

POPULAR SCIENTIFIC SUMMARY

Religious orders have an important role in society. They conduct pastoral, scientific, educational, charity and publishing work and are involved in activities related to culture and sports. We can encounter different forms of their presence and work on an everyday basis, but not always are we aware of the motives behind their work and comprehend its true dimensions. Sometimes it is difficult to access this kind of knowledge due to the lack of research publications on this subject. This applies i.a. to the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of Captives founded by St. John de Matha, the Trinitarians.

The main mission set for the new religious community by its founder was to pay ransom for Christians held captive by nonbelievers. Due to its exceptional mission the Order had been brought to Poland in 1685 at the invitation of the king Jan III Sobieski and then expanded fast. Within the territory of the former Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth more than 30 monasteries were established and Polish Trinitarians accomplished 18 ransoming expeditions setting free more than 500 people. They were also providing pastoral, educational and patriotic services. This commendable history was put to an end by the dissolution of religious orders during the Partitions of Poland. However, its memory survived in the main order, which undertook several endeavours to renew its Polish structure. Finally, it was accomplished in 1985 with the return of father Jerzy Kępiński to Poland and his construction of a monastery in the village Budziska. In 2000 another foundation in Cracow was added to that in the Sandomierian diocese. In the beginning the Cracow community functioned as a formation house. Now, it is also responsible for an apostolic activity, keeping a nursing home. Religious friars of this community are also serving as prison chaplains in two of Cracow penitentiary units.

The aim of my project is a comprehensive presentation of different ways in which the Trinitarian charism has been implemented in Poland. As the charism of an order defines and determines its mission in the Church, the research undertaken is closely related to the issue of heritage and work of the Trinitarian order in Poland. I hope that it will contribute to an increase in the awareness on this subject.

In order to achieve my goal, I am going to answer the question, whether the Polish Trinitarians have accomplished a certain adaptation of the charism to their native conditions, and whether they have created their own forms of its implementation. This is supported by the fact that the work of the Order in Poland encompasses with some interruptions three centuries. Furthermore, I will attempt to find out how the evolution of the religious charism proceeded within the territory of the former Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth and if Polish friars contributed to the development of the charism of St. John de Matha. The Trinitarians in their over 800 years long history have understood and implemented their own mission in different ways, as a result of the dynamic nature of the charism, which results in constant development.

In order to realise all the above mentioned statements I will analyse the documents of the Church on the charism theology and the fundamental elements of the Trinitarian charism. I will also study the vast source material concerning the history and the manifestation of our religious charism. I will focus my research on the source texts on history and work of the Trinitarians in Poland.

This project is closely related to the subject of the PhD thesis, which I am preparing in the Institute of Spiritual Theology at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow under the supervision of ks. prof. dr hab Wojciech Zyzak. I took up this research for several reasons. The first is the attempt to exhaust the need for a comprehensive research on this subject. Furthermore, I consider the Trinitarian charism to be very valid today. And it is not only due to the continuous reports about persecution of Christians, but also because it entails the ideas of common brotherhood, human solidarity and care for the needy, which are in great demand by society. Also my own interests are of significance here. The research project presented is a natural continuation of the study conducted for the purpose of my MA thesis devoted to the charism of the founder of the Trinitarians, St. John de Matha and its contemporary realisation. It also completes my other work popularizing the knowledge about the Trinitarian order.