

## REPORT

STANISŁAW CIEŚLAK SJ, Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow  
ORCID: 0000-0002-9079-4793

### **CONGRESS OF PRIESTS PROFESSORS AND LECTURERS OF THE HISTORY OF CHURCH** Theological Seminary in Tarnów, 20-22 April 2022

The Covid-19 pandemic caused that in the octave of Easter the traditional annual meeting of priests professors and lecturers of the history of Church in 2020 in Tarnów and 2021 in Poznań did not take place. Finally, after a two-year break, a national meeting of priests professors and lecturers of the history of Church was held, who since 1964 form the Section of the History of Church of the Polish Episcopate. Since 2004, the chairman of the Section of the History of Church has been the Ordinary of the Gliwice Diocese, Bishop Prof. Jan Kopiec. This time, Tarnów was selected the venue for the congress. The Theological Seminary in Tarnów celebrated 200th anniversary of its foundation. On Wednesday 20 April 2022 forty-one priests professors and lecturers of the history of Church representing Polish universities and diocese and monastic seminaries arrived in Tarnów. They were accommodated in a modern and extensive headquarters of the Theological Seminary situated in the centre of the city.

On Thursday 2022 at 7.30 in the seminary chapel, priests concelebrated the Holy Mass, presided over by Bishop Prof. Jan Kopiec who also delivered the sermon. After the Mass, participants had breakfast, and then gathered in the Assembly Hall, where at 9.25 a.m. the first morning session of the congress of the Church historians commenced. The first to speak was Bishop Jan Kopiec, who warmly welcomed those gathered and recalled the circumstances of the selection of the Tarnów Theological Seminary as the venue of the Congress. Later, Fr. Prof. dr hab. Jan Walkusz (John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin) commenced the proceedings.

The first to speak at the rostrum was Fr. Prof. Waldemar Graczyk (Dean of the Faculty of Historical Sciences, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), who presented a paper entitled *Teaching history at the Theological Seminary in Płock in the 18th century*. He emphasised in the opening lines of his speech that a fundamental document for the organisation of the seminary life in the Płock diocese was the statute passed on 30 September 1774 by Bishop Michał Jerzy Poniatowski (1773-1785). The *Ordinatio et Regula pro Seminariis Dioecesis Plocensis* also contained the seminary curriculum *Ratio studiorum Seminariis Dioecesis Plocensis praescripta*. It was in force without major changes throughout the 19th century. In the opinion of the Płock bishop, the introduction of the history of Church into the seminary curriculum was to help the seminary alumni understand the meaning of history, and to supplement a tool for defending the Church against various kinds of false beliefs. The postulated textbook on ecclesiastical history was *Historia ecclesiastica* (Augsburg 1727) by the French friar Ignace Hyacinthe Amat de Graveson OP (1670-1733). The ecclesiastical history was to be taught in the Płock Seminary for three hours a week. Further, the speaker referred to the inventory of the books of the seminary library of 1777. It results that many masterpieces were taken advantage of when instructing this subject, for instance by Caesar Baronius *Annales Ecclesiastici a Christo nato ad annum 1198* (Rome 1588-1607), which was translated into Polish by Fr. Piotr Skarga SJ (1536-1612). The work by Baronius was continued to the order of Pope Paul V by Abraham Bzowski OP (1567-1637), the result of which were three volumes of *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* constituting the summary of the *Annals* of Baronius and nine volumes of *Annales* (XIII-XXI), embracing 1198-1572. The Seminary Library in Płock is the owner of two volumes of this work. The second follower of Baronius' *Annales* was Fr. Jan Kwiatkiewicz SJ (1629-1703), the author of *Roczne dzieje kościelne od roku Pańskiego 1198 aż do lat naszych* (Kalisz 1695). Additionally, the history of orders, monasteries, bishopric and hagiography were as well analysed in the panel dedicated to the Catholic history of Church. Works by Fr. Bishop Stanisław Łubieński (1574-1640), Fr. Stanisław Szczygielski OSB (1616-1687) and Fr. Andrzej Samuel Nakielski (1584-1652) exerted considerable influence on ecclesiastical historiography.

The second speaker was a lecturer in the history of Church at the Przemysł Theological Seminary, Fr. Dr Marcin Kapłon, who presented

a paper entitled *The history of Church in the programme of the seminary studies in the Austrian annexation on the example of Przemyśl*. In his introduction, he characterised the Diocese of Przemyśl, which functioned already in around 1340, and its existence was confirmed on 13 February 1375 by Pope Gregory XI's bull *Debitum pastoralis officii* erecting the metropolis of Halicz, together with suffragan dioceses in Przemyśl, Włodzimierz and Chełm. He then recounted the process of establishing the Przemyśl seminary and its existence under the Austrian partition. After this introduction, the author of the paper went on to discuss its main part, i.e. the place of the history of Church in the curriculum of the seminary studies in the Austrian partition on the example of the Przemyśl seminary. His attention centred around textbooks used for lectures and the professors of the history of Church at the Przemyśl seminary. According to his calculations, between 1819 and 1918, eleven professors taught the history of Church in the Przemyśl seminary. Most often they studied at the University of Vienna, and only in the last quarter of the 19th century did graduates of Roman studies began to appear. Of these, only two conducted research into history: Fr. Jakub Federkiewicz (1852-1926) and Fr. Władysław Kochowski (1872-1917).

The third speaker was Fr. Dr Ryszard Banach, senior lecturer in the history of Church at the Faculty of Theology, Tarnów Section of UPJPII (the Pontifical University of John Paul II) in Krakow, and director of the Archives of the Tarnów Seminary and the Faculty of Theology, Tarnów Section of UPJPII in Kraków. He presented the history of *Seminarium Duchowne w Tarnowie* (Theological Seminary in Tarnów), which is closely connected with the Tarnów diocese, and which was established in 1786 and dissolved in 1807. In the initial period no seminary existed in its territory. It became possible only after the establishment of the Diocese of Tyniec in 1821, renamed again in 1826 to the Diocese of Tarnów. Legal foundation for the establishment of the Theological Seminary in the Tyniec diocese (renamed in 1826 to the Tarnów diocese) was provided by Pope Pius VII in the bull *Studium paterni affectus* of 20 September 1821, bringing the Tyniec diocese into life. In the bull, the Pope ordered the diocesan bishop to “establish a seminary under the free administration of the bishop for the purpose of training and educating young men for divine service in the number of 60 or more, as the needs of the diocese may require”. The location of the Tyniec bishop's residence in Bochnia

in 1822 caused that the seminary and theological studies were established there for the oldest year of alumni formed for the priesthood. It was the so-called Pastoralist Seminary, embracing the fourth year of diocesan seminary students who were preparing for priesthood in Lviv or other seminaries. Together with the transfer of the bishop's residence and capital of the diocese to Tarnów in 1826, the Theological Seminary was moved as well. Initially, it was located in the old Bernardine monastery, while in September 1838, it was opened by Fr. Bishop Franciszek Zachariasiewicz in a newly erected building with a separate stadium (an independent theological department). Since then, the Theological Seminary in Tarnów is located in the very same building. In the years 1934-1935, when Bishop Edward Komar was in the office of rector, the building was extended by adding the middle wing. The same building housed the so-called Theological Institute, that is, an independent theological faculty in which the seminary students were instructed. Initially, the studies lasted four years, and from 1927/28 five-year studies were introduced, and from 1953/54 six-year studies, although Rector Blessed Roman Sitko, had already prepared a programme of six-year studies in the years 1938-1939. From the very beginning, the Tarnów Seminary had a library, which at the beginning possessed part of the book collection of the Tyniec Abbey, which had been cancelled in 1817. During the German occupation, the building was seized by German administration, while the seminary operated for a short time in Błonie near Tarnów, i.e. until the arrestment of Fr. Rector Roman Sitko, Father Józef Brudz and seminary students of the first year of studies on 22 May 1941. Students were released after one hundred days of imprisonment, whereas their principals were sent to the concentration camp in Auschwitz, where Fr. Rector Roman Sitko died on 12 October 1942. Father Józef Brudz was later moved from Auschwitz to Dachau, but after the end of war returned to Tarnów and worked as professor of dogma theology. He died on 14 September 1985. In 1997, the construction of a new building of the House of Alumni commenced in the area of the seminary garden, the existing building remained for administration, library and lectures of the Theological Department, Section in Tarnów (from 2004). In 2017, the Diocesan Court was located in the part of the historic building, and in 2021, the Diocesan Curia. Fr. dr Ryszard Banach drew our attention to the fact that considerable importance was performed

by the Apostolic Union, that is the Aesthetic Society of Priests, aiming at their sanctification. It was established in 1903 on the initiative of Fr. Stanisław Dutkiewicz, the parish priest in Żegocin, and earlier a father in the Theological Seminary in Tarnów. One of the first members of this society and later its long-standing diocesan director was Fr. Piotr Halak, a prominent educator of the youth, e.g. mayor Henryk Suchalski and Venerable Stefania Łącka, who died in the opinion of sanctity in 1931. Incontestably, one of the most renowned students of the Tarnów Theological Seminary was Blessed Roman Sitko (1880-1942), Rector and martyr of World War II.

These three speeches were followed by a coffee break, which created an opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas.

After the coffee break, the congress participants gathered for the second pre-noon panel, consisting of two papers. The session began with Fr. Prof. dr hab. Roland Prejs, OFM Cap (KUL), who examined *the History of Church in the curriculum of the seminary studies in the Russian annexation*. Although the title refers to the Russian annexation, the speaker talked about the Kingdom of Poland, in which seven seminaries existed after the January Uprising: in Kielce, Lublin, Płock, Sandomierz, Sejny, Warsaw and Włocławek. After 1864, as a result of the suppression of the monasteries in the Kingdom of Poland, the missionaries stopped running seminaries, although they remained as lecturers in the first post-cassation years; their duties had to be taken over by the diocesan clergy. After the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland, a programme of the reform of the studies in the seminaries was prepared in 1821, which postulated lectures of the history of Church in the second year of studies at six hours a week. The project did not enter into force, and a new one was drawn up in 1836. The history of Church was to be instructed for four years at two hours per week, together with general history and geography. The above programme was accepted by all seminaries in the Kingdom of Poland. Despite the fact that in the years to follow the study period was extended to five years, or even six, the range of the knowledge of the history of Church was unchanged. However, there were some exceptions to the assumptions made, some resulting from the temporary difficulties in the selection of the teaching staff, other from joining courses, still other from unknown circumstances. When calculated, this gave the number of hours complying with the assumed programme

of 1836, only that it was differently distributed throughout the studies. The speaker enumerated the commonly used textbooks on the History of Church: Franz Xaver Gmeiner (1752-1828), *Epitome historiae eccleasticae Novi Testamenti* (Gracii 1787, re-issued many times) and Matthias Dannenmayer (1744-1805), *Institutiones historiae eccleasticae Novi Testamenti* (Wienne 1788, re-issued many times), both written in the spirit of Josephine, permeated with rationalism and anti-Roman orientation. With the passage of time they were displaced by other textbooks, breaking with Josephine approach, as for instance Fr. Janos Nepomuk Alber (1753-1830), *Institutiones historiae ecclesiasticae* (Agriae 1825), or Fr. Jan Chrzyciel Alzog (1808-1878), *Universalgeschichte der christlichen Kirche von katholischem Standpunkt für theologische Vorlesung* (Mainz 1840). Eventually, all were displaced by the Polish book by Melchior Buliński (1810-1877), *Historia Kościoła powszechnego* (Warszawa 1860-1866, re-issued many times). The problem touching not only on the History of Church was lack of specialisation among the lecturers. Professors did not teach subjects that they wanted and could specialise in, but such that they had to be taught at that time, which can be illustrated by the response of Rector of the Theological Academy in Petersburg given to Fr. Jan Cieplak (1857-1926), future bishop, when he was to lecture in the Academy: "Well, you see, you sing well, you like ceremonies, you will teach singing and liturgy. You have excellent memory of different terms and signs, you will deliver lectures on the beginnings of the Biblical archaeology. You will also learn a bit more about moral and dogmatic theology and this is what you will teach in the future".

After the speech by Fr. Prejs, Prof. dr hab. Jolanta M. Marszalska (UKSW) took the floor. She delivered a lecture on the *Historical seminary collection of books in Tarnów, the past and the future*. The speaker devoted a lot of time to examine the Tarnów seminary book collection and, as a result learned a lot about its history and contents. This book collection is neither homogeneous nor is it associated with one place. It amounts to about 7,000 titles and only one third of its collection comes from the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec. Prof. Marszalska distinguished four provenance groups of the Tarnów seminary collection: the Benedictine abbey in Tyniec (incunabula), fragments of the book collections of the dissolved Bernardine and Dominican monasteries and the Jesuit monastic institutions, four chapters

(the collegiate chapters in Tarnów, Wojnicz, Sącz and Bobów) and the collections of bibliophiles. She explicitly denied the circulating opinions that the seminary collection in Tarnów contained books from the Cistercian abbey in Szczyrzyc, the only continuously existing monastery of this congregation in the Polish territory.

After the speeches, there was time allotted for discussion and presentation of the proposal of further activities of the Section of the History of Church at the Polish Episcopate. This latter topic was explored by Fr. Prof. dr hab. Waldemar Graczyk (UKSW) and Prof. dr hab. Jolanta M. Marszalska (UKSW). In turn, Fr. dr hab. Tomasz Moskal, KUL Professor, encouraged those gathered to participate in the research projects jointly implemented.

After dinner, the participants of the congress went to the off-site session to Lipnica Murowana and Nowy Sącz. Lipnica Murowana, a small and picturesquely situated village, which enjoyed municipal rights between 1326 and 1934, now has a population of around 700. It is an example of a medieval trade settlement built in an oval layout around a fairly large (60 x 55 m) market square. It was surrounded by city walls, which were demolished by the Swedes. At present, it is widely known for its annual competition for the highest and most beautiful Easter palm, which takes place in the market square. Lipnica Murowana boasts four churches and links with the following people: St Simon of Lipnica, OFMBer (d. 1482), the founder and first General Manager of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St Peter Claver, Blessed Mary Theresa Ledóchowska (1863-1922), and the founder of the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus of St Ursula Ledóchowska (1865-1939). In the old times, there was a 3-grade folk school in Lipnica, in which a poet and a historian Kazimierz Brodziński (1791-1835) studied. The participants visited three local churches: the Baroque church of St Simon of Lipnica of the 17th century, the wooden cemetery church of St Leonard of the 15th century (with ornamental and figural polychrome from different periods; inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2003; the church is on the Małopolska Route of Wooden Architecture), and the Gothic parish church of St Andrew the Apostle of the 14th century.

The first point of the visit to Nowy Sącz was to become acquainted with the history, architecture and interior furnishings of St Margaret's Collegiate Basilica. The temple dates back to the turn of the 13th

and 14th centuries and contains Gothic and Baroque elements. In 1448, the Bishop of Krakow Zbigniew Oleśnicki elevated it to the rank of the collegiate church. In the main altar of the House of God, we can observe the *Vernicle* – the miraculous image of the Transfiguration of Christ, of Italian origin, dating from the 15th century, moved here in 1785. Hence, the church serves the role of the sanctuary of the Transfiguration of Christ. The parish priest of St Margaret's and prefect of the Collegiate Chapter in Nowy Sącz, together with a guide, showed the participants around the temple.

Afterwards, the professors and lecturers of the history of Church visited the District Museum in Nowy Sącz, located in the Gothic House (also known as the Canon House), erected around 1448 within the walls of the town. The permanent exhibition of the District Museum includes: guild art from the 14th century of the Sącz area, old folk art from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century and Orthodox church art. The museum director Robert Ślusarek performed the role of a host and a guide. On their return to Krakow, the participants of the congress prayed at the grave of Fr. Prof. Bolesław Kumor (1925-2002), an outstanding historian of the Catholic Church, which is situated at nearby St Stanislaus Church in the Niskowa village. Many of the participants of the congress could have a chance to get to know him during their studies at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin.

On Friday, 22 April 2022 at 7.30, priests professors and lecturers of the history of Church started the second day of the congress with the Mass concelebrated in the seminary chapel presided by the Ordinary Bishop of the Diocese of Tarnów Andrzej Jeż, who also preached the sermon. The Ordinary of the Diocese of Tarnów also referred to the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Bishop Prof. J. Kopec, who concelebrated the Mass. After breakfast, participants of the meeting proceeded to the meeting hall, where they joined the morning session, which comprised of two speeches. The proceedings of this session were chaired by dr hab. Andrzej Bruździński, Prof. UPJPII w Kraków.

The first speaker was Fr. dr Andrzej Kwaśniewski (UKSW), who proposed the topic of *History of Church in the Seminary in Kielce in the inter-war period and after World War II*. In the pre-war period, lectures from the history of Church in the Kielce seminary were held by Fr. Dr Józef Zdanowski (1887-1977), who used the book by Fr. Władysław Krynicki (1861-1928) entitled *Dzieje Kościoła po-*



*wszechnego* (The General History of Church). In the post-war period, a long-standing Director of the Theological Seminary in Kielce Fr. Tomasz Wróbel (1908-1985) used the book by the professor of the Theological Department of Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv Józef Umiński (1888-1954) entitled *Historia Kościoła* (History of Church). In turn, in the years 1973-2010 Fr. Prof. Daniel Olszewski (1934-2015), lecturer of the history of Church in the Theological Seminary in Kielce and the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Kraków presented his own original lectures, which were published in the form of a textbook entitled *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa w zarysie* (The history of Christianity in outline), reissued several times and each time expanded and revised. The last speech was delivered by Fr. Prof. dr hab. Mieczysław Kogut (Papal Theological Faculty in Wrocław). The topic of his speech was *The intellectual formation of seminarians in the Wrocław seminary after 1945*. The speaker stressed that at the Wrocław university, the process of the acquisition of knowledge of God took place in the place already sanctified by the nearly 500-year Catholic/Christian education tradition, i.e. since 1565. Founded in 1702, the Leopold Academy raised the level of the instruction of theology. After the end of World War II, the then apostolic administrator, Fr. Karol Milik (1892-1976), made efforts to re-establish the Faculty of Theology at the University of Wrocław. The Minister of Education did not consent to this. For this reason, the beginning of the realisation of the theological formation in post-war Wrocław occurred on 8 October 1947 in the renovated building of the Collegium Georgianum. This moment of the opening ceremony was experienced by 24 alumni and seven lecturers, including three independent academics. Between 1951 and 1956, the so-called period of experimentation in the intellectual formation occurred, which referred to its seeming practicalization. After Fr Bishop Bolesław Kominek (1903-1974) took charge, the seminary recovered from a desire to make it a vocational training institution, intended to reduce priestly preparation to a rubric craft. At the time, philosophy returned to an unwavering leading position. Three fundamental trends arose from theological disciplines. The first is composed of subjects based on written documents, such as biblical studies, patrology and history; the second refers to subjects based on what is permanent, on the reflection on Revelation, that is fundamental dogmatic theology; and the last comprises theological disciplines which prepare us for pastoral, preaching and

catechetical practices. The Decree of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities of 22 February 1968 established the Faculty of Theology based on the philosophico-theological studies of the Theological Seminary, acknowledging it as the continuation of the Faculty of Theology, which was until 1945 part of the University of Wrocław. In the years 1958-1960 Fr. Bishop Paweł Latusek (1910-1973) was its Rector.

The speech by Fr. Prof. dr hab. M. Kogut was followed by discussion, and then the organisational matters of the Section of the History of Church of the Polish Episcopate were commented on. Various issues were taken up by Fr. dr hab. Waldemar Żurek, Prof. KUL, Brother OSB (UŚ), Fr. Michał Gronowski, Fr. Prof. dr hab. Jan Walkusz (KUL) and Fr. dr hab. Tomasz Moskal (KUL Professor). At the end, on behalf of the participants of the congress, Bishop Prof. dr hab. Jan Kopiec thanked Bishop Andrzej Jeż and the authorities and seminary students of the Tarnów Theological Seminary for brotherly hospitality.

After the coffee break, sightseeing session commenced under the expert guidance of diocesan conservation officer Fr. dr Piotr Pasek. They visited a few representative monuments of culture in Tarnów. First, they went to the Cathedral Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where they admired the monumental Renaissance tomb of the Tarnowski family and mannerist tombstone of the Ostrogski dukes. The above tombs are considered to be one of the most outstanding Polish artworks, whose creators are Italian masters: Bartolommeo Berrecci (c. 1480-1537; the author of the grave chapel of King Sigismund the Old in the Wawel Cathedral) and Giovanni Maria Padovano (1493-1574), who worked on the Wawel Hill at Sigismund Chapel and Johann (Hans) Pfister of Wrocław (1573- before 1642). The grave monument of Barbara of Tęczyńscy family, the first wife of Hetman Jan Amor Tarnowski (1488-1561), is regarded as the most beautiful female sculpture of the Renaissance in the whole of Europe.

After visiting the Cathedral Basilica, the priests went to the nearby Diocesan Museum, which is the oldest diocesan museum in Poland, and collects valuable works of art from all over the diocese. It was founded in 1888 by the then rector of the Tarnów Seminary, Fr. Józef Bąba (1849-1936). Initially, it had its seat in the building of the Seminary, in the inter-war period it was located in the Town Hall, while currently it is housed in historic townhouses dating back to the 16th century, which form an unusually charming corner of the Old

Town, often used in film productions by many directors. Director of the museum, Fr. dr Piotr Pasek played the role of the guide. The Diocesan Museum has unique exhibits in its collections. The most important section of the collection comprises monuments of guild art from the Middle Ages – Gothic sculptures and paintings from the region of Lesser Poland, representing the so-called Kraków-Sącz school. The second section of the collection consists of ecclesiastical textiles (chasubles, surplices, etc.) from the Middle Ages to the 19th century.

The last place on the tour was the Old Art Gallery, which is a branch of the District Museum in Tarnów. The Old Art Gallery is housed in the brick building of the Town Hall, erected in the Gothic style at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The Town Hall is one of the most characteristic buildings of the city and one of its symbols. Originally, it was the seat of the town council and the mayor and jury court. The museum, which has been housed in the Town Hall since 1931 possesses rich and valuable exposition, which consists of the gallery of old art from the collection of Sanguszko princes: robes, Polish and oriental militaria of 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, firearm used for recreation for hunting and sport, self-defence and duelling weapons, a collection of Old Polish portraits, porcelain and table glass dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries, silver and silver-plated functional objects of 18th, 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

After dinner, participants left the congress, which can be regarded as fruitful and most needed. Rector of the Theological Seminary in Tarnów, Fr. dr Jacek Soprych, Director of the Diocesan Archive in Tarnów Fr. Krzysztof Kamiński and the alumni of the Theological Seminary largely contributed to good atmosphere and effective proceedings. Lectures delivered at the Congress will be published in XX volume of *Kościół w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura*, which has been uninterruptedly edited by Fr. Prof. dr hab. Jan Walkusz (KUL).

---

**STANISŁAW CIEŚLAK SJ** – dr hab., Professor of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. He was ordained priest in 1991 in Krakow. He graduated from the History of Church in 1993 at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Since 1997 an academic teacher of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Kraków. The author of over 200 publications from the field of history and spirituality of the Society of Jesus.