

MICHAŁ BIAŁKOWSKI, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń  
ORCID: 0000-0001-5215-1271  
bialkowski@umk.pl

**Rev.: FR. PAWEŁ KUMMER, KAROL WOJTYŁA  
ABOUT THE LITURGICAL REFORM  
IN THE KRAKOW ARCHDIOCESE**

Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2022, pp. 390

The life and service of Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II already possesses large historiography. It could be assumed that all the research studies concerning this Person has been exhausted and closed. Nothing could be more wrong. Not all stages of his life has been thoroughly portrayed. The greatest disproportions concern the time of service of Karol Wojtyła as an auxiliary bishop, vicar capitular and Krakow metropolitan (1958-1978), and the time of his pontificate (1978-2005).<sup>1</sup> It is evident that his international significance, in particular, the contribution of John Paul II to the global changes, of which he was the initiator, co-creator and active participant, speaks for the time of his pontificate. Therefore, it appears to be necessary to complete our knowledge in order to obtain a full picture of the path Karol Wojtyła followed to the historic day of 16 October 1978, when he was elected to the Throne of the Apostles.

Hence, the publication of the book by Fr. Paweł Kummer entitled *Karol Wojtyła about the liturgical reform in the Krakow Archdiocese*

---

<sup>1</sup> Works by the following authors attempt to supplement much needed knowledge for the period of bishop's and archbishop's service: Fr. J. M. D y d u c h, *Kardynał Karol Wojtyła w służbie Konferencji Episkopatu Polski*, Kraków 2007; M. B i a ł k o w s k i, *Udział Karola Wojtyły w pracach Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji specjalistycznych (1958-1978)*, „Studia Salvatoriana Polonica”, vol. 12, 2018, pp. 275-321; *idem*, *Działalność Karola Wojtyły na forum Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji (1958-1978)*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 3:2018, pp. 197-232; ks. J. U r b a n, *Św. Jan Paweł II jako biskup krakowski. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Kraków 2020; M. B i a ł k o w s k i, *Udział Karola Wojtyły w pracach Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji specjalistycznych (1958-1978)*, [in:] *Prymas i Papież. Studia poświęcone prymasowi Stefanowi Wyszyńskiemu i papieżowi Janowi Pawłowi II*, eds. M. B i a ł k o w s k i, dk. W. R o z y n k o w s k i, Toruń 2021, pp. 133-174.

should be welcomed and the selection of this sensitive topic appreciated. The study should be placed at the border of biographistics and history of the local Church (in this very case Krakow Archdiocese), closed in a very specific, liturgical perspective. Particularly valuable is – in the context of the analysed problem – the connection of a few interacting and overlapping planes: universal Church in Poland and Krakow Church. Explicit is as well reference to these three realities of the Church – from global to local, these include fundamental research questions explicitly formulated in Introduction (p. 17). It is worth emphasising that the study reveals pioneer character. So far just a few monographs have been published broaching the topic of the introduction of the liturgical reform in individual local churches (Tarnów Diocese,<sup>2</sup> Siedlce Diocese,<sup>3</sup> Warsaw Archdiocese,<sup>4</sup> Warmia Diocese,<sup>5</sup> Wrocław Diocese<sup>6</sup>). However, this group fails to include the Krakow Archdiocese, being a point of reference for centuries for other local Churches and assuming profound religious significance in over one thousand history of Christianity in the Polish land.<sup>7</sup>

The book under review consists of 390 pages. It contains: table of contents (pp. 7-10), list of abbreviations (pp. 11-12), introduction (13-20), six, comprehensive chapters (pp. 21-328), conclusion (pp. 329-336), bibliography (pp. 337-371), summary in Polish (p. 373), summary in English (pp. 375-376), list of photographs (pp. 377-380), and personal index (pp. 381-390). The publication has a logical, well thought-out structure of the dissertation, starting with a discussion of the liturgical renewal movement in the Church in the first half of the 20th century, the presentation of Karol Wojtyła's liturgical involvement in the life of the Archdiocese of Krakow until 1963, the attitude of the Archbishop of Krakow to the Constitution on the Liturgy and its implementation

---

<sup>2</sup> Z. S a d k o, *Percepcja soborowej odnowy liturgicznej w diecezji tarnowskiej za pasterzowania księdza arcybiskupa Jerzego Ablewicza (1962-1990)*, Tarnów 1997.

<sup>3</sup> K. M a t w i e j u k, *Recepcja odnowy liturgicznej Soboru Watykańskiego II w diecezji siedleckiej*, Siedlce 1999.

<sup>4</sup> G. B e r e c z y ń s k i, *Reforma liturgiczna Soboru Watykańskiego II w archidiecezji warszawskiej 1963-1992*, Warszawa 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Z. O g ó r e k, *Recepcja odnowy liturgicznej Soboru Watykańskiego II w diecezji warmińskiej*, Olsztyn 2006.

<sup>6</sup> T. B i s z k o, *Recepcja odnowy liturgicznej Soboru Watykańskiego II w archidiecezji wrocławskiej do 1992 roku*, Wrocław 2009.

<sup>7</sup> See: *Kościół krakowski w tysiącleciu*, Kraków 2000.

in the universal Church and in Poland, his concern for the construction of diocesan structures for the realisation of the liturgical reform, protectorate over the liturgical renewal in the Archdiocese of Krakow and the place of the reform in the Pastoral Synod of the Krakow Archdiocese and I Synod of the Krakow Metropolis.

In the Introduction the author properly formulated the purpose of this study as: [...] the presentation of the role of Karol Wojtyła: priest, auxiliary bishop and Krakow metropolitan, in the context of the liturgical renewal introduced at the end of the 19th century by the activities of the liturgical movement, confirmed by the seriousness of the Vatican Council II and implemented under its protectorate in the Archdiocese in Krakow” (p. 17).

In Chapter I, entitled *The liturgical renewal movement in the Roman Catholic Church in the first half of the 20th century* (pp. 21-66), Fr. Kummer discussed the origins of the liturgical movement, pointing to the importance of the abbey at Solemnes as its first centre in the mid-19th century. He then presented the classical liturgical movement and its most important centres in Belgium, Germany and Austria. The next part of this chapter concerns the promotion of the liturgical movement as shown in the teachings of the popes (from Pius X to Pius XII) and the organisation of international liturgical congresses. Chapter I closes with the history of the liturgical movement in the Polish land. We learn about its first propagators, the activities of Father Jan Korzonkiewicz and Father Michał Kordel (representatives of the leading circles in Krakow), the significance of the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec and the activity of other liturgical centres (Płock, Lublin, Laski near Warsaw, Lviv, Poznań, Gniezno, Pelplin and Vilnius). This part of the book organises and explains the content. Undoubtedly, the reader unfamiliar with the history of the liturgy or burdened with books published by traditionalist circles, most often devoid of substantive value, will find this part particularly valuable.

Chapter II entitled *Karol Wojtyła in the liturgical Krakow Archdiocese until 1963* (pp. 67-126) is dedicated to the presence of liturgy in the life of Karol Wojtyła until the promulgation of the Constitution on liturgy by Pope Paul VI and the appointment of the vicar capitular to the archbishop's see in Krakow (4 and 30 December 1963 respectively). The importance of liturgy in times of school catechesis, in the period of priestly formation, during priestly ordination and primum has

been discussed. The next sub-chapter refers to the care of Fr. Wojtyła about the liturgical life during his Roman studies, his service as a vicar in the parishes of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Niegowić and St Florian in Krakow. Particularly interesting are sub-chapters analysing “Tyniec Memorial” of 1951 and the scientific and journalistic activities; the liturgy for academic chaplaincy; nomination and bishop’s consecration (preparations for sacra, ceremony and the explanation of the bishop’s sacra). The last sub-chapter contains the overview of the celebrations of Bishop Karol Wojtyła before the liturgical reform; bishop’s primitions, liturgical rites performed in the Wawel Cathedral and in Nowa Huta, care for liturgy during canonical visitations in the years 1959-1963, sacramental service for the “community”, administering the sacrament of Holy Orders and other bishop’s duties.

Chapter III *Archbishop Karol Wojtyła about the conciliar Constitution on the liturgy and its implementation in the universal Church and in Poland* (pp. 127-190) touches upon broad issues referring to the discussions of the Second Vatican Council and its reception. Father Kummer has presented these issues in an insightful and comprehensive manner. At the same time, he has introduced the reader to the text of the universal Church and the Church in Poland. The first sub-chapter is devoted to Archbishop Karol Wojtyła’s participation in the Second Vatican Council and the promotion of its resolutions by the Metropolitan of Krakow. The author addresses the issues of the hierarch’s preparation for the Council, his participation in the panels, his speeches on the liturgy and his introduction of the conciliar renewal. In the sub-chapter regarding the formulation and reception of the Constitution on liturgy the author thoroughly described the preparation of the draft of the Constitution, changes in liturgy propounded by the Krakow Church, conciliar debate over the Constitution and the introduction of the assumptions of the liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council. The next sub-chapter puts forward the reception of the Constitution on liturgy in the Church in Poland. The author aptly remarked that strategic significance was attached to the translation of the Holy See into Polish language. He further analysed the standpoint of the Polish Episcopate referring to the liturgical reform drawing our attention to the fact that: “Cardinal Wyszyński claimed that the liturgical renewal is a difficult and complicated task, and above all, carrying the pastoral and educational character. He stated that the most important direction

of the conducted renewal will be the introduction of the faithful to the conscious and active experiencing of liturgy. He reassured that although great effort was expended by both the priests and the faithful, it should permanently be taken calmly and patiently” (p. 169).

Fr. Kummer then presented the liturgical documents of the Episcopate. He discussed in detail four pastoral letters of the Episcopate (“Letter to the clergy on the implementation of the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” of 2 April 1964; “Pastoral letter of the Polish bishops on the occasion of the implementation of the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” of 2 April 1964; “Letter of the Polish bishops to the faithful on the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of 7 March 1965”; “Letter to the clergy on the proper implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” of 27 January 1965) closely related to the reception of the Constitution on the Liturgy. Other letters, instructions and decrees have been provided by referencing them to the source of their publication (pp. 178-179). The last two issues addressed in this sub-chapter comprise the introduction of the Polish language into the liturgy and new liturgical books. The chapter ends with a description of the activities of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments. It should be emphasised that it was prepared almost exclusively on the basis of the archival materials from the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow.

*The concern of Archbishop Karol Wojtyła about the formation of the diocesan structure for the realization of the liturgical reform* is the title of Chapter IV (pp. 191-230). Hence, the theoretical deliberations included in the study by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II*, Kraków 1972, has naturally commenced the above problem. This is the source of the original conciliar ideas of the Krakow Archbishop, also in the realm of the liturgical renewal. Whereas, further three sub-chapters strictly refer to the diocesan institutions appointed by the Krakow metropolitan in order to fully realise the reception of the instruction of XXI Eccumenical Council on liturgy. The author analysed the origins, activities and formal and institutional transformations of the Liturgical Institute established in September 1968. The activities of the practical and theoretical sections as well as liturgical music within the Institute have been put forward. The second institution that has been presented is the Liturgical Commission of the Krakow

Archdiocese. The circumstances of its formation have been outlined, the statute referred to and the activity for the liturgical renewal explored. The third diocesan institution appointed by Cardinal Wojtyła was the Commission for Church Music / Sacred Music Commission. By analogy, as in the case of Liturgical Commission, the attention was directed at the act of the formation of the commission and its statute.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's patronage over the liturgical renewal was unique in Poland. It was expressed both in the daily activities, resulting from the hierarch's calendar (celebration of the liturgy and administration of the sacraments), and in special care for the spiritual growth and development of the liturgical altar service (ministry of altar servers and lectors). Therefore, it is good that these contents have found their separate place on pages of Chapter V (pp. 231-275). In addition, the author presents the metropolitan of Krakow's contacts with the Light-Life Movement on a grand scale, including Fr Franciszek Blachnicki, its charismatic founder and spiritual father. It is also worth emphasising that this dimension of commitment in favour of the promotion of post-conciliar liturgy and the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council was presented with rich source material. However, even here some additions and supplements cannot be excluded, since the patronage of the Light-Life Movement extended beyond the borders of the Archdiocese of Krakow. It would as well be good to refer to the conciliatory attitude of the hierarch towards tensions which grew between the Tarnów ordinary Bishop Jerzy Ablewicz and the founder of the Movement Fr. Blachnicki.

The last chapter VI (pp. 277-328) refers to the great work initiated by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, which was the Pastoral Synod of the Archdiocese of Krakow (1972-1979) and the 1st Synod of the Krakow Metropolis (1975-1983). The key to understanding these model synods for the Church in Poland was the liturgical reform. The author first discussed the preparation and inauguration stage, the activities of the collegiate bodies (the Synodal Commission for Divine Worship for the Pastoral Synod of the Archdiocese of Krakow and the Consultation Team "Liturgy" for the 1st Synod of the Krakow Metropolis), and then presented the final documents adopted. The main contents were based on printed sources and studies.

The whole of this particularly valuable study by Fr. Kummer is recapitulated in the conclusions (pp. 329-336). Particularly up-to-date,

relevant and important in the context of the critical statements referring to the topic of *Motu proprio* “Traditionis custodes” by Pope Francis of 16 July 2021 are the words included in the above position: “Archbishop Karol Wojtyła was one of the progenitors of the propagation of the liturgical reform in the Polish Church. [...] The appointment of Karol Wojtyła for the Bishop of Rome (16 October 1978) was a guarantee of the continuation of the reception of the teachings of Vatican II in the universal Church. The pontificate of the Polish Pope (1978-2005) was the embodiment of the synod thinking and its translation into some specific challenges. The twentieth anniversary of the closure of Vatican II was celebrated in the eighth year of the pontificate of John Paul II. On 25 January 1985, the Holy Father announced the convocation of the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, whose purpose was not only to recall Vatican II twenty years after its conclusion, but also to exchange experience and information on the synod decrees at the level of the universal Church and particular Churches, and to create the possibilities of further deepening and permanent inclusion of Vatican II in the life of the Church, also in the light of new challenges. John Paul II also paid a lot of attention to the synod teachings of liturgy” (pp. 334-335).

Therefore, the liturgical reform, whose advocate was Karol Wojtyła – John Paul II, is a visible sign of irreversible changes which Vatican II brought to the life of the Church.

The bibliography used in this publication is impressive. The research was conducted in 13 archives, mainly of ecclesiastical institutions, which exerts fundamental influence on the original and source character of this study. For the first time to such a scale (several hundred references), the archival materials collected in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow were used. It is worth noting at this point that these archives – especially those concerning the person of Karol Wojtyła – are rarely made available. The remaining resources came from: the Archives of the Krakow Cathedral Chapter, the Archives of the Centre for Documentation and Research of the Pontificate of John Paul II in Rome, the Archives of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, the Archives of the Liturgical Institute, the Archives of the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec, the Archives of St Florian’s Collegiate Church in Krakow, the Archives of the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Krakow, the Archives of

the Centres of the Light-Life Movement in Krościenko, the Archives of the Episcopal Liturgical Commission, Warsaw Archdiocese Archives, the Archives of the Higher Theological Seminary in Krakow, the Archives of the Head Office of the Light-Live Movement in Krościenko, the Archives of the Liturgical Commission of the Episcopate, Archdiocesan Archives of Warsaw, the Archives of the Foundation of the Papal Routes, and the Archives of the Church of St Mark in Krakow. Also the printed sources were thoroughly used, and their list – owing to its extent and bibliographical accuracy – can well be regarded as a list of the sources to the topic undertaken.

Among few review remarks, I would postulate to supplement the source materials with those kept in the Warsaw Archdiocesan Archives. The author only reached to a few documents. Whereas, two collections of documents (stored in the collection of the Head Office of the Primate of Poland (Polish Episcopate section) – protocols of the Commission/General Council of the Polish Episcopate and protocols of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate – contain numerous information about the Reformation and the post-Conciliar liturgical renewal of the Church in Poland. Especially the protocols of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, due to their formal character remain a valuable source material. It would as well be worth considering to explicate the activities occurring at the level of the Conference of the Polish Episcopate and refer to the approach of the Archbishop of Krakow. The book is enriched with archival photographs, which undoubtedly increase the cognitive value of the work and significantly enhance its attractiveness. The author selected 60 unique photographs illustrating Karol Wojtyła's participation and involvement in the liturgical life of the Krakow Archdiocese. Most photographs come from the collections of the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia of Krakow, although there are also photographs from private collections. Only some were earlier published. The last element of the discussed publication is the person index. At present – even with reference to the scientific monographs – its preparation ceases to be an existing norm, which may testify to the high editorial standards of Księgarnia Akademicka publishing house.

The high substantive evaluation of the book by Fr. Paweł Kummer *Karol Wojtyła wobec reformy liturgicznej w archidiecezji krakowskiej* should not be solely restricted to the statement that the source material not used so far and almost unknown has been used for the first time.



This would be the reality describing the importance of this study in an imprecise manner. The value of this publication rests on the fact that, after reading it, the negation of liturgical reforms of Vatican II will be equally significant with the undermining of the life, priesthood, bishop and archbishop ministry and the pontificate of John Paul II. Will the traditionalist circles draw conclusions allowing them to verify unfair and untrue assessment repeated for several dozen years? Will they decide to change the paradigm telling that Vaticanum II is the source of crisis and fall of the contemporary Church? Will they reject false narrative repeated in pseudo-scientific works? This I do not know. But I know that this book opens new research perspectives in Polish church historiography and enables the exposure of topics from the life and activities of Karol Wojtyła so far unknown.

---

**MICHAŁ BIAŁKOWSKI** – dr hab., historian, political scientist, regional historian; adjunct professor in the Chair of the History of Diplomacy at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The president of the Club of Catholic Intelligentsia in Toruń; the Secretary of the Agreement of the Club of Catholic Intelligentsia in Poland; the associate of the Catholic weekly “Niedziela”, Toruń edition of “Głos z Torunia”. The member of the editorial board of the scientific semi-annual “Fides, Ratio et Patria. Studia Toruńskie”, published by College of Media and Social Culture in Toruń. The initiator and scientific editor of multi-volume publication *Studia soborowe. Historia i nauczanie Vaticanum II*, vol. 1, Toruń-Gdańsk 2013; *Studia soborowe. Historia i recepcja Vaticanum II*, vol. 2, p. 1-2, Toruń 2014-2015. Most recently he published the following monographs: *Wokół Soboru Watykańskiego II. Studia i szkice*, Toruń 2016; *Opozycja demokratyczna w Toruniu i w województwie toruńskim w latach 1976-1980*, Toruń 2017 (co-author) and joint publication „*Radość i nadzieja, smutek i trwoga...*” *Sobór Watykański II z perspektywy półwiecza*, Toruń 2016 (ed.). His main interests centre around: Catholic Church in the 20th century, history and reception of Vatican II, social teachings of the Catholic Church, the role of Catholic Saints in political and social transformations in Europe and Poland in the 20th and 21st centuries, opposition in Polish People’s Republic and countries of the eastern bloc, relations between politics and religion (particularly the relations state-Catholic church in Poland after 1989), the history of Pomerania and Kuyavia.

