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**THE WORK OF THE CONCILIAR COMMISSION/  
COMMISSION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECOND VATICAN  
COUNCIL OF THE POLISH EPISCOPATE (1959-1977).  
INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE RECEPTION  
OF THE COUNCIL IN POLAND**

**ABSTRACT:** The article is the first description in Polish ecclesiastical historiography of the activities of the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate in the years 1959-1977. This body was the main organ responsible for the implementation of the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, and the implementation of its reception in the Catholic Church in Poland. In the analysed period it was presided over by Archbishop Antoni Baraniak. The Commission was given particular attention by the Chairman of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Card. Stefan Wyszyński. Bolesław Kominek, Karol Wojtyła and Michał Klepacz made a significant contribution to the works of the Commission. Through the conciliar activity of its members, the Commission participated in the preparation of some documents, including the Pastoral Constitution on the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*.

**KEYWORDS:** Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council; Second Vatican Council; reception of the Second Vatican Council; post-conciliar renewal; Pope Paul VI; Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński; Archbishop Antoni Baraniak; Karol Wojtyła; Bolesław Kominek.

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The 60th anniversary of the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, a landmark event in the history of the universal Church in the 20th century, prompts the proposal of a number of research postulates.<sup>1</sup> The most important – from the perspective of the “Polish

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<sup>1</sup> G. F. Svider coschi, *Sobór, który trwa. Kronika, bilans, perspektywy II Soboru Watykańskiego*, trans. L. Rodziewicz, Kraków 2003, pp. 20-21; J. Orlandis, *Kościół katolicki w drugiej połowie XX wieku*, trans. P. Skibiński, Radom 2007, pp. 28-70; P. Chenaux, *Vaticanum II między historią i teologią: status quaestionis*,

history of the Council” – include the elaboration of the activities of the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate.<sup>2</sup> This body – established already in the spring of 1959 – had a significant impact on the preparation of the Catholic Church in Poland for conciliar deliberations. During the Second Vatican Council, it coordinated the activity of the hierarchs and, after its completion, stimulated the process of post-conciliar renewal. It was suspended in December of 1977 following the death of its chairman – Archbishop Antoni Baraniak. Paradoxically, despite considerable influence on conciliar issues in Poland, the issue of the Commission’s work has not been considered as an independent research problem so far. However, it incidentally appeared in the context of the history of the Second Vatican Council, its reception in the Catholic Church in Poland, and the biography of the metropolitan of Poznań.<sup>3</sup>

This contribution is intended to fill this acute gap in ecclesiastical historiography. For the first time, the archival documentation of the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the

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in: *Studia Soborowe*, vol. 2, p. 2: *Historia i recepcja Vaticanum II*, ed. M. Białkowski, Toruń 2015, pp. 15-35.

<sup>2</sup> In the context of the universal Church, he has recently formulated them, presenting a broad panorama of the history of Catholicism in the 20th century, P. Skibiński, *Kościół wobec totalitaryzmów (1917-1989). Światowy katolicyzm i doświadczenie Polaków*, Warszawa 2022.

<sup>3</sup> See: M. Białkowski, *Wokół Soboru Watykańskiego II. Studia i szkice*, Toruń 2016; *idem*, *Początki odnowy posoborowej w Kościele katolickim w Polsce (do 1972 roku). Zarys wybranych problemów*, „Nasza Przeszość. Studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce”, vol. 128:2017, pp. 229-272; *idem*, *Odnowa posoborowa w Kościele katolickim w Polsce w latach 1972-1978. Zarys wybranych problemów*, „Nasza Przeszość. Studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce”, vol. 129:2018, pp. 387-446; *idem*, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, Lublin 2019; *idem*, *Działalność Antoniego Baraniaka SDB na forum Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji (1951-1977)*, „Studia Pelplińskie”, 2020, ch. 54, pp. 47-86; *idem*, *Udział Antoniego Baraniaka SDB w pracach Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji specjalistycznych (1951-1977)*, „Studia Salvatoriana Polonica”, vol. 14, 2020, pp. 95-133; *idem*, *Antoni Baraniak SDB jako członek Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji specjalistycznych w latach 1951-1977*, in: *Biskupi w rzeczywistości politycznej Polski „Ludowej”*, vol. 2, ed. R. Łatka, Warszawa 2022, pp. 185-215; J. Wąsowicz, *Defensor Ecclesiae. Arcybiskup Antoni Baraniak (1904-1977). Salezjańskie koleje życia i posługi metropolity poznańskiego*, Warszawa 2022.

Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate will be presented. These materials were previously unknown to researchers. Last year they were found in the Archdiocesan Archives of Warsaw, in the team of the Polish Primate's Secretariat, Varia department, and were made available to the author owing to the special approval granted by Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Metropolitan Archbishop of Warsaw. Supplementary source material, located in the same archive, includes, *inter alia*, Vatican and Polish Episcopate sections containing the following collections: the Minutes of the Council/General Council of the Polish Episcopate, and the Minutes of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate.

### **Beginnings, composition, organisational changes and tasks of the Conciliar Commission**

The historic decision to convene the 21st Ecumenical Council, announced by Pope John XXIII on 25 January 1959, echoed widely around the world and in Poland.<sup>4</sup> The Polish Episcopate, headed by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, reacted very quickly to this information. Already on 15 April 1959, during the 55th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate – at the request of the Main Commission of the Polish Episcopate – the Conciliar Commission was created and its members appointed.<sup>5</sup> The chairman was Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, one of the closest, trusted and proven collaborators of the Polish Primate.<sup>6</sup> Entrusting the Metropolitan of Poznań with this function was a confirmation of his full loyalty to the Cardinal and high substantive competence. The dignitary was fluent in Latin and Italian, had excellent contacts in Vatican dicasteries, and could evidence many years of practice with the central institutions of the Holy See.<sup>7</sup> Personal relationships, very good rankings in the ecclesiastical circles of Rome, and a thorough education could be especially useful

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<sup>4</sup> F. B é c h e a u, *Historia soborów*, trans. P. R a k, Kraków 1998, pp. 219-220.

<sup>5</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/184, k. 125, Minutes of the 55th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 15 April 1959.

<sup>6</sup> M. B i a ł k o w s k i, *Działalność Antoniego Baraniaka SDB na forum Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji (1951-1977)*, „Studia Pelplińskie”, 2020, ch. 54, pp. 55-58.

<sup>7</sup> J. W ą s o w i c z, *Defensor Ecclesiae. Arcybiskup Antoni Baraniak (1904-1977). Salezjańskie koleje życia i posługi metropolity poznańskiego*, Warszawa 2022, [in print].

if only owing to the international dimension of the preparations for the Council and the global nature of the event itself.<sup>8</sup>

The Conciliar Commission – besides Archbishop Antoni Baraniak – initially comprised of bishops: Jan Jaroszewicz, Piotr Kałwa, Michał Klepacz, Ignacy Świrski and Andrzej Wronka.<sup>9</sup> The Primate himself wrote under the date of 15 April 1959: *A Conciliar Commission was established, which will be chaired by Arc[h]b[isho]p Baraniak. It consists of Bishops: Klepacz, Kałwa, Świrski, Wronka and Jaroszewicz.*<sup>10</sup>

In turn, the materials of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate also mention Bishop Lech Kaczmarek in its composition.<sup>11</sup> His participation in the works of the conciliar body is finally confirmed by the fact that he was the secretary of the commission.<sup>12</sup> The same composition of the Conciliar Commission was approved in mid-March of 1962. Its members were: Archbishop Antoni Baraniak (Chairman) and bishops: Jan Jaroszewicz, Lech Kaczmarek, Piotr Kałwa, Michał Klepacz, Ignacy Świrski and Andrzej Wronka.<sup>13</sup>

Following the closure of the 2nd session of the Council, in December of 1963, the body was expanded by including subsequent hierarchs: Archbishop Bolesław Kominek, bishops Józef Drzazga, Kazimierz Józef Kowalski and Karol Wojtyła, as well as Fr Wincenty Granat and Fr Bernard Przybylski, OP.<sup>14</sup> Already in the post-conciliar period, the lists of commissions from 1967 and 1968 state that, apart from the chairman Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, other members were: Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Archbishop Bolesław Kominek, Bishops Józef Drzazga,

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<sup>8</sup> A. Michałik, *Odkryć sobór. Szkic historyczno-teologiczny Soboru Watykańskiego II*, Tarnów 2006, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, Lublin 2019, p. 130.

<sup>10</sup> AAG, S. Wyszynski, *Pro memoria 1959*, record from 15 April 1959.

<sup>11</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 14, Note by the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Warszawa, 16 April 1959.

<sup>12</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 15-19, Minutes of the First Session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

<sup>13</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/200, k. 122, Completed committees, 15 March 1962.

<sup>14</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/208, k. 55, Minutes of the 79th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 18 December 1963.

Jan Jaroszewicz, Lech Kaczmarek, Piotr Kałwa, Rev. Prof. Wincenty Granat and Fr Bernard Przybylski, OP.<sup>15</sup>

Major changes in the Commission took place in the early spring of 1970. The 117th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, sitting from 15 to 16 January 1970, regulated the number of members and its nomenclature. The Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate was renamed the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate.<sup>16</sup> The list of commission members, prepared two months later, included: Chairman Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, bishops: Józef Drzazga, Jan Jaroszewicz, Lech Kaczmarek, Jerzy Stroba, Julian Wojtkowski, Fr Prof. Wincenty Granat, Fr Czesław Domin, Fr Waław Hipsz and Fr Bernard Przybylski, OP (Secretary).<sup>17</sup> Further changes took place in the autumn of 1970. Fr Prof. Wincenty Granat was dismissed from the Commission,<sup>18</sup> and Fr Bernard Przybylski, OP, was replaced as Secretary of the Commission by Fr Stanisław Napierała, Phd.<sup>19</sup>

Subsequent changes in the composition are difficult to trace. Perhaps at the beginning of 1971 the commission was joined by the suffragan bishop of Łódź, Bohdan Bejze.<sup>20</sup> However, on 6 September 1975, the 149th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate appointed Fr Waław Świerzawski, Phd as a member of the commission, rector of St Mark's Church in Krakow in place

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<sup>15</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/233, k. 18, Commissions of the Polish Episcopal Conference as of 1 September 1967; AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/236, k. 4-12, Commissions of the Polish Episcopal Conference as of 1 March 1968.

<sup>16</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/246, k. 65-66, Minutes of the 117th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 15-16 January 1970.

<sup>17</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/247, k. 32, Commissions of the Polish Episcopal Conference, 20 March 1970.

<sup>18</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 89, Notifying letter from the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński to Fr Wincenty Granat, Warszawa, 27 November 1970.

<sup>19</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 84, Notifying letter from the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński to Fr Stanisław Napierała, Warszawa, 27 November 1970.

<sup>20</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 86, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 14 November 1970.

of Fr Bogusław Inlender, Phd.<sup>21</sup> The following year, in connection with the death of a member – Bishop Lucjan Bernacki – the chairman of the commission asked for the appointment of a new member from among three candidates: bishops Jan Michalski, Paweł Socha and Józef Marek.<sup>22</sup>

In turn, the 145th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, held from 26 to 27 November 1974, once again approved the chairman and members of the commission, which was connected with the expiry of the first five-year term of office, following the approval of the statute of the Polish Episcopal Conference.<sup>23</sup> The Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council in practice ceased its activity with the death of the pastor of the Church in Poznań. During the session of the 161st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate on 15 December 1977, they adopted a resolution to suspend it.<sup>24</sup>

A considerable challenge were the very tasks assigned to the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate. First of all, it was responsible for the spiritual and substantive preparation for the Second Vatican Council not only of the Polish hierarchs, but of the entire Catholic Church in Poland.<sup>25</sup> It is worth emphasising that the Polish Conciliar Commission was formed over a month before its establishment in the Vatican of the Antepreparatory Commission of the Second Vatican Council. The latter was established on 17 May 1959.<sup>26</sup>

Analysis of the minutes of the Main Commission/Main Council of the Polish Episcopate and the minutes of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, allows for the formulation of the goals set by

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<sup>21</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 119, Notifying letter from the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński to Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, Warszawa, 10 September 1975.

<sup>22</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 125, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 10 April 1976.

<sup>23</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/274, k. 54, Minutes of the 145th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 26-27 November 1974.

<sup>24</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/290, k. 68, Minutes of the 161st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 14-15 December 1977.

<sup>25</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>26</sup> J. Dyl, *Sobory powszechne w drugim tysiącleciu chrześcijaństwa*, Tarnów 1997, p. 148.

the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate. The six most important ones should be identified as follows:

- 1) animating nationwide pastoral programs containing elements of pastoral preparation for the Second Vatican Council (i.e. "Council Vigils");
- 2) coordinating and putting in order preparations for the various sessions of the Council, in particular the drafting of the conciliar schemas;
- 3) general supervision of the study works on conciliar documents, including the editing and publication of their Polish edition and commentaries;
- 4) efforts to create literature popularising and bringing closer the achievements of the Council, as well as the creation of various pastoral aids;
- 5) indicating the main directions of the post-conciliar renewal, their adaptation to the possibilities and pastoral needs of the Catholic Church in Poland, as well as coordinating the cooperation of individual episcopal commissions in this dimension;
- 6) formulating postulates related to the implementation of post-conciliar reforms in the Universal Church, including those referring to the issues raised at the Synods of Bishops.<sup>27</sup>

### **Activities of the Conciliar Commission in preparation for the Second Vatican Council (1959-1962)**

As already stated, the fundamental task of the Conciliar Commission was the comprehensive spiritual, formative and intellectual preparation of the clergy, consecrated persons and lay people to the Council. Therefore, when the first meeting of the commission took place on 12 May 1959 in Poznań, attempts were made to define the basic problems of the Council, and the contribution of the Polish Episcopate to the future work of the Second Vatican Council was discussed.<sup>28</sup> Already at the outset,

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<sup>27</sup> M. Białkowski, *Udział Antoniego Baraniaka SDB w pracach Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji specjalistycznych (1951-1977)*, „Studia Salvatoriana Polonica”, vol. 14, 2020, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 15, Minutes of the First Session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

the chairman of the commission indicated five main blocks of issues that could be considered as topics for the future council. These included: doctrinal issues; disciplinary issues; issues with the clergy; religious issues; liturgical issues.<sup>29</sup>

In the latter part a discussion took place between Bishop Michał Klepacz and Bishop Ignacy Świrski. The former, the Ordinary of Łódź, suggested to ask the Holy See, through the intermediary of the Primate, for suggestions connected with the involvement of the Polish Episcopate in the conciliar works. The Ordinary of Siedlce presented a different position, emphasising that there had been no such practice in the history of the Councils. He stressed, however, that every episcopate has the right to bring its own matters to the Council's deliberations.<sup>30</sup> Finally, a resolution was formulated in which Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński was asked to address the Holy See with information about the readiness of Polish hierarchs to undertake concrete cooperation with the Council.<sup>31</sup> It was also agreed that individual Committee members would prepare the development of specific topics: "The Doctrine and Practice of Communism" (Bishop Ignacy Świrski); "Technocracy and de-humanisation of man" (Bishop Michał Klepacz); "What the modern socio-economic codex should be" (Bishop Peter Kałwa); "Liturgical reforms" (Bishop Andrzej Wronka); "Codex Problems of Canon Law" (Archbishop Antoni Baraniak); "The issue of secularisation, its sources, symptoms and remedies" (Bishop Lech Kaczmarek).<sup>32</sup>

Over the following months, two tasks were set before the Conciliar Commission. The first concerned the preparation of a pastoral letter to the faithful, the second – the formulation of conclusions in the form of

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<sup>29</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 16, Minutes of the First session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

<sup>30</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 17, Minutes of the First session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

<sup>31</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 18, Minutes of the First session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

<sup>32</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 19, Minutes of the First session of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, Poznań, 12 May 1959.

preparatory materials for the Council.<sup>33</sup> Already during the 56th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate on 17 June 1959, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak reported on the results of the first works of the Conciliar Commission. At that time, a ready pastoral letter to the faithful and a proposal to prepare a joint letter by Polish bishops to John XXIII concerning the Council were accepted. It was decided that the letter to the Pope would be ready for the September meeting of the Polish Episcopate and that it would be signed by all the hierarchs.<sup>34</sup> As we have already mentioned, the Conciliar Commission was to collect preparatory material, so that it would be possible to submit postulates without waiting to be summoned by the conciliar bodies.<sup>35</sup> In the summer of 1959, most likely, the members of the commission outlined priority blocks of issues, including:

- 1) systemic problems related to the code of canon law (defining the place of the laity in the Church, Catholic Action in the Church, the code of canon law for the laity, clergy and the laity in the Church – their mutual relationship);
- 2) the problems of the diocesan clergy and priestly holiness (defense of celibacy, observance of the breviary, pastoral regulations);
- 3) the presence of religious orders in diocesan life (establishing the dependence, duties and rights of religious orders towards the bishop and diocese, electoral law in women's religious orders, education of religious clergy, simplification of religious dress);
- 4) the issue of the ecclesiastical liturgy (rituals, church consecration, Holy Mass, church construction);
- 5) popularisation of Catholic social teachings (dissemination of teachings about the Church, teaching about work, property and social duties, social coexistence);
- 6) revision of certain rules of the Code of Canon Law.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 20, Commission of the Ecumenical Council.

<sup>34</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/185, k. 142, Minutes of the 56th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 17 June 1959.

<sup>35</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 20, Commission of the Ecumenical Council.

<sup>36</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 20-25, Commission of the Ecumenical Council.

A significant intellectual event – preparing the Church in Poland for the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council – was the organisation of a special conference devoted to the planned Vatican Council at the Catholic University of Lublin. It met from 23 to 25 August 1961. It is worth adding that the members of the Conciliar Commission made an important contribution to the preparation of the two-day symposium. On the first day, following the speech of the Rector of the Catholic University of Lublin, Fr Prof. Marian Rechowicz, and the talk by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the following lectures were heard: “The Idea of an Ecumenical Council” (Bishop Jan Jaroszewicz); “Between the First and Second Vatican Councils” (Bishop Wincenty Urban); “Preparations for the Second Vatican Council” (Fr Andrzej Bardecki). The second day was devoted to the following topics: “Contemporary ecclesiology” (Fr Prof. Wincenty Granat); “Laity in the Church” (Bishop Bolesław Kominek); “Pastoral matters” (Bishop Julian Groblicki). The third day was filled with lectures: “Liturgical reforms” (Fr Franciszek Małaczyński OSB) and “The matter of Christian unity” (Fr Prof. Marian Rechowicz).<sup>37</sup> Approximately 600 priests from all around Poland participated in the lectures. One of the consequences of the Lublin symposium was the submission by the clergy to the chairman of the Conciliar Commission of the postulate of conducting a survey among all priests on: “What does the Polish clergy expect from the future Council?”

During the session on 15-16 November 1961 of the 69<sup>th</sup> Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak forwarded a letter on this matter to all bishops ordinaries.<sup>38</sup> Finally, as a draft of the Conciliar Commission, a Letter to the faithful on prayer in the intention of the Council, and a questionnaire to the clergy about the work and themes of the Council, were accepted.<sup>39</sup> The questionnaire included twenty questions concerning, *inter alia*, liturgy, catechesis, pastoral care, evangelisation via the media, permanent diaconate, cooperation between clergy and laity, and pastoral involvement of religious orders in the life of the parish.

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<sup>37</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/322, k. 93-93v, Lecture program, KUL, 23-25 August 1961.

<sup>38</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, II 4/198, k. 153, Minutes of the 69th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 15-16 November 1961.

<sup>39</sup> AAG, S. W y s z y ń s k i, *Pro memoria 1961*, record from 15 November 1961.

The survey was quite arbitrary, as it was conducted in different ways depending on the diocese.<sup>40</sup> In his letter of 6 February 1962, Archbishop Baraniak asked the Primate to pass the collected postulates of the conciliar questionnaire on to Rome and add to them with his word of recommendation. We know from a handwritten note that the documents were delivered to the Council Secretariat, to Archbishop Pericle Felici.<sup>41</sup>

A new form of preparation for a profound spiritual experience of the Council's deliberations, initiated by the Conciliar Commission, were the Marian prayer vigils included in the framework of a four-year pastoral program – known as the “Council Vigils”.<sup>42</sup> The Conciliar Commission proposed to take them up during the 71st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate on 14-15 March, 1962.<sup>43</sup> In a special letter, addressed ten days later, to all bishops, Primate Stefan Wyszyński informed of the joint initiative of the Conciliar Commission, the Pastoral Commission and the Marian Commission of the Polish Episcopate, and simultaneously recommended:

*The “Council Vigil” will be attended by all parishes in individual Polish dioceses. The prayer of each parish should last one day. It will begin at the usual time of the evening service (or Holy Mass) at a given church. It will end the following day, with the evening service, at the same time.*

*Pastoral materials delivered during the March Episcopal Conference can help to carry out the Council's prayers.*

*The Pastoral Faculties of the Diocesan Curia will prepare a schedule of “days of vigil” in their dioceses. Depending on the number of parishes in a given diocese, individual days in succession will fall to predetermined parishes, one, two or several. For a given day, it is advisable to designate parishes in different deaneries, distant from*

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<sup>40</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, p. 144.

<sup>41</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, Vatican, II 17/323, k. 83, Letter from archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 6 February 1962.

<sup>42</sup> A. S m a g a c z, *Człowania soborowe formą duchowej obecności Kościoła Polskiego na Soborze Watykańskim II*, „Resovia Sacra” 21(2014), pp. 387-411.

<sup>43</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, II 4/200, k. 129, Minutes of the 71st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 14-15 March 1962.

*one another, so that priests can more easily help each other in hearing Holy Confessions and in preparing devotions.*<sup>44</sup>

As the experience of the first session of the Council in the autumn of 1962 showed, in the end, the program of the “Council Vigils” included up to four scenes, which corresponded to four consecutive sessions of the Second Vatican Council. In 1962 – during the first session of the Vatican Council – these were “Council Vigils with Mary of Jasna Góra”. In 1963 – during the second session of the Council – the “Conciliar Act of Goodness” was carried out. In 1964 – during the third session of the Council – it was proposed that the pastoral program bear the motto “Victory over oneself for the sake of the Council”. In 1965 – during the fourth session of the Council – the theme of the vigils was: “Entrustment into maternal captivity of Mary, Mother of the Church for the freedom of the Church”.<sup>45</sup> Each of the conciliar campaigns was accompanied by specific signs – symbols of spiritual activity and transformation. During the first session this was a candle. During the second session – the “Parish Book of the Conciliar Works of Goodness” and the host and candle, which were used during the service of the “Conciliar Lord’s Supper”. During the third session, the faithful were accompanied by a cross and rosaries. As a symbol of the fourth session, the “Book of Holy Slavery” and a copy of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa with the act of entrusting the family into slavery and the blessing of the primate were chosen.<sup>46</sup>

### **The activity of the Conciliar Commission and the involvement of its members in the works of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)**

During the Second Vatican Council, the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, depending on the stage of the Council’s work, undertook appropriate and varied activities. Above all – together with Primate Stefan Wyszyński – it coordinated the speeches and participation

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<sup>44</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 27-28, Letter from the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński to bishops, Warszawa, 25 March 1962.

<sup>45</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>46</sup> J. Żaryn, *Dzieje Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce (1944-1989)*, Warszawa 2003, p. 230.

of bishops in the works of commissions editing drafts of particular schemas. Not without significance was the fact that several members were participating in all four sessions of the Council.<sup>47</sup> These were – the chairman Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, Bishop Piotr Kałwa, Bishop Michał Klepacz, and later co-opted bishops Kazimierz Józef Kowalski and Karol Wojtyła.<sup>48</sup> This group had the advantage over others of much greater experience in the Council's deliberations, the possibility of participating more fully in all the works, and of observing the whole Council from a panoramic and far-reaching perspective. Secondly, at the beginning of the first session of the Council, several members of the Conciliar Commission joined the conciliar commissions, and thus found themselves in the very centre of works on the conciliar documents. Chairman Archbishop Baraniak – on 16 October 1962 – was elected a member of the Commission for the Eastern Churches (he received 1,116 votes).<sup>49</sup> The head of the Commission for the Eastern Churches was Cardinal Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Vatican Secretary of State (1961-1969), one of the most influential Vatican personalities. Characterising the atmosphere and work of the Commission for Eastern Churches, the Primate noted:

*Arc[h]b[isho]p Baraniak, after returning from the Oriental Commission, informs about his impressions. Card. Cicognani is the chairman. He characterises the purpose of the schema – to show a sign of sympathy for the Eastern Churches. It is an instruction for Catholics on what it means to work on the rapprochement of the separated. All Ukrainians asked Cardinal Polish to support the schema – Arc[h]b[isho]p Baraniak will prepare a short speech that I will give in the Council Hall.<sup>50</sup>*

Let us add that the main goal set for the Commission for the Eastern Churches was to develop a schema “On Eastern Catholic Churches”,

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<sup>47</sup> The subject of the participation of Polish bishops in the deliberations of the Council was taken up in the publication by P. Rutkowski, *Polscy biskupi jako ojcowie Soboru Watykańskiego II*, Warszawa 2014. A serious drawback of the work is the lack of use of basic archival materials of this issue.

<sup>48</sup> M. B i a ł k o w s k i, *Wokół Soboru Watykańskiego II. Studia i szkice*, Toruń 2016, p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński, Prymas Polski, Ojciec Soboru Watykańskiego II (1962-1965). Wybór dokumentów*, by S. Wilk SDB, A. W ó j c i k, Lublin 2013, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> AAG, S. W y s z y Ń s k i, *Pro memoria 1962*, record from 27 November 1962.

although it also participated in work on the schemas “On Christian Unity” and “On Ecumenism”. Finally, it made the greatest contribution to the preparation of the Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches “*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*”, which was adopted by the Council Fathers on 21 November 1964.<sup>51</sup> Archbishop Antoni Baraniak – as the chairman of the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate – perceived his activity as a special mission. Therefore, at each stage of work on subsequent draft schemas, he paid great attention to the precision of their content and expressed concern that they would not succumb to the opportunity fashionable among some Western European Council Fathers, but objectively expressed the state of danger and outlined the prospects of contemporary Catholicism.

On 22 October 1962, Bishop Michał Klepacz became a member of the Conciliar Commission for Seminaries, Studies and Catholic Schools (he received 1,152 votes of support).<sup>52</sup> The Ordinary of Łódź was also the coordinator and moderator of press conferences of the Polish Fathers of the Second Vatican Council organised for journalists accredited to the Conciliar Press Office. He held this responsible post throughout all four sessions of the Council. Bishop Herbert Bednorz and priests Szczepan Wesoły and Michał Czajkowski were assigned to help him.<sup>53</sup>

The Łódź hierarch was one of the most frequently appearing dignitaries among Polish bishops during the Council. Statistically, he was – after the Primate of Poland – the most active Polish Father of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński appeared ten times during the Second Vatican Council, giving speeches on his own behalf and on behalf of the entire Polish Episcopate.<sup>54</sup> Bishop Michał Klepacz – nine times, Bishop/Archbishop Karol Wojtyła – eight times,

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<sup>51</sup> A. A. De Ville, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, in: *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. M. L. Lamb, M. Levering, New York – Oxford University Press 2017, pp. 324-346.

<sup>52</sup> AAG, S. Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1962*, record from 22 October 1962.

<sup>53</sup> AAG, S. Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1963*, record from 28 September 1963.

<sup>54</sup> The quantitative and qualitative analysis of participation in deliberations and the activities of all Polish Fathers of the Vatican Council are contained in the articles by: M. Białkowski, *Polscy ojcowie Soboru Watykańskiego II, Wstęp do badań nad episkopatem Kościoła katolickiego w PRL w latach sześćdziesiątych XX wieku*, „Nasza Przeszłość”, vol. 132: 2019, pp. 269-315; *idem*, *Polscy ojcowie Soboru Watykańskiego II, Wstęp do badań nad episkopatem Kościoła katolickiego w PRL w latach sześćdziesiątych XX wieku*, „Studia Pelplińskie”, 2019, ch. 53, pp. 33-73.

Archbishop Antoni Baraniak – seven times, Bishop Edmund Nowicki – four times, Bishop Herbert Bednorz – four times, Bishop Kazimierz Józef Kowalski – three times, Bishop Antoni Pawłowski – three times, Bishop Franciszek Jop – three times, Bishop Wilhelm Pluta – three times.<sup>55</sup>

Among the many appearances of Bishop Michał Klepacz, the speech delivered on 18 October 1963 during the debate on the “About the Church” schema caused a special resonance. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński noted at the time:

*B[isho]p Klepacz took the floor on behalf of the Polish Episcopate; he spoke for the separation of Church and State, which in our everyday practice is better than the concordat situation. The session ended at 12:30. – Card.[inal] Ruffini asked me if B[isho]p Klepacz had spoken on my behalf? Of course, yes, in our situation I do not see any other way out, but the rules of separation should be respected, because the communist state will not want a concordat as a bilateral system, but as a unilaterally imposed pact, which it will use solely for propaganda purposes.*<sup>56</sup>

The presence of Karol Wojtyła in the body of the Conciliar Commission resulted from his involvement in the works of *Vaticanum Secundum*, above-average activity in the Council Hall, numerous contacts with foreign episcopates, participation in informal meetings of discussion and study groups, and courageous postulates. During the second session, as we read in the minutes of the meeting of the Polish Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in Rome on 14 November, 1963:

*Bishop Wojtyła also argues that theologians in Poland are not sufficiently involved in the conciliar work. He proposes that some Polish theologians be called to the Council as “periti”, which will involve them more closely in the Council’s discussion. Even if they cannot go to Rome, a trace of their work will remain in the history of the Council.*<sup>57</sup>

Wojtyła’s idea did not meet with understanding from Cardinal Wyszyński, but it certainly confirmed the sense of including the vicar capitular of the archdiocese of Krakow in the work of the Conciliar

<sup>55</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>56</sup> AAG, S. Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1963*, record from 18 October 1963.

<sup>57</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/289, k. 40, Minutes of the Conference of the Polish Fathers of the Vatican Council during the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council, No. 8, Roma, 14 November 1963.

Commission. Since the beginning of 1964, the Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wojtyła, was involved in the work of the commission preparing Schema XVII. Let us add that the document had been functioning from June 1964 under the name of Schema XIII, and was the direct predecessor of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the contemporary world “*Gaudium et spes*”.<sup>58</sup> In Krakow, a team led by the Metropolitan, which included Fr Andrzej Bardecki, Fr Andrzej Maria Deskur, Fr Józef Majka, Fr Augustyn Jankowski, OSB, Fr Jan Sieg, SJ and Fr Tadeusz Styczeń, SDS, worked to prepare an expert draft of the XVII schema in the first months of 1964.<sup>59</sup> Known as the “Krakow draft”, it had a concise structure and condensed content closed in 30 typewritten pages. It consisted of four chapters, the titles of which were: 1) On the foundation of the Church’s presence in the world; 2) The goals of the Church present in the world; 3) On the specific task of the Church in the modern world; 4) On the means by which the Church fulfils its tasks in the contemporary world.<sup>60</sup>

In May of 1964, Wojtyła’s project was submitted to the Secretariat of the Council by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. From September 1964, the metropolitan of Krakow was involved in the works of subcommittees dealing with the revision of the text of Schema XIII. First, it was the “Signs of the Times” subcommittee and, from November 1964, the mixed Central Subcommittee for Schema XIII, called – after the location of numerous meetings – the “Ariccia Commission”. The Central Subcommittee carried out the main framework of the work between January and June 1965. In the deliberations of eight working groups (subcommittees) appointed to prepare individual chapters of Schema XIII, 77 people took part (Council Fathers, *Periti* and auditors). Apart from Wojtyła (a member of the doctrinal subcommittee whose subject of work was the Church), Prof. Stefan Swieżawski participated in the works (a member of the subcommittee for culture). The third Pole to

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<sup>58</sup> The detailed course of work on the schema can be traced in Janusz Zabłocki’s still valid publication, *Kościół i świat współczesny. Wprowadzenie do soborowej konstytucji pastoralnej „Gaudium et spes”*, Warszawa 1986, p. 73 et. al.

<sup>59</sup> AAG, S. Wyszyński, *Pro memoria 1964*, record from 14 September 1964; K. Wojtyła, *Vaticanum II: czas twórczego myślenia. Wypowiedzi soborowe*, selection and elaboration by A. Dobrzyński, Roma 2014, pp. 27-28.

<sup>60</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican II 17/298, k. 146-175, Abp Karol Wojtyła, *De Ecclesia in mundo hodierno, Votum Cracoviense in Polonia*.

take part in the session in Ariccia was Mieczysław Habicht (a member of the “Signs of the Times” commission).<sup>61</sup>

Reporting to Primate Wyszyński on his participation in the Schema XIII subcommittee, Archbishop Wojtyła wrote:

*The meeting of the team, whose task is to prepare Schema XIII, i.e. the so-called submissio centralis, was busy (two sessions per day). I tried to carry out my tasks as best I could – and if Your Eminence will allow me – I will report on it at the next conference of the Main Commission and also the Plenary Episcopate. I understood my tasks not so much as an attempt to enact the texts prepared by our circles (Krakow, Wroclaw), but as a defence of the theses represented therein. It turned out that we have our clear position here, which counted in the discussion. Especially when it came to the fundamental issue, namely the reality of the presence of the Church in the world, the related rights of the human person, the awareness of the salvific mission of the Church – all this passed as a fundamental thesis. Although not without resistance I suppose.*<sup>62</sup>

The significant role of Archbishop Karol Wojtyła in the work of creating “*Gaudium et spes*” was particularly evident during the CXXXVII General Congregation on 28 September 1965. He gave a speech at the time, in which he called the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “meditation”, because its concern is the human person contemplated in themselves, in the community, and “in the order of all things”. Thus, he emphasised the importance of personalistic anthropology. In a further part of his speech, he referred to the presence of the phenomenon of atheism in Schema XIII, distinguishing atheism as a personal belief and as a system imposed on man by force and violence, which violates the dignity of the human person and the natural moral law.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> S. Swieżawski, *W nowej rzeczywistości 1945-1965*, Lublin 1991, pp. 389-391; R. Skrzypczak, *Karol Wojtyła na Soborze Watykańskim II. Zbiór wystąpień*, Kraków 2020, pp. 85-93; K. Wojtyła, *Vaticanium II: czas twórczego myślenia. Wypowiedzi soborowe*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>62</sup> AAW, SPP, Watykan, II 17/307, k. 55, Letter from Archbishop Karol Wojtyła to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Kraków, 22 February 1965.

<sup>63</sup> R. Skrzypczak, *Karol Wojtyła na Soborze Watykańskim II. Zbiór wystąpień*, pp. 95-96, 321-331; G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei. Biografia papieża Jana Pawła II*, trans. M. Tarnowska, Kraków 2012, pp. 216-217.

Particularly interesting, frequent and lively were the contacts of Archbishop Karol Wojtyła with members of the French episcopate.<sup>64</sup> Wojtyła himself described them as follows:

*1. At the beginning of this session of the Council, contacts with the French Episcopate were entrusted to me. I treat these contacts as a separate task, different from participation in the weekly meetings of delegates of various (about 30) episcopates in the “Domus Mariae”, which also take place on the initiative of the French Bishops. The preparation for contact with the French Episcopate was joint work on the text of Schema XIII, especially in the winter (Ariccina – Rome). The French bishops and theologians present there understood and accepted the thesis from the so-called “Krakow draft”, according to which the Church in the XIII schema must present itself to the world, i.e. indicate the foundations of its existence and mission. From this emerged the present chapter 4, part I, as well as some elements of chap[ter] I esp[ecially] on atheism.*<sup>65</sup>

He further informed the Primate that, on 17 October 1965, he went to Paray-le-Monial at the invitation of Bishop Lucien Lebrun, where he celebrated the Pontifical Mass and participated in the 200th anniversary of the liturgical institution at the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

*3. Shortly after my return from Paray-le-Monial, I had a conversation with Archbishop G. Garrone of Toulouse, Vice-President of the French Episcopate, well known to me for working together on Schema XIII. [...] The content of the conversation can be summarised as follows. In France, the situation of the Church in Poland, especially the Episcopate and the Primate, are the subject of a dispute between representatives of the so-called Catholic left and right. While one wants to show the attitude of the state to the Church in Poland in the most positive and therefore false colours, others are exploiting the situation of the Church in Poland, exploiting true facts and the enunciation of our Episcopate, but they are doing this to a large extent in order to fight the left-wing. [...]*

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<sup>64</sup> M. Białkowski, *Działalność Karola Wojtyły na forum Konferencji Episkopatu Polski i jej komisji (1958-1978)*, „Przegląd Zachodni” 3:2018, pp. 212-213.

<sup>65</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/310, k. 44, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, Contacts with the French Episcopate, Rome, 28 October 1965.

4. *Shortly after this conversation, on 25 October, at the St-Louis Seminary, there was a meeting with a large gathering of representatives of the French Episcopate (attended by several dozen bishops, including two cardinals). The initiative came from the Archbishop of Rennes, P[aul] Gouyon, with whom I first arranged by correspondence the date and nature of the meeting. On our part, Archbishop B[olesław] Kominek, Bishop J[an] Jaroszewicz, Bishop K[Kazimierz] Majdański – and the undersigned – took part in it. We first presented the situation, speaking in turn, and even more so the work of the Church in Poland. We then answered a series of questions. Only we Bishops were present, as Archbishop Gouyon excluded all other people from this meeting. It appears to have come out positively. The issue of participation in the Millennium and the proposal to send books returned again.*<sup>66</sup>

Archbishop Bolesław Kominek, in spite of adversities raised by the party-state authorities, which resulted in his participation limited to the first and fourth sessions of the Council, was exceptionally active participant of *Vaticanum II*.<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of the first session of the Council, Archbishop Kominek – at the request of Cardinal Wyszyński – received a nomination from John XXIII to the Commission of the Apostolate of the Laity, Press and Performances.<sup>68</sup> The second Polish dignitary to become a member of this body at that time was Bishop Herbert Bednorz.<sup>69</sup> The work of the Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity, Press and Performances was directed by Cardinal Fernando Cento, and the cooperation of both hierarchs – in the field of the apostolate of the laity – dates back to the preparatory period.<sup>70</sup> The meetings of the first session were continued by meetings in the intersessional period, to which the Archbishop of Wrocław travelled on 12 March 1963.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/310, k. 45-46, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, Contacts with the French Episcopate, Rome, 28 October 1965.

<sup>67</sup> W. Kucharski, *Komuniści i Watykan. Polityka komunistycznej Polski wobec Stolicy Apostolskiej 1945-1974*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 256-259.

<sup>68</sup> J. Pater, *Kominek Bolesław*, in: *Słownik biograficzny katolickiego duchowieństwa śląskiego w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. M. Pater, Katowice 1996, p. 184.

<sup>69</sup> *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński, Prymas Polski, Ojciec Soboru Watykańskiego II (1962-1965). Wybór dokumentów*, p. 78.

<sup>70</sup> J. Pater, *Arcybiskup Bolesław Kominek i jego udział w obradach Soboru Watykańskiego II*, in: *Studia Soborowe*, vol. 2, p. 2: *Historia i recepcja Vaticanum II*, ed. M. Biąłkowski, Toruń 2015, pp. 105-107.

<sup>71</sup> T. Serwacka, *Kardynał Bolesław Kominek (1903-1974). Duszpasterz i polityk. Zarys biograficzny*, Wrocław 2013, p. 55.

The denial of issuing him a passport in the autumn of 1963 and 1964 had a mobilising effect on him, determining his involvement in study and expert works, closely connected with membership in the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate. Similarly to the Metropolitan of Krakow, he played an important role in the process of preparing subsequent versions of Schema XVII and, subsequently, XIII.<sup>72</sup> Most likely, in the final months of 1963 and the first of 1964, under the direction of Archbishop Kominek, a comprehensive draft of this document was prepared. This was an official draft of the Polish Episcopate. The Latin typescript of 42 pages was divided into 13 extensive chapters preceded by an introduction. Owing to the unique nature of this document, let us quote the titles of individual chapters proposed by Archbishop Bolesław Kominek's team: 1) On the Church's mission in the world; 2) On the nature of the world and man; 3) On the Church and the fundamental relationship to the world; 4) On the Church's activity in the world; 5) On the Church and the right to life; 6) The Church on the issues (duties, obligations) of family and marriage; 7) The Church on various social associations; 8) On the Church and prerequisites for the honourable maintenance of citizens; 9) On the Church, knowledge and progress; 10) On the Church and economic and political systems; 11) On the attitude of the Church towards the cultures and civilisations of today's world; 12) On the attitude of the Church towards non-Christians and non-believers; 13) On a Church open to the future.<sup>73</sup>

The text was the fruit of teamwork of Wrocław and Warsaw theologians. Archbishop Prof. Eugeniusz Tomaszewski, a fundamentalist theologian, lecturer at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, played a significant role in this body.<sup>74</sup> At the end of April 1964, a study called the Warsaw-Wrocław draft was handed over to Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.<sup>75</sup> The document was sent to the Vatican on 25 April 1964,

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<sup>72</sup> J. Pater, *Arcybiskup Bolesław Kominek i jego udział w obradach Soboru Watykańskiego II*, in: *Studia Soborowe*, vol. 2, p. 2: *Historia i recepcja Vaticanum II*, ed. M. Białkowski, Toruń 2015, pp. 114-117.

<sup>73</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/298, k. 81-116, Schemat XVII, Wrocław project.

<sup>74</sup> J. Pater, *Arcybiskup Bolesław Kominek i jego udział w obradach Soboru Watykańskiego II*, in: *Studia Soborowe*, vol. 2, p. 2: *Historia i recepcja Vaticanum II*, p. 115.

<sup>75</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican, II 17/298, k. 78-79 v., Letter from Archbishop Bolesław Kominek to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Wrocław, 27 April 1964.

directly to Bernhard Häring, CSsR, secretary of the commission working on schema XIII.<sup>76</sup>

Comparing the proposals of Archbishop Bolesław Kominek and the draft of the Krakow team, one can notice fundamental differences resulting primarily from the adopted methodology and structure of the document. The Warsaw-Wrocław study contained a wider range of problems, including content that was later excluded from the draft of Schema XIII, but were included in the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions “*Nostra Aetate*” and the Declaration on Religious Freedom “*Dignitatis Humanae*”.

Following the closure of the third session, Archbishop Kominek, taking advantage of the fact that the communist authorities had agreed to issue him a passport, travelled to Rome to continue work in the Commission of the Apostolate of the Laity, Press and Performances, and participate in the preparation of subsequent versions of Schema XIII. During the fourth session of the Council, apart from participating in the deliberations themselves, he played an momentous role in the preparation of the “Message of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops”. He was its author and, similarly to Primate Wyszyński, met with the most painful and unjust slanderous attacks from the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic.<sup>77</sup> Summing up the final weeks of the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, Archbishop Kominek expressed a very prophetic, although overly optimistic, opinion about the time of implementation of the conciliar resolutions:

*The constitutions and decrees of the Council will become the subject of discussion and elaboration within individual commissions appointed at the Episcopate. The Pastoral Commission will develop a pastoral plan for the next four years, and subsequently for a longer period. In general, it is expected that the full implementation of the conciliar resolutions will require approximately 20 years.*<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, p. 490.

<sup>77</sup> *Orędzie biskupów polskich do ich niemieckich braci w Chrystusowym urzędzie pasterskim*, in: *Wokół Orędzia. Kardynał Bolesław Kominek prekursor pojednania polsko-niemieckiego*, ed. W. Kucharski and G. Strauchold, Wrocław 2009, pp. 399-409.

<sup>78</sup> M. Białkowski, *Protokoły konferencji polskich ojców soborowych. Zbiór dokumentów 1962-1965*, pp. 632-633.

As we have already mentioned, the time between the individual sessions of the Council was a period of particular activity in the work of the Roman conciliar commissions, as well as the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate. During the meeting of the 79th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate – convened shortly following the closure of the second session of the Council in December 1963 – the chairman of the Commission announced the formation of 13 subcommittees to develop the various schema. The teams consisted of one to three bishops, mainly members of the Conciliar Commission.<sup>79</sup> And thus Archbishop Antoni Baraniak became a member of the “*De Ecclesiis Orientalibus*” subcommittee; Bishop Michał Klepacz joined the “*De Divina revelatione*” and “*De clericis*” subcommittees; Bishop Karol Wojtyła the “*De Ecclesia*” and “*De praesentia efficaci Ecclesiae in mundo hodierno*”; Archbishop Bolesław Kominek “*De Apostolatu laicorum*” and “*De cura animarum*”; Bishop Józef Drzazga “*De sacrorum alumnis formandis*”; Bishop Jan Jaroszewicz “*De Beata Maria Virgine matre Ecclesia*”; and Bishop Lech Kaczmarek “*De scholis catholicis*”.<sup>80</sup> However, during the following meeting of the Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Archbishop Baraniak informed that the composition of the subcommittees appointed by the Conciliar Commission had been supplemented on 5 February 1964. Amendments to the conciliar schemas were to be sent, following consultation with the members of individual subcommittees, in two copies in Latin, to the Archbishop.<sup>81</sup>

Also following the closure of the third session – in December 1964 – Archbishop Antoni Baraniak archived speeches delivered by Polish hierarchs and coordinated the compilation of reports concerning particular conciliar schemas. Out of eleven studies prepared at that time, up to five were authored by members of the Conciliar Commission (Antoni Baraniak, Karol Wojtyła, Józef Drzazga, Kazimierz Józef Kowalski), including two (“On the Adapted Renewal of Religious Life”, as well as “On Eastern Catholic Churches”)

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<sup>79</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/208, k. 55, Minutes of the 79th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 18-19 December 1963.

<sup>80</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 57, Conciliar Subcommittees of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 18 December 1963.

<sup>81</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/209, k. 67, Minutes of the 80th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 6-7 February 1964.

prepared by its chairman.<sup>82</sup> The final task that the Conciliar Commission performed throughout the duration of the *Vaticanum II* deliberations, was the registration of all forms of participation (intervention) of Polish hierarchs in the Council. A special questionnaire containing detailed questions was used for this purpose, i.e.: Surname – first name – episcopal title? In whose name did you speak?, In reference to which schema? In reference to which chapter?, On what topic?, When was it submitted?, Was it delivered?, When was it delivered?<sup>83</sup>

### **Activities of the Conciliar Commission for Post-Conciliar Renewal (1965-1977)**

After the Second Vatican Council, the Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate was responsible for the implementation of the conciliar resolutions. The form, pace and style of the introduction of the conciliar reforms – from the perspective of half a century – cannot raise any major objections. All activities planned, coordinated and controlled by the chairman of the Polish Episcopal Conference were characterised by caution, reason, consistency and farsightedness. The Polish Church could not afford any sudden, often shocking, changes, or superficiality. Similarly, it could not afford the fast, mass printing of documents, commentaries, conciliar studies, and even new liturgical books. The major limiting factor was not the lack of good will, skill or enthusiasm, but the prevailing totalitarian system, with all of its negative consequences. Therefore, the post-conciliar reforms could be introduced gradually and without haste.<sup>84</sup>

A similar pattern of thinking about renewal accompanied the presiding member of the Conciliar Commission. Archbishop Baraniak quite critically assessed – not supported by Polish realities – the post-conciliar claims of some lay Catholics and their sympathies for the reforms in the Dutch, German and French Churches. That is why the interview

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<sup>82</sup> AAW, SPP, Vatican II 17/300, k. 3, Reporting session of the Polish Episcopate from the third session of the Second Vatican Council, Warszawa, 17 December 1964.

<sup>83</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 59, Survey in order to accurately compare the active participation of the Polish Bishops in the works of the Council in the form of an intervention.

<sup>84</sup> M. Biąłkowski, *Początki odnowy posoborowej w Kościele katolickim w Polsce (do 1972 roku). Zarys wybranych problemów*, „Nasza Przeszłość. Studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce”, vol. 128:2017, pp. 245-246.

with Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens, on the implementation of the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council – published in the *Tygodnik Powszechny* weekly – received a strict assessment of the hierarch himself, and was recognised by the bishops gathered at the meeting of the Main Council of the Polish Episcopate on 19 June 1969 as harmful to the Church in Poland.<sup>85</sup>

Of unusual significance, and simultaneously requiring great intellectual work, the process of preparing translations, as well as the editorial and substantive elaboration of the documents of the Second Vatican Council from the very beginning, rested on the shoulders of Archbishop Karol Wojtyła. Already during the Council, the Krakow community was chosen to translate the texts, and the Metropolitan of Krakow exercised personal supervision over the work of the translation team.<sup>86</sup> For this purpose, it established the Krakow Centre for Conciliar Documentation. Translations were produced, among others, by Fr Feliks Bednarski, OP, Fr Andrzej Deskur, Fr Bolesław Filipiak, Fr Franciszek Małaczyński, OSB, Fr Bernard Przybylski, OP. The printing of the conciliar resolutions – with introductions by the most competent experts – published at the Poznań Pallottinum in 1968, was the great success of Karol Wojtyła and his close collaborators.

In 1970, the name of the commission was changed, moreover, the balance of the first years of the post-conciliar renewal led the members to formulate: [...] *the postulate of a closer definition of the role and opinions of the Commission and its attitude towards other Commissions which, within the limits of their competence, watch over the implementation of conciliar resolutions in various domains of ecclesial life.*<sup>87</sup>

The proposals and suggestions collected by the chairman of the Commission were developed and arranged in a logical whole. Thus, the “Draft of tasks and means of their implementation concerning the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of

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<sup>85</sup> AAW, SPP, RGEP Minutes, II 4/24, k. 49-50, RGEP Protocol, Warszawa, 19 June 1969.

<sup>86</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/225, k. 29, Minutes of the 96th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 31 August – 1 September 1966.

<sup>87</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 64, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 13 June 1970.

the Second Vatican Council” was created. The document sets out four main tasks for the Commission: 1) serving the Polish Episcopal Conference in taking responsibility for the work of implementing the conciliar resolutions, understood as a whole; 2) cooperating with individual commissions of the Episcopate, and helping them in order to ensure the continuity of their work; 3) concern for the formation of the correct opinion among the faithful on the teachings of the Council and post-conciliar problems; 4) attention to the proper contacts with Roman centres (especially with the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops) and foreign national centres for the implementation of the Council.

On the other hand, the manner of carrying out the tasks was to consist in: 1) elaborating a type of “directory” of conciliar resolutions, arranged according to the hierarchy of their importance, which should be taken into account in their implementation; 2) being aware of the current state of implementation of the Council’s resolutions (e.g. by gathering in writing the initiatives of individual commissions in the field of the implementation of the Council or by sending an appropriate questionnaire to the ordinaries of the dioceses); 3) indication of conciliar resolutions not yet implemented in Poland; 4) popularisation of conciliar ideas and shaping of the appropriate conciliar attitudes among the faithful (elaboration of the conciliar “dictionary” or “catechism”, preparation of appropriate popularisation brochures, organisation of conferences, conventions, lectures on the Council, informing about the Council’s achievements abroad); 5) establishing appropriate contacts with foreign, especially Roman, centres for the implementation of conciliar resolutions.

The third part of the document discusses the measures to be used to carry out the tasks: 1) the proper organisation of the work of the Commission by establishing a permanent secretariat by the chairman of the Commission, establishing a section for the implementation of specific tasks; 2) collecting the feasibly most complete conciliar and post-conciliar documentation; 3) establishing contact with ecclesiastical universities and seminaries in order to benefit from their professional help.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 65-67, Draft tasks and means of their implementation concerning the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council.

The final version of the “Draft tasks and means of their implementation concerning the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council”, prepared on 24 August 1970, became the basis for the discussion during the 121st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate.<sup>89</sup> During the same plenary conference, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak presented the state of the post-conciliar renewal from the perspective of five years since the closure of *Vaticanum II*:

*He also discussed the directions of the tasks currently emerging before the Commission, namely concern for popularising the authentic teachings of the Council, proper discernment and evaluation of the previous achievements of the Council in Poland, as well as the due indication of further stages of the conciliar renewal in the reality of the Polish Church, attention to the registration of broadly understood conciliar documentation, contacts with foreign centres, especially Roman ones, etc.*<sup>90</sup>

Also the next, 122nd Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, at the request of the Conciliar Commission, took up the subject of *Vaticanum II*. During the meeting of 26 November 1970, the pastoral letter entitled “The Polish Episcopate to the clergy and faithful on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council” was approved after amendments. The document was read out in all churches across Poland on Sunday, 10 January 1971.<sup>91</sup>

The change of the name of the Commission, introduced at the turn of the 1960s and 70s, was primarily to reflect the character of the work undertaken at that time, no longer related to the Second Vatican Council itself, but with the practical dimension of its reception. That is why the Commission spoke, among other matters, of suggestions for the Second Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1971. In a document prepared in May 1971, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak

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<sup>89</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 70-76, Draft tasks of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, Poznań, 24 August 1970.

<sup>90</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/250, k. 40, Minutes of the 121st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 3-4 September 1970.

<sup>91</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 99-102, The Polish Episcopate to the clergy and faithful on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council.

raised two issues.<sup>92</sup> The first concerned the preparation of a pastoral letter addressed to priests and the faithful, which would explain the goals of the Synod of Bishops concerning priesthood. The hierarchy suggested that such a document should be drafted by Bishop Bohdan Bejze.<sup>93</sup> The second suggestion referred to setting up a panel of experts to follow the press, collect material, and prepare the publication after the Synod. This work could – according to the chairman of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council – have been carried out by the Thomistic Institute in Warsaw, headed by Father Bernard Przybylski, OP.<sup>94</sup>

The 10th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, celebrated in 1972, prompted bishops to reflect more deeply on the state of reception of the conciliar resolutions. Archbishop Antoni Baraniak prepared a special “Reporting Communiqué on the activities of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council”, in which he put forward specific proposals: 1) convening of the Institute of Conciliar Studies at the Institute of Thomistic Studies, headed by Father Bernard Przybylski, OP; 2) issuing an appeal to Catholic universities; 3) a meeting between the commission members and editors of Catholic magazines.<sup>95</sup> In the further part of the letter, he informed about the need to prepare a “Post-Conciliar Directory”, a concept for the publication of a “Post-Conciliar Catechism”,<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/255, k. 8-9, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 8 May 1971.

<sup>93</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/255, k. 10-11, Suggestions of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council for the Polish Episcopal Conference, Poznań, 8 May 1971.

<sup>94</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/255, k. 11-12, Suggestions of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council for the Polish Episcopal Conference, Poznań, 8 May 1971.

<sup>95</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 107, Reporting communication on the activities of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, Poznań, 3 February 1972.

<sup>96</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 107-108, Reporting communication on the activities of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, Poznań, 3 February 1972.

and asked for a questionnaire on the state of implementation of the Council's teachings in individual dioceses.<sup>97</sup>

The assessment of the state of conciliar literature in Poland should be seen as a summary, which was made by Bishop Bohdan Bejze, on behalf of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council. The dignitary noted that, among the authors of the works, one can distinguish three attitudes towards the Church, which is not without significance for the content of the publications themselves. He distinguished the publications that were: 1) written in the spirit of the Church; 2) written according to the declarations of the authors from the Catholic position, but referring to the Council in a critical way; 3) deliberately and completely hostile toward the Church.<sup>98</sup>

The problem of access to the legacy of the Second Vatican Council was mainly related to the modest amount of scientific works, the poor offer of popular science books, and the lack of foreign literature. In 1973, editorial works on the *Catechism of the Second Vatican Council* intensified. Archbishop Baraniak announced his readiness to discuss the general assumptions, character and detailed content of the publication on 27 April 1973.<sup>99</sup> However, the presentation itself took place during the 136th Plenary Conference of the Episcopate held at Jasna Góra on 4-5 May 1973. He then presented to the episcopate the "Communiqué of the Commission for the Implementation of the Council on the *Catechism of the Second Vatican Council*"<sup>100</sup> together with the table of contents of the book.<sup>101</sup> The topic of the *Catechism of the Second Vatican Council* also returned in September 1973, during the 138th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate. Discussing the work of the Commission, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak: [...] *mentioned that*

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<sup>97</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 109, Reporting communication on the activities of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, Poznań, 3 February 1972.

<sup>98</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4 260, k. 59, Minutes of the 131st Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Kraków, 27-28 June 1972.

<sup>99</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 110, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 27 April 1973.

<sup>100</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 111-113, Communiqué of the Commission for the Implementation of the Council on the *Catechism of the Second Vatican Council*.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, k. 114-116.

many today refer to the achievements of the Second Vatican Council, but in fact it is known too generally. One of the reasons for this is the lack of a publication that would bring the complete teachings of the Council closer to wider circles of clergy and faithful. The speaker [Archbishop Antoni Baraniak – M. B.] enumerated the literary and scientific achievements devoted to the Council to date, such as the series entitled *In the current of post-conciliar issues, the work of Card. Wojtyła entitled Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of Vatican II, published under the direction of Bishop Bejze, publications in the Ateneum Kapłańskie, elaboration of documents by the Krakow centre, etc., but there is a lack of popular publications. In order to remedy this deficiency, the Commission is preparing a popular exposition of the whole of the Council's teachings in the form of a catechism. It will be a question of extracting the essential contents of the conciliar documents and arranging them in a logical manner.*<sup>102</sup>

The draft outlined by the hierarch was, on the one hand, the response to a specific need of the Church in Poland and, on the other, part of the trend of post-conciliar catechism reflection. It can be noted, at this very time – in the years following the end of the Second Vatican Council – that many national catechisms were published. They focused on the pastoral specificity of a given country or cultural area, so they were inevitable narrow. Thus, in 1966, a Dutch catechism was published, in 1981 an Italian catechism, in 1985 a German catechism, a Spanish catechism in 1986, a Belgian catechism in 1987, and a French catechism in 1991.

The Polish conciliar catechism – compiled under the auspices of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council – was published under the title *Nauka Soboru Watykańskiego II (w zarysie)* in 1975 at Św. Wojciecha Bookstore in Poznań. The editor of the publication, and simultaneously creator of the structural concept, was Father Bernard Przybylski, OP. The book was comprised of three parts: I. The Church deepens its awareness of itself; II. The Church in Renewal; III. The Church in Dialogue.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> AAW, SPP, Minutes of the Polish Episcopal Commission, II 4/267, k. 42, Minutes of the 138th Plenary Conference of the Polish Episcopate, Warszawa, 13-14 September 1973.

<sup>103</sup> *Nauka Soboru Watykańskiego II (w zarysie)*, Poznań 1975, p. 144.

Including in the preface the general characteristics of the publication, Archbishop Antoni Baraniak emphasised:

*While working [on the book – M. B.] it was as if two currents of conciliar thought appeared: closely interconnected: one ideological and doctrinal, the other practical and normative. In order to preserve these two currents, a project was put forward to elaborate a work that would give an outline of the complete teachings of the Council, collected from all documents and arranged according to the ideas of primates and leaders. The work must be characterised by fidelity to the thought of the Council. The Council itself is called to speak in it with its authentic truth and spirit.*<sup>104</sup>

The culmination of the activity of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council – under the chairmanship of Archbishop Antoni Baraniak – was the completion of work on the regulations of the Commission. The finished document was sent to the President of the Polish Episcopal Conference on 10 April 1976.<sup>105</sup> It was comprised of seven parts: general principles; the structure of the Commission; the tasks of the Commission; the tasks of the chairman of the Commission; the *modus operandi* of the Commission; cooperation of the Commission with the Episcopal Conference; Provisions.<sup>106</sup> The most important provisions include the tasks of the Commission, such as: informing the Episcopal Conference of matters concerning conciliar renewal, submitting its proposals and suggestions; cooperation with individual commissions of the Episcopate, inspiring their activities, introducing suggestions on how to implement the Council's resolutions; cooperation with diocesan centres of conciliar formation; cooperation in the field of conciliar formation and knowledge of the Council's teaching in seminaries; attention to the knowledge of the Council's teachings among priests, religious and lay people; monitoring the implementation of conciliar resolutions in the field; following the statements of the Magisterium of the

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<sup>104</sup> A. Baraniak, *Przedmowa*, in: *Nauka Soboru Watykańskiego II (w zarysie)*, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 120, Letter from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak to the Polish Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Poznań, 10 April 1976.

<sup>106</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 121-124, Regulations of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council.

post-conciliar Church, and presenting proposals for their implementation on Polish ground; collection of conciliar documentation; following publications on conciliar topics; providing correct information to foreign periodicals about the implementation of conciliar resolutions in Poland.<sup>107</sup>

Content related to the “Regulations of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council” was also included in the last report on the Commission’s activities, contained in archival materials produced by this body. The Commission Chairman informed that they were the result of reflections formulated during its meeting on 7 April 1976. The information given to the Primate contained three main thematic blocks. The first concerning the tasks of the Commission repeated the earlier regulations contained in the Rules of Procedure. The second was an analysis of conciliar publications, the demand and possibilities of the publishing market. The third contained observations and pastoral observations on the implementation of the conciliar resolutions in the field.<sup>108</sup>

Since the mid-1970s, there has been a visible fall in the activity of the Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council and its chairman. A certain explanation was definitely the state of health of the Metropolitan Archbishop of Poznań, who was increasingly losing his strength due to subsequent illnesses and complications.<sup>109</sup> However, we must not forget that, in the case of the specialist commissions of the Polish Episcopate, the process of dividing their competences and diversifying tasks concerning post-conciliar renewal was deepening. Thus the liturgical reform section was implemented by the Liturgical Commission. Several pastoral commissions of a state character were also formed, and the new tasks of the laity in the Church were dealt with by the increasingly active

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<sup>107</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 122, Regulations of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council.

<sup>108</sup> AAW, SPP, Varia, Conciliar Commission of the Polish Episcopate, II 28/163, k. 126-129, Information from Archbishop Antoni Baraniak, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council on the activities of this commission (Episcopal Conference in Warsaw 27-29 April 1976).

<sup>109</sup> K. Białocki, R. Łatka, R. Reczek, E. Wojcieszek, *Arcybiskup Antoni Baraniak 1904-1977*, Poznań-Warszawa 2017, pp. 61-63.

Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity, launched upon the initiative of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła and directed by him.<sup>110</sup>

In summary, it should be emphasised that this article, owing to the nature and chronology of the work of the Conciliar Commission/Commission for the Implementation of the Resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of the Polish Episcopate, can serve as a starting point for further reflections and an introduction to the history of the reception of *Vaticanum II* in the Catholic Church in Poland.

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<sup>110</sup> M. Białkowski, *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*, ed. M. Białkowski, W. Rzyński, Toruń 2021, pp. 158-162.

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