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## MASOVIA IN PREDICTION OF PRIMATE STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI

Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, in his teaching paid special attention to such notions as Church and Homeland. He focused on the value of the event, which was the Baptism of Poland in 966. Spiritual values, which the Nation, during the complicated destiny of its history, had to fight for, resulted from this fact, as if from the spring. Simultaneously, organisation of the State based on the foundation of Christian values took place in close contact with the Holy See. It is proved at least in the document known in historiography as *Dagome iudex* deriving from the end of the reign by Mieszko I of Poland (died on 25 V 992). This bond between Poland and the Holy See is particularly noticeable through centuries of the existence of our statehood. The martyr's death of Adalbert on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 997 and his quick canonisation in 999 was the important building block of Christian identity of Poland. A cult of his person started developing quickly just after his death. It took place both in Poland and in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Germany. The creators of this cult were: Otto III Holy Roman Emperor and his environment, Bolesław I the Brave and monks from Benedictine convents. The grave of St. Adalbert became an incredibly important link connecting Poland with the West. In March 1000 Otto III Holy Roman Emperor arrived to visit his grave and the devotional character

of the emperor's visit in Gniezno was emphasised by some sources, particularly in the chronicle of German chronicler Tiethmar.

Masovia was one of the stops of awakening faith of the Nation, awareness of a free and responsible man, creating history on the foundation of law and morality of the Decalogue. Primate was visiting Płock many times, during different occasions. He was preaching a word, which like the biblical grain was supposed to fall on the soil of human hearts and bring fruit. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński arrived in Płock for the first time at the end of 1961 to participate in the funeral ceremony of Bishop of Płock, Tadeusz Paweł Zakrzewski (died on 26 XI 1961). Then he arrived many times in the historic capital of Masovia (Płock) – for instance to consecrate a bishop, Jan Wosiński, in Płock cathedral on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1962; on 12-13 XI 1966 Cardinal Wyszyński participated in Płock in millennial ceremonies; on 16 IX 1968 he delivered a sermon in Płock cathedral on the occasion of 50 years of activity of Congregation of Sisters Passionists, and particularly he took part on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> 1975 in solemnisation of the jubilee of 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the existence of Płock diocese. The texts for speeches during Primate Wyszyński's visits in Płock were printed in a local periodical "Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine"<sup>1</sup>. The millennial speech, delivered in November in Płock, was printed in the publication titled "From contemplations on native culture" (Poznań-Warsaw 1979)<sup>2</sup>.

Historical and cultural role of Masovia, as a borough constituting an integral part of Polish state since its beginning and its contribution to cultural-religious development of Poland, was particularly emphasised during two Primate's speeches: during millennial

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<sup>1</sup> „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 1/1962, p. 1-29, no. 5/1962, p. 129-148; „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1966, p. 245-261; „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 8/1968, p. 176-189; „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1975, p. 401-415.

<sup>2</sup> S. Wyszyński, *From contemplations on native culture*, Poznań-Warszawa 1979, p. 99-106.

solemnities in 1966 and during the jubilee of a diocese in 1975. I will limit my presentment to the content of these two speeches.

The peculiar announcement of thoughts on the roles of Płock and Masovia in the history of the Nation and the Church, which will be unfolded by Primate during millennial ceremonies were the words uttered during the holy mass during the consecration of bishop Jan Wosiński, which took place on 4t February 1962. Emphasising that Masovia carrying through the history the light of faith, was contributing to building unity of the Nation, in a sermon delivered in Płock cathedral Primate said: „There are three places – said Primate, which since my childhood kept impressing me, are: Kruszwica, Gniezno and Płock. As a small boy I did not even know them personally, but the very recollection made an impression on me. Why? Because it seemed to me that these names were somehow connected through what was the heart and soul of Poland going through centuries. I think so until now, although I travelled a lot in my life and saw many towns and cities, however, old impressions left in my heart. Particularly now, when we return to the historical past, on the threshold of Millennium of the Nation and the Church these three names – Kruszwica, Gniezno, Płock very lively affect the historical imagination of our society. It would be an extremely momentous thing if your city, which, as many others, undergoes social changes, as a result of economic development, could still preserve its unifying power, comforting Polish spirit, bizarre strength of faith and consolidating religious unity, which it was the best at”<sup>3</sup>.

These words reflect the profound belief of Primate that *Sacerdotium* and *imperium* are key terms to understand history of Poland. The existence of the country cannot be imagined without the foundation in the form of religion with the formed church organisation. In the peak period of Polish Middle Ages (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) religion (I mean Christian religion with its Roman faith) co-created the country in the sense of the political being, through

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<sup>3</sup> Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's sermon delivered in Płock cathedral on 4 II 1962, „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 5/1962, p. 129-148.

active actions – also political one of Polish Bishops' Conference of the Gniezno metropolis and since 15th century the Lviv metropolis; partnership in the formation of the foundation for national law; also for broadly-defined culture and social activity<sup>4</sup>. This idea was developed by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński during his speech in Płock cathedral, given on 12th November 1966 during the celebration of the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland. He then said: „Standing in this Romanesque basilica [...] we remember, that similarly as in Gniezno, Poznań, Kraków and Warsaw, also here in Płock, we are standing around royal graves. We stand here towards the majesty of Christian republic, in the face of power, which was vowed in our soil with the Church and the Nation [...]. We look at the traces of fruitful and permanent cooperation of the Church and the Nation, living with Christian culture, which was created in the Polish soil together with the Church and the baptised Nation. Our remembrance is heightened at the mere mention of the figure of the son of Masovian soil, the Saint Stanislaus Kostka”<sup>5</sup>.

By means of these words Primate was focusing our attention on the national identity of Poles, rooted in the events of the Baptism of Poland. Spiritual values were flowing out of it, as if from the spring, the values, which the Nation had to fight for during the intricate fate of its history. Victory was always coming by a strong relation with God, resulting from profound faith. These were pages of our history – beautiful, although sometimes painful. The same Primate said on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1975: “As the Nation standing out with a sense of high culture, we maintain historical continuity with the past, being aware that the past generated the present and is a guarantor of a common sense of the future. The nation without history is a poor nation; the nation,

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<sup>4</sup> W. Graczyk, *Sacerdotium and imperium, or religion and state in Poland. Elements of civil religions in Polish disputes from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries*, in: *Civil religion in Poland. Between the beginnings of statehood and the present*, ed. Janusz Węgrzecki, Warszawa 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's sermon delivered in Płock cathedral on 12 XI 1966, „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1966, p. 245-261.

which has history and respects it is a nation, which believes in its future. As a small bush sprouts into a tree and becomes a powerful oak, also history of the nation must have its material. This material for the history of the nation towards the future is constituted by our past and present, and respect for the past is a sign of cultural and spiritual maturity of the Nation”<sup>6</sup>.

Distinguished bishops, who by their profound faith gave witness of service for Christ, being Lord of History, will be remembered in the history of Płock and Masovia. Primate Stefan Wyszyński personally recollected the arrival of bishop Apolinary Wnukowski (1904-1908) to Primate’s native place in Zuzela<sup>7</sup>. It was possible only after a tolerance act issued by tsar in 1905. Earlier bishops were forbidden to visit dioceses. Tsar government did not allow to do it. „You can imagine – Primate emphasised – a triumphant bishop’s march through a poor village to a wooden church, in which I was baptised. The joy of priests was huge, people’s faith and awareness as well, that God will prevail, that we did not die, despite a frightening intrusion of foreign faith and language. Płock diocese survived all that. And it belongs to nine centuries of its history”<sup>8</sup>. Bishop Michał Nowodworski (1889-1896) was the example of a bishop of high intellectual and spiritual culture<sup>9</sup>. In difficult times of national servitude, he developed an extensive literary activity. He dedicated himself to editorial job in „Moral-Religious Diary”, and since 1863 of “Catholic Review”. However, most of all he became famous as an editor of “Church Encyclopaedia”, known as Nowodworski’s Encyclopaedia, “whose all volumes, except for the first and the last,

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<sup>6</sup> Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński’s sermon delivered in Płock cathedral on 1 IV 1975 r., as cited in J. Śniegocki, *Solemnities of 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Płock diocese*, „Płock Studies”, no. 4/1976, p. 272-273.

<sup>7</sup> I. Lasocki, *The late priest archbishop Wnukowski, metropolitan bishop of Mogilev*, „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine” no. 6/1909, p. 152-154.

<sup>8</sup> Primate’s words delivered in Płock cathedral on 1 VI 1975, „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1975, p. 401-415.

<sup>9</sup> W. Karpiński, *Michał Nowodworski, bishop of Płock 1831-1896*, Płock 2009.

were edited in Płock”<sup>10</sup>. A particular tribute of gratitude was paid by Primate to two bishops of Płock: archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski (1909-1941)<sup>11</sup>, who – as he repeatedly emphasised – confirmed him in Andrzejewo in 1913 and to bishop Leon Wetmański (1928-1941)<sup>12</sup>, martyred in a concentration camp during the last frightening war. The victory of Masovia’s faith can be summarised in the sacrifice of their lives. These two Płock martyrs, canonised on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1999 are „a victorious flower on the huge historical mound, made by faith, love and work of clergy, bishops and Church community of Płock diocese We thank them – Primate Wyszyński said – that without hesitation they gave example of faith to God, the Church and the nation. The old man, lying on the ground, kicked by Gestapo, Bishop Antoni [Nowowiejski] knew that it was his duty, that it was his greatest glory – to suffer insult in the Christ’s name. He gave an example to us, priests, how we should serve people until we sacrifice our life. He gave an example to You [...] how to overcome dangers of Christly faith, Christian morality and religious-national culture. it is genuine historical heritage of your diocese – Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński emphasised in Płock cathedral on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1975<sup>13</sup>. Such behaviour and attitudes of bishops of Płock in Działdów camp, constituted support and consolidation for prisoners staying there. Only such people could afford for such an attitude of spiritual balance, regardless of life conditions, who thanks to passionate faith, as if on the solid foundation, were rising to the peaks of sanctity<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Primate’s words delivered in Płock cathedral on 1 VI 1975, “Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1975, p. 401-415.

<sup>11</sup> W. Graczyk, P. Krysztofiak, *Seeing Christ in man. Concern about the needy based on pastoral letters of blessed Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski*, Płock 2008, s. 7.

<sup>12</sup> M.M. Grzybowski, *Bishop Leon Wetmański, Płock suffragan 1886-1941*, “Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 8/1973, p. 311-328.

<sup>13</sup> Primate’s words delivered in Płock cathedral on 1 VI 1975, “Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1975, p. 401-415.

<sup>14</sup> W. Graczyk, *A temporary camp in Działdów as a place of martyr’s death of archbishop A. J. Nowowiejski and bishop L. Wetmański*, „The Light of Nations”,

Continuing these contemplations – Primate Wyszyński indicated – that also many priests, monks and laymen contributed to the history of Masovia’s faith. Their cooperation based on the foundation of faith resulted in measurable effects. Thanks to their strength and courage during persecutions in the time of the Partitions, thanks to “[...] profound faith and trust in God’s justice and thanks to a cohesive organisational network of the Church, native speech hid in temples, survived in religious songs. Lamentations, Litany of Loreto and Little Hours were reinvigorations for us. [...] Thanks to that the Nation survived. The Church survived as well, supported and cared by the Nation. The faith of the Nation was preserved as well being the biggest religious and national good”<sup>15</sup>. Masovia has its tremendous contribution in the historical transmission of these values.

This issue of sacrifice, effort and offering, which profoundly echoed in Płock in 1975, was somehow the development and specification of thought instigated several years earlier, namely on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1968. This beautiful combination of a cross and suffering with the Nation’s history took place during 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 50 years of activity of Congregation of Sisters Passionists, in which the essence of their establishment is the contemplation of the mystery of Christ’s cross. Each life path is marked with effort and sacrifice. Many people rebel against it on their way, because they do not see any sense in it. To understand it, Primate invoked in the speech on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1968, delivered in Płock cathedral, an image of the Nation’s history, “[...] which strong by faith in salvific might of the Cross, did not (ever) surrender. Although, at the beginning of the Second World War in many capitals people shouted – the end of Poland – it was not in God’s intention. God reinvigorated, strengthened and encouraged. There are not those who shouted, there is the Nation, which peacefully works and trusts, happy that it is able to look at the Cross, consider Passion of Christ and gain powers for their everyday effort”. Epochs pass,

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2/1999, p. 63-70.

<sup>15</sup> Primate’s words delivered in Płock cathedral on 1 VI 1975, “Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1975, p. 401-415

systems collapse, but the image of God is still current – the Man on the cross. The experience of suffering and sacrifice may be understood only in the context of Christly cross. „For a contemporary man, who has so much hope for more peaceful and orderly life on earth, the sign of the Cross is less necessary. Everybody longs for such a system of interpersonal relations, in which they desire to experience less effort but more love, unity and peace. The entire contemporary science aims at eliminating suffering and human ordeal. Medical knowledge struggles with this task and hopes to restrict the scope of suffering<sup>16</sup>.

The person dignified by effort, suffering and offering fully experiences their dignity and freedom. Primate reminded us about human dignity during millennial solemnities in Płock on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1966. This spark came from Masovia and it ignited the biggest minds of contemporary Europe. At the Council in Constance Paweł Włodkowic – the son of Masovian soil, told the contemporary representatives of Christian power, “that it is not worthy converting by sword, that human conscience and its freedom is more important above all, that freedom of religion and belief – even of imperfection – corresponds more to human culture than violence and truth imposed by violence. Let alone lie, deceit, propaganda and various illusions, in the name of which Divine truth is taken away from people, so that the mirage of human opinion is placed instead of it. Let alone methods of overcoming God Alive to place false gods instead. In this way – in Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński’s opinion – Paweł Włodkowic demonstrated great dignity of each man and nation, who/which being small and weak, has the right to live. He also profoundly appreciated the dignity of Christly Gospel, which must be foretold not by sword but by love and peace”<sup>17</sup>.

This truth about human freedom and dignity spoken on Tumskie Hill during the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland is the most

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<sup>16</sup> Primate’s words delivered in Płock cathedral on 16 VI 1968, „Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 8/1968, p. 176-189.

<sup>17</sup> Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński’s sermon delivered in Płock cathedral on 12 XI 1966, “Płock Pastoral Monthly Magazine”, no. 11/1966, p. 245-261.



important message resulting from teaching and life of Primate of the Millennium. The first chapter of each peace treaty – he said – should contain one most important condition: to believe in human greatness. Only then when we believe in its profundity, the charter of fundamental human rights will be unnecessary for us, because we will be able to find everything in this profundity. It will be sanctity, which murderous hands will not dare to touch<sup>18</sup>.

Concluding I would like to emphasise that what Primate of Poland Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński said in Płock Masovia and about Masovia was fully reflected in the words of the Saint John Paul II uttered on 7 VI 1991 during his stay in Płock – “Płock has profoundly rooted in the history of Poland and the Church” – emphasising the role of this city, the capital of historical Masovia, in the millennial history of our Homeland. Primate Stefan Wyszyński, talking about Masovia, always emphasised its high position in building the State and the Church. Invoking figures, important for Masovia, he always pointed to the values, which they represented, and which were timeless.

### Summary

Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, in his teaching paid special attention to such notions as Church and Homeland. He focused on the value of the event, which was the Baptism of Poland in 966. Masovia was one of the stops on which the Nation's faith was awakened, as well as the awareness of free and responsible man, creating history based on law and morality of the Decalogue. Primate was visiting Płock many times, during different occasions. He was preaching a word, which like the biblical grain was supposed to fall on the soil of human hearts and bring fruit. Historical and cultural role of Masovia, as a borough constituting an integral part of Polish state since its beginning and its contribution to cultural-religious development of Poland, was particularly emphasised during two Primate's speeches: during millennial solemnities in 1966 and during the jubilee of a diocese in 1975. Primate Stefan Wyszyński, while talking about Masovia, emphasised its high position in building the State and the Church. Invoking figures, important for Masovia (bishops, priests, princes), he always pointed to the values, which they

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<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

represented, and which were timeless. What Primate of Poland Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński said in Płock Masovia and about Masovia was fully reflected in the words of the Saint John Paul II uttered on 7 VI 1991 during his stay in Płock – “Płock has profoundly rooted in the history of Poland and the Church” – emphasising the role of this city, the capital of historical Masovia, in the millennial history of our Homeland.

**Keywords:** Masovia, speeches, Płock, Primate Stefan Wyszyński

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