

REV. RYSZARD FICEK

**THE WŁOCŁAWEK PERIOD OF FR. STEFAN
WYSZYŃSKI'S PASTORAL MINISTRY: YOUTH AND THE
SEMINARY FORMATION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD
(PART 1)**

Introduction

It can be said that the entire pre-seminary preparation for the priesthood of young Stefan Wyszyński was – in some way - anticipated and envisaged. To some extent, his parents and the family home contributed to this, especially his father - a devout organist who had untimely been widowed. Stefan lost his mother a year before the First Holy Communion, at the age of nine. For this reason, he probably remembered her less, and, in some way, he was less aware of her contribution to his religious education. And it had undoubtedly been tremendous. After her death, her father married a second time. Although he had a very close relationship with his stepmother, his mother's loss will stay in the consciousness of Poland's future Primate forever.

Recalling this fact, Primate Wyszyński said to pilgrims from Włocławek at Jasna Góra: "I came with the First Holy Mass to Jasna Góra to have a Mother, so that she would stand with me at every Holy Mass, as she stood with Christ on Calvary. (...) I have always trusted that Mary would help me. My devotion to the Blessed Mother was developing slowly. I felt the mystery of this veneration even better when, while visiting my home parish in Zuzela, I saw the same image of Our Lady of Częstochowa, before which my parents had been prayed. This image

is worshiped in the temple to this day, although it suffered a lot during the last war. However, Mary's face was untouched. It always seemed to me that one should be faithful to this hereditary family honor"¹.

In this context, however, a question arises: What spiritual values shaped the personality of the future Primate in his childhood and adolescence? Undoubtedly, the character of young Stefan was significantly influenced by family life. First, the deep religiosity of the Wyszyński family should be mentioned. Wyszyński mentioned the spirit of piety and prayer of his parents several times: "What remains in my memory from that period? I was left with the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa, which we see here. Before this painting, my father and mother prayed, who died on October 31, 1910, just a few months after my father moved from Zuzela and is buried in Andrzejewo. I had often found my father - whom God gave a deep religiousness and a gift of prayer - right here, in front of the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa. Here he spent his free time from various works on the construction of the church. At that time, I did not understand why my father was kneeling in front of this "picture" for so long. Today I understand it. He was faithful to the gift of prayer until his last days. Today I understand his prayers and service, which he treated not as a profession, but as a vocation of a servant to God's glory, playing and singing in an old, historical wooden temple"².

1. *Per Aspera ad Astra*

Almost a year before the outbreak of World War II, in the early autumn of 1938, Father Stefan Wyszyński visited in Skulsk, near Konin, a local priest, his former tutor, and the principal-director of the Minor Seminary in Włocławek, Fr. Antoni Bogdański. He was a very educated clergyman: an ascetic, a great patriot, and a scout, the first chief chaplain of the "Polish Scouting Association" (ZHP) in the Second Polish Republic. No wonder that Fr. Bogdański had a significant impact on the intellectual and spiritual development of the future Primate. In the Minor Seminary, he had taught Wyszyński moral theology, catechetics, liturgy, and French.

It is Fr. Bogdański who dragged the young priest Wyszyński to the "Charismatic Priests' Association" (Stowarzyszenia Księżych Charyzmatów) founded by him. The

REV. RYSZARD FICEK, STD, PH.D., priest of the diocese of Rockville Center/NY, the moral theologian and political scientist, a former lecturer of the Jordan University College in Morogoro/Tanzania, specializing in the moral theology, church history and international relations. ORCID 000-0001-5238-6767. Address for correspondence: 3000 Depot Ln, Cutchogue, NY 11935 USA, rficek@optonline.net

1. S. Wyszyński, Nowoczesny program ślubowań akademickich. Jasna Góra 4.05.1974, in: S. Wyszyński, Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956-1981, vol. I-LXVII, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, XLVI, 26.
2. S. Wyszyński, Przyrzekamy Ci wychowywać młode pokolenie w wierności Chrystusowi. Komentarz do Jasnogórskich Ślubów Narodu, in: S. Wyszyński, Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956-1981, vol. I-LXVII, Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. I, 117.

main goal of this fraternity was to improve priests' spiritual life, as well as to share the "Good News" with others. „Once, this unforgettable man said during a liturgy lecture: 'There will come a time when you will go through such torments that people of our age cannot even think about. There will come times when [enemies of the Church] will hammer nails into priests' tonsures, many of them will go through the horrible prison..."³

These words, spoken by Bogdański, sank deeply into Wyszyński's heart. After the war, during which nine of the thirteen colleague-priests from Wyszyński's class had either been brutally murdered or had died in the German concentration camp in Dachau, none of his classmates could remember these words of warning. In a letter to Bishop Korszyński, Primate Wyszyński commented it, underlining: "We were too young that this statement would catch the attention of Christ Kingdom's enthusiasts"⁴.

Human fate did not comfort Stefan Wyszyński at all. One could say that until 1946, when he became Lublin's bishop, he was severely tested by it. As a child, then, he survived his mother's death. He also struggled with the severe disease for many years. After years, as the Primate, he recalled: "I was ordained a priest in the chapel of Our Lady in the Włocławek Cathedral Basilica in 1924. I was ordained alone – on August 3, 1924. My colleagues were ordained on June 29, and I went to the hospital that day. However, it was a happy occasion because, thanks to this, I was able to receive my ordination in the chapel of the Mother of God. When I came to the cathedral, the old sacristan, Mr. Radomski, said to me: I am asking you, priest, with such health, you probably have to go to the cemetery but not to ordination"⁵. Therefore, without a doubt, the life of Cardinal Wyszyński can be fully characterized by a famous Terence's quotation: "I am a human being; of that which is human, I think nothing estranged from me."

2. The Minore Seminary in Włocławek: Uncovering the Calling to the Priesthood

In the summer of 1917, Stefan Wyszyński made the most crucial decision in his life: he decided to enter the Minore Seminary and become a priest. He informed his family about it during the holidays, after finishing the fourth grade of junior high school. Father agreed, but not without resistance. They probably decided together that Stefan should study not in the Seminary in Płock (at that time Andrzejewo belonged to the vast Płock diocese, and from 1925 – to the Łomża diocese), but in Włocławek. Actually, the Włocławek Seminary was the oldest and then one of the

3. S. Wyszyński, *Dzieła zebrane*, vol. 4: 1958, Warszawa: Soli Deo, 2002, 415.

4. Quotation after: F. Korszyński, *Jasne promienie w Dachau*, Poznań 1985, 5.

5. S. Wyszyński, *Z Pro memoria (Februarij 15, 1970)*, in: P. Raina, *Kardynał Wyszyński. Czasy Prymasowskie 1969–1970*, vol. IX, Warszawa 2003, 144.

best in Poland. Stefan's friends from Andrzejewo also studied over there, but that was not the most important thing.

The reason for choosing a Seminary in another diocese was probably the tension between the parish pastor in Andrzejewo and the organist, i.e., Stefan's father. He probably did not want his son – an “organiściak,” as sometimes priests scornfully called such Seminarians – while learning in Płock, to feel the effects of these tensions and misunderstandings. After all, the pastor delivered Stefan a positive opinion, but he had fired his father from the job a year later. The Wyszyński family had to move to Wrociszew near Warka, where they had to live in much worse housing conditions⁶.

When in September 1917, Wyszyński came to Włocławek, it was an industrial city of 40,000 inhabitants, developing thanks to, among others, a cellulose factory. After passing the Polish language, history, Latin, theology, and history exams, Wyszyński was admitted to the Pius X High School, a Minor Seminary. Włocławek, however, for 16-year-old Stefan Wyszyński, was primarily a Cathedral and a Seminary. Later he belonged to other churches, such as the general house of the “Congregation of the Sisters of Joint Work of the Immaculate Mary” located at Orla Str., Universal Bookstore, Diocesan Printing House, and the House of Christian Trade Unions placed at Leon XIIth Str.

Almost half a century later, the Primate of Poland recalled his first encounter with this city: that was a student who came to the Minor Seminary in 1917. When he first saw this cathedral, he fell in love with it. It was young love but very faithful⁷. He also recalled the next day: From the seminary windows at what the invasive anti-culture was doing on Copernicus Square. Then, in the memorable Ash Wednesday 1918, this temple was robbed with an invasive hand. Its heart was ripped out of the tower, organ sounds were destroyed, and even its ornament – the copper covering – was torn off. These were terrible days and dreadful experiences that deeply fell into the soul of a young student of the High School at the Major Seminary⁸. Wyszyński was returning to the Włocławek Cathedral quite often, as the Bishop of Lublin, as the Archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw, and as the Primate of Poland⁹.

6. Cf. E.K. Czaczkowska, *Kardynał Wyszyński: Biografia*, Kraków 2013, 35.

7. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, „Kronika Diecezji Włocławskiej” 52: 1969, 167.

8. Cf. P. Nitecki, *Włocławskie dzieje ks. Stefana Wyszyńskiego 1917-1946*, Wrocław 2008, 87.

9. One can see a kind of nostalgia for the Włocławek cathedral in his writings about the role of the Cathedral in the priest's life: “The Cathedral, “Domus Episcopalis”, located in the heart of the diocese, in the cathedral shrine, mother of all diocese churches, is a mainstay of God's authority, which wins the will and minds of priests and the People of God. After all, so many of our best feelings are associated with it. Who among us does not remember with the emotion the years spent in the Cathedral, to which we came like chicks under the wings of a hen. Over here, we

3. Seminary Formation: Time of Spiritual Growth

Inevitably, for Primate Wyszyński, a man was an essential creature right after God. He treated meetings with him as a divine gift but also as a mystery. He taught that the people we meet are those from whom we take and learn and those to whom we give something from ourselves. This is a genuinely exceptional exchange. Moreover: A particular historical bond arises in work itself: accomplished work links the entire past with the future. Whatever we take in the course of work, we see there closed in specific shapes, embodied by the past's action. This work, which we attach to the work already done, will be undertaken in the future by our successors, who will develop it, improve it, and lead it further.

Similarly, it is a connection between the man who currently works, the one who worked before him, and the one who will come after him: a kind of "holy communion." It is a strong historical bond¹⁰. The people with whom the future Primate of Poland contacted in Włocławek were primarily bishops, priests, professors, and alumni in the Seminary, religious sisters, especially from the "Congregation of the Sisters of Common Work of the Immaculate Mary" (which requires particular study due to special ties with this congregation). Among the laypeople, those with whom he cooperated were: people from the world of work, representatives of the intelligentsia, and landowners. From the memories of the Primate, it seems that during this period, a significant impact on his spiritual development and the already mentioned Fr. Antoni Bogdański had Fr. Bronisław Ostrzycki, a spiritual director of the Pius X High School. The seriously ill, stern, holy, and extremely compact priest laid the foundations of spiritual and religious life in our souls. He was very sober. Whenever someone confabulated or impatiently wanted to reach a higher spiritual perfection level than he should, Father Bronisław Ostrzycki used to say: "Domine," "domine," sober, lower. First, walk the earth, and then look at the sky¹¹. In May 1920, when the Polish-Bolshevik war was fought for over a year in Poland's eastern borders, Stefan Wyszyński took his first baccalaureate exam in Włocławek. The examination consisted of many subjects: Polish and general literature, mathematics, physics, biology, cosmography, physiology, anatomy, French and German, as well as the history of the Church and theological subjects taught in high school.

took our first steps, here through the priestly ordination we were authorized to use the altar. This altar is like a cradle of the spirit of our priesthood service. We put on it everything we took from the work of mind and grace carried out in the Seminary. The almost emotional connection with the Cathedral, with the Seminary, with the diocesan bishops, with outstanding priesthood figures, with humble servants of so many work posters, creates in us this beautiful feeling, a kind of "diocesan pride" which makes us see with our almost child's eyes all the best in our diocese" (S. Wyszyński, *List do moich kapłanów*, vol. III, Paris 1969, 37-38).

10. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *List do moich kapłanów*, 37-38.

11. Cf. Id., *Duch pracy ludzkiej*, Poznań 1957, 35-36.

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Nevertheless, we do not know too much about the seminary times of the future Primate. The four-year curriculum study included lectures on Scripture, theology (first of all fundamental, dogmatic, moral, ascetic, mystical, and pastoral theology. Additionally, canon law, philosophy, church history, and the history of philosophy, ethics, sociology, pedagogy, apologetics, homiletics, as well as classes on catechization and hygiene). Seminarians were also taught Hebrew, Greek, and, of course, singing. Lectures were partly in Latin.

Stefan Wyszyński once said about himself: Well, I was probably, in some way, a "holy seminarian"¹².

Considering that period of life, Wyszyński always recalled very warmly Bishop Stanisław Zdzitowiecki (1854-1927), bishop of Kujawy-Kalisz diocese (1902-1927): the first bishop whom he encountered in Włocławek. At a meeting with pilgrims of the Włocławek diocese who had come to visit Jasna Góra, he confessed with all honesty: "All my priestly life in the diocese passed in deep respect to my spiritual leaders. When I often examine my conscience, I do not remember a single thought or a single word that would be directed, even in the most intimate way, against my Bishop or my superiors. It was what I had learned from the elderly Bishop Zdzitowiecki, who was really a man of God, a man of Christ's Church"¹³.

Primate Wyszyński remembered bishop Zdzitowiecki as a great friend of the seminary youth. He often had come to take part in lectures and exams. It was sometimes immense happiness for the students because, if the young adept of knowledge, especially Latin – as it happened to the above "poor boy" – got entangled in Latin knowledge's secrets, then the Bishop asked the more straightforward question. Furthermore, when the student somehow succeeded,

12. Cf. P. Raina, *Stefan kardynał Wyszyński. Prymas Tysiąclecia*, vol. I, Wrocław 2016, 22.

13. S. Wyszyński, *Słowo Prymasa Polski do pielgrzymów diecezji włocławskiej przybyłych na Jasną Górę*, 26 VIII 1961, „Kronika Diecezji Włocławskiej” 55: 1961, 358.

he explained to the professor: you see, professor, it is not so bad. He does, at least, know something"¹⁴.

Wyszyński met the successor of Bishop Stanisław Zdzitowiecki, Władysław Krynicki (1861–1928), who was at that time a rector of the Seminary. On November 10, 1918, i.e., on the eve of regaining independence by Poland, Władysław Krynicki, together with Fr. Wojciech Owczarek, were ordained bishops in the Włocławek cathedral. After the death of Bishop Zdzitowiecki, Krynicki headed the Diocese of Włocławek since February 11, 1927, as a vicar of the chapter, and then, as its ordinary, until December 7, 1928. Unfortunately, his rule was short but very fruitful. In this time, the Higher Theological Seminary in Włocławek was granted university status by the Polish Republic's Parliament.

On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the Major Seminary in Włocławek, referring to the person of Bishop Władysław Krynicki, Cardinal Wyszyński mentioned an event from the rector's years: "Once, during the winter holidays that we spent here in the Seminary, we went to Fr. Rector Krynicki with a request to let us go to the city. He asked my friend: why do you want to go to the town? – To bind the book. Read the book in such a way that you do not have to bind it. Why do you want to go to the city? – He asked me. I answered: to buy a book. Have you already read all the books that are in our seminarian library? – Not yet (there were about a hundred thousand of them). So, if you will read them all, come, and then I will let you go to the city. As a result, I stayed to read these books, and I have not read them all until today"¹⁵.

Wojciech Owczarek (1875–1938), who, on August 3, 1924, ordained him as a priest. Bishop Owczarek, himself, suffered from tuberculosis, though he was morally obliged to take more care for young Wyszyński. In the future, the Primate of the Millennium mentioned that Bishop often asked about his health¹⁶. The successor of Bishop Owczarek, Bishop Michał Kozal (1893–1943), together with the rector of the Seminary, Fr. Franciszek Korszyński, providentially decided to send Wyszyński out from Włocławek. It was a few days before the arrest of professors and alumni priests. As a sign of special care from heaven, Cardinal Wyszyński realized that at

14. Id., *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, „Kronika Diecezji Włocławskiej” 52: 1969, 167.

15. Id., *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, 167.

16. “Bishop Wojciech, who put his hands on me, was in some way personally interested in my life. He often asked when I was studying abroad – whether I endure with health. Moreover, he added: It was I who ordained you as a priest. He was the instrumental cause of everything that took place in my life later. He once told me that he specifically prayed to support a man who, according to human judgment, was not very fit for the burden of the priesthood. I often refer to him, believing firmly that he is among God's friends and – through his intercession – I owe a lot!l. (ibid, *Po konsekracji Księdza Biskupa Ubrana*. Wrocław – Katedra 7. 02. 1960, in: *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956-1981*, vol. I-LXVII. Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. VI, 50).

the time of his arrest by communists in 1953, when the nun quickly handed him the coat, he noticed in the car that it was the coat of Bishop Michał Kozal, which he had received after being nominated bishop of Lublin: “I was thrilled with this discovery. I found an advocate. I have prayed to him many times, asking for support to fulfill honestly the task that God has given to me”¹⁷. In Kalisz, he prophetically said that Father Maksymilian Kolbe and Bishop Michał Kozal would lead the martyrs of war and occupation to beatification”¹⁸.

4. *In Spiritu et Veritate*

There was also a host of priests, especially the Seminary professors, who greatly influenced Poland’s future primate. He enumerated them on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the Seminary. However, they can be divided into several groups, depending on the interests that aroused in the young alumna and priest: Fr. Bronisław Ostrzycki and father Antoni Bogdański shaped his spirituality; Fr. Stanisław Chodyński, Fr. Józef Kruszyński, Fr. Adam Jankowski, Fr. Antoni Borowski – passion for scientific work; Fr. Antoni Szymański and father Stanisław Tywonek – interest in social studies. Nevertheless, the Primate always had very warm memories of each of these noble priests.

Though, the most remarkable memories are related with Fr. Antoni Bogdański (1891–1938), and, particularly, with what he foretold to the future Primate of Poland, Fr. Bogdański together with Fr. Franciszek Korszyński founded in 1919 the “Charist Association of the Włocławek Diocese”. He was also the director of the Minor Seminary, as well as a very devoted organizer of the scout’s movement in Italy and – later – in Poland. In 1924–1925 he was even elected as a “Chief Chaplain of Scouts” in Poland¹⁹. Once, lecturing liturgy, he said: “When I look at you, I must tell you: the time will come that they will hammer nails into your tonsures. Moreover, I see martyrs in you!...”. We were all terrified. In the classroom was absolute silence. After a while, Fr. Bogdański folded his notes and left. He was sick for quite a long time, but he could not return to his duties never again”²⁰.

In this context, the most interesting was the comment of the Primate. He pointed out that “although Bogdański’s prophesies may not have been fulfilled so realistically, (...) unfortunately, the Church had had to face reality a hundred

17. Ibid.

18. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Milenijne gody w Wiślicy*. Wiślica 17.07.1966, in: *Kazania i przemówienia autoryzowane 1956-1981*, vol. I-LXVII. Archiwum Instytutu Prymasowskiego w Warszawie, vol. XXIV, 257-271.

19. This priest was seriously ill with tuberculosis, and his condition chained him very often to bed for weeks. One day he entered the classroom, where there were 18 seminarians. Slender, pale, with a script file. His eyes were glistening with tuberculosis fever. However, his soul radiated a hundred times more clearly (F. Korszyński, *Jasne promienie w Dachau*, Poznań 1985, 6).

20. Wyszyński, *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, 164.

times worse than those from Bogdański's visions. The experiences of thousands of Catholic priests and people of the Church suffered in so many concentration camps, described in numerous diaries, had exceeded all the darkest imagination²¹.

Wyszyński also underlined that from the classmates that actually had heard the prophecy of Father Bogdański – and which, apart from Father Primate, no one remembered – ten of them died in Dachau, others perished of exhaustion. Only four remained alive. “Do not think, however, that someone taking into consideration this statement decided to leave the priesthood. No one! God gave us grace. Everyone was faithful. We understood that God, calling to the priesthood, has the right to demand a lot”²².

Among the professors, who awakened his passion for scientific work, Stefan Wyszyński mentioned several of them. The entire team of professors – with the elderly historian, Fr. Stanisław Chodyński – was a group of people whose qualifications were needed for good education of the future priest: reliable biological and physical knowledge, as well as humanistic formation with the broadly understood general culture, which Fr. Idzi Radziszewski strictly demanded²³. Therefore, the Pius X High School was established in 1906 as the “Minor Seminary of Włocławek Diocese.”

The most important for the beginning of the seminarians' intellectual formation was good philosophical foundations and – in particular – basic knowledge and the precision of thinking (Fr. Prof. Adam Jankowski). On these foundations, the students were able to build the edifice of theological, social, and pastoral knowledge. Responsible for this process were such professors as Józef Kruszyński (a librarian), Fr. Antoni Borowski and Fr. Henryk Kaczorowski (moral theologians), Fr. Antoni Szymański (a sociologist educated in Catholic University of Leuven, and then, the first editor of the „Ateneum Kapłańskie”), Fr. Bolesław Kunka (an apologist and editor of the „Ateneum Kapłańskie”)²⁴. In other words, only a well-educated candidate was admitted to the priesthood.

The mentioned program of seminary studies resulted in the preparation of many priests for scientific and pastoral work. It is not surprising that in 1914 Fr. Idzi Radziszewski was appointed as the rector of “Saint Petersburg Roman Catholic Theological Academy”. Under his guidance, the “Theological Academy” was reformed. In 1918, after the “October Revolution”, experiencing the trauma of Bolshevik persecution, he returned from the city on the Neva to Poland with a clear plan to establish a Catholic university, hesitating only whether in Włocławek or Lublin. Finally, Radziszewski chose Lublin. At that time, this city was in the center

21. Quotation after: F. Korszyński, *Jasne promienie w Dachau*, 5.

22. S. Wyszyński, *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, 168.

23. Cf. *Ibid*, 166-171.

24. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *425 lat Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego we Włocławku*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 58: 1959, 387.

of Poland. Besides, a good friend of his from Włocławek, Fr. Marian Fulman (1866-1945), became a Lublin diocese bishop.

As a result, six professors from the Włocławek seminar went to Lublin to work at this university. Three of them later became rectors of the Catholic University of Lublin: Fr. Idzi Radziszewski, Fr. Antoni Szymański, and Fr. Józef Kruszyński. Primate Wyszyński, on the 400th anniversary of the Włocławek Seminary, recalled the moment of saying goodbye to professors going to Lublin: “I remember the inaugural year here, in the theological hall, after the professors’ departure to Lublin. Bishop Zdzitowiecki was so glad to give so many professors to the Catholic University of Lublin that he enthusiastically said: I gave everything I had the best to the Catholic University. However, he realized that there were professors who had authority among young people, so he began to explain: “Of course, many outstanding professors remained here”. Nevertheless, the youth in their defiance thought that the best professors went to Lublin”²⁵.

It is worth noting that the founding of the Catholic University of Lublin was a great pride of the Włocławek community. The Primate expressed this by saying: “The establishment of the Catholic University of Lublin made everyone happy. We, seminarians, were personally attached to this fact. It was our great joy and a great title to be proud of, although we did not contribute much to it”²⁶. One of the classmates of the future Primate, who also studied with him, was Henryk Ryszewski. He left the Seminary after several years. In December 1970, Ryszewski sent to the Department IV of the “Ministry of the Interior” (a unit of the Communist Security Service) a typescript of his book “Cardinal Purple and Red” (*Purpura kardynalska i czerwień*), in which he recalled the times of common studies with Wyszyński at the Włocławek seminary. At that time, Ryszewski was a retired journalist and – according to the Institute of National Remembrance archives – a secret informer of the communist Security Services. His text was literarily low, but it seems that some parts of the book can be trusted²⁷.

About Wyszyński, he said: “He was not willing to confide. (...) His piousness was most noticeable, but far from any cheap devotion. He did not pray “for a show” to attract the favorable attention of the seminary authorities. (...) Did Stefan have a real calling to the priesthood? Undoubtedly, yes, and as time passed, this calling

25. S. Wyszyński, *Garść wspomnień podczas akademii w 400-lecie Włocławskiego Seminarium Duchownego*, 168.

26. Ibid.

27. Ryszewski wrote, among others: “Do you remember [he turned to Wyszyński], how hard our life was. (...) After all, we were given breakfast without potatoes to save on bread, and for tea, we dipped biscuits from the Bug River razor, which our parents sent us. You know very well how our stomachs suffered because you have been in pain for many years. Lice, scabies, and typhoid haunted us every day. Eleven seminarians fell ill, four died” (H. Ryszkowski, *Purpura kardynalska i czerwień*, AIPN, sign. 0445/83, 2).

grew and became more beautiful. He was extremely hard-working, ambitious, and memorable in science. Maybe because he got it hard (e.g., he did not have language skills); however, he never was the proverbial “nerd.” He inherited neither his musicality nor his father’s voice, and he did not belong to the clerical choir. (...) I know him as a good friend. He did no harm, and he was disgusted by denunciation, which flourished particularly in the Seminary. He liked to laugh, to make fun with his colleagues and of his colleagues as well. However, he always did it in their presence, and he never abused anybody. I cannot say that he clung to the wider camaraderie. Already at the Seminary, he seemed to be, in some way, a kind of loner at work and in the struggle”²⁸.

Contrary to this opinion, however, Wyszyński was quite actively involved in the seminary community’s life. He was the president of the “Abstinence Brotherhood” and also the head of a Seminar newspaper. Throughout his studies, as well as many years after, Wyszyński suffered from tuberculosis. Harsh living conditions in the Seminary, lack of proper food, and cold rooms only deteriorated his health. Moreover, all these conditions did not allow him to be successfully cured of his ailment. Usually, the seminar authorities sent sick clerics for summer internships to prosperous parishes to improve their physical condition and be better nourished. Therefore, Wyszyński was sent to Licheń. During one of his stays, Wyszyński described miracles and favors that suffering pilgrims received through the intercession of Our Lady of Licheń. Unfortunately, this document was lost during the war. He was sent to Licheń to improve his health also in July 1924.

5. Experience of the *Misterium Iniquitatis*

When in the autumn of 1917, 16-year-old Stefan Wyszyński began his studies at the Minor Seminary in Włocławek with a dream about becoming a priest, the world devoured by the “Great War” entered into a completely new era of its history. The armed coup d’état executed by Bolsheviks in Russia, known as the “October Revolution,” has permanently changed the face of the world. In this sense, the “Bolsheviks’ revolution” was a state of mind. It was born in spirit, and with the power of the spirit, it directs the affairs of this world. Therefore, its whole essence is based on two metaphysical values: absolute equality and absolute freedom – and two mortal sins: pride and sensuality, which most strongly push people to rebel against the existing order.

Furthermore, the critical stimulus that gives it unstoppable dynamics is the feeling of hatred. Thus, the Bolshevik revolutionary spirit’s quintessence consists of hating – in principle and on the metaphysical level – all inequality and all law,

28. Ibid, 4-8.

especially moral law. Because the revolution in the Bolshevik edition is disorder and illegality par excellence, at the foundation of which lies the real hatred of God²⁹.

It is no wonder then that Pope Pius XI has opposed communism practically since the beginning of the Bolshevik revolt. His words spoken in 1931 in the Encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno" are significant: If Socialism, like all errors, contains some truth (which, moreover, the Supreme Pontiffs have never denied), it is based nevertheless on a theory of human society peculiar to itself and irreconcilable with true Christianity. Religious Socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms; no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a real socialist³⁰. In other words, Socialism, if it remains Socialism genuinely, even after it has yielded to truth and justice on the points which we have mentioned, cannot be reconciled with the teachings of the Catholic Church because its concept of society itself is utterly foreign to Christian truth³¹.

Stefan Wyszyński, a faithful son of the Catholic Church, did not learn communism either from fascination or ordinary curiosity. Communism was, for him, the starting point for the program to fight against this system³². He wrote about it himself: "You cannot fight communism if you do not study it deeply; it does not illuminate its wrong assumptions and insincere aspirations; the error must be named and branded. (...) Because the danger of communism threatens and permeates all manifestations of life, it must be combated by the concerted effort of the whole society"³³. Wyszyński's first publications on Socialism and Communism appeared in 1931, two years after his graduation from the Catholic University of Lublin and, interestingly, after his scientific trip to Western Europe. As befits a reliable Catholic researcher, he first dealt with what the Church had already said on these topics³⁴, as well as its current teaching³⁵.

It was then that Pius XI announced the encyclical "Quadragesimo Anno", and Wyszyński, in his article, presented the papal evaluation of both ideologies: Socialism and communism³⁶. He also introduced Pius XI's encyclical, "Divini

29. Cf. P. Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Hanover, PA 2002.

30. Cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 120.

31. Ibid, No. 117. In his alarming documents, Pope Pius XI defines communism as "ungodly", "anti-religious by nature", and "definitely false". Besides, it is a form of "perversion", "deception", "deceit", "fury", "poison", "extremely delusional", "tremendously dangerous", "disgusting deluge threatening the world", a "collectivist terrorism full of hatred", "plague" leading to ruin, and a "widespread disaster" (cf. K.S. Latourette, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, London 1973, 178-187).

32. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Inteligencja w przedniej straży komunizmu*, Katowice 1939, 132-141.

33. S. Wyszyński, *Katolicki program walki z komunizmem*, Włocławek 1937, 4.

34. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Socjalistyczna własność wspólna w ocenie „Rerum novarum”*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 28: 1931, 470-486.

35. Ibid, 505-523.

36. Ibid, 516-517.

Redemptoris,” displaying the Church’s attitude to communism³⁷. Other publications already contain it, although seen mostly through the papal – especially Pius XI optics – image of Socialism. Socialism has played a significant role in the fight against religion, seeking to limit the public rights of the Church, remove it from influencing the state, economic, and social life. Therefore, Wyszyński did not have a high opinion even of its expressiveness and compactness in programming. Socialism finally adopted one of its principal canons, seeing almost the essence of evil in private property defended by the Church³⁸.

According to it, human life’s whole reality should be subordinated to the state understood as a collective (collectivist economy). In practice, it led to the negation of fundamental rights arising from the very nature of man and the introduction of, among others, the collectivist economy³⁹. Moreover, socialist ideology “(...) destroyed the concept of society as a moral organism. On the one hand, it led to humiliation and proletarianization of the working masses, to contempt for manual labor, and on the other, to brutal class struggle and disrespect for intellectual and managerial work. On both sides, for mutual negation”⁴⁰. Furthermore, the system, which does not consider the human person’s rights, negates the value of the human soul, imposes on people goals that contradict their most profound destiny, sooner or later will lead to the liquidation of the rights of the human person.

Besides, Socialism creates illusions about the alleged absolute equality of all people and thus the elimination of all social ills in the future system designed by them. Such promises testify to too external and even mechanistic treatment of human equality⁴¹. On the educational level, socialist ideology “(...) reflects the whole spirit of Marxism: classiness (even toward children), anti-religiousness, dislike of Catholic morality, anti-clericalism, anti-statehood, anti-nationality, and internationality, Jewish mentality. A young worker brought up at home, and at school in a Catholic, under the influence of socialist reading, contact with socialists and socialist organizations ceases to be Catholic”⁴².

At the same time, Wyszyński warned against the temptations of “Christianizing” Socialism, and Catholic or Christian socialist organizations, Catholic-socialist newspapers which – in his opinion – usually ended in the “conversion” of the initiators to communism. The fact that Socialism has undergone various transformations in its practical activities, for example, a change in the attitude toward class struggle and private ownership, cannot be considered a lasting gain. It is

37. S. Wyszyński, *Pius XI o walce z komunizmem*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 39: 1937, 466-478.

38. S. Wyszyński, *Socjalistyczna własność wspólna w ocenie „Rerum novarum”*, 470-486

39. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Duszpasterz w budowaniu ustroju korporacyjnego*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 43: 1939, 107.

40. *Ibid*, 112

41. Cf. *Ibid*, 110.

42. S. Wyszyński, *O młodym robotniku polskim: Przebudowa KZMM*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, 42: 1939, 501.

a change of tactics, not the doctrine⁴³. Some solutions proposed by Socialism can be accepted, but one cannot take its theory, even retouched.

He referred in this matter to Pius XI's indications in "Quadragesimo Anno," which warned that Socialism, despite tactical changes, still maintained a view of society and man's social nature contrary to the Catholic moral teaching. That is why – according to the Pope – contradictory terms are: religious Socialism or Christian Socialism. One cannot be a good Catholic and a true socialist at the same time⁴⁴. In other words, as Wyszyński stated: "The communist myth introduced into its world the elite of work, heroes of toil, and pioneers of production, announcing that they are giants of the future, creators of a new culture, morality, and religion. The most narrow type of elite: the "lunkheads" ruling bravely over the hammer, tractor, and machine, but unable to control their own soul"⁴⁵.

Conclusions

The process of growing in faith dynamized in Stefan Wyszyński and shaped his entire spiritual life. This outgrowth, however, was in line with the conviction about the greatness of the gift and the mystery of priesthood. The above persuasion was an imperative of zealous commitment to cooperation with the grace of priestly vocation, and it was reflected in its implementation. Ultimately, it led to union with God, which is a condition for the ecclesiastical service's effective accomplishment. It is also the source of Stefan Wyszyński's zealous concern for shaping the quality of spiritual life. The awareness of the priesthood's greatness stimulated him to realize the sacramental reality he was discovering and – in this context – understanding his future mission. In turn, it inspired Stefan Wyszyński's concern for such a spiritual and intellectual formation that he would be worthy of such a gift. Therefore, he justified the need for such spiritual formation with the theological motivation according to which the priest appears in Christ's name as the *alter Christus*. This is the nature of the sacrament of Holy Orders from which the evangelizing mission is carried out both in the Church and the world.

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43. S. Wyszyński, *Inteligencja w przedniej straży komunizmu*, 132–125.

44. Cf. *Quadragesimo Anno*, No. 117–118.

45. S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna. Rozważania społeczne*, Poznań 1993, 93.

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Summary

The article's subject examines the youth period and the process of Stefan Wyszyński's seminary formation. The above paper's primary research goal is to display Wyszyński's early life in the context of Poland's socio-political status quo at that time. Therefore, the source materials' interpretation focuses on exposing the role and significance of this time for the entire future ministry of Fr. Stefan Wyszyński, so important both for the Church and the Polish nation. The exploration of the above research is based on the analysis of source texts using the historical method in order to reconstruct historical facts and their reinterpretation by the inductive-deductive method. According to the author of this study, the upbringing in the family home, the period of youth, as well as the seminary formation were a kind of testing ground, where Stefan Wyszyński could gain the pastoral experience necessary for his future activity as a priest, ordinary of the Lublin diocese, and, later, the Archdiocese of Gniezno and Warszawa and the Primate of Poland.

Key words: Stefan Wyszyński, Włocławek diocese, priesthood, Seminarian formation, the interwar period

WŁOCŁAWSKI OKRES POSŁUGI DUSZPASTERSKIEJ KS. STEFANA WYSZYŃSKIEGO: MŁODZIEŻ I SEMINARYJNA FORMACJA DO KAPŁAŃSTWA

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł analizuje młodość i proces formacji seminaryjnej Stefana Wyszyńskiego. Podstawowym celem badawczym powyższego artykułu jest zatem ukazanie wczesnego okresu życia Wyszyńskiego w kontekście ówczesnej sytuacji społeczno-politycznej Polski. Interpretacja materiałów źródłowych koncentruje się na ukazaniu roli i znaczenia tego przedziału czasowego dla całej przyszłej posługi ks. Stefana Wyszyńskiego, tak istotnej zarówno dla Kościoła, jak też narodu polskiego. Eksploracja powyższych badań będzie polegała na analizie tekstów źródłowych metodą historyczną w celu rekonstrukcji faktów historycznych i ich reinterpretacji metodą indukcyjno-dedukcyjną. Zdaniem autora niniejszego studium, wychowanie w domu rodzinnym, okres młodości, jak też formacja seminaryjna były swego rodzaju poligonem doświadczalnym, gdzie Stefan Wyszyński mógł zdobyć, jak również rozwinąć doświadczenia duszpasterskie niezbędne dla późniejszej działalności jako księdza-społecznika, ordynariusza diecezji lubelskiej, a później archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej i warszawskiej, jak też Prymasa Polski.

Słowa kluczowe: Stefan Wyszyński, diecezja włocławska, kapłaństwo, formacja seminaryjna, okres międzywojenny