

POPULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

One of the important discussions that dominated the life of the Church in the period from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century was the debate on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Christians believe that because of the disobedience of the first people in Paradise, original sin happened to all people. Its effects (loss of original holiness, death, suffering, change of relationship with God, the world and other people) apply to every human being. In the 12th century, there is a conviction about the freedom from the original sin of the Virgin Mary (*Immaculate Conception*), due to the foreseen event of the adoption of human nature by the Son of God in her womb (*Incarnatio*). The holiness of the Son of God demanded that the human nature with which He was to be united be pure and unadulterated by any sin (including original sin). Theologians initially take a critical position.

The period of the 13th-16th centuries was marked by a controversy over the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary¹. Most theologians were critical of this truth. It was obvious that to accept Mary's freedom from original sin would call into question the universal dimension of the redemption accomplished by Christ. When the Franciscan, Bl. Duns Scotus presented a hypothetical solution to the problem, which was quickly recognized as the official position of the Franciscan Order. On the other hand, the canonization of Thomas Aquinas and the awarding of the title of Doctor of the Church made the Dominican Order adopt his doctrine as an official position. The debate on the Immaculate / Maculate Conception of Mary quickly spread across Europe. theologians from various backgrounds and preachers participated. Although at first most theologians took a negative position on the privilege of Mary, over time the Dominicans, maintaining an intransigent line of defense, became an increasingly isolated party. The celebration of the Immaculate Conception became more and more popular and, although it was not officially approved by the Roman Church, it gained new supporters.

In this context, it is worth taking a closer look at the position taken by the Dominicans. Questions arise: were all Dominicans really against the Immaculate Conception (as is popularly believed today)? Do the arguments of the Dominicans, apart from the critical position of St. Thomas Aquinas, brought something new to the essence of the dispute? As the dispute developed, did the Dominicans improve their arguments? Finally, why did they lose the debate when at the beginning they all shared a similarly critical position? Where was the mistake made?

Finding the answers to these questions will help to draw attention to the way of practicing theological reflection and will allow to formulate questions that also apply to the contemporary theologian: is it possible to limit oneself to rational reflection in the search for theological truth? To what extent should theological research take into account the sense of faith (*sensus fidei*) of God's people, which is expressed in various forms of popular piety and liturgy (*lex orandi-lex credendi*)? How much authority enjoyed the position of St. Thomas among the Dominicans? And didn't his teachings consequently lead to the fall of the independent, original and innovative theological reflection of the Dominicans, who over time became faithful guardians and popularizers of Aquinas's achievements?

The issue has not been analyzed so far. Although the positions of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas about the Immaculate Conception, the positions of the other Dominicans were taken into account to a small extent. A thorough understanding of the Dominicans' position will allow us to find the reasons for the failure in the dispute over the Immaculate Conception. Until now, no one has undertaken a critical study and evaluation of Dominican theology, especially the Thomist one, in the context of the development of theology. In order to answer the questions posed, it is necessary to analyze many writings of the Dominicans of the 13th-16th centuries, which are kept in the archives and libraries of Europe.

¹ B. Kochaniewicz, *Średniowieczni dominikanie o Matce Bożej*. Kraków 2008.