

## **The Polish Communist State and the Roman Catholic Church's Power Towards the Sexual Agency of the Homosexual Priests Between 1945 and 1989**

The purpose of this study is to analyse the way the state authorities of the Polish People's Republic and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland dealt with the homosexual priests. The results of the research will be presented in the papers in English.

An image of the state and the Roman Catholic Church is considered in the context of their impact on individuals' "sexual agencies". The concept of sexual agency was described by Prof. Heather Albanesi. She states that sexual agency is the ability to define individuals' approach to sexuality. In other words, it is making and enforcing the decisions about one's sexual life in the social/cultural/religious/political context. In connection with this, the proposition of this research is to consider both the Polish state and ecclesiastical power towards the gay priests' sexual agency. The project will answer the main questions:

- 1) What content was presented about homosexual priests in the state law and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church?
- 2) To what extent did the state authorities respect the civil rights towards gay priests? how much did Church authorities make their decisions about the development of a given priest depend on knowledge of his homosexual identity?
- 3) What conclusions can be drawn from the answers to the above questions in the context of the state and the Church's power towards the sexual agency of the homosexual priests between 1945 and 1989.

The research project is taken due to the following factors:

- methodological: the project employs a theory by H. Albanesi. This approach has not been applied in historical research yet. Its use will allow to obtain new research findings;

- historical: it advances the state of research on the past as it shows an unexplored aspect of the experience of the Polish society in the selected period. In addition to this, it discusses the topic of homosexual priests which has not been described in the history of Poland till now, it also makes use of very diverse historical source material;

- interdisciplinary: the academic research combines the historical, sociological and the theological content;

- social and contemporary: the research will highlight the importance of gender and sexuality in relation to the experiences of individual people, social groups, institutions and country. It is a significant input in the contemporary debate in Poland and abroad;

- international: due to its aforementioned qualities (historical, methodological, social and contemporary), the research may be relevant for readers from outside Poland, as well as it will be a part of international, academic discussion on the sexual history of the 20th century, gender issue and institutional power in various countries.

The research project presents an interdisciplinary academic approach (historical, sociological, from gender studies and religiology, theological). It shows new content for a social discussion on the interaction between the Catholic Magisterium, the state policy and individual lives in the country in the historical period. Hopefully, this research project will help to dispel the "myth" that what distinguishes Poland from other countries is a very low experience of social diversity, containing one of the most mono-ethnic and monoreligious European societies. The implementation of the research proposed by PI will bring new information to the image of Polish experience of social gender diversity between 1945 and 1989.

When considering the risk associated with the implementation of this project one must consider that it is a controversial topic. Bearing this in mind, all the effort will be made to ensure that the findings are a result of using research methodology, profound and critical analysis of historical sources.