude that he had a lively and heroic faith. Moreover, his observance of all the Church's commandments as well as God's, and the obligations proper to his state in life, was extraordinary. He showed great obedience to his superiors, both religious and secular, especially to the Holy See, which he held in great esteem. During his stay in Rome,

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<sup>61</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 464-465.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 431.

he visited seven Roman churches and together with his associate he attended the 40-hours-long devotion.

“When he was still in Poland he encouraged all the brethren of his religious institute to have devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion of the Lord, and to the Blessed Mother, and personally gave a good example of such devotion. He would rise early and go at once before the Blessed Sacrament. He was zealous in teaching simple folks the truths of the faith. Moreover, Venerable Casimir showed a particular reverence for God and everything pertaining to God, to whom he manifested a wholehearted dedication and freedom from any other attachments. He considered the truths of the faith and God’s commandments to be sacrosanct and abided by them with all his might.”<sup>63</sup>

At an earlier time, Father Taut testified: “It is the honest truth that the Venerable Casimir displayed uncommon piety before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament: whenever he happened to pass in front of the tabernacle, he would kneel and very reverently adore the Blessed Sacrament. He would rise daily before the first Breviary hour and go to kneel in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. He would urge members of his Order, as well as other people, to go in adoration before the Eucharistic Presence. I personally witnessed this while living with the Venerable Servant of God: I witnessed and noted that Father Casimir was tireless in practicing this adoration.

“It is equally true that there was a custom in our Congregation of meditating every day on the mysteries of the Lord’s Passion. While I was residing with the Venerable Casimir at the same monastery in Góra, I was able to observe him devoting himself to this daily meditation. On my way back from meditation, I often saw that the Venerable was in tears.

“It is also true that Venerable Casimir liked to clean the church and prepare the hosts, which was recounted to me by other Marianians who used to reside alongside of him.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 470-471.

“As to praying in choir, I learned from observation that Venerable Casimir participated in praying in choir both day and night and used to recommend the same to other confreres. I had a chance to witness this personally because I lived alongside the Venerable for two years at the monastery in Góra: Father Casimir always participated in choir prayers and urged others to do the same, which I witnessed personally many times. I also know that the Venerable Casimir never failed to recite the daily Office of the Dead as prescribed by the Constitutions of our Order and that he encouraged other confreres to do so. I can testify to this because I lived alongside him in Góra and thus had the opportunity to witness his daily custom of reciting this Office. I travelled with the Venerable Casimir from our monastery in Goźlin (Poland) to Lithuania, during which trip he also recited that Office daily. Moreover, it is also true that during his stay in Rome, Venerable Casimir fervently endeavored to obtain the privilege of a plenary indulgence for observing the octave of the Memorial of the Deceased, so that it could be obtained in our already existing monasteries and in new ones in the future.”<sup>64</sup>

Other witnesses from the Marian Order, such as Hyacinth Wasilewski and Aloysius Długołęcki, along with the coachman, Stanislaus Sekuła, testified that the Venerable used to pray fervently not only within the monastery walls but also during his travels. During his trips to pilgrimage sites such as Częstochowa, Studzianna, Boża Wola or Sulejów, he used to go first to confession before celebrating Holy Mass. Once, when he became angry with the coachman for flirting with a girl and even struck him with his walking stick, Father Casimir graciously offered his apology.<sup>65</sup>

Father Casimir’s biography written by Wojciech Magnuszewski in 1757, provides an example of the Servant’s living faith: “As the Superior General, in 1736 he arrived for a visitation of the Korabiw Hermitage. This was the year of famine, and a bushel of wheat cost 40 florins. Father Casimir found only two people present in the monastery, Father Gabriel Morze and a religious brother. The

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 432-433.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 436, 478, 749.

Venerable inquired about the other brethren and was told by Father Morze that all the others had gone to stay in parishes because of the lack of food. To this the Venerable Casimir replied: 'O ye of little faith! This is why you have nothing to eat. If you had a strong faith, even the trees would supply you with nourishment.' Having said that, he went to collect alms and returned with two bags of ground wheat. Father Morze, Father Andrew and the other priests and brothers benefited from this, having no shortage of flour for a whole year. So, for Father Casimir it happened in the same way that the Holy Scriptures told about the widow feeding Elijah."<sup>66</sup>

Father Casimir's heroic hope can be found in his trust in the mercy of God and the merits of Jesus Christ. A special source of strength was his hope and trust in Divine Providence, in the protection of Immaculate Mary and in the intercession of the holy Father Founder.

He greatly longed for obtaining salvation. His primary goal was seeking Christian virtue. He did not attach any importance to temporal goods. He remained good-natured in adversity and in life's trials. His hope was indomitable in the face of life's circumstances and became particularly manifest in the face of his approaching death.

Father Benon Bujalski emphasized the virtue of hope when he testified about Venerable Casimir: "In various difficulties or when faced with a shortage of food and other necessities for the community in Góra Kalwaria, Venerable Casimir placed his entire hope in God. He urged other confreres to do the same when they were experiencing severe shortages of food and clothing."<sup>67</sup>

"Father Casimir practiced the virtue of hope in an uncommon, that is, a heroic manner. And he cared with great trust and solicitude for everyone. Although he and his subordinates in the monastery lived in poverty, he continued to provide for the magnificence of the divine worship in the church, even to preparing refreshments to sustain the piety of the attending populace. He

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<sup>66</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot ...*, 44.

<sup>67</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 465.



placed his hope in God and was never disappointed; somehow they never lacked for necessary food.”<sup>68</sup>

Father Benon recollects the many adversities, misfortunes, and even the danger of starvation they experienced during his joint travel with Father Casimir to Portugal: “In all of these adversities and misfortunes the Venerable placed his hope in God’s assistance and demonstrated an extraordinary patience and perseverance in attaining his goal. His attitude also encouraged me, his fellow traveler, to remain patient and trusting.”<sup>69</sup>

Father Benon recounts the fact that Venerable Casimir’s trust was universally considered miraculous: “It was still during the time of Father Casimir’s tenure as local superior that rainwater flooded the monastery in Góra. Draining it seemed to be quite impossible. Placing his hope in God, the Venerable ordered a trench to be dug leading from the monastery to a higher place, the only place of exit. And by this trench which was directed to a higher place, the Venerable, having recited the words of blessing, made all the rainwater run out of the monastery area. Everyone marveled at this way of draining the water and considered it to be supernatural. Although I did not personally witness this particular event, when I arrived at the monastery shortly afterwards and stayed in Góra for a while, I was able to see the rainwater running out by this trench which flowed upward. As to the original event, I learned of it from the local Marians and other town residents who recounted their personal observations.”<sup>70</sup>

In his testimonies, Father Isidore Taudt also emphasizes Father Casimir’s virtue of hope: “He placed particular hope in God, because he longed for God with all his might; he only waited for eternity and practiced both spoken and silent prayer for its achievement. He spurned wealth, pleasures, and honors, but cherished scorn. He deeply trusted in Divine Providence, and because of the monastery’s chronic poverty, he founded the Confra-

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 466.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 469.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 465.

ternity of Divine Providence at the church in Góra Kalwaria. He displayed divine hope in various circumstances and in the most difficult matters regarding his Order, especially at the founding of his community's new monastery in Raśna, since he had to overcome great obstacles in order to have it happen.<sup>71</sup>

“There is no need to doubt his virtue of hope, for the Venerable Casimir manifestly possessed this theological virtue. The essential objective of hope is to reach the ultimate goal which is God Himself and eternal happiness, granted on the strength of God's grace and the merits of Christ. This was the only goal of Venerable Casimir. All of his expectations, desires, and thoughts were concerned only with ultimate things and heavenly matters. This was manifested in cases when he, greatly trusting in God, was able to settle the most difficult matters successfully. It happened when the Marians were offered a new foundation in Raśna, and the Venerable was called to accept it, but the benefactor happened to be gravely ill. Before setting out on this trip, the Venerable made a seven-day retreat, which I as his travel companion also made, separated from Father Casimir's bedroom only by some rods. During this retreat I was able to observe with great edification for myself, Father's heroic acts of virtue. Also, out of the conversations I had with him, I was able to learn that he possessed the theological and cardinal virtues to a heroic degree.

“Having completed the retreat, the Venerable Casimir and I rushed to visit the aforesaid benefactor, Mr. George Matuszewicz. We found him seriously ill. Father Casimir advised him to place his hope for recovery in God. Then he went into prayer and urged me to do the same. And so it happened that our benefactor promptly returned to health and fulfilled his promise of the new foundation. From that moment on, the benefactor held Venerable Casimir in great esteem, professing that the Venerable was a man after God's heart.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 431.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 471.

In his account of Father Casimir's life which Father Alexis Fischer wrote in Portugal in 1759, he stated certain facts, which he was able to observe personally, concerning the practice of the virtue of hope by the Venerable. When living the virtue of poverty, Father Casimir trusted in the generosity of Divine Providence and even founded a confraternity in its honor at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria.

Father Casimir introduced the custom "that after the first breviary hour the Litany of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary along with the antiphon 'Under Your Protection' would be sung in supplication to the Mother of God's particular protection of the Marian Order."<sup>73</sup> He was endowed with such an unwavering faith in the power of the Immaculate Conception that in various circumstances or moments of weakness and danger—either to himself or to others—he recited the following formula and was granted the desired result: 'May the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection.'<sup>74</sup> Father Alexis also cites the fact that once when his own health had deteriorated, it vastly improved after Venerable Casimir traced on his forehead the first letters of the above-quoted short ejaculation. At the same time, Father Alexis also experienced a surge of religious emotion: "Later after everyone left, a powerful pain gripped my soul and tears welled up, so that I had to close the door to my cell, and lying down, I wept from the bottom of my heart for a whole hour except for a brief moment when I arose to pick up my crucifix. My tears were so abundant, my heartfelt repentance so great, that I kissed my Savior's image with such deep feeling that I wished the most merciful God to let me die like this one day."<sup>75</sup>

Father Casimir's particular manifestation of hope was displayed when he sensed that the end of his time on earth was approaching. He said to a priest who wished to read at his sickbed the warnings about final judgment and hell: "There is no need to frighten or admonish a religious who has endeavored to be a

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<sup>73</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta ...*, 58-59.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

good religious. An encouragement to godliness would help more to anchor him in God's love and fill him with hope for approaching salvation."<sup>76</sup>

With extraordinary calm and filled with deep faith and hope during his last hours on earth, he was getting ready for passing away: "As the end of Father Casimir's life was near, his spiritual sons bitterly lamented his leaving their new and still insecure religious Institute. He called them to himself and urged them not to become dispirited, but instead to persevere in their religious observance and keep their habits. 'The Virgin Mary herself was the foundress of this Institute. Therefore, she will never abandon anyone who will habitually and piously wear the habit of her Immaculate Conception.'

"On the last day, everyone came to him and knelt, and as he imparted his blessing, everyone wept. Sobbing, they commended themselves to his intercession before God, as sons orphaned by their father, to which he replied: 'Do not weep! The Most Blessed Virgin is your Foundress. When I leave this body and my soul is brought before God, as I hope will happen thanks to trust in God's mercy and the merits of my Savior, I shall support you even better."<sup>77</sup>

Faith and hope were closely bonded with Father Casimir's love for God and his neighbors. He always strove to remain in the presence of God. He faithfully fulfilled God's commandments, the laws of the Church and the duties of his state in life. He made all of his works, sufferings, spiritual experiences and material offerings a part of his veneration of God.

Equally extraordinary was his love for people. He hoped above all for their salvation and thus he taught them the truths of Faith and helped them reach a union with God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. His intervention before the Pope in the matter of improper practices by village priests on the occasion of Easter confessions also flowed out of this love. He was

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 73-74.

magnanimous towards his adversaries, solicitous in regard to his confreres, and embraced the sick and the suffering with love and care.

Father Isidore Taudt testified: “He glowed with the love of God. It was obvious that God was the only center of his activity and that all his works were carried out for the glory of God. His fervent love found manifestation in his strict and constant observance of God’s commandments and the Church’s rules, in his most precise following of the rules of his Order and the policies of his Institute, as well as his constant efforts to motivate his confreres to do likewise.

“He pondered the laws of God both day and night and nurtured a fervent devotion to the Most Sacred Passion of the Lord. Early in the morning, when everyone else was still asleep, he used to precede them to the chapel to celebrate his special devotions. He also bore admonitions with utmost patience.

“I was able to observe his love for neighbor when he performed the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and prayerfully assisted in every way the souls in Purgatory. He recited the Office of the Dead almost every day, explained the catechism to simple folks, gladly assisted the sick, and endeavored to guide his neighbors to God by imparting salutary admonitions. As he spoke to his confreres, his words were permeated with love of God. Having in mind the greater benefit of his neighbors, he translated from Latin into Polish an extremely useful book, appropriate for every state in life—a treatise on the imitation of the ten virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>78</sup>

“As far as his love of God is concerned, I can testify with certainty that the Venerable was endowed with it. Out of love for God he left the world and undertook the way of religious life. In his Order he gave everyone a saintly example. He was fervently pious. He meditated with love on the Passion of Our Lord and felt aggrieved upon hearing about some offense to God. He urged his confreres and lay people to love and serve God zealously. He showed his love in word and deed, especially by faithfully fulfill-

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<sup>78</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 431.

ing the commandments of God and the Church, and the evangelical counsels and rules of religious life. He pondered the divine laws day and night. Out of love for Jesus Christ he wore a hair shirt, flagellated his body, mortified his senses severely, and dedicated himself constantly to both spoken and silent prayer.

“Venerable Casimir also scrupulously fulfilled the command to love one’s neighbor by carrying out numerous works of mercy, both spiritual and corporal. Almost every day we would observe him catechizing and preaching both the young and adult of the simple folks, admonishing the careless and gently instilling in all a respect for God. He also frequently inspired us, his religious confreres, to diligently impart spiritual instructions to the simple folks in accordance with the goal of our religious Order.

“He also performed corporal works of mercy. No needy person who came to our monastery begging for alms was ever sent away empty-handed. Father Casimir valued poverty; he gladly visited the sick and served them with dedication. In an uncommon, heroic manner he embraced his enemies with love. He showed it in the case of a certain confrere who spoke foolishly against a task assigned to him in our community. Father Casimir did not choose to punish that man, but only admonished him. He also kindly forgave the sponsor of our monastery in Goźlin for damaging and ruining the guesthouse and did not call for litigation.”<sup>79</sup>

In his testimony, Father Benon Bujalski emphasized: “The Venerable possessed to the highest degree the virtue of love for God and neighbor, which is evidenced by the fact that he provided charitable support to the poor despite the poverty of his own monastery [...]. He also undertook other deeds of love, for example, he organized courses of learning for the brethren of our Order at the monastery of Góra Kalwaria, although he had no income and relied only on alms.”<sup>80</sup>

Father Alexis Fischer, in his account of Venerable Casimir’s life and manifestations of holiness, underlined: “His unwavering love

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 471-472.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 465.

and kindness always affectionately shown towards his brethren also found expression in a letter addressed to me: 'I ask you, Reverend Father, to give my farewell personally to all the Fathers and Brothers in Poland. I am sending my heartfelt goodbye to all of them and humbly ask for forgiveness if I have offended anyone. If ever I gave cause of scandal or showed volatility, I will endeavor to make amends through my present troubles, undertaken out of the gracious mercy of God for the honor of the Mother of God.'<sup>81</sup>

"During his last illness, Father Casimir showed great sensitivity and graciousness: with great love he wished to alleviate the labors of his brothers assisting him. Throughout his life he used to pray to God that he would not become a burden to his brethren as the result of a long illness. As long as he could, he tried to get up by himself, [...] only shortly before his death did he allow someone to watch him at night. When he needed something or wanted to call his brethren to pray in choir, he tapped his cane."<sup>82</sup>

"About three hours before his death, he asked for the holy Sacraments. When he received the Blessed Viaticum and the Sacrament of the Sick, in spite of great pain caused by a sore throat, he said: 'I have no need for anything else. Blessed be God.'"<sup>83</sup>

The Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Rites holds a document, dated November 20, 1778, in which Father Peter Żółkiewski, a Franciscan, communicates his opinion that the written works of Father Casimir Wyszyński do not contain anything contrary to Faith and Tradition. On the contrary, they strongly convey their author's virtue and sanctity. One can infer from them the Venerable's great obedience to his superiors and his love for God and his religious Order, for the sake of which he not only underwent great dangers and difficulties without hesitation, but was ready to give his life for God's cause.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 67.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

<sup>84</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 508.

Indeed, his love of the spiritual life, which was based on devotion to and imitation of Mary Immaculate, prompted Father Casimir to translate and edit the work entitled *Morning Star*: “I chose for this book on the imitation of the evangelical virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the title of *Morning Star*, because I saw that nearly the whole world, plunged in anger, addictions and ignorance of what is good and salutary, was moving away—due to error and heresy—from Christ, the Sun of Justice. As a morning star is a prelude to sunrise, so the virtues of the Virgin Mary become a beam of hope of reaching Christ, the Sun of Justice, for those who voluntarily practice them.”<sup>85</sup> The Marians were to be the ones before everyone else to endeavor following Mary’s example. Hence, announcing the general visitation, he wrote to his confreres: “Like a deeply rooted plant, the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived*, upon which we make our vows, should sparkle, blossom, and bear fruit in our Marian hearts. For it is not in words, but in fact and in truth, that we must follow and practice the virtues of the Most Elect Virgin, mentioned in our Rule. I encourage all Marians to relish the sweet aroma of these virtues.”<sup>86</sup>

While making visitation of the Marian monasteries, Father Casimir tried to inspire his confreres to a more zealous service of God and people. He asked: “Do you all follow a consistent course in spreading the honor of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without the stain of original sin?” The Founder of the Marians, Saint Stanislaus Papczyński was just this kind of great venerator of God and Mary. Thus, Venerable Casimir promoted his honor with great zeal, prepared his biography, and began efforts for his beatification.

One can find numerous illustrations of Father Casimir’s spiritual life and practice of the theological virtues in his Roman and Portuguese notes, entitled *Diariusz czynności* [Diary of Activities]. He asked God to help him grow in faith, hope and love: “I believe,

<sup>85</sup> C. Wszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 31.

<sup>86</sup> Circular letter of June 10, 1740, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 177.



I trust, and I love You, my God, my highest and ultimate Good. I want to love and praise you throughout my whole life. Grant me Your love so that I can live and die in it, and then rejoice in You.”<sup>87</sup>

The above-quoted opinions of these few witnesses of Father Casimir's life, in addition to perceptible signs of his spirituality found in his written works, indicate the heroic manner of the Venerable's growth in faith, hope and love. They constitute an incentive for remaining steadfast on the path of holiness for both a Christian and a religious in spite of the climate of the times which was and still is fraught with all sorts of dangers to holiness of life.

### ***External Criteria of Holiness***

**T**he Portuguese people's strong belief in the “Holy Pole,” as they called Father Casimir, as well as pilgrimages made to his tomb and graces received through his intercession, contributed to the opening of the beatification process. Down through the centuries the Church's canonization procedures have improved, due in great part to Pope Benedict XIV. To facilitate the opening of the process of beatification for the Founder, Father Papczyński, Father Casimir arranged the Pope's recommendations in the form of instructions.

To examine external evidence of a person's relationship with God, such as fortitude, miracles and heroic virtues, a trial by a Church tribunal must be held. It is important to establish with great accuracy and under various circumstances, proof of the heroic life and manner of practicing Christian virtue by the candidate for beatification.

In a visit to Poland, Saint Pope John Paul II, who performed many canonizations and beatifications, called his compatriots to cooperate with Divine grace in achieving holiness: “Do not be afraid of holiness. Have the courage to strive for the full measure

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 430.

of your humanity! Demand this of yourselves, even if others should not demand it of you!" (Gorzów Wielkopolski, June 2, 1997). He encouraged the youths to never fear adversities because a man can be more powerful than the conditions he lives in: "The human person is strong; he is strong by his understanding of goals, awareness of tasks, recognition of his duties, and realization of the fact that he is loved. Therefore, in order to succeed one must have the certainty of being loved" (June 10, 1997).

Father Casimir Wyszyński possessed such an understanding from his very youth and did not lose it through his last moment on earth. In all of his life's circumstances he did his best to follow the path of God, seeking help from Mary and imitating the example of the saints. That is why in the last moments of his life he could repeat the Psalmist's words: "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast" (Ps 57:8). His entire life always pointed to God, just like the compass needle always points north. He was accustomed to repeat frequently the words of the prayer that he composed: "Dearly beloved Lord, how can I ever repay my infinite debt to You; how can I show my gratitude that You saved me from such great evil, and in Your goodness placed Your mercy and actions, words and thoughts in my heart? I give You thanks for having created me and redeemed me with Your precious Blood; for having washed me of my sins in the holy baptismal font and for having called me to this Holy Order, thus including me among Your servants who venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother and our Lady".

### *Opinions of Father Casimir's Holiness*

In 1763-83, the Church tribunals in Portugal, Poland, and Rome collected the testimony of witnesses to Father Casimir's life and made an evaluation of his writings. Unfortunately, the process was impeded by Poland's loss of independence and the suppression of religious Orders in Portugal. It was picked up again in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and successfully concluded with the

decree of the Apostolic See recognizing Father Casimir's heroic virtues. Testimonies given by witnesses to Father Casimir's life and writings were instrumental in the proceedings of the process.

All the witnesses from Poland, Rome, and Portugal emphasized that the Servant of God Casimir was always mindful of God's presence. He taught to others the values he lived by and the things that help one draw closer to God. He was a man of profound prayer which he did not neglect even on his travels. He had a great veneration for the Most Holy Sacrament and was very meticulous and attentive in celebrating Holy Mass. With tears running down his face, Father Casimir used to ponder the Passion of Christ frequently. He did his best to deepen Marian devotion, especially the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., thanks to which he as well as other people, could glorify God and praise Mary, not only with their sentiments and word of mouth, but also by imitating Mary's virtues. Father Casimir's faith showed itself particularly in his behavior during his final illness and preparation to meet God.

Father Isidore Taudt was the only one who testified twice before the Church tribunal on behalf of the Servant of God Casimir, pointing out the latter's exemplary life and emphasizing his role in the renewal and growth of the Order: "To everyone in the Order he was a shining example of sanctity and fervent piety. (...) When he lived in Poland, he used to encourage the members of his institute to hold devotion for the Most Holy Sacrament, Christ's Passion, and the Blessed Mother, setting a good example himself. He used to get up early in the morning and go directly before the Most Holy Sacrament. With great zeal he taught simple folks the truths of the Faith. Also, the Servant of God Casimir radiated with exceptional veneration of God and the things of God, to which he was wholeheartedly devoted. He considered the truths of the faith and God's commandments, to be sacred and did his utmost to fulfill them (...). He frequently encouraged us, his brethren, to be diligent in conducting religious education among plain country folks in accordance with our Order's goal."

Father Benon Bujalski, the Servant of God Casimir's companion on the journey to Portugal, testified among other things: "In various difficulties and in times of food shortage and the lack of other goods for the community in Góra, the Servant of God always placed his hope in God. He kept telling his brethren to do the same while suffering these trying shortages of food or clothing. He cared for all with great trust and concern. Even when he and his subordinates lived in poverty, he ensured the magnificence of worship and divine cult and provided food for the assembled faithful to stir up their piety."

Experiencing many obstacles, perils, and famine on his trip to Portugal, "the Servant of God placed his hope in God's help and displayed the utmost patience and steadfastness in achieving his goal. This encouraged me, his companion, to be patient and trustful" (Father Bujalski).

Father Alexis Fisher pointed out Father Casimir's filial bond with Mary Immaculate: "He had such an unbreakable faith in the power of the Immaculate Conception that in various circumstances, in weaknesses and perils, either his own or somebody else's, he recited the following words, thus achieving the expected result: 'May the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection.'" Father Alexis personally experienced the healing power of this prayer when the Servant of God Casimir traced on his forehead the initials of this invocation.

The same biographer passed on to us a testimony given by our Portuguese brethren pertaining to the time of the Servant of God's last illness: "With great love [Father Casimir] wished to alleviate the strain on the brethren waiting on him. He used to pray throughout his entire life that he would not become a burden to his brethren because of a long illness. As long as he was able he tried to get up on his own [...] and only shortly before dying did he allow for a night vigil to be kept at his bedside. When he needed something or wished to call the brethren to pray, he tapped his cane."

The first Portuguese Marians perceived Father Casimir as someone dedicated to fulfilling the will of God and endowed with

extraordinary patience and gentleness: “He was very polite towards everybody and did not scandalize anyone with his words” (Brother John of St. Mary). The same witness emphasized the great piety with which Father Casimir prepared for Mass, as if it were his last Mass before dying.

In addition to testimonies given by various people, Father Casimir himself provided an important witness which flow out of his writings. In his introduction to *Morning Star*, he reminded us that “One’s virtue is proven by persevering in it until the end. Only those steadfast in virtue may be recognized as perfect, not those who enter the road of virtue occasionally and then deviate from it for a trifling reason.”

Strengthened by the Eucharist and Mary’s intercession, Father Casimir did not deviate from the road of perfection. On his journey to Portugal, after Mass in Genoa, he recorded the following reflection: “On the day of the Most Holy Trinity I celebrated Mass at the altar of the B.V.M. à la Pace at the Reformati Fathers where we were staying. I reflected on how the unfathomable God can fit into such a small host. Then it came to me: since He, the head of the Church, deigned to remain in the darkness of the Blessed Virgin’s womb and chose her to be His mother, He wants all members of the Holy Church to have her as their Mother as well. Therefore, unhappy are those churches and their members who think it shameful to accept her as their Mother, she who was honored by the God-Man who gave himself in submission to her. ‘*And was obedient to them*’ (Lk 2:51)” (June 17, 1753).

Father Casimir sought safety from the dangers of sea-crossings by entrusting himself to the Mother of God and St. Stanislaus Papczyński: “I do not call for any other than my usual help: ‘Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio’ [May the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection]. I also frequently recited the Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, made a sign of the cross towards ominous clouds and called for the intercession of our Venerable Father [Papczyński]” (June 1, 1753).

Father Wyszyński diligently imparted the basic elements of the Marian spiritual heritage to the laity. He accomplished it, among other things, by printing Father Papczyński's book entitled *Mystical Temple of God*, which teaches the way to Christian holiness. On the other hand, in his book *Morning Star*, he presents Mary as a special patroness in the battle against evil: "I called the book on imitating the evangelical virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary *The Morning Star*, because I knew that due to errors and heresy, nearly the whole world was sunk in anger, and numerous addictions, and ignorance of what is good and salvific, and was distancing itself from Christ, the Sun of Justice. And just like the morning star, known as the first light is the announcement of sunrise, so the virtues of the Blessed Virgin will give hope to anyone who voluntarily accepts them in drawing near to Christ, the Sun of Justice.

"Even if someone gets entangled in the greatest darkness and wanders about in the terrible night of a bad conscience, by reading this book and diligently following the teaching of *Morning Star*, and imitating her 10 evangelical virtues, that person will see the day of a good conscience and the radiance of Christ the Lord, the Sun of Justice. Thereafter, with no difficulty or darkness, as if in the middle of the day, he will go forward under Mary's protection until he sees God on Mount Zion."

Father Casimir reminded those unduly concerned with earthly matters that the most important thing is "to meet in heaven." He also fostered devotion for the deceased and made it possible for people to obtain indulgences for the deceased in Marian churches.

### **Conclusion**

**T**he Venerable Servant of God, Father Casimir Wyszyński, appears as a man exceptionally significant in his efforts to fulfill his life's purpose. Already in his youth he started developing the

grace of faith received at baptism by practicing conscientiously the pious devotions of the day. He did not follow the clerical career as his father had wished. Instead, he discerned and unwaveringly answered, God's call of a religious vocation in the Marian Order. He joined the Order clearly understanding his mission to mend the wrongs done by his own brother and those inflicted by the weaknesses of his brethren. With exceptional courage he undertook the task of bringing order into religious life in accordance with Church regulations and the instructions of the Marian Founder. He accomplished it by setting a good personal example of faithfulness, regardless of insults and even a threat to his life. Instead of indulging in futile criticism, he used acceptable means of correction such as religious visitations. His dedication was instrumental in stimulating the Order's interior dynamics and outward growth.

He was the first novice of the recently revived Marian Order. He stayed with his religious family until the end, when Christ through an illness, knocked on his door in Balsamão. Like Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, Father Casimir bore a deep conviction that "This tiny Congregation of the Immaculate Conception has been raised up by God" and therefore it was necessary to take good care of it.

In his sermon of 1968, Stephen Cardinal Wyszyński emphasized Father Casimir's role in awakening a hope for the nation's survival, thanks to Mary's special protection: "To a nation of people who were losing their freedom, Father Casimir revealed their very Mother. He tied this nation personally to her through the veneration of her Immaculate Conception."

Appreciating the importance of the outward signs of Marian piety, Father Casimir Wyszyński pointed out the need of conversion in Christian life. For this reason, he did his best to instill into Marian cult the practice of imitating Mary in her attitude towards God, her love of Christ, and fulfillment of the Gospel precepts. Father Wyszyński exhorted that it was not enough to just call upon God with one's lips while failing in the external obligations of faith. One's salvation may be secured only through the effort of

fulfilling God's will at any stage of one's life. This is the kind of attitude that Mary teaches us. Therefore, one must entrust everything to Mary, for she is the Morning Star that leads to Christ, the Sun of Justice. And by imitating the attitude of the Mother of God we can also draw closer to other people. After all, her eyes always saw other people's needs; they noticed the humble and the hungry whom God nourishes through the goodness of others.

Guided by the Morning Star, the Immaculately Conceived Mary, Father Wyszynski consequently followed the road to holiness throughout his entire life. People took notice of his sanctity; they felt drawn to him and sought his assistance. Interaction with Father Casimir prompted people to be kind towards others and to work on themselves. Judging by the biography of the Servant of God, it is possible to say that he made a large contribution towards the revival of the nation of Poland because he did his best to help overcome the decline of the Saxon period. His influence spread far beyond the borders of his homeland, which he loved and for which he wished happiness. His concern was manifested, for example, in sending back from other countries seeds that could grow well on Polish soil or in describing the ways of making bamboo canes or growing tobacco, or recipes for cooking which he learned. In Rome he kept in touch with his compatriots, but was also open to other nations, which the Portuguese people in particular had a chance to experience.

One of the theologians who evaluated the documents and testimonies concerning the life of the Servant of God for his beatification process, explained Father Casimir's timeliness for our day thus: "Father Casimir can be offered as a model for the modern world because he shows how to carry out in the Church the duties of guiding one's brethren and giving honor to the Immaculate Virgin in the context of human behavior which is so greatly scarred by sin."

The call for conversion remains timely in today's world, so afflicted by a multitude of opinions and attitudes that lead to a weakening of religious faith, the break-up of marriages, and the abandoning of priestly and religious life.





Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, PhD

**FAITHFUL TO THE ROAD OF  
RELIGIOUS PROFESSION OF VOWS**



I shall demonstrate how the Venerable Casimir Wyszyński embraced the three religious vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, and how he practiced these three virtues of the spiritual life in a perfect manner. The decree on his heroic virtue, proclaimed by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints on December 21, 1989, recognized Father Casimir's exceptional radicalism in fulfilling the Christian virtues, including his religious vows. At the same time, the decree assures us that we may take Father Casimir as a model for our own religious life. To some extent, I base my reflections on the *Summarium* concerning the virtues of the Servant of God Casimir, which was included in the *Positio*.<sup>88</sup>

### *Chastity*

Available testimonies about Father Casimir's life confirm that he "excelled in such flawless purity that he was often compared to another Casimir (Polish Saint 1458-1484) or called an angel in a human body. His chastity expressed itself in his discipline of the eyes in his meetings and conversations, in the manner he carried himself and performed all tasks."<sup>89</sup> An eyewitness, Father Czermak stated that he always saw Father Casimir's chastity "being preserved in an exemplary manner."<sup>90</sup> Another witness who lived alongside Father Casimir for 12 years claimed that he witnessed the "exceptional chastity" of the Servant of God, for which reason he was presented to everyone as a model of continence. Indeed, Father Casimir distinguished himself by the innocence of his life and moral chastity, which he proved by "making

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<sup>88</sup> Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Miranden. seu Brigantien. Beatificationis et canonizationis Servi Dei Casimiri a S. Ioseph Wyszyński [...]. Positio super virtutibus et officio concinnata*, Romae 1986, LXX-LXXX (afterwards: *PositioWysz*).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 386; A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta ...* 58.

<sup>90</sup> *PositioWysz*, 439.

the sign of the cross and thus chasing away some lecherous women who once came to him at night."<sup>91</sup>

Father Wyszyński realized that perfection in practicing chastity might be achieved only at the price of constant vigilance and strict penance. In the struggle against his body, he employed various means to preserve chastity. Among these measures, the mortification of the external senses should be mentioned first. One of the witnesses stated that Father Casimir had complete control over his external senses of taste, sight, hearing, smell and touch.<sup>92</sup>

As early as his novitiate year, he started to mortify the sense of *taste*: he abstained from eating meat and kept fasts scrupulously. Inspired by the spirit of continence, "he usually drank only water" and refrained from drinking any alcoholic beverages.<sup>93</sup>

Father Casimir distinguished himself by "great discipline of the eyes": he always kept his eyes averted from women, even avoiding conversation with them unless strictly necessary. When the necessity arose, he would keep his sight firmly affixed toward the ground, not wanting as much as a glance at their faces. Wojciech Magnuszewski testifies: "I can state that [...] Father Casimir would always come from his monastery in the company of a confrere known for his good habits. If he should see this religious needlessly talking to a woman, he would admonish him at once."<sup>94</sup> Father Alexis Fischer left similar recollections.<sup>95</sup>

Father Casimir carefully guarded his *hearing*, thereby abhorring every kind of slander.<sup>96</sup> He also mortified his sense of *smell*, never inhaling the aroma of flowers or tobacco.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 474.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 473-474.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, LXIX. At that time, Poland was actively fighting drunkenness. A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 71.

<sup>94</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 47.

<sup>95</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 58.

<sup>96</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 514.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

*Touch* is the most dangerous of all the senses. For this reason, Father Casimir was particularly mindful of it. One of the witnesses states: "He kept his touch very pure and innocent, and as far as I know, he never touched a woman."<sup>98</sup> Moreover, he "avoided the company of women" with great eagerness and cautioned others against getting near women, including nuns, unless contacting them was absolutely necessary.<sup>99</sup> "All in all, he was strictly set against conversations with women."<sup>100</sup>

Further, the Venerable Father Casimir mortified his sense of *touch* by avoiding everything soft.<sup>101</sup> Once when he had to stay overnight at Magnuszewski's house, he slept on "...the straw only, having folded and placed on the table the bedding that had been provided."<sup>102</sup> While staying in his own monastery, "He slept only briefly, using for his headrest a stone which he kept in his cell."<sup>103</sup>

The Venerable Father Casimir practiced mortification of the *body* by using a whip and hair shirt. One of the eyewitnesses testifies that the Venerable Father frequently practiced self-flagellation. Sometimes he also wore iron chains. Magnuszewski testifies: "He (Father Casimir) wore a hair shirt and while still a lay person, he used to wrap metal chains around his body, thus making it bleed. For many years he did not remove these chains, probably keeping them on until his dying breath."<sup>104</sup> Father Casimir explained that without applying such means he would never have learned to curb his senses in a true religious manner. The effort needed to preserve bodily virtue was facilitated by the fact that "He was never idle because he either prayed, or read, or wrote, or worked in the vegetable garden."<sup>105</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 58.

<sup>100</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 496.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 361, 366.

<sup>102</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 36.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 42.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 43.

<sup>105</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 71.

The virtue of chastity is linked to reticence or *modesty*. It was noted that during his stay in Balsamão, Father Casimir “so much excelled in chastity and modesty that he would never allow any part of his body to be uncovered.”<sup>106</sup> He was always modest and chaste both in his relations with others and in his personal appearance.<sup>107</sup>

During his terminal illness he showed praiseworthy modesty in reference to his confreres who were assisting him. As long as he was able, he endeavored to rise from the bed by himself so as not to display to his brethren his bare, undressed body.<sup>108</sup>

“Being a model to everyone,” Father Wyszyński frequently advised his brethren to preserve chastity. So that they could attain this perfection, he called them to do mortification and demanded that they refrain from the company of women.<sup>109</sup>

In his introduction to *The Morning Star*, the Venerable Casimir reminded the faithful of the things that prevent them from preserving chastity, stating: “We cannot believe someone to be pure if he or she frivolously risks the loss of purity, does not courageously fight temptation, or calmly looks at something that should not be looked at; who does not train his body by fasting, vigils, and moderation in eating and drinking.”<sup>110</sup>

### **Poverty**

**F**ather Wyszyński zealously preserved the virtue of poverty. Father Alexis Fischer, who lived 12 years in the Order alongside the Venerable Servant of God, claims that he observed and expe-

<sup>106</sup> *PositioWysz*, 410, 413.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 496.

<sup>108</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 73.

<sup>109</sup> *PositioWysz*, 369, 416, 433, 485.

<sup>110</sup> Casimir Wyszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 22.

rienced Father Casimir's "singularissimam paupertatem"<sup>111</sup> (most singular poverty).

According to the testimonies given by witnesses in the beatification process, Father Casimir practiced the vow of poverty in a "totally faultless manner," "exactly" and "strictly."<sup>112</sup> Fortified by his faith, he lived out religious poverty, entrusting to Divine Providence all the material needs of his monastery in Góra Kalwaria and encouraging his brethren to do the same.<sup>113</sup>

Inspired by the virtue or the spirit of poverty, the Venerable Casimir "...kept his cell in a state of utmost poverty, did not have any other furnishings except for a crucifix and necessary pious books" and had only one image—that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. He slept on a bed unworthy of the name, having just a bag of straw for bedding. He wore an exceptionally poor and thin garb; his habit was made out of some very stiff fabric. He consumed frugal meals that looked as if they came from alms.<sup>114</sup>

During his stay in Rome, the Venerable Casimir "...was happy to give alms and used to do so frequently, although he himself was always poor."<sup>115</sup> Divine Providence always helped him in a miraculous manner so that he was never short of strict necessities.

When Father Casimir arrived in Lisbon, he stayed in the poorest conditions in the house of Salazar. Witnesses attest that throughout that time he endured even more than evangelical poverty without complaint. Similarly, living conditions in the monastery of St. Peter of Alcantara were extremely poor and he had to rely on the alms of friends to subsist.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 485.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 437, 439, 442, 468.

<sup>113</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 44.

<sup>114</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 442, 466, 468, 480.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 390.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 242, 339-340, 423, 425.

When Brother Giovanni di Dio, Father Casimir's first Portuguese companion, pleaded with him to move to Balsamão, since he heard that the monastery there had sufficient sustenance, the Venerable Casimir replied: "I did not come here seeking Matthew's bag."<sup>117</sup>

And later, in Balsamão, he became known for his "apostolic poverty."<sup>118</sup> Father Fischer testifies thus about Father Casimir's voluntary deprivations: "Indeed, Father Casimir loved poverty so much that he was always content with a mean habit and meager furnishings; he lived at the religious house as if he were a constant pilgrim. Since he did not wish to keep anything as his property, once on the feast of Epiphany, he returned the money left over from a trip, around 52 pennies, saying: 'The Blessed Virgin loved poverty so much that she gave away all the magi's gifts. I do not want to keep anything either.' When he was given food by visitors, he kept none in his cell but turned everything over to the community."<sup>119</sup>

One of the witnesses testifying in the beatification process states that, on his visiting Balsamão, he found the Venerable Casimir wearing "an old habit, worn bare here and there."<sup>120</sup>

As the Superior General, Father Wyszyński always called his confreres to practice evangelical poverty. At his suggestion efforts were made to satisfy genuine material needs of the brethren in order to prevent potential abuses against the vow of religious poverty. And when making visitation of the Marian monasteries, the Venerable Casimir would check if they were properly practicing poverty, chastity, and obedience.<sup>121</sup>

In his Foreword to *Morning Star*, Father Wyszyński, addressing both religious and lay persons, tried to awaken in their hearts

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 420.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 422.

<sup>119</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 70.

<sup>120</sup> *Positio* Wyszyński, 420.

<sup>121</sup> Circular letter of June 3, 1749, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 184.



a spirit of poverty, reasoning thus: “How can we call poor in spirit someone who continues to cling in his heart to earthly goods, as if placing in them, instead of in God, his hope and the purpose of his life; or someone who, despite taking a vow of poverty, still possesses or desires to possess what he should have renounced; or who complains upon finding himself in poverty and does not agree with the will of God?”<sup>122</sup>

### *Obedience*

**T**he Venerable Servant of God Casimir was always ready to subordinate his will to the will of his Superiors. Already in his novitiate year he was greatly meticulous in regard to obedience. After making his religious vows he practiced the vow of obedience exactly and strictly, for which he was praised by everyone.<sup>123</sup>

Exercising the virtue of obedience according to the Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Venerable Casimir reached such heights of perfection that he was presented to everyone as a model of obedience.<sup>124</sup> For this he was regarded as a religious obedient in a perfect manner. Father Fischer called him uncommonly obedient, rigorously carrying out his superiors’ instructions in a manner of total availability. Another witness states that the Venerable Casimir practiced the virtue of obedience “*miro modo*,” that is, in a manner worthy of admiration because of how he always did everything his superiors asked him to do.<sup>125</sup> To illustrate: He undertook the trip to Portugal not only on his own volition, but following the command of his superiors. And the entirety of Father Casimir’s written work is permeated with the spirit of obedience.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Casimir Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 23.

<sup>123</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 432, 437, 468, 494.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 439, 446, 485, 519.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 441, 468-469.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 508.

The Venerable Servant of God Casimir also called his confreres to perfect obedience. In his circular letter of 1749, the Venerable Servant of God, announcing his canonical visitation, stated that he would want to learn during his visitation whether the Marians were formed in perfect obedience and “...observed strictly the principles of religious discipline.”<sup>127</sup>

In an effort to correct erroneously understood concepts of obedience, in his Foreword to *The Morning Star* the Venerable Casimir admonishes his readers in these words: “How can one be called obedient if he does not obey his parents, superiors, and teachers; if he does something either under coercion or because it pleases him, refusing to do anything contrary to his own likes and whims? The virtue of obedience consists in doing what we are instructed to do and not what we like.”<sup>128</sup>

Father Wyszyński distinguished himself also by his *observance of the religious rule*. Already in the novitiate he upheld the rule and constitutions in a rigorous manner, thus setting an example to all. “He was a model for others because of his growth in virtue, his stability in observing the proper Marian discipline, and his faithfulness to the rule and constitutions.”<sup>129</sup> Thanks to the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of novice master after his appointment to this office, not only the novices, but the entire monastery as well, experienced his living example and growth in religious obedience.<sup>130</sup> He was equally exemplary and exacting in his observance of the religious rule in his later assignments.

During his stay in Rome, Father Casimir impressed everyone as a “good and obedient religious,” who “fulfilled everything precisely” during the celebration of the Holy Mass, “as it was set forth in the rubrics.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Circular letter of June 3, 1749, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 184.

<sup>128</sup> Casimir Wyszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 23.

<sup>129</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 55.

<sup>130</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 107.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 445-446.

As the Superior of the Marian community in Balsamão, the Venerable Casimir taught the members by his personal example to observe everything that was stipulated for functions and communal exercises.<sup>132</sup>

From his novitiate year he was an ardent promoter of obedience to the religious rule. In the years following he remained equally demanding of the rule's strict observance by the religious. The document *Puncta sancita* of 1738 shows his effort to implement a more accurate observance of religious discipline among the Marians.<sup>133</sup>

In the Venerable Wszyński's circular letters written while in the office of Superior General, one notices his drive to tighten the discipline and observance of the religious rule.<sup>134</sup> This work on the spiritual renewal of the Marian community was necessary because the "Rostkavian dispersion" (1715-1722) caused a considerable relaxation in the observance of the rule within the Order.

In the opinion of Father Fischer, the Venerable Servant of God guided "...the Marian Order with great zeal towards perfect observance of the rule."<sup>135</sup> And he did so both through admonition and personal example of life.

Perfect obedience is closely united to humility. If humility concerns mostly submission to the will of God, then submission to the superior for the sake of obedience is one of the main manifestations of humility, because one cannot be obedient if one is not humble. Father Taudt testifies that the Venerable Casimir "was humble and subordinated to God in spirit and mind in the most perfect way, that he was subordinated to his superiors and never placed himself above his peers. As to those who were of lower office, he rather wanted to be their subordinate instead of having them at his orders. His humility was intentional and sta-

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 411.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>134</sup> See *Listy Przełożonego Generalnego*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 170-186.

<sup>135</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 485.

ble; he gladly performed lowly services and humbled himself before everyone.”<sup>136</sup>

Father Casimir’s contemporaries noted his “extraordinary humility,” while witnesses in his beatification process testified that he exercised humility “in an extraordinary manner,” and “in a praise-worthy manner.”<sup>137</sup> While a student at the middle school in Góra, he already knew how fitting it was to implore God with “an extreme humility.”<sup>138</sup> Training himself in humility during his novitiate, he practiced it to such “a high degree that he endeavored to appear through his words and deeds as the least among all the novices.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, he distinguished himself by his humility from the very beginning of his religious life.

Likewise, after being elected to the office of Superior General in 1737, Father Casimir continued to behave in the most humble manner, for example, by cleaning the church and other places of communal use. He did not regard himself worthy of the office of General Superior and confessed: “The Almighty, whose prerogative it is to raise the poor from lowliness and place them among princes, through the voice of all the Chapter members called me from the desert to undertake the pastoral labor of preparing the way of your salvation.”<sup>140</sup>

While he stayed in Rome, the Venerable Casimir enjoyed respect as *a religious of great humility*.<sup>141</sup> During his time in Lisbon, Father Casimir had “many an eyewitness to his great and exceptional humility,” in the person of Antonio da Silva e Souza. Also, Father Wyszynski’s confessor stated that he learned Father’s deep humility while hearing his confession.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 514.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 424, 439, 481, 502.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 376.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 430.

<sup>140</sup> Circular letter of Dec. 23, 1737, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa mari-anów...*, 170.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, 446.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 422.

Many of the witnesses of Father Casimir's saintly life emphasized the depth of his humility, the foundation upon which he built perfect chastity, poverty and obedience. He not only accepted the gift of the religious vocation, but also magnanimously increased it, receiving God's favors and cooperating with them eagerly.





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**APOSTLE OF THE IMMACULATE MARY**





“**P**reserve your Marian identity in its original freshness and remain faithful to your beautiful mission. As long as you model yourselves after the example and instruction of Our Lady, the paragon and foundation of every kind of life dedicated to God and the apostolic life, and the source of your dedication, devotion and zeal, the internal life shall not dry up in your Institute, which has already brought such abundant fruit to the Church.<sup>143</sup>

Fidelity to the Marian charism of religious life can be measured by the extent to which the Mother of God is both the model and motivation of one’s spiritual and apostolic life. The nature of this Marian calling was expressed in the charism discerned and accepted by Saint Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701), the Founder of the Marians.<sup>144</sup> This charism is clearly identified by the idea that imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the most essential element of Marian piety and spirituality. The mystery inspiring the Marian way of life shall be the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

Venerable Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755) accepted this gift of the Marian calling and fulfilled it in the spirit of the holy Father Founder. “What is more, his entire life became a true testimony to the efficacy of this ‘Marian’ road in his striving for holiness. The Venerable Casimir stands on this road as a shining “example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Tim 4:12).”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Paul VI, *Address to the participants of the Marians' General Convention on Dec. 5, 1973*, Polish text in “Immaculata” 11(1974) No 1, 41.

<sup>144</sup> T. Rogalewski MIC, *Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701). Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers and Inspirer of the Marian School of Spirituality*, Stockbridge 2012.

<sup>145</sup> Kongregacja do Spraw Świętych, *Dekret o heroicznosci cnót*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 6. Cf. J. Kumala MIC, *Pobożność maryjna jako szczególny rys duchowości Sługi Bożego ojca Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego*, „Immaculata” 23(1986) No. 1, 18-28; same author, *Z maryjnych doświadczeń Ojca Kazimierza*, mps, 1987, 4; A. Sikorski MIC, *Maria marianorum. Problem chrystotypiczności i eklezjotypiczności maryjnego charyzmatu księży marianów*, Lublin-Warszawa 2001, 29-42; K. Pek MIC, *Imitatio Mariae według o. Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego (†1755)*, in: *Patrimonium marianorum. Ojciec Kazimierz Wyszyński (1700-1755) w kontekście swej epoki*, Ed. K. Pek MIC,

Let us take a closer look at the Marian way of Father Casimir, who loved Christ limitlessly and served Him by following the example of Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord.

The first factor that influenced the shaping of Father Casimir's Marian piety was his family home. He was a son of gentry who lived their lives in "a noble and exemplary manner"<sup>146</sup> and were "thoroughly Catholic."<sup>147</sup> He had "truly pious parents."<sup>148</sup> The house even had an oratory where holy Mass could be celebrated.<sup>149</sup> This does not mean, however, that Father Casimir did not experience any difficulties or sufferings, especially spiritual ones, from the people closest to him. His father, John Casimir, was a strict man who placed high demands on his sons. These demands were centered mostly on his sons' studies. Francis did not do well at school and for this reason—as recollected by his brother Michael—he was "hated by his father and treated meaner than the servant boys."<sup>150</sup> Consequently, Francis was painfully affected by the lack of his father's love and by humiliations and punishments from his father. In his vulnerability he turned to his mother in whom he found support and comfort in his troubles. She spoke to him about God, taught him to pray and steered him to church. Kind and gentle by nature, she had a very positive impact on the boy's delicate psyche. Her manner certainly influenced Francis's attitude towards the Mother of God on whom he early in life bestowed his filial love and trust.

The Wyszynski family's religiousness did not differ significantly from the average religiousness of the good Polish families of the day. They were not new to devotion to the Virgin Mary,

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Warszawa-Lublin 2003, 157-164.

<sup>146</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 29.

<sup>147</sup> B. Jakimowicz, MIC, *Czcigodny Sługa Boży Kazimierz Wyszynski*, in: *Polscy święci*, 135.

<sup>148</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Kazimierza Wyszynskiego...*, 31.

<sup>149</sup> *Positio*Wysz, 24.

<sup>150</sup> Michał Wyszynski, *Chcę naprawić to, co zepsuł mój brat*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa...*, 21.

which was often expressed in pictures and statues or in the founding of churches and monasteries in honor of Our Lady. The Wyszyński family probably acted likewise. It is believed that they donated the painting of the Mother of God to the Jeziora Wielka parish church, which to this day is deemed as miraculous.<sup>151</sup>

A significant influence on Francis's devotion to Mary was the education he received in the schools run by the Piarists in Góra Kalwaria and Warsaw.<sup>152</sup> Students were obliged to go to Mass daily, to sing the Little Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to sing the litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary every Saturday. Francis distinguished himself by the zeal with which he performed all the required practices and special devotions, as his school friend, Wojciech Magnuszewski, confirmed: "Francis attended classes together with all of us; he would be the first to start a litany service; he sang hymns during Mass and devotional meetings, and never knelt in the pew, but knelt before the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary [...]. He had a special veneration for Christ the Lord and the Virgin Mary, His Blessed Mother. Every day at six o'clock he went to Mass. [...] He often spent time alone, in meditation. He recited prayers, various litanies, the chaplet, the Little Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and even encouraged other students during recreation to do the same."<sup>153</sup>

Venerable Casimir's Marian devotion should be considered against the background of the Polish Marian devotion of the day, in which he was brought up and which he practiced later as a Marian. The beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century concluded a period of a flourishing Polish Mariology during which thrived a creativity

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<sup>151</sup> J. Bukowicz MIC, *Uroczystości ku czci Ojca Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego w miejscu jego urodzenia*, „Immaculata” (1965) No. 12, 64-65; *W parafii Przemienienia Pańskiego w Jeziórcu. Rekoronacja obrazu Najświętszej Maryi z Dzieciątkiem Jezus*, in: „Słowo Powszechne” (1987) No. 123, 1. 6.

<sup>152</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 24-27.

<sup>153</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 30. Father A. Fischer similarly reported later in his *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta ...*, 52: "Francis was characterized by remarkable modesty and devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary").

centered on the Mother of God. Much was said and written about the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, Mary's mediation and her spiritual motherhood<sup>154</sup>. The most prominent representative of this "golden" period was a Dominican, Father Justin Zapartowicz (1590-1670), the creator of the first Mariological synthesis in Poland<sup>155</sup>.

The most common form of Marian devotion at this time was the surrendering of oneself in bondage to Mary. This form of devotion existed in Polish piety as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, about 40 years before the birth of Saint Louis Grignon de Montfort, the famous French Mariologist (1673-1716). Marian devotion in Poland had been introduced by Father Francis Fenicki, SJ (1592-1652), who published the book *Mariae mancipium* in 1632. Later, another Jesuit priest, Father John Chomętowski (1597-1641), supplemented and published this book in Polish. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, other Jesuits (Druźbicki, Nieliski, and Morawski) further developed this devotion which promoted service to and love for Mary.<sup>156</sup>

The coronation of the image of Our Lady at Jasna Góra in 1717, became an important event for the development of Marian devotion in Poland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This event revived the practice of bondage to Mary and veneration of the Jasna Góra icon in its many forms. Also increased was the number of pilgrimages to Jasna Góra, which slowly became a central shrine in the Kingdom of Poland. People continued to remember the miracle of the defense of the Jasna Góra monastery in 1655 and the vows made by King John Casimir in 1656, who proclaimed the Mother of God as the Queen of the Polish Crown.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>154</sup> F. Bracha, *Historia mariologii polskiej*, in: *Gratia plena. Studia teologiczne o Bogurodzicy*, Ed. B. Przybylski, Poznań-Warszawa-Lublin 1965, 466-475.

<sup>155</sup> T. Węgrzyniak, *Śłynny mariolog polski o. Justyn Zapartowicz (Miechowita)*, in: "Ruch biblijny i liturgiczny" 4(1951) 113-121.

<sup>156</sup> E. Reczek, *Niewolnictwo mariańskie. Dwie publikacje polskich jezuitów z roku 1632*, in: *Sacrum Poloniae Millennium*, v.10, Rzym 1964, 319-480; W. Makoś MIC, *Forma kultu Maryi propagowana przez Druźbickiego, Fenickiego i Chomentowskiego*, in: "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 29 (1982) c. 2, 127-134.

<sup>157</sup> S. Litak, *Z dziejów kultu Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej w XVII-XVIII wieku*.

Father Wszyński recognizes this Marian aspect of Polish piety and characterizes it thus: "The Polish nation was endowed by God with a great love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This great love and devotion is regarded by Poles as a gift from God and is one of the most characteristic and noble among the many merits of the Kingdom of Poland. This fact is recognized by the whole world and accepted by almost all the neighboring nations. Our nation's extraordinary love for Mary brought it about that she was declared the Queen of Poland.

"In defense of Mary's honor, Polish knights repeatedly fought the enemies of her holy Name, copiously spilling their blood on the battlefield with no regard for their lives and often arose triumphant.

"All the men and women of faith proclaimed her glory in prayers, hymns, and songs, and in calling upon her intercession in their needs, trusting in her most efficacious help and protection."<sup>158</sup>

In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the level of theological works declined, because conditions during the Saxon era were not conducive to the development of theology. Devotional literature became dominant. Most often the Marian topics were delivered from the pulpit in the form of panegyrics. References were extensively made to Mariological books written by foreign authors.<sup>159</sup> Among the Polish authors who delivered some original thinking, we should mention primarily Rev. Adrian Miaskowski (1657-1737) and Father Antoni Węgrzynowicz, OFM (1658-1721).<sup>160</sup>

During the time of Venerable Casimir, "Bondage to Mary" or the practice of dedicating oneself as a slave to Mary, was the dominant form of Marian devotion. It consisted in acknowledging

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*Sprawa zasięgu społecznego*, in: *Z zagadnień kultury chrześcijańskiej*, Lublin 1973, 447-454.

<sup>158</sup> C. Wszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 15.

<sup>159</sup> F. Bracha, *Historia mariologii polskiej...*, 475-477.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. D. Mastalska, *Teologiczny obraz Maryi Antoniego Węgrzynowicza OFM (1658-1721)*, Niepokalanów 1994.

oneself and one's entire earthly life to be the property of Mary and proclaiming her to be one's Lady, Mother and Advocate.<sup>161</sup> A slave of Mary was obliged to venerate her through a series of devotional practices.

Father Wszyński, who regarded himself as an "unworthy slave" of the Blessed Mother,<sup>162</sup> was certainly acquainted with this devotion of "Marian bondage." Describing various forms of Marian piety, he mentions devotees of Mary who "out of love for her"<sup>163</sup> wear a rosary, scapular, medal or image as signs of "belonging to her as to their Lady and Queen." There are also those who "offer themselves in service to Mary in religious orders dedicated to her."<sup>164</sup>

In the spirit of his dedication to Mary, Father Casimir used to say this prayer: "Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven, Mistress of the world and Immaculate Virgin preserved from original and actual stain, accept this resolution of mine. You are and will always be my beloved Mother, worthy of constant love and praise. May I be worthy of becoming your special son. Show yourself as my kind Mother, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!"<sup>165</sup>

Examining Venerable Casimir's life and writings, one wonders about his way of living out and interpreting this form of piety. At first it is possible to conclude that the practice of "Bondage to Mary" did not interest him at all, because he concentrated on a different form of venerating Mary—the imitation of her virtues. Is this really just "another" form of Marian devotion, not related to "Bondage to Mary?" We observe that Father Casimir knew various pious practices in honor of the Mother of God, but he believed them insufficient because they did not represent a true Marian devotion, one that would signify Mary's "slave" or Mary's

<sup>161</sup> E. Pohorecki, *Niewolnictwo Maryi w Polsce*, in: *Mały słownik maryjny*, Niepokalanów 1987, 59-61.

<sup>162</sup> K. Wszyński, *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii*, 322.

<sup>163</sup> C. Wszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star* 16.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>165</sup> *Modlitwy Sługi Bożego o. Kazimierza Wszyńskiego*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 430.

“servant.” He did not reject “Mary’s bondage,” but wanted to supplement it in a proper, deeper, more evangelical manner. Hence, he searched for a book that could become the best help for “all veneratorators of Mary,” teaching them “true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary”<sup>166</sup>. He came across the work of a Jesuit, Francis Arias (1533-1605), entitled *De Virgo imitanda sive de Imitatione Mariae Virginis*,<sup>167</sup> and decided to translate it and introduce it to readers,<sup>168</sup> so that “by reading and pondering its contents you may grow in trust and love of the Immaculate Virgin.”<sup>169</sup> Three basic tasks—recognition, service and imitation—constitute authentic “Marian slavery,” which consists of a most deep desire to serve God by following the example of Mary. This kind of imitation of Mary is described by the theological expression “Marian slavery.”<sup>170</sup> Venerable Casimir accepted various pious practices in honor of Mary and advised against abandoning them, but he emphasized that “imitation of Mary’s life and virtues” is the “best portion” and “the most perfect expression of true devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.”<sup>171</sup>

How does Father Casimir substantiate the excellence of this form of piety? We must remember that this particular form of devotion was not discussed much in the Marian literature of the time. The majority of Polish authors from the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries did not leave much room in their works for the

<sup>166</sup> C. Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 16.

<sup>167</sup> Latin translation (Cologne, 1622) of the Spanish original entitled *De la imitacion de Nuestra Senora*, Valencia 1588.

<sup>168</sup> *Gwiazda Zaranna na Horyzoncie Polskim nowo wschodząca Naybepszczniejszą drogą Prawowiernego Chrześcianina do pożądanego portu szczęśliwey wieczności prowadząca to jest Książka Naśladowania Życia Maryi Panny w dziesięciu Cnotach Ewangelicznych Jey upodobanych [...]*, Warszawa 1749.

<sup>169</sup> C. Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 16.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. B. Cortinovis, *Sviluppo storico-dottrinale della schiavitù d’amore nel secolo XVII*, Roma 1968-1969; G. Calvo Moralejo, *Fray Melchor de Cetina, O.F.M., el primer teologo de la „esclavitud mariana” (1618)*, in: *De cultu mariano saeculis XVII-XVIII*, vol. 4, Roma 1987, 51-79; J. De los Angeles, M. De Cetina, *Esortazione alla devozione della Vergine Madre di Dio. Alle origini della “schiavitù mariana”* (Studi Mariologici, 2), Città del Vaticano 2003.

<sup>171</sup> C. Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 17.

presentation of Mary as a model of virtue, except when—doing it only partially—they were discussing the topic in the context of Mary’s exceptional holiness, without indicating that her virtues were an example for all Christians. Only a few authors of the period, such as Anthony Węgrzynowski and Francis Balicki, dedicated more attention to the imitation of Mary. In any case, they do not delve into the theological validation of the necessity or the need to imitate Mary.<sup>172</sup>

For Venerable Casimir, imitation of Mary was the basis of fidelity to Christ. This kind of Marian devotion has above all a Christological foundation. True Christian life consists not only in getting to know Christ and talking to Him, but primarily in following His way of life. “For He did not come into the world only that He might be heard, seen, and read about in the Gospel; rather, He came above all so that He might be imitated,”<sup>173</sup> says Father Casimir. He supports his statement by Jesus’ words: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24; cf. 1 Jn 2:6: “He who says that he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.”) The Venerable Servant of God Casimir believed that—to enable us to do so—Christ “left in Mary, His most beloved Mother, the first and most perfect example of imitation of His life. She—the one most aware of Christ’s ways—shows us the most dependable way of imitating the Lord.”<sup>174</sup>

On this Christological basis of imitating Mary, Father Casimir refutes the claims of those who believe “that it is inappropriate to imitate Mary, because the only example for them to follow should be Christ the Lord.”<sup>175</sup> As Saint Paul stated many times in his letters (1 Cor 4:16, 11, 1, Phil 3:17; 1 Thes 1:6, Heb 6:12), Christians are called to imitate not only Mary, but also the Apostles. According to Father Casimir, we should imitate them because

<sup>172</sup> D. Mastalska, *Teologiczny obraz Maryi...*, 188.

<sup>173</sup> C. Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 19.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.



“they too imitated Christ”<sup>176</sup>, and thus, reasons the Servant of God, why should we not imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary who was closest to Christ and knew His work in the most intimate way?”<sup>177</sup>

The path of imitating Mary is linked to our salvation. Encouraging this practice of Marian devotion, Father Casimir sees it also in a soteriological context. By imitating Mary’s evangelical virtues, the faithful enter the road to salvation. Moreover, “The faithful who practice these virtues will never stray from the road of salvation because they receive the help and assistance of their Lady.”<sup>178</sup> Mary’s virtues, practiced by her venerators, will “lead us to salvation more effectively.”<sup>179</sup> Father Casimir argues that “However deeply a person may be pulled by Satan into sin, if he begins to imitate sincerely the virtues of Mary, he certainly will be able to break free from all the snares and traps of the hellish serpent, and by practicing these virtues will reach eternal salvation.”<sup>180</sup>

For Father Casimir, the path of imitating Mary’s virtues is not an alternative, independent from Christ’s path to heaven, but is decisive in one’s bond with Christ as our only Savior. Accepting the grace of conversion and entering the path of fidelity to Christ, expressed by the effort to imitate the virtues of Mary, indicates the inner rebirth that the Gospel advises “to all who desire salvation.”<sup>181</sup> On this path, Mary is present as the One who leads and guides.<sup>182</sup>

Where shall we seek the roots of the practice of imitating Mary’s ten virtues? Father Casimir indicates: “The Holy Spirit desired that the Gospels describe the ten virtues that can be acquired not only by Mary, but also by us.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Ibid, 32, 33.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 25.

As a result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Father Casimir foresees the rise of those who “are willing to imitate the Blessed Mother’s evangelical virtues.” This would most certainly include members of the Order of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded by St. Joan de Valois upon the Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and similarly the Order of Marians which adapted the aforesaid Rule, and its Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczyński, for it “was God who called his servant [...] to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”<sup>184</sup> Moreover, we ought to see it as the fulfillment of God’s will that many of the ordinary faithful undertook the practice of imitating Mary: “God prompts and invites not just the members of the aforementioned Orders, but also many others from among the faithful to imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary,”<sup>185</sup> because “God gave [them] for this purpose.”<sup>186</sup>

The practice of Mary’s virtues must be understood as part of God’s plan for our salvation. It is not enough to focus on “obtaining virtue” without correlating it to God’s work within us. Human effort alone is insufficient for attaining virtue, because—as Father Casimir clearly states—“Virtues come from God who helps all who truly seek Him to do good, no matter where they may be.”<sup>187</sup> The Venerable Servant of God realized that God’s grace had primacy in the spiritual life of human beings but also required their cooperation. In this light he sees Mary who “advanced in virtue thanks to God’s grace, not her own power, but with her cooperation through diligence and hard work.”<sup>188</sup> Therefore, it is impossible to treat the path of imitating Mary’s virtues as some sort of self-im-

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid. Cf. Ph. Annaert, *Le père Gabriel-Marie Nicolas et l’héritage de Jeanne de France*, in: *Jeanne de France et l’Annonciade (Actes du colloque international de l’Institut catholique de Paris, 13-14 mars 2002)*, Ed. D. Dinet, P. Moracchini, M.E. Portebos, Paris 2004, 27-64; A. Pakuła, MIC, *La ‘Règle des dix plaisirs de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie ‘dans l’histoire de la Congrégation des Pères Mariens*, *ibid*, 401-410; A. Mączyński, MIC, *Koronka dziesięciu cnót NMP. Dawna modlitwa marianów*, “Immaculata” 25 (1988) No. 4, 55-62.

<sup>185</sup> C. Wyszzyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 26.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

provement program: it must be understood as a matter of human cooperation with God. Such a view conforms to Gospel principles and corroborates the Church's experience, of which Father Casimir was perfectly aware: "Likewise, we should—with God's help—practice virtues by following her example. Without God's help, neither the Virgin Mary nor the saints, nor any of us can achieve anything."<sup>189</sup>

Taking upon ourselves the practice of imitating the Blessed Mother's virtues is also necessary for a correct understanding of the mystery of Mary and our relationship to her. Father Casimir reminds us that Mary is blessed in the sight of God because of her "holy life and virtues."<sup>190</sup> She was blessed "not only for conceiving and giving birth to Christ, but above all for hearing and keeping the word of God."<sup>191</sup> Venerable Casimir supports this with references to the Gospel (Lk 11:28; Jn 13:17; Rom 2:13) and the Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine, Saint Bede, and Saint Bonaventure.

This biblical image of Mary's dignity finds its fulfillment in a bond with her that is based upon the imitation of her virtues. Authentic veneration of Mary finds expression in a zealous effort to become "like her."<sup>192</sup> Therefore, "he who has pledged himself to Mary should imitate her virtues and follow the path by which she followed Christ. This is how we recognize true venerators of Mary, those whom she calls her own."<sup>193</sup> Only the path of imitating [her virtues] indicates the essence of serving Mary and makes us "her true children."<sup>194</sup>

Witnesses of Father Casimir's life confirm that he not only taught about imitating Mary, but was most eager to personally follow this path. Father Adrian Ignatowski testified to the humility of the Servant of God: "When he took me as his companion to

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 24.

clean the church, he told me not to think of such a lowly work as something disagreeable, for the Blessed Mother was humble.”<sup>195</sup> Father Alexis Fischer testified to Father Casimir’s prudence: “He was a watchful guardian of his own and others people’s silence. Following the Rule of imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary’s prudence, he never said anything or made a reply without prudently considering or listening with interest.”<sup>196</sup> In one of Father Casimir’s early biographies written by Fr.Charles Hondlewski, we read that after joining the Order of Marians Casimir “dedicated himself entirely to works of piety and the practice of virtue. He abided so closely by the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* that he was given to all as an example of mastering one’s senses, piety, and obedience.”<sup>197</sup>

Father Casimir’s remembrance of Mary was expressed primarily through liturgical commemorations and feasts in her honor.<sup>198</sup> He prepared himself in a special way for the celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception by making a day of recollection and by fasting on the eve of the solemnity.<sup>199</sup> At the daily breviary prayer, he endeavored to make sure that the central place in the Marians’ choir stayed free, because he believed that Mary was spiritually present among them and that she deserved an honorary place as the foundress of the Marian Order.<sup>200</sup>

Father Casimir’s daily life was filled with numerous pious practices of Marian character: he prayed the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, the Rosary, the Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the Most B.V.M., the litany of the Mother of God and the prayer “Under Your Protection.”<sup>201</sup> His favorite invocation was “Immaculata Virginis Mariae conceptio sit nobis salus et protec-

<sup>195</sup> *PositioWysz*, 442.

<sup>196</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta ...*, 64-65.

<sup>197</sup> K. Hondlewski, *Obyśmy teraz podążali jego śladami i wreszcie znaleźli się w chwale nieba*, in: *Najstarsze świadectwa...*, 79.

<sup>198</sup> *PositioWysz*, 132, 134, 390-391, 494.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 390-391,494.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 418.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 366, 436-437.

tio," by which he implored Mary's help in times of danger and difficulties.<sup>202</sup> As a Marian, he was proud to wear the white habit of the Order and the scapular of the Immaculate Conception as symbols of his honoring the mystery of Mary Immaculate.

Venerable Casimir treated images of the Blessed Mother with great respect. To him they were signs of Mary's presence, her protection and beauty. He always kept an image of the Mother of God in his cell and on his trip to Rome and Portugal he took along an image of Our Lady of Częstochowa.<sup>203</sup> During his visits to various churches, especially in Rome, he admired the images, statues and mosaics depicting Our Lady.<sup>204</sup> His interest was particularly drawn to images of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived; he even personally commissioned the painting of one. Father Casimir even had—as reported by Father Isidore Taudt—on his left arm a tattoo showing Our Lady and on his right arm that of the Crucified Christ.<sup>205</sup>

Venerable Casimir's Marian piety also included pilgrimages to the Marian shrines. He mentioned it in his description of the Marian devotion in Poland: "Many are the faithful who bear the hardships of pilgrimages to her holy and miraculous picture."<sup>206</sup> He experienced the hardship of pilgrimages personally. His main object was Częstochowa.<sup>207</sup> During one of such pilgrimages he purchased an image of Our Lady of Częstochowa, with which he never parted until the end of his life. Although we do not have exact dates of his pilgrimages, we know that he undertook them especially in 1747-1750, during his second term in the office of Superior General. Father Hyacinth Wasilewski testified about one of the pilgrimages in 1748, when he, as a cleric, accompanied Fa-

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, 391.

<sup>203</sup> B. Jakimowicz, MIC, *Kult Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej w życiu Sługi Bożego o. Kazimierza Wyszyńskiego, marianina*, "Studia Claromontana" No. 3, Jasna Góra 1982, 128-129.

<sup>204</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności w Rzymie i w Portugalii...*, 212.

<sup>205</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 434.

<sup>206</sup> C. Wyszyński, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 17.

<sup>207</sup> B. Jakimowicz, MIC, *Kult Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej...*, 125-129.

ther Wyszyński. Father Aloisius Długołęcki and Father Isidore Taudt gave similar testimonies.<sup>208</sup> On their way to Częstochowa, Father Casimir would stop at places which held miraculous images of the Mother of God, such as Studzianna, Boża Wola, and Sulejów. The main motive for his pilgrimages during this period was to pray for Mary's help in guiding the Marian Community to successful outcomes in the work of the renewal of Marian life.

While staying in Rome, Venerable Casimir frequently visited the Roman basilica of Mary Major. Before setting out on his trip to Portugal he made a pilgrimage to Loreto in order to beseech Mary's assistance in the fulfillment of the new Marian mission.<sup>209</sup>

The mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God occupied the central place in Father Casimir's Marian devotion and decisively shaped his way of religious life. He accepted with enthusiasm the goal set forth in the *Rule of Life* of the Marian Community: "Lest you remain without work in the vineyard of the Lord, to the utmost of your strength you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin mother of God."<sup>210</sup> Father John of Saint John the Baptist, one of the witnesses in Father Casimir's beatification process, testified that he personally heard Father Casimir saying that he had joined the Marians "because of love for the great mystery of the Immaculate Conception."<sup>211</sup> Venerable Casimir never hesitated to undertake various toils in order to give witness to Immaculate Mary. Brother John of Saint Mary Rodrigues testified that he heard from Father Casimir himself that "he would have gone to India and to the most remote places on earth in order to spread devotion to that mystery and would have given to that his entire life."<sup>212</sup> It was in this very spirit that he accepted his mission to Portugal, where he faced great difficulties and sufferings, but "resolved to bear until

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 127-128.

<sup>209</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta ...*, 66-67.

<sup>210</sup> S. Papczyński, *The Rule of Life*, in: *Constitutions and Directory of the Marian Fathers*, Rome, 2018, 263.

<sup>211</sup> *Positio* Wysz, 409.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 241.

death all sorts of adversities on account of devotion to the Immaculate Conception.”<sup>213</sup>

Father Casimir’s decisive choice on the side of the truth about the Immaculate Conception, which the Church had not yet dogmatically defined, emphasizes his readiness to give his life in its defense. In 1752, he wrote to the Superior General, Father Cayetan Wetycki: “I suffer due to unremitting threats from my adversaries, but I bear them joyfully for the sake of the Immaculate Conception. In order to uphold this mystery I would not hesitate to shed my blood.”<sup>214</sup> Besides, he declared daily in prayer his readiness to suffer martyrdom in defending his faith; in this prayer he invoked—along with the principal truths of the Faith—the truth about the “Immaculately Conceived Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God”: “In this Faith I want to live until death and for this Faith I want to die and shed my own blood, if such be Your will.”<sup>215</sup>

Venerable Casimir closely followed the theological discussions and debates about the mystery of the Immaculate Conception which took place during his time. In addition to his numerous occupations and duties, he endeavored to study works on Mariology, which either defended or rejected the truth about the Immaculate Conception. His *Diariusz* contains an entry made on September 7, 1751: “Once, in a very inauspicious climate for the truth about the Immaculate Conception set up in Rome, in 1740, a certain renowned and worthy Doctor dared to publish a book against the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., entitled *On Avoiding the Superstition, or on Denouncing the Blood Vow in Honor of the Immaculately Conceived Mother of God*. At that time many people started doubting this mystery and some of them even mocked our Order.” As if in response to that publication—as Father Casimir noted with satisfaction—there appeared another book written by Father John De Luca, in which the author provided “very strong ar-

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, 295. Cf. M. Pisarzak, MIC, Z. Proczek, MIC, *Niepokalana, ślub krwi i świadectwo marianów*, “Salvatoris Mater” 6 (2004) No. 1, 231-259.

<sup>215</sup> *Modlitwy Sługi Bożego...*, 428.

guments, testimonies of the Fathers of the Church and papal statements in support of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.” Being well acquainted with the polemics, Venerable Casimir did not hesitate to suggest: “A dogmatic ruling on this truth should have already been issued,” but, since he also knew of obstacles—not necessarily of theological nature—he added: “However, rioting and heresy are greatly feared.”<sup>216</sup>

Publications contesting Mary’s Immaculate Conception contributed to the increase in the number of opponents of that truth and Father Casimir—as a member of the Order of Mary Immaculate—very painfully suffered from their ill-will.<sup>217</sup> On September 7, 1752, he wrote to his penitentiary friend in Loreto: “I am promoting zealously the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. and her religious Order. Although I have borne much suffering from this mystery’s adversaries, in the end I not only came out victorious in that battle, but was even endowed with a special blessing from the Lord our God. (He refers to the invitation for the Marians to settle in Portugal.)”<sup>218</sup>

An important element in the defense of the Immaculate Conception was the defense of the Marians’ Rule of Life as well as their title and habit, since these were illegitimately used by Reverend Stephen Turczynowicz, who was attempting to found in Vilnius a new religious institute for men and women converted from Judaism or Islam. His activities were hurting devotion to the Immaculate Conception and jeopardizing the good name of the Marians.<sup>219</sup>

Venerable Casimir directly linked the spreading of devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. with the cause of the beatification of the Servant of God (now Saint) Stanislaus

<sup>216</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, 204-205.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 2111-212, 237.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, 343.

<sup>219</sup> See J. Kałowski, MIC, *Działalność zakonotwórcza księdza Józefa Turczynowicza. Studium prawnohistoryczne*, Warszawa 1982; Z. Proczek MIC, *O. Kazimierz Wyszynski a „marianie wileńscy”*, in: *Patrimonium marianorum...*, 125-155.



Papczyński, and with the growth of the Order itself. In his letter to Father Cayjetan Wetycki, Venerable Casimir wrote: "After all, nobody hides a light under a bushel basket, but puts it on a candlestick so that it may shine forth. Therefore, if we wish that the Order of the Blessed Virgin would flourish, we must get busy with worthy and glorious matters. For promoting her religious Order is not about us, but about spreading the glory of Mary Immaculately Conceived. It is also about our Venerable Father Founder, who was a special venerator of the aforesaid mystery. Surrounding him with reverence, we must begin efforts for the cause of his beatification."<sup>220</sup> On August 5, 1752, Father Casimir wrote in a similar vein to his brother, Father Valerian: "By spreading devotion to the Servant of God, we give great honor to the Blessed Mother. For he (Father Papczynski), zealously striving for the glory of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, brought our Congregation into being for the sake of this mystery and the salvation of the souls of the dead."<sup>221</sup> Thus, in numerous letters Father Casimir continued to insist on and entreat his superiors not to neglect the matter of the beatification of their Father Founder: "I am writing this letter nearly in tears, lamenting the misfortune of such a great and necessary cause—necessary also for the Church of God—which is not being carried out. For far greater honor to the Immaculate Conception might flow from our promotion of the Servant of God than from the promotion of any other of her venerators. And yet they are being strongly supported, while we are not making efforts on behalf of our distinguished Founder."<sup>222</sup>

It is true, of course, that emphases may be placed differently in our relation to the Mother of God, and the manner of Marian devotion might also vary. In his *Redemptoris Mater*, Saint John Paul II reminded us that meditating on the Mother of our Lord should lead to a strengthening of our faith through the example of her, who was the First Christian. We speak here "of authentic

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<sup>220</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, 314.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, 321-322.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, 334.

*Marian spirituality*, seen in the light of Tradition, which is the spirituality to which the Council exhorts us.”<sup>223</sup> We learn from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that true Marian devotion “proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God and are moved to a filial love for our Mother and to the imitation of her virtues.”<sup>224</sup> It is easy to notice that the Council does not reject multiple forms of piety, but clearly emphasizes the primacy of the imitation of Mary as the fruit of acknowledging her as the Mother of the Lord and the necessity of bestowing our love upon her.

In 1967, a few years after the Council, St. Pope Paul VI released the exhortation *Signum magnum*, in which he reflects on Mary’s role in the work of the renewal of Christian life. He indicates that “Mary is the Mother of the Church not only because she is the Mother of Christ [...] but also because ‘she shines forth to the whole community of the elect as a model of virtue.’”<sup>225</sup> Her presence in the spiritual life of Jesus’ disciples is notable for her intercession and example, “...but the cooperation of the Mother of the Church in the development of the divine life of souls does not come to an end with appeals to her Son. She exercises on redeemed humanity another influence: that of example. [...] The sweetness and the enchantment emanating from the sublime virtues of the Immaculate Mother of God attracts souls in an irresistible way to imitation of the Divine Model, Jesus Christ, of whom she was the most faithful image.”<sup>226</sup>

The exhortation *Marialis cultus*, the task of which was to organize Marian devotion according to the principles indicated by both the Council and the Post-Conciliar development of theology, provides similar teachings. Thus this document states that “the ultimate purpose of devotion to the Blessed Virgin is to glorify God and to lead Christians to commit themselves to a life which

<sup>223</sup> St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, 48 at w2.vatican.va

<sup>224</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 67 at w2.vatican.va

<sup>225</sup> St. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Signum magnum*, Part I, at w2.vatican.va

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

is in absolute conformity with His will.”<sup>227</sup> Saint Paul VI showed Mary as the one from whom we can learn Christian piety, devotion to God and fulfillment of His will. This “Marian Way” was already known in the Church in the early centuries, as Paul VI reminded us: “The faithful at a very early date began to look to Mary and to imitate her in making their lives an act of worship of God, and making their worship a commitment of their lives.”<sup>228</sup>

Saint John Paul II, in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, and in many other of his Marian statements also teaches about Mary’s role of giving example in the life of the Church by presenting her to the faithful as the model of Christian life and encouraging them to imitate her.”<sup>229</sup>

Our excursion into the past and our encounter with Father Casimir Wyszyński is associated with the search for inspiring examples of Marian spirituality. This was encouraged by St. John Paul II because “Marian spirituality, with its corresponding devotion, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and various Christian communities among the different peoples and nations of the world.”<sup>230</sup> The Venerable Servant of God Father Casimir Wyszyński, whose model of Marian devotion turns out to be very current, also belongs to the group of “teachers of Marian spirituality,”<sup>231</sup> for he brings together the most important elements of devotion to the Mother of the Lord, namely love, invocation and above all, imitation of her virtues. The manifestations of this Marian attitude are—in accordance with the teaching of the Vatican Council—victory over sin, growth in holiness, conformity to Christ, constant advancement in faith, hope and love, search for God’s will in everything and zealous apostolic

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<sup>227</sup> *Marialis cultus*, 39.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> Cf. J. Kumala, *Maryjne pośrednictwo przykładu w świetle „Redemptoris Mater”*, in: *Matka Odkupiciela. Teksty i komentarze*, Ed. S.C. Napiórkowski, Lublin 1993, 263-270; D. Mastalska, *Maryja wzorem i nauczycielką w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, “*Salvatoris Mater*” 4(2003) No. 3, 90-105.

<sup>230</sup> *Redemptoris Mater*, 48.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

work. We find all of these manifestations in the life of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir. He was a man who found, loved and persevered in the Marian way to God according to the charism of the Marian Order's religious life.

"If his life, directed towards intimate union with God, were to be summed up in a few words, it would be possible to say that Father Casimir was a man of God whose way of life prompted his fellow Marians to live the evangelical virtues, and who himself gave heroic witness to living religious life and the apostolate. He was the "apostle of the Immaculate" and through his preaching he contributed to the spreading of devotion to her and won the conversion of many souls. Further, the person of Father Casimir can be offered as a model for the modern world because he shows us how to be a fraternal guide to others in the Church and how to honor the Immaculate Virgin in the context of a contemporary society heavily marked by sin."<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum, *Casimiri a S. Ioseph Wyszyński. Relatio et vota congressus peculiaris super virtutibus*, Roma 1989, 18.



Tadeusz Rogalewski, MIC, PhD

**FAITHFUL VENERATOR OF  
THE MARIAN FOUNDER**



The secret of greatness of many celebrated persons lies in their ability to learn from other great figures and follow their example. There is an ancient saying: *Discite exemplo moniti* or learn from the admonitions of the exemplar. Father Casimir Wyszyński—the faithful son and follower of the Marian Founder, Saint Stanislaus Papczyński—took this idea to heart. He became the great venerator and promoter of Father Papczynski’s spirit, thus giving an example of love of the Founder to many generations of Marians.

The Venerable Servant of God, Father Casimir, surrounded the person of the Founder of the Marian Fathers, Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, with extraordinary love and energetically promoted devotion to him. Upon joining the Marian Order, Father Casimir proved to be a faithful son of the Founder and the guardian of his spiritual heritage. He tried to follow meticulously the instructions of the Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, upon which he had made his religious profession, and endeavored to imitate the Immaculate Virgin in the way she thought, spoke and acted.<sup>233</sup>

In 1741, when Father Casimir became the superior of the Marian monastery in Góra Kalwaria, he renovated the church of Our Lord’s Cenacle in which the earthly remains of Father Stanislaus had been placed in 1701. In order to acquaint the Polish public with the person and work of the Founder, during one of the community’s Chapters, Father Casimir proposed to have made an engraved likeness of the Founder for the purpose of his promotion.<sup>234</sup>

As the postulator in Father Papczyński’s beatification process in Rome, Venerable Casimir made efforts to have the Founder’s portrait painted. The work was supposed to be done gratuitously as homage to Father Papczyński, by a renowned painter Antonio

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<sup>233</sup> *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 21.

<sup>234</sup> Z. Proczek, *Sługa Niepokalanej. Ojciec Kazimierz Wyszyński marianin*, Warszawa, 1987, 22.

Albertoni.<sup>235</sup> Father Casimir supplied him with a copy of the original portrait of Father Papczyński<sup>236</sup> so that Antonio could recreate the Marian Founder's likeness in the last years of his life. However, the artist, who was young and prone to vanity, cared nothing about keeping the similarity to the original and painted Father Stanislaus as a well-groomed, corpulent young man with sharp eyes and red face, completely devoid of all appearances of humility and holiness. It was pointed out to the artist that the portrait he produced bore no resemblance to the image of Father Stanislaus—an elderly person, emaciated by mortification, committed to contemplation, immersed in thoughts about eternity, gentle in looks and gestures, and detached from earthly things. Therefore, the artist was asked to amend his work for it had nothing in common with the original. But the painter, who claimed that the presentation of a handsome and portly person responded better to the requirements of the arts than that of someone thin and worn out by penance, refused to alter the painting regardless of the opinions of many priests, religious, and other people. Father Wyszyński personally begged Antonio several times to alter the image, but the latter refused because he believed it shameful to alter his own work.

Consequent to his obstinacy, the painter became ill and fell into some sort of madness. Hoping to get better, he consulted many doctors and used various medicines, all to no avail. His illness continued for several months until he realized that his suffering was a punishment for refusing to paint Father Papczyński's portrait in accord with his true likeness. After surviving some unpleasant experiences, he finally agreed to alter the painting. How-

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<sup>235</sup> Antonio Albertoni was a talented painter. He was born ca 1730, son of Francis, an Italian residing in Warsaw. Antonio was sent by his father to Rome, to study painting. Upon his return to Poland, he became one of the court painters (*pictor regius*) of King Stanislaus Augustus. He died in 1795. Cf. *Beatificationis et Canonisationis Servi Dei Stanislai a Iesu Maria Papczyński, Positio*, Romae 1977, 715-1716, footnotes 253, 255 (afterwards: *PositioPap*).

<sup>236</sup> This original portrait of Fr. Papczyński is the image presently located in the Marian monastery in Skórczec; in 1998, this image underwent a careful restoration. We have no information as to the whereabouts of the copy, which Fr. Wyszyński brought with him to Rome.



ever, still being ill, he could not complete that task. Thus, another well-known painter<sup>237</sup> did it on his behalf. At that time Antonio regained his health and returned to his work with his old vivacity. From that time on he grew in great reverence for Father Stanislaus, as did many others who witnessed the event.<sup>238</sup>

Faithfully discharging all his duties, Father Wyszyński “used every opportunity to strengthen religious discipline and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin and to revitalize the Founder’s spirit among the Marians.”<sup>239</sup> Being a great venerator of the Mother of God Immaculately Conceived, he reminded the members at every occasion that Father Stanislaus founded the Order of Marian Fathers primarily with the goal of spreading devotion to her Immaculate Conception. In order to expand her honor, Father Casimir reworked a book, *Gwiazda Zaranna*,<sup>240</sup> by Francis Arias, to which he wrote a comprehensive preface containing suggestions for having a correct Marian devotion and developing a properly Christian personal approach to life on the basis of this devotion.

As a faithful guardian of the Founder’s spiritual legacy, Father Casimir also endeavored to fulfill the second objective of the Congregation: supporting the souls suffering in purgatory.<sup>241</sup> In order to bring the general public closer to the Founder’s spirit, Venerable Casimir managed to reprint Saint Stanislaus Papczyński’s

<sup>237</sup> This was the painter of Prince Czartoryski, by the name of Theodor, who was also studying in Rome. Cf. K. Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności...*, 340.

<sup>238</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego*, in: *Ibid*, 140-141. Thus far, the aforesaid painting has not been discovered. However, it ought to be mentioned that the portrait of Fr. Papczyński from the monastery in w Puszcza Mariańska has an inscription very similar to the one, proposed by Fr. Wyszyński for the copy to be painted in Rome. *PositioPap*, 716, footnote 254.

<sup>239</sup> Congregation for the Causes of Saints, *Decree on heroic virtues*, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 8.

<sup>240</sup> F. Arias, *Gwiazda Zaranna na horyzoncie polskim nowo wschodząca nabybezpieczniejszą drogą prawowierne go chrześcijanina do pożądanego portu szczęśliwej wieczności prowadząca. To jest książka naśladowania życia Maryi Panny*, Warszawa 1749.

<sup>241</sup> Congregation for the Causes of Saints, *Decree on heroic virtues*, ... 9.

book *Templum Dei Mysticum* [Mystical Temple of God],<sup>242</sup> which was a unique textbook on Christian spirituality of the period. Father Stanislaus explained the nature of Christian life based on the biblical concept of a temple of God as personified by every baptized individual. Later, when he was in Rome, Father Casimir prepared the biography of the Marian Founder, which he finished in Portugal. In this work, Father Casimir endeavored to present the entire richness of Saint Stanislaus Papczyński's spirituality.<sup>243</sup>

Venerable Casimir frequently reminded his Portuguese confreres that he was not the founder of the Marian Order: its first founder was the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the second, the holy Father Stanislaus, and with his finger he would point to Saint Stanislaus' image.<sup>244</sup>

Upon his admission to the Marian Order, Father Casimir began meeting people who knew Father Papczyński personally and believed him to be a saint. These people later testified to Father Stanislaus's exemplary religious and priestly life and about the prophecies and healings granted through his intercession. All of this further strengthened Father Casimir in the opinion that the Marian Founder was a holy man and that he ought to be elevated to the glory of the altar. Therefore, after becoming the superior of the Marian monastery in Góra Kalwaria (1739-1747), he attended to the preservation of Father Stanislaus's earthly remains, which had been deposited on the day of his funeral in a shallow grave that was dug out in wet ground under the floor of the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle.

For the first time, the grave was opened in 1705, after obtaining permission for exhumation. It was confirmed then that the remains had not decayed and did not emanate a bad odor but a pleasant one, even though the coffin had totally disintegrated. Only the face in the nose area of the body was slightly decayed. Father Stanislaus's habit did not lose its color either. At that time,

<sup>242</sup> S. Papczyński, *Templum Dei Mysticum*, Cracoviae 1675.

<sup>243</sup> *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 11.

<sup>244</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 72.

Father Casimir procured a new coffin and habit, replacing the old ones.<sup>245</sup>

For the second time the grave was opened around 1716 or 1721, during the canonical visitation of Adam Rostkowski, the Bishop of Łuck. Again, it was confirmed that the remains had not decayed.<sup>246</sup>

Father Stanislaus's remains deteriorated only in the course of the following several years, after the floodwaters inundated the monastery grounds and the church floor. The water stayed there for 15 years, which caused the falling rotten beams to break open the coffin, forcing Father Stanislaus's remains into the mud. After a while, only bones remained. Upon authorization from Rev. Anthony Grzegorzewski, a Warsaw official, Father Casimir Wyszyński, as the Superior General since 1737, exhumed the bones in 1739/1740. He took them out from the mud, washed them and placed them in a new coffin.<sup>247</sup>

In 1750, Father Casimir was named the General Procurator of the Order, a position he carried out successfully in Rome for two years (1751-1753). He fervently dedicated himself to the preparation of Father Founder's beatification process. In his letters from Rome to the Superior General, Father Cayetan Wetycki, Venerable Casimir continually urged that efforts begin for elevating Father Stanislaus to the glory of altar, because he so deeply believed it to be an important step in the efforts to obtain a dogmatic definition of the truth of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. Therefore, with utmost zeal, he dedicated himself to preparing instructions needed for opening Father Papczyński's beatification process, since Father Stanislaus had founded his religious Order under that very title.

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<sup>245</sup> [Mansueto Leporini OFM Ref.], *Vita Fundatoris Congregationis Polonae Ordinis Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, ca 1705, n. 90, in: *PositioPap*, 650.

<sup>246</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego*, 131-132.

<sup>247</sup> Same author, *Diariusz czynności...*, 272.

Father Wyszyński, who was so deeply convinced of Father Stanislaus's sanctity, claimed that he distinctly experienced a blessing after the exhumation of Father Founder's earthly remains. He believed that the lack of effort towards elevating the saintly Founder to the altars was bringing misfortune upon the members of the Marian Order.<sup>248</sup> One of those members was Father Joachim of Saint Ann Kozłowski. This is what Father Casimir wrote from Rome: "The late Father Joachim and our other predecessors should have taken care of the beatification of our Founder. Various difficulties arose for the Congregation and for them personally because of neglecting this matter. So that God would grant His blessing on us, may the younger generation reflect upon, 'Let us now praise famous men and the fathers in their generation' (Sir 44:1)."<sup>249</sup>

According to the testimony of Father Wyszyński's, Father Papczyński's confrere, Father Joachim Kozłowski, who wished to be regarded as the founder of the Marian Order, adamantly impeded efforts towards Father Stanislaus's beatification. What is more, for the 10 years that the coffin containing Father Stanislaus's remains was soaking in water in the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle, Father Joachim made no attempt to rescue the tomb. It was not until after Father Joachim drowned in the waters of the Vistula River near Warsaw that the opening of the beatification process was made possible.<sup>250</sup>

Wishing to persuade his confreres as to the cause of Father Stanislaus's beatification, Venerable Casimir wrote thus from Rome: "I am like a vigilant sentinel, keeping my eyes and ears open here in the Holy City. I am longing for some comforting news from Poland about our Congregation, both regarding the beginning of the process of our Venerable Founder and about your life. I am entreating you, Most Reverend Father, to inform me whether

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<sup>248</sup> *Positio Pap*, 26.

<sup>249</sup> Letter to Father Cajetan Wetycki of December 18, 1751, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 227.

<sup>250</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego...*, 135.

there is a willingness to conduct—for the greater glory of God and the honor of the Immaculate Virgin—the process of our Venerable Founder.”<sup>251</sup>

Father Casimir kept sending appeals from Rome to Poland, urging his superiors to make haste in preparing for the beatification process. He lamented the fact that the case was being stalled, while the number of eyewitnesses to the life and virtues of the Marian Founder was decreasing. He wrote to Father General Wetycki, urging him kindly to make up for his previous negligence with regard to the beatification of the Founder, because “not only should the process of our saintly Father be already open, but he should already be elevated to the altars.”<sup>252</sup>

In a similar pleading tone he wrote to his brother: “Our father’s sluggishness in this matter may be explained by the fact that they do not have a good protector and promoter. Therefore, I am obliging you, my good sir and benefactor, to stir them to action. For doing so, you will merit immeasurable reward through the intercession of the Servant of God, who was and is a saint and now reigns with Christ in heaven. For each time we promote his cause, much happiness comes to us, but when we stop, misfortune ensues.”<sup>253</sup>

This ardent venerator of the Marian Founder shared his personal experiences when he spoke about the blessings received by Father Papczyński’s devotees. He declared that he was full of wonder at the actions of Divine Providence towards himself, for as soon as he started applying himself to the promotion of the Venerable Father Founder’s process, God began to grant him exceptional favors.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Letter to Father Casimir Polak of August 19, 1752, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 230.

<sup>252</sup> Letter of February 17, 1753, in: *Diariusz czynności...*, 374.

<sup>253</sup> Letter to his brother on February 2, 1753, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 372.

<sup>254</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, DW 2, 23-24.

Among these special favors was securing funds for the restoration of the ruined church of Our Lord's Cenacle, then establishing new Marian houses in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, followed by a successful conclusion of the matter involving Rev. Stephen Turczynowicz, who tried to establish his own congregation under the name of the Marian Fathers, and finally the invitation for the Marians to come to Portugal. He even attributed to Fr. Papczyński's protection the fact that he was assigned a healthier cell at *Ara Coeli* in Rome.<sup>255</sup>

In his letter to Father Cayetan Wetycki of December 18, 1751, Venerable Casimir spoke about the aims pursued by the Church in the case of elevating saints to the altars: "The goal of leading a Servant of God to beatification and canonization is two-fold. First, it is to honor God in His servants, and second, to have the faithful follow their examples in their own saintly life."<sup>256</sup> This letter, containing a quote from an expert author of the period in the field, is a sort of instruction on how to proceed in matters pertaining to the opening of a beatification process. This letter is also a testimony to the fact that Father Wyszyński was guided by a proper motive in his efforts for Father Papczyński's beatification, namely: the one pursued by the Church in elevating her sons and daughters to the glory of the altars. Besides, he was quite anxious for his Order to obtain its own special patron whom he personally regarded as a saint.<sup>257</sup>

In spite of Father Wyszyński's energetic efforts on behalf of Father Papczyński's beatification process, its opening was still delayed. There were many and various causes for this delay, such as the Marians' unfamiliarity with the procedure; their hindered contacts with Rome; the small number of the Congregation's members, which caused the lack of qualified persons for conducting the procedure. Also, the Marians did not have a protector. After meeting with a Roman expert—Father Andrew Budrioli, SJ, who expressed his surprise at the Marians' sluggishness, Father

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 329.

<sup>256</sup> *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 149.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 166-167.

Wyszyński mentioned some of these factors in his letter to Father Wetycki: "I explained to the lawyer that we did not have opportunity for conducting the process on the holy life of our Founder. There were various obstacles and persecutions of our Order. We had to attend first to the approval of the Order and safeguard it from persecutions, plus enduring numerous epidemic illnesses and wars."<sup>258</sup>

A year later, Venerable Casimir reported: "Father Budrioli advised explaining to the judges the reasons for our delay in opening the process. These reasons included persecution of the Order by various individuals, including its own members, similar to what happened in the case of Blessed Joseph Calasanz; also the wars and recurring epidemic deceases; finally, negligence on the part of our forefathers, for which they received punishment from God. These obstacles were amplified by our Order's poverty; thus the failure to accomplish something which should have been done right after the glorious death of our Venerable Father Founder."<sup>259</sup>

As to the matter of negligence in forwarding the process, Father Casimir blamed himself as well. He wrote to Father Wetycki that he always tried—since joining the Order—to persuade his superiors of the necessity to attend to the Founder's beatification cause, but they maintained that such matters could be started only 100 years after the person's death. After learning in Rome that such a matter should be started without delay, Father Casimir regretted not knowing this during his time in the office of Superior General. Thus, he asked the Superior General to remedy his ignorance and negligence as soon as possible.<sup>260</sup>

Finally, the fervent appeals which Father Wyszyński kept sending from Rome to Poland, moved hearts and the Marians took steps towards the beatification of their Founder. In 1752-57,

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<sup>258</sup> Letter of October 16, 1751, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 207.

<sup>259</sup> Letter to Father General Wetycki of July 29, 1752, in: *Ibid*, 317.

<sup>260</sup> Letter to Father General Wetycki of February 17, 1753, in: *Ibid*, 374.

upon the order of Father General Wetycki, testimonies about the sanctity of Father Papczyński's life and the miracles made through him began to be collected. On January 25, 1753, this Superior General issued a circular letter to the Marian Fathers, instructing them to pray for the beatification cause of their Founder. He also ordered them to sing *Veni Creator* daily after matins, prime and vespers.<sup>261</sup>

Shortly afterwards, some bishops, princes and magnates began sending petitions to Rome for the beatification of Father Papczyński. Also, the Polish Diet, gathering on the occasion of the coronation of King Stanislaus Poniatowski, showed its support in the matter by issuing the resolution of December 9, 1764. At that time, the Diet petitioned the Holy See for the beatification of various Polish candidates, e.g., Andrew Bobola. The index of names included the name of Father Papczyński. Furthermore, following the recommendation of the Marians' General Chapter celebrated on August 24, 1766, Father General Hyacinth Wasilewski named Father Louis Zapałkowicz as the General Postulator to conduct the beatification cause in Rome.<sup>262</sup>

With the permission of the Bishop of Chełm, the Episcopal Official in Warsaw, Felix Turki, saw to it that Father Papczyński's remains were examined and moved (circa 1766) to a different tomb at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria. This was done with the further consent of the Bishop of Kujawy, Anthony Ostrowski (1763-1773). As a result of further efforts, the Bishop of Poznan and Warsaw, Teodor Czartoryski, on April 9, 1767, instructed the Bishop of Kiev, Joseph Załuski (1759-1774) to start the Informative process. Finally, on June 10, 1767, the episcopal court, on behalf of the Ordinary of Poznan, began the long-awaited Informative process in the archbishop's residence in Warsaw. Thus, the momentum towards the beatification of Father Papczyński which Father Casimir set in motion began to bear

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<sup>261</sup> G.A. Navikevičius MIC, *Stanisław di Gesù Maria Papczyński (1631-1701) Scolopio e Fondatore della ongregazione dei Padri Mariani*, *Dissertatio ad Lauream* in Fac. Hist. Eccl., Roma 1960, 232.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*



fruit. Sadly however, Father Casimir did not live to see that day. He died on October 21, 1755.

Father Casimir was a truly faithful spiritual son of Father Stanislaus Papczyński. He constantly spoke about him with great love and fervently strove for his elevation to the altars. For the Marians of the present day he stands as an example of someone who, imitating Father Founder, fulfills the ideal of religious perfection and striving for holiness.

The Servant of God Casimir followed in the footsteps of Father Stanislaus Papczynski as a great venerator of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception. His devotion found its expression primarily in his endeavor to live faithfully and zealously the guidelines of the Rule of The Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary as adapted to the Marian by-laws. He also made efforts to ascertain that his confreres and all the faithful would strive for holiness under the protection and guidance of the Immaculate Virgin. He had the highest regard for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, still dogmatically undefined at that time. He lived out this truth and to promote it he was ready to go to the ends of the earth to tell people about this great privilege with which God endowed the Mother of His Son and our Mother.

Elaborating on the sentence from the Apocalypse: "I will give him the Morning Star" (Rev 2: 28—Douay-Rheims), Father Casimir provided in his preface to the work of Francis Arias, SJ, an excellent discourse on devotion to Mary in Poland, indicating its many manifestations and emphasizing the essence of its practice.<sup>263</sup> He writes about the need to ground this devotion in good theology and explain its various forms so as to draw attention to the most important aspect of devotion to Mary— imitation of the Holy Mother, which he calls the "best part" of this devotion.<sup>264</sup>

In letters addressed to his confreres during his tenure as Superior General, Father Wyszynski frequently returned to the im-

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<sup>263</sup> *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 24.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

portance of imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary. In a circular letter of 1740, he wrote: "Like a plant that takes root, the vows made on the Rule of The Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived should radiate, blossom, and bear fruit in our Marian hearts. For it is not in words but in reality and in truth that we must imitate and live out the virtues of the Most Elect Virgin mentioned in our Rule. I encourage all Marians to inhale the sweetest aroma of these virtues."<sup>265</sup>

It seems impossible to overemphasize Father Wyszyński as an example of the precise observance of religious regulations and of zeal in acquiring virtue. In fulfilling numerous offices, he was characterized by a wealth of spiritual and intellectual attributes. As the Superior General, he greatly contributed to improving the customs and repairing the damages caused by the pernicious influence of moral decay that prevailed in Polish society in the Saxon era. In an era lacking reasonable transportation, he formed his confreres by means of circular letters, guiding them and settling various disputes. His letters prove his conscientious care and love for his subordinates, whom he encouraged to be guided by the rules and live together in peace.

In the first letter after his election to the office of Superior General (often titled then as "rector general"), he wrote to his confreres: "By the unfathomable mercy of God [cf. Rom 12:1], I am begging you in a fatherly manner to be ready and pure and righteous for the coming of Jesus Christ, our Judge [cf. Tt 2:13]. I wholeheartedly recommend the complete observance of religious discipline, submission to superiors, fraternal love, and fulfillment of previous and current decrees of the Chapter."<sup>266</sup>

He wrote the second circular letter, announcing the general visitation, in an eschatological spirit borrowed from the Founder: "I fervently desire the salvation of all entrusted to my fatherly care, for we are but temporary sojourners on this earth on our

<sup>265</sup> Circular letter of June 10, 1740, in: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów...*, 177.

<sup>266</sup> Circular letter of December 23, 1737, in: *Ibid*, 170.

way to heaven and on this earth have no lasting city [cf. Heb 13:14; Rev 21:10-22]. I would like to find you embellished with spiritual, heavenly and eternal desires, not entangled in earthly and temporal matters. May you show yourselves like this during this canonical visit!"<sup>267</sup>

Further in that letter, he pointed to specific elements of religious life that would become his interest during the canonical visitation: "My task during this visitation will be to assess whether each man fills the directives of his superiors; whether the confreres preserve fraternal love among themselves; whether they observe the Rule, the Constitutions, Papal Decrees, and the resolutions of the Chapters; whether they undergo retreats, participate in choir prayers and practice meditation; whether they live in harmony in their monastery and behave in an exemplary way outside of it."<sup>268</sup>

Although in his instructions to the confreres the Servant of God drew attention to practical matters of religious life and discipline, he also reminded them of the principle of love upheld by the Founder: "Our beloved in Christ, most reverend Fathers and Brothers, during the oncoming visitation I want particularly to ascertain whether the love of God and of neighbor 'has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us' [Rom 5:5]. I shall insist upon, encourage and examine it. For we truly love God when we obey His commands and the rules of our beloved Marian Institute, while refraining from our own whims. We love our neighbor if we do not deny him anything that is due to him, and do not wish him anything bad. If love is absent, everything else is nothingness. With love we can achieve everything (1 Cor 13:1-13).

The Servant of God had great concern for new vocations to the Marian community. Due to his fervent love for the Congregation and its Founder, he wanted to expand it outside of Poland, to other Christian countries of Europe. Certainly, his apostolic spirit drove the Marians, who later spread throughout the world.

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<sup>267</sup> Circular letter of June 8, 1738, in: *Ibid*, 171.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, 172.

During his first term as Superior General (1737-1741), Father Wyszyński several times dispatched Fr. Casimir Polak to Prague. This Marian of Bohemian origin attracted more than 20 candidates of Bohemian origin to the Congregation. The new men made valuable intellectual and spiritual contributions to the Congregation. Some among them were: Casimir Polak, Isidore Taudt, Alexis Fischer, John Cantius Szkraffer, Benedict Hönnig, and John Nepomucene Czermak. They became pillars of the community, working very fruitfully in Poland and Portugal. Before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, even more Bohemians became Marians.<sup>269</sup>

Thanks to Father Casimir's tireless efforts, eventually Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Hungarians, Italians, French and Portuguese men also joined the Marians. Towards the end of his life, Father Wyszyński founded a monastery in Portugal, where he himself lived until his death. His plans for the future included a foundation of the Marians in Brazil, but this came to pass only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>270</sup>

Another aspect of Father Casimir's rich spiritual profile, something also dear to the Marian Founder, was care of the poor and neglected rural folks. As the Superior General, Venerable Casimir imposed on local superiors the obligation to make sure that at their monasteries catechism was being taught to the country folks. He also attacked the way rural folks were treated in some parishes in regard to their Easter confessions. That was a pastoral problem in some dioceses, which we have described earlier.<sup>271</sup> No doubt Father Casimir's sympathy for the poor and afflicted derived at least somewhat from Father Papczynski's solicitude for the downtrodden, which Father Casimir practiced and in turn passed on to future Marians.

In the dark Polish sky of the Saxon era, the Servant of God Casimir shown as a bright light. His veneration of the Immaculately Conceived Mother of God, his care for the poor, his advocacy

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<sup>269</sup> Circular letter of June 1, 1739, in: *Ibid*, 174-175.

<sup>270</sup> Z. Proczek, *Sługa Niepokalanej...*, 25.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

of the souls in purgatory, his zealous example of religious and priestly living, and his faithful following of Father Papczyński's holiness, teach us today how to perfect ourselves in the tradition of the Marian community to lead a holy life in the turmoil of today's world.





Wacław Makoś, MIC, S.T.L.

**A MAN OF PRAYER AND LOVE OF  
THE EUCHARIST**





The entire life of Father Casimir of St. Joseph (baptized Januarius Francis Wyszyński) was filled with arduous undertakings of one sort or another. Difficulties in early childhood and schooling, followed by years of work under severe and unusual conditions, provided challenges which might have deterred a lesser man, but which seem to have honed Casimir's ability to conquer difficulties and obstacles which he turned into stepping stones. In addition to a most serious and conscientious pursuit of holiness as a priest and religious, he fulfilled in an exemplary manner many special offices in the Marian community such as: novice master, superior of the monastery, general procurator, and twice the superior general of the Order.

Casimir's Catholic family upbringing prepared him well for a life of prayer, abetted with various pious practices, devotions and the holy Sacraments. His family roots were of Bohemian origin, and their coat-of-arms contained the image of a rake and lily.<sup>272</sup> Little Francis grew up in this religious and patriotic environment to become not just an everyday good Christian, but a true man of God. Much has been already written about Venerable Casimir's piety infused by his mother, his nanny, and other family members, as well as about his virtues, emphasizing additionally his patience and the cardinal virtues along with his dedication to God and his fervent devotion to the Blessed Mother, all initiated in childhood.<sup>273</sup>

The above statements, however, pose an embarrassing question: Why does Poland not have a spontaneous public worship of this great candidate for the altars? If such worship does exist, why is it so minimal and unnoticed? These questions, rising from an observation of reality, force us to consider whether the authors properly portrayed the person of Father Casimir. Has he been ad-

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<sup>272</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 12-13.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, XXV-LXXXV. The most valuable are testimonies given by direct witnesses such as Fathers Isidore Taudt, Hyacinth Wasilewski, John Czermak, Adrian Ignatowski, Benon Bujalski, Narcissus Rychter, and particularly Alexis Fischer, Father Casimir's friend.

equately presented as a man of God worthy of imitation and praise, as a man of prayer and contemplation, loving God, people and the Eucharistic Christ? Could the source documents perhaps contain something more than has already been drawn from them? Could they hold a message for us today, still suitable for contemporary needs and temperament?

Seeing no need for repeating well-known facts and dates, let us re-examine the source documents and try to look at Father Casimir from the point of view of his God-given graces and gifts, including his most important natural talents. Let him say after the Psalmist: "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what He has done for me" (Ps 66:16).

This boy, who was baptized Januarius Francis, while still a child of tender years displayed great sensitivity. There was no need to wait until he would grow up and acquire the age of reason for this quality to develop. During the war against Sweden, the enemy regiment came to stay overnight in Jeziora Wielka. What a fright that must have created in the townspeople. Even worse, the Swedish King entered the room in which little Francis, not yet two-years old, was staying. As his brother Michael Wyszynski later wrote: "Apparently, the child sensed at once an enemy of the holy Catholic Faith and of the Immaculately Conceived Virgin Mary," because he began to cry in protest. For this reason, upon the king's order, the little toddler in his cradle was dispatched to the courtyard—outside, alone?<sup>274</sup> Although no one would attribute to a two-year-old any theological expertise, yet the child could undoubtedly sense hostility. The foreign speech of the man, his arrogance and apparent anger, so very different from the loving voice and gentle behavior of his mother or nanny, shocked and frightened the small child. Shortly afterwards, the entire family had to leave their home and wander around the country homeless, which most certainly left an imprint on the youngster's mind and deeply affected his psyche.<sup>275</sup> In the light of modern-day psychology and pedagogy, which speak of the importance of the early

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<sup>274</sup> M. Wyszynski, *Chcę naprawić...*, 21.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

childhood period, the aforesaid events speak for themselves without need to explain them further.

This manifestation of evil, which Francis faced so early in life, no doubt left its mark. It must have honed his sensitivity and shaped his response to the outside world. All this became apparent after the family returned home. Francis was about eight at the time.<sup>276</sup> The boy was sent without delay to the Piarist school in Góra Kalwaria. He did not do well in class. He was not properly prepared for learning and no doubt still bore the trauma of war. Instead of applying himself to secular disciplines, he took refuge in prayer and meditation. Wojciech Magnuszewski, his classmate at the time, who had a chance to observe him, later composed a long list of Francis Wyszyński's favorite habits, pious practices and prayers. One of them was frequent, even daily, participation in holy Mass, along with the recitation of litanies, pious songs, and meditations. In addition to his fervent devotion to God, especially to the Eucharistic Jesus, he also manifested an exceptional love and devotion to the Blessed Mother, which manifested itself in the recitation of various prayers, the rosary and Chaplet, and in his singing the Little Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So, the presence of a lily in the family's coat-of-arms was perhaps not so coincidental. The aforesaid classmate also draws attention to Francis's exceptional, strikingly mature, attitude of reflection and solemnity that defined his behavior in church and in prayer. If the occasion called for it, Francis was apt to call other boys to order.<sup>277</sup>

The boy's lack of interest for secular disciplines gave him considerable trouble and even caused his father's displeasure and anger. Michael, Francis's brother, writes: "John, only a year older, advanced in learning. Francis, cowed from early childhood, did poorly at school and thus brought upon himself his father's disdain and was treated worse than the servants."<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 30. Cf. *PositioWysz*, 493-494 (Rev. Rychter's testimony).

<sup>278</sup> M. Wyszyński, *Chcę naprawić...*, 21. Cf. *PositioWysz*, 994 (Rev. Rychter's

One day, without informing anyone, except telling his mother in secret, he ran away in search of a better climate than the one he experienced at home, wishing to reach the Rome of his dreams as a pilgrim. The willful pilgrim, who managed to put nine miles between himself and Warsaw, was overtaken and returned home upon given the promise that his father would be mollified.<sup>279</sup> Somehow, in spite of troubles such as these, Francis managed to graduate from the Góra school.

When he was sent to continue his education at the Piarist school in Warsaw, Francis already had a sufficient knowledge of good and evil such that he conceived the idea that it would be good to know the enemy, that is, the evil spirit. Perhaps he wished to learn about it in order to better avoid it, or perhaps to fight it more effectively. With a profound trust in God, which was infused in him from childhood, he asked the Lord to allow him to see the *infernal devil*. Our Heavenly Father, who is goodness itself, heeded the youngster's artless request, but only to a degree. He allowed Francis to hear the evil spirit speak, but not be seen. One evening, as Francis and his friends were in the school dormitory at the inn, such an infernal noise started to arise, first from the chimney and then from the hall, that all the boys, full of fright, fled the room. The terrified "perpetrator," who fled the room as well, immediately began to pray and encourage the others to ask God to terminate that terrible noise. And the noise stopped. But from that time and to the end of his life, Francis never again wished to see Satan.<sup>280</sup>

Since Francis was forced into a homeless wanderer's life from early childhood, he did not develop ties with his hometown. But now he began to feel the need to find support and refuge. He wished for silence, solitude and closeness with the Heavenly Father. He was looking for an environment conducive to prayer and contemplation. Father Alexis Fischer has written that once as Francis was completing his law internship at the Grodzka Chancellery, in his free time he went to the nearby forest. Unfortu-

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testimony).

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. Cf. *Positio Wysz*, 494 (Rev. Rychter's testimony).

<sup>280</sup> M. Wyszyński, *Chcę naprawić...*, 21-22.

nately, as he went deeper into the forest in search of peace and solitude, he came upon a hanged man (one of the household servants) and heard behind his back the terrifying cawing of crows. He associated them with hellish demons and suffered a terrible shock. As a result of this encounter with death and its ensuing trauma, Francis lost all taste for earthly matters and undertakings. On the contrary, his longing for heavenly things increased. He felt the need to dedicate himself more completely to God and resolved to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.<sup>281</sup>

Along with the deepening of Francis's inner life, some interior secrets began to develop. He never told anyone the reason—keeping it a secret forever—for having made the pledge to go on pilgrimage to far-away Spain. About this matter he demonstrated great decisiveness and constancy. Nothing could turn him away from keeping his promise, not even his father and his family's pleas. Moreover, moral arbiters chosen by his father supported Francis's decision.<sup>282</sup> Therefore he set forth on the pilgrimage clad only in the garb of a poor pilgrim, reaching Rome and steadfastly bound to continue further. However, having crossed the Franco-Spanish border he fell seriously ill, and following doctors' orders, was forced to return to Rome. Thus, he had to postpone his pilgrimage and soon understood that God had willed differently. Hence, he asked the Holy See for a dispensation from his pledge and he remained for some time in the Eternal City.<sup>283</sup>

It is difficult to say how much Francis knew about his brother Joseph's doings during Joseph's time at the Marian Fathers' novitiate. We do know that Joseph contributed to the dispersion of the Marian Order, which lasted several years.<sup>284</sup> But the matter was not totally unfamiliar to Francis. Father Joachim Kozłowski, who was in Rome as the General Procurator of the Marian Order, informed Francis in detail. In turn, Francis asked at once to be vested with the Marian habit and expressed his desire to repair all that

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<sup>281</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 53.

<sup>282</sup> M. Wyszyński, *Chcę naprawić...*, 22-23.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 23. Cf. *PositioWysz*, 494 (Rev. Rychter's testimony).

<sup>284</sup> This is the matter of the Rostkavian dispersion (1715-1722).

his brother Joseph had ruined.<sup>285</sup> This sudden decision may seem a little puzzling: where did such readiness and availability come from? Here again, we come across his secret, a part of which he would reveal later (prior to his trip to Portugal) in a letter of August 5, 1752, to his brother Valerian: "Therefore, I leave in your hands the cause of our Founder. I remain as a second Saul in this Congregation, which was attacked by one of our own, specifically by our brother Joseph, until the Blessed Mother said to me: 'Francis, why are you persecuting me?' Daring not to kick against the goad, I felt compelled to accept the Marian habit in Rome. So, now that I can guide the Order of the Blessed Mother as her unworthy slave, I must pluck up the courage to make this lengthy journey."<sup>286</sup>

It becomes clear from this explanation that Francis was ready to undertake the task of repairing the damage caused by his brother Joseph even before his meeting with Father Joachim in Rome. We do not know how or when this matter was decided between him and the Blessed Mother. The program of repairs which Casimir would later develop in detail, was so clear to him from the start, that upon his return to Poland he already knew that for which to admonish Father Joachim. And he would be able to discover easily the latter's machinations to the detriment of the Order and unmask Father Joachim's desire for usurping the Founder's place. It was not in vain that Casimir had a rake in his coat of arms, although Father Papczyński had given the more gentle word of "little hairbrush" when he foretold that someone would come to "brush away" Father Joachim in his older years.<sup>287</sup>

Being a just and forthright man, Father Casimir firmly manifested his piety and endeavored to carry out his duties and assignments faithfully, expecting others to do the same. If he should notice someone's failings he did not hesitate to admonish that person.

<sup>285</sup> M. Wyszyński, *Chcę naprawić...*, 23.

<sup>286</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Dziennik czynności...* 322.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. same author, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Papczyńskiego...*, 107.

It was with some reluctance that Father Joachim, who was still conscious of the recent conflicts with the Wyszyński family, performed Francis's investiture with the Marian habit in Rome and gave him the name of Casimir.<sup>288</sup> He quickly developed an aversion to the newly-admitted candidate because of the admonitions that the novice had given him about his lack of fraternal charity, his love of elaborate meals, and the shortcomings in his religious observance. On their way back to Poland from Rome they parted ways in Venice because Father Joachim was irritated by the candidate's admonitions, and decided to continue the trip alone. During his time in the novitiate, when he was undergoing scrutiny, Father Casimir usually lacked one positive vote, and after completion of the novitiate Father Joachim kept on postponing Father Casimir's advance to the profession of vows. By that time, Father Casimir had plenty of time and opportunity to acquaint himself better with Father Joachim's attitude towards the Founder and the Marian Order, especially—as Father Casimir admitted—because the Lord God revealed to him (he did not say how) certain matters regarding Father Joachim's machinations to the Order's detriment. Venerable Casimir learned about Father Joachim's insubordination to the saintly Father Stanislaus on numerous occasions, as well as his tendency to deviate from established customs. Therefore, it would follow from this that Father Joachim, who contributed information to the process of papal approval of the Marian Order, would also become the one to initiate the process of its degradation.<sup>289</sup> After Father Casimir finished his studies, the tension between the two intensified so much that it pushed Father Joachim to put a curse on his antagonist: "Do not advance any further!" Naturally, as Father Casimir remarked later, the curse could not be fulfilled because it was uttered unfairly.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> *PositioWysz*, 40.

<sup>289</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Żywoł Czciogodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława...*, 107-108. Cf. S. Papczyński, *Another Testament*, § 15, in: *Historical Writings of Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński*, Stockbridge, 2007; W. Magnuszewski, *Żywoł...*, 45-46.

<sup>290</sup> *PositioWysz*, 41-42; 58.

A zealous and sincere manifestation of piety during the novitiate combined with his admonition of others did not make Casimir popular among his classmates. Some of them quickly formed the opinion that they were dealing with a superficial devotee and began to ridicule him. Casimir did not publicize the appearance of red liquid on the crucifix in his cell as something miraculous, which those persons who insidiously soiled it had hoped. It turned out that the perpetrators alone suffered ridicule. In this way they realized that Casimir's piety was not of a morbid sort as they had judged it to be.<sup>291</sup>

After making his vows and receiving ordination to the priesthood, Casimir began to show even greater concern for leading a life according to the religious Rule and the Marian charism, as well as living this life in the most disciplined way. Some of the confreres, who had lost a great deal of the religious spirit during the times of the "Rostkovian dispersion" and had become accustomed to laxity of lifestyle, regarded the advancement of their young confrere and his being entrusted with more important offices, with dissatisfaction. Some of them even thought of getting rid of him permanently, but the Lord God showed him a way of rescuing himself: he went to Rome for a time.<sup>292</sup>

Thus, we can see that the radical change in Father Casimir's attitude towards the Marians and his desire to repair the bad effects that his brother Joseph caused to the Order, found its justification. The analogy with what happened to Saul on the road to Damascus as well as the Blessed Mother's identification with the Order of Marians founded by the holy Father Stanislaus, lead us to believe that Casimir was also enlightened in a special way about the Marian charism, because after joining the Community he whole-heartedly focused on strengthening the observance and practice of the Rule and spreading devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. He is ready to give his life for this cause as Mary's slave.<sup>293</sup> He also endeavored to make others more fer-

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<sup>291</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 56.

<sup>292</sup> M. Wyszynski, *Chcę naprawić...*, 25; cf. *Positio Wysz*, 494 (Father Rychter's testimony).

<sup>293</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, 295.



vent, so that, imbued with mercy, they might bring assistance to the souls suffering in Purgatory by obtaining the indulgences granted by the Holy See, and also by doing apostolic work among the destitute and miserable sinners, and by restoring the devotions to Divine Providence<sup>294</sup> and the Eucharist to their rightful place.<sup>295</sup> These tasks had priority in his plan of action when he became Superior General. Of this we find confirmation in letters and decrees passed by Chapters in paragraphs of protocols of the annual general meetings.<sup>296</sup>

The incident he described in the letter to his brother Valerian, not only radically transformed Father Casimir's attitude toward the Marians and brought forth a desire to repair the damages done to them, but was also a call for a deep revision of his own piety. The Blessed Mother's rebuke must have moved the deepest stratum of his soul, for he had felt sure of being her great venerator since his youth. His conviction was now strengthened by those occurrences, as Magnuszewski has told us. Young Francis had been used to reciting so many prayers, singing songs, fulfilling various pious practices, and doing it all with the utmost solemnity and love, and yet he heard: "Francis, why do you persecute me?" This must have caused a shock which drove him to reflect on his Marian spirituality.

The need for reflection was also caused by the fact that he joined a religious Order under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., which had the Rule of her evangelical virtues as the basis of its lifestyle and the promotion of her honor as its main objective. The reading of Father Founder's *Prodromus*,<sup>297</sup> and especially his *Mystical Temple of God* turned out to be essential and most helpful to Casimir. He absorbed the positions

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<sup>294</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 151-152. 431. 495.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid*, 432.

<sup>296</sup> *Protocollum Ordinis*, 237-242; *Protocollum Goźlinense*, f. 11v-12v; *Protocollum Rasnense*, 60-66; *Protocollum Corabieviense*, 45-50.

<sup>297</sup> *Laus Deiparae Mariae Virginis*, in: S. Papczyński, *Prodromus reginae artium*, Varsaviae 2001, 65-73.

expounded in both books,<sup>298</sup> which deepened his understanding of the Mystical Temple of God. He not only studied Father Founder's manual on spirituality, but recognized its great importance and necessity, to the extent that during his two terms in the office of Superior General (1737-1741 and 1747-1750), he had it reprinted twice, in 1741 and 1747.<sup>299</sup>

Father Casimir felt a great need to share with others the fruit of his prayers and reflections. His search for a book that could become a popular instrument in the apostolic field was for a time unsuccessful. He was critical even of a popular and highly recommended book of that time about revelations, written by Venerable Mary of Agreda entitled *Mystical City of God*.<sup>300</sup> In the end, he chose the book *On the Imitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary* by Francis Arias, SJ, which he edited according to his own thinking, supplying it with a Foreword and publishing it under the title of *The Morning Star*.<sup>301</sup>

Having given the matter much thought and consideration, he arrived at the conclusion that it would be beneficial to learn as much as possible about Mary; that much good would come also from teachings and sermons on the Blessed Mother; that beautiful prayers, songs, pilgrimages, large donations to various good causes, the construction of shrines, solemn celebrations of her feasts, the installation of Rosary groups and other confraternities; wearing special symbols, making votive and other offerings, and especially dedicating oneself in the service of the Blessed Mother would be most beneficial. He believed that all these things were undoubtedly pleasing to the Blessed Virgin and that if someone has already been practicing them he should not abandon them. But all of this would not be sufficient if the most important part was lacking, which is imitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary's virtues. In truth, a devotee of Mary can become like her and by

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<sup>298</sup> Such as the need for imitating Mary and her role as a model for her venerated.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. S. Papczyński, *Templum Dei Mysticum*, Varsaviae 1998, *Proemium IX*.

<sup>300</sup> C. Wyszynski, *Foreword to Morning Star*, 15.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

extension like Christ, only by possessing her virtues. For Mary imitated Christ in the most perfect manner and became our path to Him.<sup>302</sup> Wishing to imitate the Blessed Mother in her solicitude for the poor (Cf. Lk 1:50-53), he was always very attentive to the needs of the destitute and oppressed people. He took upon himself a cause that required great courage and determination, namely: he wrote to the Holy Father in defense of the Polish peasants abused by pastors.<sup>303</sup> And to everyone he encouraged imitation of Mary, substantiating his advice with speculative, biblical and patristic rationales.<sup>304</sup>

Observing the life of the Marian Order, which was growing stronger with Mary's help after several years of dispersion, he acquired a deeper understanding—on the basis of his own experience—of what Mary should mean to the Marians. As the principal patroness of the Order, the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived was indeed its Foundress.<sup>305</sup> Father Casimir was glad to repeat this statement after the habit of the holy Father Founder.<sup>306</sup> Father Casimir also understood the prophetic meaning of the ark and the dove carrying an olive branch, the image of which St. Stanislaus placed on the Order's seal.<sup>307</sup> This time it was not Noah, but Our Lady who built, with Fr. Stanislaus' help, in the Korabiew Forest the ark of rescue from Satan. Mary Immaculate stepped aboard that ark and was guiding it. Father Casimir was looking deep into the future and perceived things that were still hidden from the eyes of other people.

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid, 4-7. A witness from Portugal, Brother John of Monte Policiano testified that Father Casimir always made sure that a space was left for the Blessed Mother in the center of the monastic choir. See *Father Casimir Wyszyński's Informative Process in Miranda*, a. 17, f. 95v-96r, in: *Positio Wysz*, 418.

<sup>303</sup> Letter of Jan.13, 1753, *Positio Wysz*, 226-227.

<sup>304</sup> *Morning Star*, 16-27.

<sup>305</sup> *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis*, § 1 Testamentum II §5; in: S. Papczyński, *Scripta Historica...*, 81 and 136.

<sup>306</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 72.

<sup>307</sup> K. Wyszyński, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława od Jezusa Maryi Paczyńskiego...*, 134-135.

Magnuszewski speaks of Father Casimir's words, uttered once during his term as superior of the Korabiew Forest monastery: "I want posterity to know that our Marian Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary shall fight great battles against the Antichrist in the future. And the Antichrist shall be defeated because the Blessed Virgin Mary crushed the head of the ancient serpent when in her lowliness she gave birth to the Son of God."<sup>308</sup>

Obviously, Father Casimir cherished his other devotional practices as well. Witnesses unanimously claim that he had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament since childhood. They recall his rising early in the morning to attend Mass, dedicating much time to adoration. Perhaps the piety of his youth bore some traits of a childish or youthful immaturity, but as he matured and became a priest in the Order of Marian Fathers, his Eucharistic devotion manifested itself in his great esteem for the Mass, for which he carefully and prayerfully prepared and never wanted to miss. He would also dedicate ample time after Mass for giving thanks. Undoubtedly, in the deepening of his Eucharistic devotion he turned for help to the Founder because he knew well the latter's reflections on the Eucharist and the Passion of the Lord as contained in *Inspectio cordis*, *Christus Patiens*, and *Orator Crucifixus*. Those who testified to Father Casimir's great and fervent Eucharistic devotion, repeat as if a refrain, the fact that Venerable Casimir also meditated on the Passion of the Lord while he was in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament<sup>309</sup>. It is worthwhile adding here that he ordered the tattoo sign of the cross to be made on his right arm and the Immaculate Mary on the left, in order to give external evidence to what was most dear and most sacred to him.<sup>310</sup>

<sup>308</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 45. When he was in Rome as the General Procurator of the Order, he discovered the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Navicella, which contained a mosaic depicting the Apostles and the Blessed Mother in the ark. Father Casimir made great efforts (fruitless, as it happened) to acquire this place for Marians' headquarters in Rome. K. Wyszyński, *Diariusz czynności...*, 212.

<sup>309</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 431, 432-433, 436, 440, 445, 446, 471.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid*, 431, 440.

Father Taudt testified that he frequently saw Venerable Casimir in tears<sup>311</sup> after such adoration and reflection on the Passion of Christ. These tears also appeared during the celebration of Holy Mass and afterwards, testifying to his fervent and lively Eucharistic devotion.<sup>312</sup> It is obvious therefore, that for Father Casimir the Holy Mass was not just any service that had to be performed according to the rubrics; to him it was a true embodiment—in an unbloody manner—of the sacrifice which the living Jesus Christ made at Calvary by choosing to suffer and die out of His inconceivable love for us. Reflecting on the Passion of Christ and empathizing with Him, tortured and dying, Father Casimir was also dying, as it were, along with the Lord. He explained to his younger brethren that they should approach the Eucharistic Sacrifice with trepidation, and that he, having prepared himself, was going to the altar as if to a meeting with death. When the end of his life came, that is, the moment when he realized that it might already be his last Holy Mass, he was shaking all over and moved as if he were going through his personal “Agony on the Mount of Olives.” When asked how he was feeling, he replied in these words: “Trembling before the Sacrifice.”<sup>313</sup>

Venerable Casimir’s tears, mentioned by Father Taudt, were assuredly the result of his internal experiences and were akin to the feelings that Father Papczyński used to experience, tears of tremendous regret and sadness, bitter tears when realizing that we sinners have been the cause of Christ’s torture and death, but simultaneously tears of gratitude and joy because of God’s incomprehensible love for us.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 433.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid, 410.

<sup>313</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 72.

<sup>314</sup> S. Papczyński, *Inspectio cordis*, 178v: “Therefore, to an extent my heart is torn asunder by pain, sympathizing with you, most lovable Jesus; but to an extent it overflows with joy, feeling myself to be freed from the scourging due to my sins by your scourging. My soul grieves very much and it should grieve, because if it does not grieve, it will be ignoble. I say, my soul grieves, o my hope Jesus! when it considers you condemned to scourging, after the manner of the greatest of criminals; but the same (soul) exults in the highest degree and should exult, because if it does not exult, it will be ungrateful. My soul, I

In view of the information and testimonies provided above, we should be able to understand Father Casimir's care for the Marian Order and his efforts to compensate for the harm it sustained, as well as his deep comprehension of the Marian charism and inner life of the members, and his efforts to revive their life of prayer and participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and even for expanding the Order of Marians to the wider world.<sup>315</sup> What still remains unexplained is his unique and intense attitude towards Father Stanislaus Papczyński. How did he come to know the Founder and his spirit so well? How did his great conviction about the sanctity of Father Stanislaus and the need for his canonization come to be? He held Father Stanislaus in such high esteem that he called him a great saint, chose him as his patron, and always turned to him for help in his needs. He stated that he was never disappointed in his expectations.

Undoubtedly, some knowledge about Saint Stanislaus was conveyed to Venerable Casimir by some older members of the Community and from the novice master and through his reading of the Order's by-laws, but perhaps especially the book by Mansueto Leporini *Żywoł założyciela polskiego zgromadzenia Zakonu Niepokalanego Poczęcia NMP* (The Life of the Founder of the Polish Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.), which is mentioned in *Protocol of the Order*.<sup>316</sup> From other available source documents he would have been able to learn about Saint Stanislaus' humility and low self-esteem, and his conviction that God had raised the Marian Order to life and that the Blessed Virgin was indeed its Foundress. At the same time, Saint Stanislaus never lost sight of the fact that he was the Founder of the Marians and a responsible instrument in the hands of God and the Blessed Virgin.

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say, exults in the highest degree, when it sees that you, prompted by love towards it, eagerly desire unutterably countless scourges for its salvation, and when it hears you saying with the King psalmist: "Behold I am ready for scourges" (cf. Ps 37:18).

<sup>315</sup> Father Casimir accepted new foundations for the Order in Raśna, Marijampole, Berezdov, and last one—in Balsamão.

<sup>316</sup> *Protocollum Balsamanense*, 3-16.

Any speculative acquaintance with a subject is usually marked by some abstractedness and generally not imbued with feelings, conviction and zeal. Yet, with great concern and personal dedication Father Casimir treats the Founder as if he were a living person. Father Hondlewski has every right to say that Venerable Casimir was a very faithful spiritual son of Saint Stanislaus Papczyński.<sup>317</sup>

Speaking about Father Casimir's devotion, one cannot forget the testimony given in the process by Father John Czermak. He testifies to Father Casimir's fervor in prayer and his custom of remaining alone in the church after Lauds so that he could come into fervent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and meditate upon the Passion of the Lord. Sacristans who saw him during these times witnessed—and informed others of the fact—that Father Casimir was not the only one who stayed behind to pray, but that during his prayers he was joined by some other being who came to keep him company and engaged him in dialogue. The aforesaid sacristans claimed—and assured the others—that the other person was none other than Saint Stanislaus Papczyński. Father Czermak, who swore under oath to tell the truth, remarks that this was a notorious fact, well-known to other Marians.<sup>318</sup>

This testimony could have become an even more comprehensive answer to all previously raised questions, but some of us might, nonetheless, suspect Father John of being too credulous and the sacristans of wanting to create a legend, especially because neither those people's names nor those of the churches where such events could have happened were ever mentioned. However, as it turned out, this was not the only signal intervention of holy Father Stanislaus into matters of his Order. Venerable Casimir personally related an incident concerning the time when Rev. Turczynowicz—supported by the Dominicans and higher Church hierarchy—tried to usurp the title and rights of the Marian Order. The situation took a dangerous turn for the Marians,

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<sup>317</sup> K. Hondlewski, *Obyśmy teraz podążali jego śladami i wreszcie znaleźli się w chwale nieba*, 79.

<sup>318</sup> *Positio* Wysz, 440.

because Cardinal Bardi, who had the case in hand, favored the usurper. The tenor of Father Casimir's account demonstrates his great surprise at finding out what had happened during his absence. This is what he wrote: "Our attorney and I went to see Cardinal Bardi, an official on Rev. Turczynowicz's side, to inform him about our case. After our departure, a Religious came to see this cardinal and had a long conference with him about our cause. When our advocate once again went to Cardinal Bardi, his butler and other servants told the lawyer that another Religious had come after our departure and stayed a long time, talking to the cardinal about our case. This individual had never before come calling. Our attorney was astonished because he could not imagine who this person could be. However, this official changed sides and instead of further backing Rev. Turczynowicz, he took a favorable attitude toward us. He insisted on having the matter resolved as soon as possible even though the opposing party demanded adjournment."<sup>319</sup>

This incident happened at a specifically defined place and has material witnesses. Moreover, both Father Alexis Fischer<sup>320</sup> and W. Magnuszewski also mention it. In the latter's account of Father Casimir's trip to the Loreto shrine, where he went to implore the Blessed Mother's help in this difficult matter of the Order, Magnuszewski adds that Father Casimir, after his return, learned from the lawyer about the mysterious visit of the Religious wearing the Marian garb. Father Casimir then showed Father Stanislaus' picture to one of the men who witnessed the visit, and the man declared that the one in the picture was indeed the Cardinal's visitor.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>319</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności ...*, 327.

<sup>320</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 61-62.

<sup>321</sup> W. Magnuszewski, *Żywot...*, 40-41. It can be added, in addition to the account of this incident that Father Casimir ordered to sign as "Vera effigies" [true likeness] the portraits [of Father Founder] painted on the basis of the existing copy and his [Fr. Casimir's] instructions (*Diariusz czynności ..*, 256). Can this fact be sufficiently explained only by the acquaintance with the Founder's oldest portrait? Perhaps. But also noteworthy is that Mr. Antonio Albertoni, who, claiming the freedom of art and his own artistic competence of the painter, refused to take Father Casimir's critical remarks into account while creating the portrait in Rome, had—in his own reckoning—to pay for



Father Casimir testified repeatedly and with confidence, that he had avoided many dangers and had managed to carry out very difficult matters successfully, because when he lifted his prayers to God for help he also pleaded for the assistance of Immaculate Mary through the intercession of Father Stanislaus.

To identify the other “occurrences” properly, which Father Casimir mentions in his *Diariusz czynnoci* (e.g., the case of a rabid dog, of the undiminished money of alms, of the collapsing ceiling, etc.), it is not necessary to retrace our steps. For that purpose it will be sufficient to recall Father Casimir’s trip to Portugal and his “adventures” encountered during the sea passage.

On May 31, 1753, as he and Father Zenon Bujalki sailed on a small boat (felucca) bound for Portugal, a hurricane arose around midnight. “The wind was tilting the boat so much that water poured in, while the mast began to crack. The women onboard cried loudly, as we were in great peril. But as soon as we commended ourselves to the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and our Father Stanislaus, the wind abated. The next day about noon, another storm arose, but it too soon ceased thanks to the protection of the Blessed Mother.”<sup>322</sup>

More severe storms arose on June 1<sup>st</sup>, causing despair among the passengers. Father Casimir and his companion resigned themselves to the thought of drowning, for they were ready to give up their lives for the glory of Mary Immaculate. In his desperation, the felucca owner kept throwing sidelong glances at the lifeboat, hoping to escape unnoticed if the felucca should begin to sink. “We were sure the boat would capsize if not for the order to lower the sails. After we fervently commended ourselves to the protection of the Blessed Mother and our holy Founder, the tempest ceased and a favorable wind arrived [...]. As for myself, I was not invoking any other kind of help but the one to whom I usually

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this disobedience with a very serious illness and much suffering. His illness—for which there was no remedy—passed, but only after the likeness of Father Stanislaus was appropriately altered. K. Wyszynski, *Żywot Czcigodnego Sługi Bożego Ojca Stanisława Papczyńskiego ...*, 140-141.

<sup>322</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności ...*, 387.

turned: *Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio*. Also, I recited the *Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* over and over and kept making the sign of the cross towards the threatening clouds, continually invoking the intercession of our Venerable Father Founder.”<sup>323</sup>

Even further, they later had trouble safeguarding their luggage, which ended with “a stroke of luck.” They miraculously escaped shipwreck on underwater rocks during a thick nighttime fog and a thunderbolt barely missed the ship’s mast during the hurricane. Finally, their ship was safely pushed into the opening of a canal by huge sea waves. Depicting the danger of the intense lightning and the unprecedented thunderbolts, never before seen even by experienced seamen, Father Casimir attributes their safety once again to his “customary” ejaculation: *Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio, sit nobis salus et protectio*.<sup>324</sup>

Like Father Papczyński before him, Father Casimir too was certain that for God nothing is impossible. Counting on God’s help and protection, he continued getting ready to go to Portugal even though prior to his departure he already knew from the Minister General of the Franciscans Minor that he was up against some deceit, because the invitation to the Marians did not come from the king, but from a person or persons unknown.<sup>325</sup> Nevertheless, for the glory of Mary Immaculate he set out on this trip, exposed to attacks from brigands as well as storms, without even knowing what was awaiting him upon arrival in Portugal.<sup>326</sup> He wrote to Father Wetycki, that the Marians’ presence in that country would facilitate arranging the Founder’s beatification process. He also rejoiced over the anticipated honor and distinction the Polish Marians would receive because of the invitation coming from the king of Portugal.<sup>327</sup> But when he reached Lisbon and settled in the house of Rev. Antonio de Souza Salazar on Mount Aboboda,

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 387-388.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid, 392-408.

<sup>325</sup> Cf. *Positio Wysz*, 237-238.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> K. Wszyński, *Diariusz czynności ...*, 246, 253.

all his anticipations burst like soap bubbles. Being treated as a prisoner, starved, tormented, and humiliated, he quickly and completely lost all hope for financial support and honors.<sup>328</sup> Father Benon was unable to withstand such treatment for long: he fell ill and had to return to Poland. Father Casimir, already infected with malaria in Rome, was also ill, yet he plunged into the night of his misfortune, and nearly reaching the brink of insanity, still refused to even dream about returning to Poland, because—for Mary Immaculate—he was ready to suffer death.<sup>329</sup> He gave himself meekly to purification. He no longer admonished anyone or complained about his trials. Being asked later about them, he would respond evasively and tranquilly, without blaming anybody,<sup>330</sup> for he offered to God through Mary Immaculate and for her greater glory all that had happened to him.<sup>331</sup> On this account God endowed him with many friends in Portugal—exceptional, noble, and generous people—who extended to him a helping hand and led him out of the misery in which he found himself.<sup>332</sup>

Quite astonishing are the reactions of pious and upright people, rich and poor alike, as they came to know Father Casimir. Nobody had any doubts about his being a man of prayer, a man of God, a kind and gentle man, in a word—a saintly Pole.<sup>333</sup> Father Casimir prayed for these people and encouraged them by his own behavior to love God, Christ, and His Immaculate Mother, zealously passing on to them his trust and honor for the holy Father Papczyński. Convinced by him, people began to ask for graces through the intercession of Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, and certain persons received them and regained their health. Many peo-

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<sup>328</sup> *PositioWysz* 467.

<sup>329</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 68; *PositioWysz*, 467 (Father Bujalski's testimony).

<sup>330</sup> *PositioWysz*, 423-424.

<sup>331</sup> After Father Casimir's death, Rev. Salazar weepily confessed to Father Fischer that he made him [Father Casimir] a martyr and because of this he was going to his grave in Balsamão to obtain forgiveness. A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 68

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid*, 68-69.

<sup>333</sup> *PositioWysz*, 415, 420, 423.

ple came to trust in Father Casimir as well; they assisted him financially and helped him fulfill the goals for which he journeyed to Portugal. Although he did not speak Portuguese, he was able to cope. With the recommendation of his new friends, Father Casimir's petition to the bishop of Miranda to establish a Marian religious house in Balsamão, was successful, even though the Bishop had previously refused others. After the death of the hermits' Superior, which occurred during Father Casimir's first visit to the bishop in Miranda, the bishop appointed him—and not someone else—as the hermits' new Superior. What is even more amazing is that the same bishop shortly afterwards wanted Father Casimir to be the examiner of his diocesan clergy.<sup>334</sup>

Meanwhile, Father Casimir's dreams reached even beyond Portugal: his thoughts were already going farther—to Brazil.<sup>335</sup> Brother John of Saint Mary Rodrigues testified in the informative process in Miranda that Father Casimir was ready to go to India and even farther in order to spread devotion to the Immaculate Virgin through work and contemplation. Father Casimir told Brother John that he would not regret giving his life for her in that distant land.<sup>336</sup> But Father Casimir was able to enjoy that beautiful Balsamão hilltop dedicated to Mary Immaculate for only slightly over a year. In a letter to the Superior General in Poland,<sup>337</sup> he described Balsamão as a virtual paradise, deeming his stay there something of a special grace of which he stated he had never even dreamed.<sup>338</sup> God allowed him to stay only long enough for new people to become acquainted with this aficionado of Immaculate Mary. Even during his lifetime people would ask him to pray for their intentions and gladly participated in Holy Masses, especially the sung ones which he celebrated with such solemnity and piety as no one else.<sup>339</sup> Father Casimir heard confessions, gave counsel, and even assisted the poor financially whenever

<sup>334</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 69-70.

<sup>335</sup> K. Wyszynski, *Diariusz czynności...*, 415.

<sup>336</sup> *PositioWysz*, 413.

<sup>337</sup> Letter of June 13, 1755, in *Ibid*, 415.

<sup>338</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 71.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*, 72. *PositioWysz*, 452.

possible. On his deathbed he endeavored to convince his saddened confreres not to worry about the future because Mary was their Mother, while he—if God would allow—would also support them even more from heaven and assist in their needs as much as he could.<sup>340</sup> It would seem that the Lord granted him permission; for Father Casimir kept his word in regard to the simple, poor, sick, and otherwise afflicted people. In the brief period after his death (1757-1767) several books were filled with descriptions of alleged graces and miracles granted through his intercession, so the people were convinced. Registered incidents numbered over 400, and nobody knows how many have remained unregistered.<sup>341</sup>

Therefore, we can speak now about a spontaneous devotion towards him, even you could say an outburst of devotion. Soon the need arose to safeguard Father Casimir's tomb for fear of losing everything, including the soil that covered his remains.<sup>342</sup> To the chagrin of some of the priests, some of the simple folks, in gratitude for graces received, requested Masses in honor of Father Casimir as a saint. It was necessary to correct and amend their intentions to avoid collision with Church law. Numerous persons, grateful for having their petitions heard, offered various kinds of gifts to the Marians, including votive gifts which could not be publicly displayed prior to the beatification.<sup>343</sup>

But the era of peace and devotion would not last forever. Several decades later, as a consequence of the French revolution which took place between 1789-1799, ripples of unrest and turmoil were felt in Portugal as well. The Order of Masons rose to power and brought about a wave of intolerance and persecution of the Church, especially of religious orders. The Portuguese Marians were seriously affected. In 1834, all three of their monasteries were closed down, and in 1851, even the faithful were

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<sup>340</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 74.

<sup>341</sup> *Positio Wysz*, 423.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid*, 453.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, 458-459.

forbidden access to the house and church in Balsamão.<sup>344</sup> The beatification process, therefore, could not be concluded. Although devotion to Venerable Casimir was not extinguished, writing about him was forbidden. This condition perdured for the approximately 100 years of the Marian's absence from Balsamão—they returned in 1954—yet the people from *Tras os Montes* kept alive the memory of Father Casimir. All through that time people believed in his help. Now a new generation continues the tradition. People make pilgrimages to the shrine in Balsamão, hoping to receive graces there. In spite of the effort required, they walk up the mountain to meet the Lady of Balsamão, who has become known as the Heavenly Nurse, and Venerable Casimir, whose elevation to the altars they await. To him they turn for intercession in their needs and do not suffer disappointment.

In the last hours before Venerable Casimir's death, a confrere who cared for him during his illness asked him an important question, which, like a gold buckle, closed the book of his life: "Have you ever been exposed to the assaults and temptations of the evil spirit?" Father Casimir's response was clear and decisive: "Not in the slightest! Just as by the mercy of God I never allowed the devil any room in my life, now in this very hour the Lord and His Blessed Mother will defend me before that enemy."<sup>345</sup> We recall, however that it was different when he was making his first steps in life: he fell victim to deadly panic when he heard a noise "like that of a huge bird," which was made by "the infernal devil," and the time when the sight of someone's tragic death in the forest imposed such a shock that he was barely able to recover his senses. But now, as Immaculate Mary's "slave," who imitated her virtues all his life long, he was freed from all fear and calmly awaited death. At times, with lips barely moving he kept repeating after his teacher, our holy Father Stanislaus: *Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio*, or after the Psalmist: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 524.

<sup>345</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 74; *Positio* Wyszyński, 415, (testimony of Br. John of Saint Mary Rodrigues).

fear?" (Ps 27:1). To someone present nearby he gave an assurance: "My spirit is strong, very strong," and, using the words of Christ, he slowly entered into a dialogue with the Heavenly Father: "Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit."<sup>346</sup>

Three hours before his death, Father Casimir asked for the holy sacraments and when they were brought to him, he received the Holy Eucharist with difficulty, but with an awareness that he had realized his earthly agenda in full, and he stated that he needed nothing else. With his last words *Benedictus sit Deus*, he started the new assignment facing him now: adoration and praise of God eternally.

Although he spoke no longer and needed nothing else, yet God knew that Father Casimir was leaving his brethren orphaned. Probably for the sake of these men deep in sorrow, He sent a winged "artist," who settled outside of the dying man's cell just after midnight and gave a wonderful two-hour concert. It was an unusual bird which his brethren had never seen or heard before and which never came again. Its performance began deep in the night when only birds without a beautiful voice are active, because blackbirds or nightingales do not sing at midnight in October. This bird sang wonderfully, delighting with its voice the brother keeping vigil at the side of the dying Father Casimir and the servant making bread for the next day. Perhaps this bird's appearance was the reason why the brethren remembered other birds which Father Casimir liked very much and which were not afraid of him and willingly came to him. In their testimonies, they even recalled specifically one of them which made itself so comfortable in Father Casimir's cell as to take liberties. Once this bird even "disrespected" its host's manuscript and even dared—as Father Fischer stated—to soil the Holy Bible. Father Casimir was forced to banish the ill-mannered bird from his cell while clearly indicating the reason for the "eviction."<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 74.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid*, 71; *Positio Wysz*, 411, (testimony of Br. John of Saint Mary Rodrigues).

The superior of the Balsamão monastery, Brother John of the Rosary, remembered the winged night singer in a letter informing the Superior General in Poland of the death of Fr. Casimir. Later, Father Fischer also made a note about this bird in the *Protocollum Balsamenense*.<sup>348</sup>

Some people claim that later on, church bells were heard at nighttime in the abandoned monastery, reminding people of Father Casimir. It is impossible to verify if this is really true or only a fable. However, it is known for certain that in 1955, when the beatification process was resumed and a commission appointed by the Bishop of Bragança arrived to open the grave to inspect the state of Father Casimir's remains and transfer them to a new coffin in a new location, the church bells, untouched by human hands, amazingly began tolling. This is not a fable! The incident was witnessed by competent and respectable people, including priests. The doors leading to the church and the belfry were not only all closed, but they were sealed as well. To exclude other possible external coincidences, an investigation was made as to whether or not something outside the church might have caused the tolling, and inquiries were made even in neighboring churches whether their bells might have been ringing at the same time. But nothing of that nature was discovered. Father Boleslaus Jakimowicz, MIC, made a note of this occurrence in the official protocol and collected statements of individual witnesses, later included in the *Positio* for Father Wszyński.<sup>349</sup> Furthermore, Father Ladislaus Mroczek, MIC, who was a member of the commission and witnessed the incident, later provided a detailed description of the event in his circular letter of November 21, 1955, as the Superior General of the Marians. His letter was included in the *Positio*.<sup>350</sup> and at the end of the *Positio* additional testimonies of graces received and alleged miracles through the intercession of Father Casimir were added.<sup>351</sup>

<sup>348</sup> A. Fischer, *Życie, cnoty i śmierć święta...*, 74.

<sup>349</sup> *Positio* Wysz, 564-570.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid*, 550-551.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid*, 557, 571.





APPENDIX



## DECREE OF HEROIC VIRTUES

A thorough examination of Father Casimir's life and work conducted by Church tribunals was crowned by a decree affirming his heroic virtue issued by the Congregation for the Saints in 1989. The contents of this decree include: an emphasis on the Marian pathway of the Servant of God in his striving for holiness; a biography of his life; the history of the process of examination of testimonies regarding his sanctity, and the final decision.

***Decree in the Diocese of Miranda-Bragança*** on the canonization cause of the Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński, a priest and religious in the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. (1700-1755).

### ***Question:***

Is it quite certain that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love for God and neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of temperance, justice, prudence, and fortitude, along with related virtues, were practiced by the person whom this cause regards?

### ***This is the answer:***

#### ***The Marian Character of Spirituality***

"I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of the life and of virtue. Come to me, all you that desire me and be filled with my fruits. He that hearkens to me, shall not be confounded and they that work by me, shall not sin. [...] They that explain me shall have life everlasting" (Eccl 24:24-26, 30-31 Douay-Rheims).

These words, as if spoken by the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the Church incorporates in various liturgical

texts in her honor, prompted the Servant of God Casimir, since early in life to strive untiringly for holiness under the guidance and protection of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. What is more: his entire life gives witness to the great effectiveness of this “Marian pathway” in striving for holiness. The Servant of God stands on this pathway as “a shining example of speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity to those who believe.” (1 Tm 4:12).

[Father Casimir] endeavored to deepen his devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary by imitating her virtues. He emphasized this in the book *The Morning Star*, which he prepared “for the benefit of the faithful in all walks of life.” In his introduction to this book, he states that “...the most effective devotion to the Blessed Virgin consists in imitating her virtues as presented to us in the Gospels.”

The Ecumenical Council Vatican II also solemnly confirmed this way and in a clear statement pointed it out to the faithful as always vital: “But while in the most Holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection (...), the followers of Christ still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. Therefore, they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of all virtues” (LG, 65).

Saint Pope John Paul II recognized the reason for this state of things in the fact that “The Mother of the Redeemer has a precise place in the plan of salvation. Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, for individuals and for communities, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity,” so that “Mary does not cease to be the ‘Star of the Sea’ (Maris Stella) for all who are still on the journey of faith. If they lift their eyes to her from their earthly existence, they do so because ‘the Son whom she brought forth is He whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren’ (Rom 8:29) and also because ‘in the birth and development of these brothers and sisters she cooperates with a maternal love,’” (LG, 63, (*Redemptoris Mater*, 1, 6).

**Biography**

The Servant of God Casimir Wyczyński was born August 19, 1700, at his family's estate, Jeziora Wielka, then part of the Diocese of Poznan, presently the Diocese of Warsaw, as the seventh of eight children of John Casimir and Hedwig (born Zawadzka). He was baptized on October 4 of the same year. He received the basics of religious education from his parents in whom the Catholic faith was deeply ingrained. From his childhood Father Casimir had a great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. After receiving his education at the Piarist Colleges—first in Góra Kalwaria and then in Warsaw—following pressure from his father, he went into legal apprenticeship at the end of 1718. However, in 1721 he resigned, in order to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain in fulfillment of a previously made promise. While on the road, he fell ill and thus was prevented from carrying out his vow. Therefore, he went to Rome where he was able to obtain a dispensation from his vow. Also in Rome, he met Father Joachim Kozłowski, the Procurator for the Marian Order, and declared before him his readiness to join the Order. In 1723 he received from Father Joachim the Marian habit.

Upon his return to Poland, he began his novitiate with the Marian Fathers, and, having completed it, made a profession of solemn vows in the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary on March 19, 1725. The same year he received his minor orders and was made a sub-deacon, and finally, in 1726, he was ordained to the priesthood.

Already in the novitiate he became noted for his meticulous observance of religious regulations and zeal for growing in virtue. Therefore, soon after ordination he was entrusted with various offices and duties in fulfillment of which he rendered the Order a great service through the richness of his spiritual and intellectual life as the Novice Master (1727-30), substitute for the superior in the Korabiew monastery (1728-30), General Procurator in Rome (1730-33), Secretary General, again Novice Master and substitute for the superior in the Korabiew monastery, General

Assistant (1734-37), instructor of moral theology (1735-37), and spiritual director of the Korabiew monastery (1736-37). Faithfully performing these duties, he used every opportunity to strengthen religious discipline and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin among his brethren, as well as to revive the spirit of their Founder. His fruitful activity was supported above all by his personal example of religious life, filled with particular care for obtaining and improving virtue.

Elected Superior General (1737-1741), he used all the means available to this office to renew and improve the customs and spirit of the Order and especially to eliminate the damages caused by the so-called "Rostkavian dispersion" (1715-22) and the fatal influences of moral depravity dominating the Polish population of the day.

As the superior of the monastery in Góra Kalwaria (1739-47), he did his best to increase its spiritual and material welfare, being particularly concerned with rescuing the Founder's earthly remains from total ruin. At the same time he dedicated himself to fruitful apostolic activity, serving as a confessor to the nuns of

St. Dominic's Order at the convent in Góra Kalwaria, among other things. He was also the Moderator of the Confraternity of Divine Providence, which he established at the Cenacle of the Lord's church.

Re-elected the Superior General (1747-1750), [Father Casimir] reached out to his subordinates through letters in which he presented himself as "a father resolving various disputes, a loving brother, a legitimate administrator managing the community, and a concerned and watchful minister;" endeavoring to keep fidelity to the Rule, mutual charity, and peace in the community. As a faithful son of the Founder, and a guardian of his spiritual legacy, he also diligently aided the souls in Purgatory.

However, the novitiate and a proper formation of the young Marians were his primary concerns. In this respect, he was greatly helped by numerous candidates whom he recruited for the Order from Bohemia who possessed an extensive theological

knowledge. Thanks to this fact, he intensified his efforts for spiritual renewal and intellectual development of the Order. The growing number of Marians made possible the foundation of four new religious houses in Lithuania and Volhyn'.

Named Procurator General of the Order in November of 1750, Father Wyszynski successfully carried out his duties in Rome for two years (1751-53), and effectively fended off the false "Marians" from Vilnius, who usurped the rights of his Order, all the while preparing the beatification process of the Founder.

Being sent to Portugal in 1753, he was greatly mistreated in Lisbon by a man who used deceit to bring the Marians to Portugal for his own purposes. However, in October 1754, Father Casimir eventually obtained from the Ordinary of the Miranda Diocese, presently the Diocese of Bragança, a place for the Order on Mount Balsamão. He died of malignant fever on October 21, 1755, in the opinion of holiness, having received the sacraments of the Church and being in the middle of his dedicated work of formatting the first Portuguese Marian community of hermits residing at this hermitage near the Marian Shrine. He was put to rest near the main altar at the church in Balsamão, greatly mourned by all.

### ***Examination of Testimonies***

The opinion of holiness that the Servant of God enjoyed already in his lifetime, especially during his two-year residency in Portugal, began to spread quickly after his death. Less than a year later, the Bishop of Miranda, responding to the petition of the Marian community in Balsamão, ordered the opening of Father Casimir's beatification process.

Unfortunately, the bishop's unexpected demise halted the process until 1763, when the new Bishop of Miranda gave instructions to conduct an informative process in the diocese (1763-68). Additional processes were held in Lisbon (1768), in Poznan (1775-76), and in Rome (1779).

Upon completion of the proper examination of the Servant of God's writings, Pope Pius VI on January 15, 1780, by his authority, as was customary, signed a decree establishing a committee in charge of presenting this matter before the Apostolic See. Consequently, the episcopal curias in Poznan (1781-83) and in Miranda-Bragança (1783) conducted apostolic processes in accordance with the legal regulations with regard to the virtues of the Servant of God. On November 25, 1788, the Congregation for the Saints issued a decree confirming the credibility of the above processes.

However, as a result of events of a political and religious nature, both in Poland and in Portugal, a total silence befell the beatification cause of the Servant of God. Virtually nothing was done until on June 17, 1955, the cause was re-opened and dispatched to the Historical Section of the then Holy Congregation of Rites. After gathering and securing various documents about the life and work of the Servant of God, an extensive *Positio* on his virtues was prepared in 1986. In October of the same year this *Positio* was positively evaluated by the experts in history appointed by the Congregation for the Saints.

Accordingly, on March 21, 1989, the theologian consultants gathered in special session presided over by the General Promoter for the Faith, Father Antonio Petti, unanimously declared that the Servant of God practiced Christian virtue to an heroic degree.

On November 7<sup>th</sup> of the same year, His Eminence Andrzej Maria Cardinal Deskur, the President of the Pontifical Academy of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., presented the cause to the cardinals and bishops gathered in their ordinary meeting. They acknowledged that the Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński practiced the theological, cardinal and related virtues to an heroic degree.

Eventually, the undersigned Cardinal Prefect presented the account on these matters to the Holy Father, John Paul II. His Holiness, having accepted with satisfaction the opinion of the



Congregation for the Saints, instructed them to prepare an appropriate decree on the heroic virtue of the Servant of God.

When his directive had been carried out, the Holy Father called in the Cardinals, the undersigned Prefect, Cardinal A.M. Deskur, the presenter, and myself, the Bishop's Secretary, along with all other persons who must be called according to custom, and in their presence solemnly pronounced the following:

“It has been recognized as certain in the presently discussed case and all its consequences that the Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszynski practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope and love of God and neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude along with related virtues, to an heroic degree.”

The Holy Father ordered this decree to be publicly proclaimed and deposited in the archives of the Congregation for the Saints.

Rome, December 21, A.D. 1989

✠ Angelus Cardinal Felici  
Prefect

✠ Traianus Crisan  
Titular Archbishop of Drivasto,  
Secretary

## PRAYERS OF FATHER CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI

### **Daily Profession of Faith**

O Lord, Almighty and Triune God, Creator of heaven and earth, before Your Divine Majesty I declare that I believe in everything that our Holy Mother Church believes in, namely, in everything that concerns the Most Holy Incarnation, the human nature, life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; in everything that concerns the Holy Spirit, the Advocate; in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, the Eucharist; in the Immaculately Conceived Virgin Mary, Mother of God; in the seven holy sacraments; in the Saints who reign in heaven; in everything that is in heaven, Purgatory, the Inferno, and eternity; in the immortality of the soul just as the Holy Mother Church believes and as You, my Lord, want me to believe also. I wish to live in this faith until death, and I wish to die and shed my own blood for this faith if such be Your will. Amen.

### **Act of Thanksgiving**

O Lord God Almighty, I believe that You are present here and everywhere. I thank You that You have created me and redeemed me with the Precious Blood of Your Son, that You gave me new birth in the baptismal font and cleansed me in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I thank You that You have nourished me with spiritual and earthly food. I thank You also for calling me to this Congregation, and for numbering me among Your servants who venerate the Virgin Mary, our Mother and Queen. I thank You also for all the blessings of which I am continually and bountifully the recipient. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Thanksgiving to the Lord Our God**

Lord Jesus Christ, I offer myself to You and with thanks and praise I dedicate to You my soul and my body with all my senses for the sake of the immeasurable mercy and favors, both natural and supernatural, that were granted to me out of Your infinite kindness.

My dearly beloved Lord, will I ever be able to repay my infinite debt to You for having set me free from great evil and for the mercy and deeds, words and thoughts that You put into my heart out of Your kindness?

My Lord and my God, here I am appealing to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother; along with the choirs of angels, the righteous and holy ones in heaven, in every way that I am able, according to my understanding and ability, asking and imploring them to help me give due thanks for the innumerable favors I have received, in general and in particular.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, my most beloved Mother and Lady, how much must I be thankful to you and how little I am grateful! You are my Mother indeed; do not look back on the past. Hasten to my rescue in the future so that each moment of my life may become a continuous thanksgiving by every beat of my heart and every breath I take. And should I forget, please accept this right now as done, once and for all.

### **Entrusting Himself to the Lord Our God**

Into your most blessed hands and the sweet embrace, O Divine Providence, I entrust my spirit and my body, my entire being, and especially my responsibilities. Take us, O Lord, under the wings of Your protection and kindly keep us pure and innocent so that we may live and die with You and have eternal rest in You.

### **Entrusting Himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Mother and Lady**

Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven, Lady of the universe and Immaculate Virgin, preserved from the stain of original and every other sin, kindly accept my consecration. You have always been and will always remain, I pray, my dearly beloved Mother worthy of unending love and praise. May I always be your special son! Please show yourself as my Mother, O gracious, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!

### **Entrusting Himself to His Guardian Angel**

My dearly beloved Guardian Angel, you have kindly accorded me your careful protection thus far. Please help me now and in the future to preserve my body in chastity and innocence so that I may gaze upon and adore the Holy Trinity eternally. Amen.

### **Entrusting Himself to his Holy Patrons**

My holy patrons, whom I chose to be my advocates, support me on the path to the fullness of happiness. O God's chosen ones, help me to overcome my faults and to praise God and proclaim His glory, so that strengthened in life by His grace I may merit eternal unity with You.

### **Prayer before Mass**

Almighty and eternal God, I offer You this holy and wondrous Sacrifice of the true Body and Blood of Your dearly beloved Son. I want to be a part of it with all attentiveness, for the sake of Your glory and with the entire heavenly court. I give you thanks for all the favors received from Your most generous hand and which I hope for in the future along with all the people in the world. Grant us perfect love for You and our neighbors and grant us perseverance in Your grace until the end.

Through the merits of this most divine Sacrifice, kindly release the souls of the departed suffering in Purgatory. I offer for them the part of the Sacrifice that is due to them in addition to the part that regards me and my important duties.

I offer You this Eucharist for the conversion of those who remain engrossed in mortal sin. I offer it also for those who live in Your grace that You might kindly strengthen them in it. I offer it for the Holy Father so that You keep him in health and in joyful ministry, also for the exultation of Holy Mother Church. I offer it for the peace and quiet of this Kingdom and all Christian rulers and kings. I offer it for the destruction of heresy and the conversion of infidels and all heretics and schismatics. I offer it for the increase of the spiritual goods of my Holy Order and for all those for whom I must pray out of justice and love. Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving after Mass**

Most gracious and merciful Jesus, have mercy on Your Church. Have mercy also on this place where we come together. Bring it about that sincere peace, genuine humility and magnanimous love may always reign in our midst. Support us with Your grace that we may conduct ourselves with dignity, serve You faithfully, love You, and be pleasing to You. To Your mercy we commend all our works, concerns and occupations. Ever keep on imparting Your blessing upon us. Grant us the grace of persevering in Your service to the very end. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

### **Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady**

O Blessed Virgin Mary, most Pure, most Holy, Immaculate One, God our Lord made you beautiful above all and bestowed upon you the privilege of the sun and the moon. By virtue of your miraculous Conception and for the pain that pierced your heart while you watched your Son die on the cross, please be with me and guard me in the dreadful hour of my death, for you are a powerful Lady. Protect and guard me from the snares of the enemy of mankind. Obtain for me from your Beloved Son the forgiveness

of all my sins, and thus supported by your love, may I share in the joy of your eternal glory. Amen.

**PRAYERS FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF  
FATHER CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI**

**First Prayer**

O Jesus, You deigned to call Your Servant Casimir to the Congregation dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin and Your Mother Mary, bring it about if such be Your Most Holy will, that though her intercession we may rejoice without delay in his elevation to the altars of the Church. Amen.

**Second Prayer**

Let us pray that God will raise the Venerable Servant of God, Father Casimir Wyszyński, to the honors of the altar and ask his intercession for us with God.

O God, joy of the saints, make us glad by the elevation to the honors of the altar of Your faithful Servant Casimir and grant us the zeal to imitate him on our way to holiness.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

Divine Master, You Who call us to Your service, by the example of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir, fill us with concern for the growth of religious life in our country and in all the Church.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

O Holy Spirit Who, in the Immaculate Virgin Mary have prepared a worthy dwelling place, by the example of Your Servant Casimir, make us fervent venerator of her Immaculate Conception.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

O God, fountain of all good, make prejudices and injustices disappear from the face of the earth and grant us the grace after the example of Your Servant Casimir to be ardent defenders of all those who suffer.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

Most holy and undivided Trinity, You choose to live in the hearts of Your faithful servants and after their death to reward their merits with the glory of heaven. Grant, we implore You, that Your Servant, Casimir, who with apostolic zeal faithfully served the Church under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, may be numbered among the Blessed, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Third Prayer**

Most holy and undivided Trinity, You choose to live in the hearts of your faithful servants and after their death to reward their merits with the glory of heaven. Grant, we implore You, that Your Servant Casimir, who with apostolic zeal faithfully served the Church under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, may be numbered among the Blessed. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Prayer for a Special Grace Through the Intercession of the Servant of God Father Casimir**

O God, Merciful Father, in the heart of Your Servant Casimir You aroused such a great zeal for accomplishing corporal and spiritual deeds of mercy; deign to grant me (us) through his intercession the grace ..., for which I (we) implore You. Amen.

*Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be to the Father...*

### Chaplet of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary

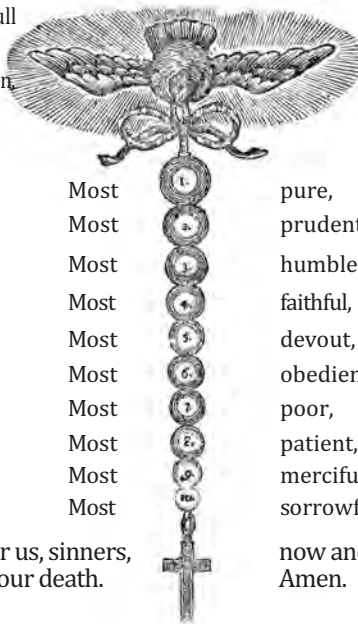
The Marians have recited this prayer since the time the Order was approved upon the “Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the B.V.M.” by Pope Innocent XII in 1699. Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, Founder of the Marians, was the first to make his solemn vows on this rule on June 6, 1701.

First, we make the Sign of the Cross, then we recite one Our Father and 10 Hail Mary’s, mentioning after the words “Holy Mary, Mother of God” one of the virtues in the order given below.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Our Father who are in heaven...

Hail, Mary, full  
is with you.  
among women,  
the fruit of  
Holy Mary,



of grace, the Lord  
Blessed are you  
and blessed is  
your womb, Jesus.  
Mother of God,

Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most  
Most

pure,  
prudent,  
humble,  
faithful,  
devout,  
obedient,  
poor,  
patient,  
merciful,  
sorrowful.

Pray for us, sinners,  
of our death.

now and in the hour  
Amen.

V. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:

R. As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever.  
Amen.



V. In Your Conception, O Virgin Mary, You were Immaculate.  
R. Pray for us to the Father Whose Son, Jesus, you brought forth into the world.

Let us pray: Father, You prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of Your Son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by His death (and Resurrection) and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in Your presence without sin. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

V. The Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception,  
R. Be our health and our protection.

### **Prayer for the Congregation of Marian Fathers**

Almighty God, You endow your Church with the charism of the religious life. I give You thanks for the gift of the Marian community, which Saint Stanislaus Papczyński founded by Your inspiration, and which Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz renewed in a most wonderful way. I thank You for the beautiful witness of the life of the many Marian Fathers and Brothers who faithfully brought to fulfillment the gift of the Marian vocation they received.

I ask of You, God, the grace of fruitful fidelity for all whom You have called to the Marian way of life. Bring it about that, strengthened by Your grace, they may zealously spread the honor of Mary Immaculate, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. With their eyes fixed on the example of her life, may they uphold the beauty of the Marian image of the Church. Set ablaze in them an ardent love for bringing help to the departed and to all who find themselves drawing to the close of their life and at the gate to eternity with You. Let them show forth to all the purpose of human life, which is eternal happiness with You, and may they perseveringly accompany them in their daily pilgrimage by the way of faith, hope, and love. Keep strengthening them in the service of the Church that they may always be inflamed with the holy fire of zeal and courageously proclaim to the world the Good News of Your mercy, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Savior. Con-

tinue to pour into their hearts the zeal and wisdom by which to render help to the poor of the contemporary world, especially to people sunk in various addictions, to those relegated to the margins of society, to the forgotten and to those held in contempt. May they know how to bring the Good News to them with great haste, and may they someday see your Fatherly Face.

O God, who desires to include every one of us in your providential plan of salvation, I pray You, enlighten the Congregation of Marian Fathers that they may know how to discern the signs of the times and courageously go where the need is greatest and the conditions most difficult. May they know how to undertake with humility all sorts of tasks in the Church, even if that would require following the road of hardships, suffering and adversity.

I ask of you, O God, new and holy vocations to the Congregation of Marian Fathers, that the Marian charism of life may enrich the Church in the various niches of the world. O Lord, send forth courageous and zealous men that, in love with Christ and the Church they may know how to lead others efficaciously to You. And for those already called, support and strengthen them in the life they have chosen, that no deceptions of the world may draw them away from You, Who alone are Goodness and Beauty.

Bring it about that the beauty of the Marian charism may shine on the face of the Church and radiate to all who are on their pilgrim way to You and are filled with longing for You. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## GRACES RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI

*Recent accounts of graces received*

### **The only help would be a Holy Mass**

When my sister's daughter, Karolina, was 5 months old, she became ill. She was taken to the doctors in Grójec and Warka, in Poland, who suspected heart disease.

Then her mother took Karolina to the Children's Healthcare Center in Miedzylesie, where she was hospitalized and placed under oxygen because during a blood draw she experienced circulatory collapse. Karolina was resuscitated, but remained unconscious for several days.

At that point, Karolina was diagnosed with a heart defect. She spent about a month at the hospital after experiencing a second collapse. She was resuscitated again and got well enough to go back home. However, the doctors said the only help we could give her would be to offer Holy Mass.

When Karolina again fell ill we started to pray for her health through the intercession of the Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński, using a novena pamphlet. We all prayed daily. We also had Holy Masses celebrated to implore the intercession of the Servant of God.

Now we have all observed a noticeable improvement of Karolina's health, which we believe is thanks to the intercession of the Servant of God. She presently has to take heart medication, but she is healthy and developing properly.

— *Maria, Poland*

### **The pain vanished**

After a work-related accident, I had my right kidney removed. The surgery left me in poor health. It took me approximately five months to recover.

Following my recovery, I felt considerable pain in my left kidney. The pain was similar to what I had previously felt in my right kidney before surgery. I went to see a doctor who prescribed medication. The medicine did not bring any relief; instead, the pain intensified.

At that time, I received a Venerable Casimir Wyszyński prayer card. I decided to celebrate a novena and asked the Servant of God for his intercession. On the morning of the ninth day, the pain was just as acute as before, but about midday, the pain vanished.

I believe that my pain went away thanks to the intercession of the Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński.

— *Ferdynand, Great Britain*

### **Wife recovers**

After having miscarried a 2-month-old fetus, my wife was hemorrhaging for three weeks, which left her in a weakened state. Further, she had to undergo surgery for cancer removal. Her condition was life-threatening.

We had a Mass celebrated for the intention of the beatification of the Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński, also asking for his intercession for my wife's health. My wife came home in April and now she feels totally fine. For this grace, I want to give thanks to the Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.

— *Josef, Poland*

### **Father Casimir to the rescue**

When friends requested help in prayer, Fr. Casimir came to the rescue. He has become the guy to go to when we need miracles fast.

First, there was Jude, a 16-year-old boy born with a severe bone malformation in his chest cavity. The only hope to alleviate the pain was to surrender to a five-hour-long surgery. We prayed to Fr. Casimir for his intercession. Joan, his grandmother, reports that the surgery went miraculously well and Jude is doing just fine.

Then there was Kelleigh. She had endured four complicated surgical procedures on her spine within three months to correct

injuries from an automobile accident. But Kelleigh still needed another surgery to correct a bone pressing on a nerve. Payment for this surgery meant emergency certification through her insurance company for an additional \$15,000. When the certification didn't come through in time, Kelleigh had to borrow against her home equity to pay for the surgery. Again appealing to Fr. Casimir for his intercession, within days her insurance company refunded her the entire \$15,000. Though still recuperating, Kelleigh is doing well and is actively back to her work as a dedicated journalist.

— *SF, Worthington, Massachusetts*

### **Son turns away from sin**

I am writing to thank Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński for turning around my son's life. My son was involved with the wrong crowd and was leading a life of sin. I prayed to Fr. Casimir to intercede with God for my son. I asked that the Lord would instill in my son the character to be a good young man and strong enough to forego that lifestyle. And my son did just that! He even entered into a nice relationship with a good girl.

But then he didn't want to marry this girl, so again I prayed to Fr. Casimir. I asked him to help my son gain the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and marry his girlfriend. Again, Fr. Casimir answered my prayers right away. My son had a change of heart and married his girlfriend. They now have a wonderful family. I have Fr. Casimir to thank for my son being the man he is today.

— *JC, Hopewell, New Jersey*

### **Wife avoids major surgery**

I would like to share two graces received through the intercession of the Venerable Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.

First, my wife of 54 years suffered a heart attack. She was rushed to the hospital and spent six days there. After undergoing a battery of tests, she was told that she was facing major surgery. She most likely needed a heart valve operation, but they wanted to run one more test.

I prayed to Fr. Casimir to intercede for my wife's health. After undergoing that final test, it was determined that my wife would not need the operation after all. Thanks to Fr. Casimir's intercession, everything worked out well.

Then, one of my grandsons earned his master's degree with a 4.0, but he couldn't find a job anywhere. He was getting discouraged. Again, I turned to Fr. Casimir. Three weeks later, we got the good news that he finally found a job.

Once he started work, his boss told him he was one of more than 500 applicants for this one job.

— *EH, South Hadley, Massachusetts*

### **Grandson finds work after prison**

My grandson was released from prison in April. He was only able to get a job landscaping for four days a week and was making about \$200 a week. I prayed to Venerable Casimir to intercede and help him get a better job. About two weeks later, he obtained a full-time job that pays him better wages. I continue to pray to Fr. Casimir as my grandson starts his new life.

— *DD, Lithia, Florida*

### **Against all odds**

I testify here to the grace received through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński.

My daughter, age 38, had to undergo surgery for a life-threatening ulcer in her throat. Since she was losing weight at an alarming rate, the doctors believed she would not survive. Her weight went down to 100 pounds. Meanwhile, I was reciting the novena to Fr. Casimir, asking for his help. The surgery took place in October and it was a success — “against all odds,” as the surgeon said. Two weeks later, my daughter was back home, and she was immediately able to resume taking care of her family. She feels very well.

I give thanks to Fr. Casimir for this wonderful grace, and I will offer a Holy Mass for his beatification.

— *Jadwiga, Poland*

### **Cancer is in complete remission**

We wanted to thank Venerable Fr. Casimir Wyszynski for his intercession in healing my mother's sister-in-law. After she was diagnosed with a tumor in her sinus cavity and began chemotherapy, my mother started praying to Fr. Casimir for her recovery. Now she is in complete remission and has returned to her normal life. Thank you, Fr. Casimir.

— *RW, Evansville, Indiana*

### **Son starts new career**

When I received your Fall 2017 *Marian Helper*, I read with interest the "Graces Received" article about graces received through Venerable Casimir. I started crying as I thought about our youngest son, Jimmy. In recent years, he was misdiagnosed and almost died from undetected diabetes; has been in two car accidents; suffered a severe concussion; and lost his job. He ran into all kinds of health complications until he was finally cleared to pursue a new career. After reading about Fr. Casimir, I prayed to him and asked that he intercede for our son. On the following day, our son got an offer for the job he wanted, and now he's in training. Talk about a fast response!

— *JK, Liverpool, New York*

### **Family receives several graces**

I wanted to let you know of several special graces that God granted my family and me through the intercession of Fr. Casimir. I prayed the prayer for his intercession [below] every day for several months. I prayed for a better house for us to be able to buy. We weren't able to buy a house, but we were able to rent a much bigger house in a nice area for a price we can afford. The opportunity basically fell in our laps, and I am sure it was a special blessing granted to us through Fr. Casimir's intercession. He also worked another grace for our son, who had been sad and seemed depressed. He wasn't interested in anything and he hardly smiled anymore. We found out he was being bullied in school. My hus-

band and I also realized that we were being too hard on him. The bullying minimized, and we began to show him more love. He's a happy boy now. I believe it was through the intercession of Fr. Casimir, because it all happened shortly after I began praying for his intercession.

— *LK, email*

*Testimonies previously collected by the Marians from Portugal:*

### **A newborn is healed**

There was a healing of a child in France. The little boy was born with orange-colored skin. The doctors' prognosis was that the baby had only hours to live. Blood work was ordered at once, and the newborn was transported to another clinic.

Meanwhile, his mother prayed to the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir for help. Some four hours later, the doctor pronounced him suddenly healed. They allegedly said it was a miracle. The child presently stays with his grandmother. I personally saw him and testify that he looks like the picture of perfect health.

### **Sight for sore eyes**

A widow came to the tomb of Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński to give thanks for the miracle performed by the Lord God through Fr. Casimir's intercession. The woman had leukoma in one eye and was afraid she would soon lose sight in the other as well. Therefore, she prayed to Fr. Casimir, pledging—should she regain her eyesight in the next five days—to proclaim it publicly. One afternoon during that period, she began to see things better. Her eyesight kept slowly improving until she was totally cured of blindness.

### **She was preparing for death**

A married couple came to make an offering at Fr. Casimir's tomb in thanksgiving for the grace of accepting God's will that was granted to the wife. She was suffering from malarial bron-



chitis and was near death. She came to receive the Sacraments. Meanwhile, as her husband prayed for Fr. Casimir's help—promising to offer a Holy Mass for his beatification and to make a barefoot pilgrimage to his tomb if she were to be healed—the wife opened her eyes and felt her health markedly improve. Now she is feeling well.

### **A child's suffering alleviated**

A man came to give thanks for the grace granted by God through Fr. Casimir's intercession for a young child. This child had misshapen arms and was unable to hold up his head. The man reports that soon after he prayed to Fr. Casimir asking that the child be healed, the child was able to straighten his neck and hold up his head, which was regarded as a miracle.

### **Woman's tumors disappeared**

For three years, a woman had tumors on her head, one of which looked bad and was particularly painful. The doctor thought that a surgery was necessary. After the woman recited the novena to Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, the tumors disappeared during the next month. Only small traces of the tumors remain on her head.

### **Leg pain disappears**

A woman visited the tomb of Fr. Casimir in thanksgiving for a grace of healing of her knee, which the Lord granted through Fr. Casimir's intercession. She had experienced unbearable pain and was unable to use her leg. She entrusted her health to Fr. Casimir, and shortly afterwards she was relieved from pain that had tormented her from her early youth.

### **Girl's wounds finally heal**

A girl had about five or six wounds on her leg. She was given various medications for a whole year without achieving any relief.

Her leg remained swollen and covered with wounds. When she began praying to the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir, her leg began to heal and she eventually experienced a full recovery.

*Testimonies previously collected by the Marians from Poland:*

### **Son healed from epileptic attacks**

One day the mother of a young man came to me to offer a Mass for the intention of her son's health. He was tormented by attacks of some unidentified illness, similar to epilepsy, which would happen nearly everywhere—even in the street—and he would have to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. However, the doctors could not identify his ailment. After we celebrated Mass for the intention of the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, as well as asking for the healing of this young man, the attacks stopped.

### **Niece regains consciousness**

A woman from the nearby town came to our chapel wishing to offer a Holy Mass for the intention of her 20-year-old niece. Her niece had overdosed on some strong medicine and lost consciousness. After a month she still had not regained consciousness and was on artificial nutrition.

Before going to see her niece, the woman attended Holy Mass for the beatification of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński and the healing of her niece. When she arrived at the hospital, she found everyone greatly amazed, because her niece had regained consciousness. After a while, she went back home in good health.

### **Son recovers from serious illness**

A woman who lived nearby came to tell us about her son. He was a veterinarian and worked for state-owned farms in the north of the country. He had contracted a disease from the animals. He was sent for treatment to Lublin. His mother, fearing for

his life, offered a Holy Mass for the beatification of Fr. Casimir Wyszyński and for the healing of her son. Some time later, she received the news that her son was doing better and had left the hospital. The woman attributed this grace to the intercession of Fr. Casimir.

### **Feuding families reconcile**

Two families had a long-lasting feud which seemed impossible to reconcile. Family members prayed to Fr. Casimir Wyszyński for his intercession in this matter during the celebration of the novena and Holy Mass for his beatification. Soon the two families reconciled and the feud was forgotten.



## **PHOTOGRAPHS**





The Venerable Servant of God  
 Fr. Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński (1700–1755).  
 Copperplate by J.C. Winkler (Vienna, second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century).



Scenic view of the Marian monastery in Balsamão, where the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński died and was buried in 1755.

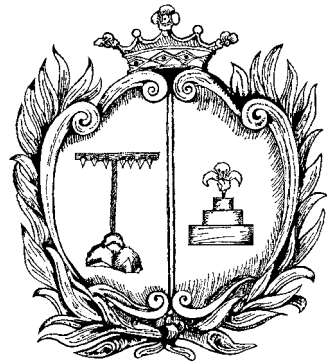


The frontal view of the Marian Church on Mount Balsamão in Portugal. (Opposite: close-up of the white marble monument to Fr. Wyszyński).





Basilica Ara Coeli and the entrance to the monastery of Reformed Franciscans in Rome, where Fr. Wszyński stayed as a guest during his frequent trips to the Eternal City.



Coat of arms of the Wszyński family.



The old atrium of the Balsamão monastery at night.  
The lighted window on the second floor belongs to Fr. Casimir's cell.



Interior view of the newly renovated Marian church in Balsamão.



The granite stone bearing a suitable inscription covers the coffin containing Fr. Casimir's earthly remains at the Marian Church in Balsamão.





The frame of Father Casimir's bed, his trunk, and walking stick preserved in his simple cell at the monastery in Balsamão. The Venerable Servant of God was known for the austerity of his lifestyle.



The baptismal font in Fr. Casimir's native parish church in Jeziórka near Grójec. In all likelihood, the Venerable Servant of God was baptized there in 1700.

Cutlery that belonged to Father Casimir. More of his personal items can be seen on display at the museum in the Marian monastery on Mount Balsamão.

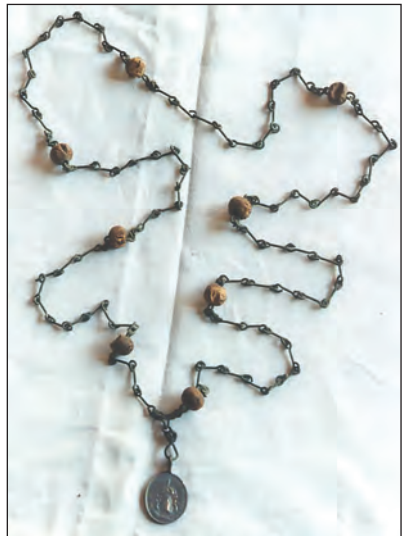


Below: a metal cilice which Fr. Casimir used for mortification. This device was commonly used by clergy and religious of the day to mortify the flesh.



These beads, on which Fr. Casimir recited the *Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the B.V.M.*, were found at his graveside.

Father Casimir strongly believed that meditating upon and praying the Chaplet brought great spiritual strength and consolation.



Averse (left) and reverse (right) of the Chaplet medal.





This 18<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Father Casimir Wyszyński by an unknown artist is located at the Archbishop's Palace in Lisbon, Portugal. The heroic perseverance of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir led to the founding of a Marian community in Balsamão, Portugal, and the international expansion of the Marian Order.



Another 18<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Father Casimir Wyszyński – a work of an unknown painter, now preserved at the Marians' monastery on Mount Balsamão



Portrait of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir from the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, attributed to Fr. John Niezabitowski, MIC (1744-1804). This painting is preserved at the Marians' monastery in Gozlin, Poland.



This 18<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Father Casimir Wyszyński is attributed to Domingos Teixeira Barreto. The picture shows Our Lady holding the blue scapular of the Immaculate Conception. The Venerable Servant of God Casimir zealously promoted that devotion. (Right-hand corner: enlarged fragment of this picture showing Father Casimir making his way to the monastery on Mount Balsamão.





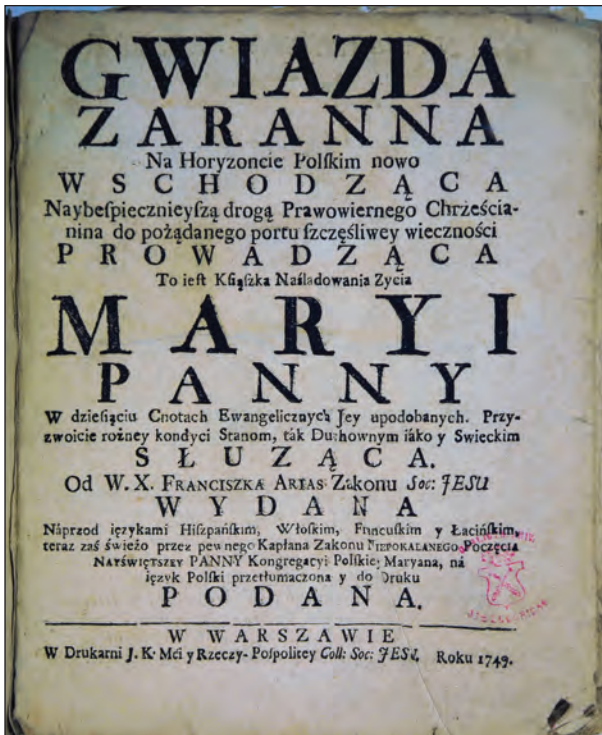


The Archangel Raphael guides Father Wyszyński (in the background) on the road to Balsamão. Painting from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, attributed to Domingos Teixeira Barreto. The image is located at the Marians' monastery on Mount Balsamão in Portugal.





This painting, attributed to Domingos Teixeira Barreto and dated the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, symbolically depicts the establishing of the Marian Order in Portugal. Father Wyszyński is shown kneeling on the right, opposite the Marian Founder, St. Stanislaus Papczyński.



Title page of the book *Gwiazda Zaranna* (Morning Star), which Fr. Wyszynski edited and published in Warsaw, in 1749.



Venerable Casimir Wyszynski's signature as the Superior General of the Marians – together with the Great Seal of the Order – on his circular letter of May 18, 1748.

Fr. Cajetanus Wetycki Congregationis Marianorum Immaculate Conceptionis  
Episcopi M.A.S.E. Praepositus Genlis & Servus

um ad instantiam Serenissimi Regis Portugalliae ac Lusitaniae de gremio Congrega-  
tionis Nostrae Religiosi revisiti sine, Quapropter vigore presentium testatur Admodum  
Radium Fr. Cosimirus Wyzynski Ex Praeposito ac Procuratorem Saluae Congregationis nostrae  
Marians in Regno Portugalliae destinatum, et ad reparationem Serenissima Majestatis  
Regiae missum. Cui presentibus omnigenam facultatem impartitur Fundationis ibidem  
accedendi, Moribus suscipiendi, induendi, ad Professorem additendi, nec non ad Ordines dignos  
promovendi, et alia ad hunc finem concernentia, tam in jure quam in facto tractandi, Licentiam  
plenariam damus et concedimus. In quorum fidem sigillum nostrae Congregationis Nostrae apud  
Iulium et manu propria Subscribimus. Datum in Conventu Nostrae Mariane Casertensi  
die 28. Julij Anno D. M. D. C. LXXII.



Fr. Cajetanus Wetycki Congregationis Marianorum Immaculate Conceptionis  
Episcopi M.A.S.E. Praepositus Genlis & Servus

Fr. Joannes Gualterus Secretarius

The document issued by Fr. General Cajetan Wetycki on July 28, 1752, authorizing Fr. Wyzynski to establish the Marians in Portugal.



## ABOUT THE MARIANS

The Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception is a worldwide community of about 500 priests and brothers who have been serving Christ and the Church for 350 years.

Founded in Poland in 1670 by Saint Stanislaus Papczyński, the Marians were the first Catholic men's order still in existence to give witness to Mary's Immaculate Conception by bearing her title.

As the years passed, the Marians continued to spread beyond the borders of Poland. However, during the 19th century, the Marian Congregation's very existence was challenged by a flood of political oppression. By 1909, the Congregation was reduced to a single elderly priest. On the brink of extinction, God sent Fr. George Matulaitis-Matulewicz who as a child was spiritually formed and educated by the Marians. He undertook renewing the religious order.

As an educator and social reformer, Fr. George—now Blessed George—renovated the Congregation of Marians in 1910, calling on its members “to serve where the need is greatest.” It was a period of restoration and great renewal for the Marians. Known as the Renovator of the Congregation, Blessed George served the Church as bishop of Vilnius, archbishop and apostolic delegate, and founder of two religious congregations of women. He challenged his fellow brothers in Christ to “Respond to the signs of your times ...” and “see how the gospel is touching humanity.”

The principal apostolic goals of the Marians are to promote and foster devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, to aid the Holy Souls detained in Purgatory with God's abundant grace and merciful love, to assist diocesan priests in their pastoral ministry and to offer religious formation to the faithful. Faithful to Christ and His Church and attentive to the spiritual needs of God's people, the Marians have been spreading the salutary message and devotion to the Divine Mercy since 1941.



## MEET A SAINTLY RELIGIOUS WHOSE EXAMPLE OF LIFE AND DEDICATION TRANSFORMED HIS RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

*I come to serve you ...* With these words Father Casimir Wyszyński opened a circular letter to his confreres as the newly-elected Superior General of the Marian Order. These words reflect his manner of being a member of this particular religious community and of the entire Church.

All his life long, he strove on the road of faith, serving both God and his neighbor, without letting any difficulties or adversities to deter him.

He knew that he had been called and sent by the Lord to fulfill a mission of proclaiming the Good News to his fellow-Marians in order to rekindle the community's religious charism and to help—through communal effort—the people in these difficult times to maintain hope and to trust completely in Divine Providence after the example of Mary.

What kind of man was he? Why do we wish to preserve his memory? What makes his message relevant today?

These are just a few questions that led to the publishing of this book, which intends—through reflection on his road of life, his Marian vocation and mission in the Church—to bring closer to the modern world the person of Father Casimir Wyszyński.

*From Introduction*

More information  
about the Venerable Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński is available  
at [www.padrimariani.org](http://www.padrimariani.org)



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