

Report on the Activities of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society for 2024

Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Naukowego Franciszka Salezego za rok 2024

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Scientific societies play a crucial role in fostering debate and the exchange of ideas, bringing together specialists and enthusiasts dedicated to advancing specific fields of knowledge. Through research, dissemination, and integrative activities, they not only advance science but also support its application in real-world social contexts. Thus, they play an essential role in the broader scientific community.

The mission of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society (TNFS) is to promote and conduct scientific research and to support educational and formative initiatives related to the “world of youth.” The Society’s activities are rooted in the spirit of Christian humanism inspired by St. Francis de Sales and focus on generating scholarly reflection and translating it into formation, education, and social practice. Through collaboration with academic and cultural institutions, TNFS aims to address current civilisational and educational challenges and provide competent and responsible responses.

During the reporting period from January 1 to December 31, 2024, the activities of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society included the following areas and events:

I. 16th TNFS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The key statutory event of the year was the 16th General Assembly of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society, held on May 17–18, 2024 in Frombork. The location was chosen in connection with the conclusion of the Copernican Year (marking the 550th anniversary of Copernicus’s birth) and the historical presence of the Salesians in Frombork (1946–1981). The event gathered 31 participants.

The first day of the Congress included a meeting of the TNFS Board and the editorial team of the journal *Seminare*:



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Learned Investigations. The program also featured cultural and integrative activities, including a tour of sites associated with Nicolaus Copernicus and an evening community gathering. On the second day, participants celebrated the Eucharist in the Frombork Co-Cathedral. The Mass was presided over by Rev. Dr Krzysztof Niegowski SDB, recipient of the 2024 TNFS Award, and the homily was delivered by Rev. Dr Jacek Wojtkowski, Dean of Frombork.

The formal session of the General Assembly followed the liturgy. During the session, the *Praemium Societatis Scientiarum Francisci Salesii* was ceremoniously awarded to Rev. Dr. Krzysztof Niegowski SDB in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of *Seminare*. The laudation was delivered by Rev. Prof. Henryk Skorowski SDB.

Due to an insufficient number of voting members present at the first session, a second session was held following the academic conference. In accordance with the Society's statutes, the Assembly adopted the following resolutions: approval of the financial and activity reports, distribution of profit, and acceptance of the Audit Committee's report. A change in the composition of the Audit Committee was also confirmed: Radosław Błaszczuk SDB was succeeded by Jan Niewęglowski SDB.

The central academic event of the Assembly was a scientific conference from the *Youth and Their World* series, titled *Youth in Cyberspace: Opportunities and Threats*. The conference comprised two parts: the first featured three presentations, and the second consisted of a panel discussion involving experts and young people. The session was chaired by Dr. Dariusz Wesołowski, Dean of the Faculty of Administration at the Higher School of Managerial Personnel in Konin. The conference addressed educational, parenting, and cultural issues related to youth's presence in the digital world, highlighting both its developmental potential and the real threats involved.

The plenary session featured the following presentations:

- Diana Mościcka (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn; inspector in the Social Prevention Team of the Municipal Police Prevention Department in Olsztyn) and Senior Sergeant Anna Depczyńska (Municipal Police Prevention Department in Olsztyn): *Cyberspace as a New Dimension of Youth Activity*.
- Prof. Piotr T. Nowakowski (University of Rzeszów): *(New) Media as an Opportunity?*
- Prof. Monika Podkowińska (Warsaw University of Life Sciences): *Cyberspace – Communication Threats and Challenges for Youth and Families*.

The panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Mirosław Wierzbicki SDB, featured representatives of youth, parents, and educators: Dr. Magdalena Kosche (moral theologian, doctoral dissertation on Manuel Castells's theory of network society) and Dr. Michał Kosche (theologian, personalist, IT professional) – representing the voice of parents, educators, and media experts in the field of new media; Jakub Szajkowski, MA – expert in media informatics and computer science teacher at the Dominic Savio Salesian School in Konin and the Romek Strzałkowski High

School in Poznań; Maria Teresa Lebiecz – student of psychology at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow and of journalism and social communication at the Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow; Wojciech Piaskowski – student at the Poznań University of Technology and educator at Oratory of the Blessed Oratorians of Poznań in Łąd on the Warta River. The discussion facilitated an exchange of views on digital engagement among youth. The open and inclusive nature of the panel discussion, which enabled a genuine encounter between academic, parental, and youth perspectives, was warmly appreciated.

The next TNFS General Assembly is scheduled for May 15–16, 2025. TNFS President, Rev. Prof. Jerzy Gocko SDB, expressed his gratitude to all participants and in particular to Dr Zdzisława Kobylińska and Dr Mirosław Wierzbicki SDB, for organising the conference.

II. BOARD MEETINGS OF THE FRANCIS DE SALES SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY IN 2024

In the reporting year 2024, the Board of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society held six meetings in various formats: in-person (Łomianki), online (via MS Teams), and hybrid. Meetings took place on January 29, March 23, May 17, June 15, September 23, and November 20.

Key decisions and initiatives included:

1. Organisation of the 16th TNFS General Assembly and scientific conference (Frombork, 17–18 May 2024), including:
 - logistical and academic planning.
 - awarding the TNFS Prize to Dr Krzysztof Niegowski SDB.
2. Approval of a new TNFS research project for 2025–2029, titled *Youth in Search of Meaning*, coordinated by Prof. Henryk Skorowski SDB and Prof. Monika Podkowińska. The first conference in this series will be held during the 17th TNFS Assembly in 2025 under the title *Youth and the Meaning of Life*.
3. Establishment of the Youth Research Centre, a TNFS-affiliated research unit based in Łomianki, dedicated to developing interdisciplinary research on youth in social and educational contexts.
4. Admission of new members: eight new individuals joined TNFS in 2024 – one in May, four in June, and three in September.
5. Granting TNFS scientific patronage to the following events:
 - Symposium *Character Formation* (Salesian Spirituality Centre, Łąd),
 - Symposium *A Dream of Educating and Evangelising Youth: Challenges and Responses* (Szczecin),
 - 36th Liturgical Symposium (Łąd, April 12, 2024),
 - Art competition *Images with a Message – Inspired by Don Bosco's First Prophetic Dream* (Association JESTEM, Lublin),
 - XVI Borderlands Debate: *Camino 2024* (Łeba, September 21, 2024),

- Symposium on youth rehabilitation (Youth Educational Centre in Trzciniec, November 22, 2024),
 - Educational events organised by the Office for Education of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Salesian Province (Warsaw),
 - 19th International Conference *Humanistic Ecology*, co-organised with the Faculty of Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (UKSW).
6. Editorial activity of the journal *Seminare. Scientific Investigations*: The Board decided to resubmit the application to the Scopus database, to implement the Similarity Check anti-plagiarism system, and to continue promotion of the journal. The successful completion of the two-year funding programme from the Polish Ministry of Education and Science was noted, along with the migration to a new publishing platform.

Members of the Audit Committee regularly participated in the Board's meetings in an advisory capacity. According to the Audit Committee's resolution of February 28, 2025, the Board's activities in 2024 complied with the TNFS Statutes without remarks or objections.

III. MEMBERSHIP AFFAIRS

As of December 31, 2024, the Francis de Sales Scientific Society had 128 regular members. During the reporting year, eight new members were admitted to the Society: Małgorzata Mróz, Paulina Jabłońska, Sylwia Jaskuła-Korporowicz, Leszek Korporowicz, Jolanta Łodzińska, Rev. Paweł Wątor SDB, Waldemar Urbanik, and Amadeusz Urbanik. One member resigned from the Society.

With deep sorrow, the Society marks the passing of two esteemed members: Rev. Prof. Jerzy Koperek (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin) and Prof. Janusz Mączka SDB (The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow).

Honorary members of the Society remain: Rev. Dr Pascual Chávez SDB, Rector Major of the Salesian Society (2002–2014) and Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime SDB, Rector Major (2014–2023). Supporting members of the Society include all Polish Salesian provinces and the Salesian Institute of Theology in Krakow (WSDTS), affiliated with the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.

TNFS pursues its statutory mission based on membership fees, grants, and donations. The annual individual membership fee remains 50 PLN. As of December 31, 2024, 63 members had paid their dues (48%).

IV. SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITY

In 2024, the scientific activity of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society centred on individual research projects undertaken by members within their respective academic institutions. The primary research direction remained the Society's core

project: *Youth and Their World*. The annual scientific conference, a platform for sharing findings, was focused on the presence of youth in cyberspace, addressing both the opportunities and threats. Discussions highlighted the educational and integrative roles of new media, their impact on youth identity formation, and concerns about the replacement of social reality with the digital environment.

The *TNFS Studies and Dissertations Series* published a monograph by Stefania Mazurek FMA, titled *The Province of Our Lady of Jasna Góra of the Salesian Sisters in Poland (1982–2007)*.

The Society co-organised the 18th International Conference in the series *Humanistic Ecology*, titled *Contemporary Environmental Dilemmas: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Bratislava, September 26–27, 2024).

The Society granted scientific patronage to the following events:

- Symposium *Character Formation* (Łą, February 3, 2024),
- Symposium *A Dream of Educating and Evangelising Youth: Challenges and Responses* (Szczecin, March 15–16, 2024),
- 36th Liturgical Symposium (Łą, April 12, 2024),
- Art competition organised by the JESTEM Association in Lublin: *Images with a Message – Inspired by Don Bosco's First Prophetic Dream*,
- 16th Borderlands Debate – Camino 2024 (Łeba, September 21, 2024).

As part of the *Scientific Journals Development Program*, a new website for the TNFS was launched, and actions were initiated to establish the Youth Studies Centre in Łomianki as an integral research unit of the Society.

The Audit Committee's report, dated February 28, 2025, confirmed that the Society's activities in 2024 complied with the TNFS Statute and regulations.

CONCLUSION

In 2024, the Francis de Sales Scientific Society continued its mission as defined in its Statutes, focusing its activities on the theme *Youth and Their World* and systematically enhancing the quality of the *Seminare* journal. Efforts continued to identify new platforms for addressing youth-related topics. The growing synergy between theoretical reflection and its educational and formative applications deserves particular recognition. The Society's Board extends its sincere thanks to all members for their active involvement in 2024.