

ZEŃSKIE ZGROMADZENIA ZAKONNE W POLSCE 1939-1947

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SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Servites of Immaculate Mary was founded in 1878 by Capuchin Father Honorat Koźmiński. It is a religious order with a social mission, working especially amongst village populations. The congregation was approved by the Apostolic Capital in 1936. During the 20-year interwar period the congregation acted officially under the names of its religious-charity organizations: "Self-Help", "Dawn", "The Ray", "Help and Work" (in each province a different name was used). Before the war broke out in 1939 the sisters owned 138 houses. Of the overall total of 1197 sisters, there were 811 professed nuns who had taken final vows, 195 with temporary vows, 114 novices and 77 postulants.

In 1939 the congregation directed 4 of its own technical schools (3 sewing schools and one which offered preparation in home economics), and a grammar and secondary school. All of the above were boarding schools. In addition to these private schools, many sisters worked in public state schools. The sisters also managed 6 separate pupils' hostels, 2 "station missions" for travelling women, 1 nursery, 48 pre-schools (10 of which belonged to the congregation). The congregation also owned and ran 15 cafeterias and 13 stores.

As a part of their apostolic work the Servites managed service shops, took care of the sick and poor, and directed other religious organizations, such as the Catholic Youth Association and third order groups. They organized recollections for the elderly and sick, taught catechism and took care of the liturgical and altar linen. The Servites also worked in two district hospitals as nurses and ward attendants, in addition to managing the farms attached to several seminaries and homes for retired priests. The Second World War put a stop to the congregation's activity in those areas taken over by the Reich, and greatly limited work in other parts of the country. Included in the war damage was the destruction of 11 of the congregation's outposts in the following places: Garwolin, Łaskarzew, Kurozwęki, Łowicz, Lunna, Maków Mazowiecki, Parysów, Różan, Wyszów, Warsaw, and Włostów. During the evacuation operation the sisters lost houses in Drohiczyn, Goniądz, Kazimierz Biskupi, Łapy, Radom, Łomża, Nasielsk, Płock (2 houses), Rokicze and Wilno.

As a result of repatriation 16 houses were closed down and 106 sisters transferred to central Poland in 1945. The general administration, clearly seeing the lack of necessary living conditions in some communities, dissolved seven homes. Sisters from the occupied territories were scattered about. To the extent that it was possible and based on their own initiative, many founded new communities, some of which survived the occupation.

The educational work at many of the congregation's outposts was hindered as the occupiers liquidated schools, pre-schools, pupils' hostels and boarding-houses run by the sisters. Despite this the Servite congregation conducted classes in 3 technical schools in Mariówka

throughout the occupation. To a large extent the Servites took part in underground education. Aside from offering clandestine classes on the grammar and secondary school levels, they also organized a secret course for pre-school teachers. Many sisters took part in the resistance movement, cooperating with partisans, helping prisoners, soldiers, the wounded and sick, and providing any other necessary help, with the support of the Chief Council for Protection (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza). The sister sheltered youth from exportation to work in Germany, arousing within them a love for God and their homeland. To the extent that it was possible, the Servites provided shelter for the evacuees, offering them material help and education for their children.

The most significant losses suffered by the congregation were personal losses. Five sisters died as a result of shelling. Four sisters perished in concentration camps in Działdowo and Pomiechówek, whereas two died upon return from the camps. Some of the sisters left the order as a result of the dispersion and lack of contact with superiors, while some left due to panic caused by military action on the front, raids, etc. In addition, some sisters were discharged. Another factor was the increase in the mortality rate during the occupation.

By the end of the war in 1945 the congregation was weakened, but not defeated. Thanks to good leadership it was able to undertake new tasks. Many of the outposts saved from the turmoil of war continued their work. The first priority was setting up schools, i.e. a grammar and secondary school in Mariówka, and technical schools which survived the occupation, but needed to be returned to their original, pre-war state. These were schools in Sandomierz, Częstochowa and Mariówka (2), each with its own boarding-house. Aside from schools, immediately after the war the following outposts were activated: 9 special homes for children, 34 pre-schools, 6 shelters for the elderly, 3 hostels and 2 hospitals. Fourteen sisters worked in grammar schools, 9 in Caritas offices, 3 in private dispensaries, 6 in stores owned by the congregation, 3 in soup kitchens, and 5 on farms of seminaries. The sisters ran service shops, nursed the parish sick and poor, and cared after liturgical and processional linen. In 1947 the congregation owned 125 houses and the sisters numbered 1006. During the war years, the number of houses decreased by 13 and the number of sisters by 191.

In the new, post-war reality the congregation concentrated on proper preparation of its members for apostolic work. It took advantage of every possibility to supplement and deepen the general and technical education of its sisters, sending them to various schools and on to higher education.

SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Daughters of Immaculate Mary (a secular order) was founded in Zakroczym on October 21, 1891. In 1934 it was approved by the Apostolic Capital in Rome. In 1939 the congregation numbered 271 sisters and owned 28 houses throughout Poland. During the occupation under the management of Reverend Mother General Maria Bagnowska (Mother Natalia) and her general council, the sisters conducted their work in two principle directions: social-charity work and educational work. Their activities included the following: 3 technical schools, 3 general schools, 12 offices offering technical courses, 8 boarding-houses, 2 community centers for youth, 7 pre-schools, 10 sewing shops, 6 orphanages, 2 homes for the elderly, 2 cafeterias and 2 laundries serving the local church. In 1939 in the 59 outposts of the congregation, the sisters took care of 2570 children and youth, and 120 elderly and cripples.

During the course of the war the congregation lost 7 establishments in Końskie, Sucha (2), Wąchock, Warsaw and Skarżysko (2). In addition it suffered serious material losses as a result of the evacuation from 9 educational institutions in Grójec (3), Radom (3), and Kielce (3), and the destruction of 3 large estates. As a result of the dissolution of some outposts and the opening of others, in 1945 the congregation carried on its work in 26 establishments and, in 1947, in 21.

During the occupation years, being sensitive to the needs of the time, the sisters extended their activities to 5 kitchens (sponsored by the Chief Council for Protection and parish Caritas organizations), which provided food for children, Polish soldiers, the civilian population, prisoners and partisans. During periods of highest demand the sisters served 9000 meals a day, operating from these 5 kitchens. In all the outposts the sisters gave immediate help to those in need, supplying linen, clothes, food articles, in addition to helping the sick, wounded and Jews. They washed laundry for the poor and prepared children for their First Holy Communion. As a part of their educational work during the war, the sisters ran 3 technical schools in Radom, 3 general schools in Wilno and Bujwidziszki, 3 boarding-houses for girls and 6 tailoring courses, participation in which protected youth from being taken to Germany to work and facilitated their participation in clandestine study groups.

Despite the difficult material conditions caused by the war, the sisters supported 545 orphans and children of unknown nationalities: Polish, White Russian, Soviet, Jewish. The sisters often collected contributions in order to feed them. In addition, 235 children from pre-schools and residents of two homes for the elderly were also partially dependent upon the sisters' support. Altogether the number of pupils and wards from these various establishments surpassed 3000 people in 1945, whereas in 1947 the number decreased to 2358.

During the German occupation sisters from 2 homes in Hrubieszów and Kielce participated in the underground movement, providing soldiers of the Home Army with food, medicines, clothing, in addition to hiding partisans of the Home Army in the congregation's houses.

After the liberation the congregation's work slowly returned to its former character. The sisters continued to supply the population with food until 1947, though by then working only from 2 kitchens in Radom and in Pionki.

During the Hitlerite occupation the Congregation of the Daughters of Immaculate Mary saw its founding aims realized through prayer, selfless work and the example set by the sisters, in this way keeping up morale in its surroundings.

SUMMARY

This work presents a documented historical outline of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart (whose name in Latin reads as follows: Congregation Sororum Filiarum Purissimi Cordis Beatae Mariae Virginis) during the time period of September 1, 1939 to December 31, 1947.

The congregation was founded in 1885 in Wilno by Capuchin priest Honorat Wacław Kozmiński and Mother Maria Paula Malecka. The congregation's aim is the upbringing and education of children, especially orphans, in the spirit of catholicism. The first canonical novitiate arose in 1905 in the main house in Nowe Miasto on the Pilica. The congregation was granted approval on May 12, 1930. On September 1, 1939 the congregation owned 31 outposts and totalled 470 people.

Due to the fact that the electoral chapter was not able to meet, in 1941 the same administration directed the congregation for 11 years, from 1935-1946. From September 1, 1939 to December 31, 1947, 20 outposts were closed down, however, 19 new establishments arose in their place.

The sisters' work was concentrated on Polish territory, yet all over the country. Members of the congregation came from different social and educational backgrounds. In the time period mentioned above, 63 women joined the congregation and 35 left. In total 42 sisters died: 3 were executed, 3 died during actual fighting, 1 perished in a concentration camp, and 35 died a natural death 24 were taken to Germany to work.

During the occupation the sisters did not fundamentally change their activities. In addition to those mentioned above, they conducted various home economic courses, directed sewing schools, and also worked on the farms owned by orphanages and seminaries. The Germans tolerated the sisters' work raising children, and conducting sewing courses. However, they forbade the education of children, even on an elementary level. For this reason the sisters became involved in underground education, most often under the guise of sewing and other such courses.

In Warsaw, at the W. Reymont Educational Institution, the sisters lent out their place to professors of Poznań University who conducted secret university lectures. The sisters always fulfilled their patriotic duty, a prime example of which being their participation in the Warsaw Uprising. Some of them, along with other teachers, paid for this patriotism with their lives.

The exact number of people consistently taking advantage of the services and help provided by the sisters in their various outposts cannot be determined. From the documents saved there is information that in 1939 this number reached approximately 1,855, while during the war it decreased to 698. Before the war, self-administered institutions and social groups provided the congregation with material support. During the war, charity organizations and private people lent a hand.

SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Consolers of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus, a secular order, was founded in Nowe Miasto on the Pilica in 1896 by Capuchin Father Honorat Wacław Kozmiński, with the help of Zofia Krzymowska.

The aim of the congregation is the spread of authentic principles of learning and Catholic morality amongst the Polish intelligensia, by raising and educating youth, and distributing valuable books and press, which at the time of the congregation's founding were the main means of passing on intellectual values.

With the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, the congregation numbered 72 sisters (10 of which were novices) living in 8 houses. From 1938-1944 the congregation was directed by a 7-member administration, led by Mother General Janina (Beatrice) Wolska. During the occupation on July 5, 1944 a new administration was elected by the general chapter and Ann (Cecylia) Gagolska was chosen Superior General.

When the war broke out the congregation was carrying out its apostolic work at 6 outposts. Located in the remaining 2 houses was a novitiate in Radość and a vacation home in Otłówek. In the main house in Warsaw on Wilcza St. 25, there was a lending library, "Reading Room for Everyone", which opened in 1911 and became increasingly active during the occupation. The house was destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising. On Marszałkowska St. 78 there was a boarding-house for female teachers and clerks. In this house during the occupation the sisters baked rolls and during the Uprising, bread for these participating. In Łuków at Plac Kościelny the sisters ran a bookstore and lending library from 1919 on. This outpost, operating until July 1944, provided textbooks for students who participated in clandestine studies during the occupation. On Narutowicz St. 59a in Łódź, from 1919 on the sisters managed two schools for girls, the Helena Miklaszewska Grammar School and Secondary School (with the full rights of category A state schools) and one general school. Also in Łódź on Sienkiewicz St. 61, they ran a hostel for pupils of the grammar and secondary schools. Beginning in 1928, in the village of Moskule outside Łódź (now, Strykowska St. 122, Łódź), the congregation rented space from a public school and during the vacation months conducted summer camps for children and youth. There was also a chapel on the premises. It was a public chapel which functioned as a filial of the church in Dobra.

Three of the first outposts (one in Warsaw, 2 in Łuków) found on German-occupied territory were quite active through the first half of 1944. In Warsaw the Reading Room for Everyone on Wilcza St. 25 and the boarding-house on Marszałkowska 78 were destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising after the evacuation operation in October 6, 1944. Along with the Reading Room, the house in Łuków was destroyed in July, 1944 during military action. Three outposts in Łódź were

liquidated by the occupying forces at the end of 1939. The sisters were evacuated from the houses and the Łódź voivodeship became part of the Reich.

In December 1940 a provisional house was set up in Łódź on Sienkiewicz St. 32 for sisters who were evacuated from the homes in this city. Despite difficult material conditions the sisters of this house took part in the help operation for prisoners, sending packages to imprisoned priests in German concentration camps. At the end of January 1945, after the liberation of Łódź, the house was closed down as the evacuated sisters returned to their old outposts.

During the occupation the house in Otwock, who it before the war served exclusively as a vacation home, was transformed into a boarding-house for those suffering from tuberculosis and became an apostolic outpost, thanks to the fact that it contained a chapel with a permanent chaplain.

At the same time other educational opportunities opened up for the sisters. In 1942 a group of sisters took over the outpost in Zagórze, where they cared after difficult children and those who lost their families in the war. In 1944 the sisters moved from Zagórze to another establishment in Radość-Zbójna Góra, and in July 1945 to Józefów near Warsaw. In these establishments the sisters conducted their educational work under the direction of the Institute of Mental Hygiene.

After the war the main house in Warsaw, whose former headquarters on Wilcza St. were beyond repair, was transferred to a new location at Miodowa St. 16/6. Five sisters from this house undertook charity activities in the parish of Our Lady of Częstochowa on Łazienkowska St. The sister-catechists returned to grammar schools where they resumed religious instruction.

After the liberation the sisters immediately returned to the outposts in Łódź. On February 22, 1945 classes began in the Helena Mikiaszewska Grammar and Secondary Schools. The boarding-house on Sienkiewicz St. also resumed its activities. The grade school and chapel in Moskule were reactivated in February 1945.

From 1939 to 1947 personal losses totalled 23 sisters: 7 left the order, 3 were dismissed, 12 died of natural causes, and 1 perished in the fighting.

On December 31, 1947 the congregation numbered 66 sisters (of which 13 were novices), spread out amongst 7 outposts: the main house in Warsaw, the novitiate in Radość, an educational facility in Józefów, an apostolic outpost in Otwock and 3 in Łódź.

SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Reparatrixes of the Most Holy Countenance (up to 1961 known as the Congregation of the Announcers of Reparation, or Missionaries of the Most Holy Countenance, and popularly known in Poland as Sisters of the Countenance) is a secular order founded in 1888 in Warsaw by Capuchin father Honorat Koźmiński, with the help of co-founder Mother Eliza (Teresa) Cejzik.

The congregation's administration has had its headquarters in Warsaw, on Polna St. 40, except for a two-year period (1899-1901) when the administration operated out of Częstochowa. The novitiate was located in Nowe Miasto on the Pilica from 1895-1899, in Warsaw from 1899-1919, and in Częstochowa from 1919 to November 1947. Since 1947 it can be found on Żeromski St. 23 in Otwock.

At the general chapter in 1930 the sisters were divided into two choirs. During the years 1939-1947 the congregation conducted its work on Polish territory alone. It owned 10-14 houses and numbered 86-94 sisters. In accordance with its founding aim, the congregation of the Sisters of the Countenance was geared towards educational work. Aside from this, it also managed special homes and establishments, which offered all types of care and food.

In 1939 the congregation owned 6 educational outposts. Included in this number were 2 pupils hostels (in Warsaw and Częstochowa), 3 pre-schools (1 in Białski near Kalisz and 2 in Częstochowa), a boarding-house of the State Seminary for Pre-school Teachers. At this time the sisters also ran 2 hostels (One for Women Teachers in Zielonka near Warsaw, and one for Veteran Artists of the Polish Stage, in Skolimów near Warsaw), in addition to 4 food establishments (3 at the Catholic University of Lublin – a Cafeteria of Brotherly Help for Students, a cafeteria in the Professor's Hotel, and a cafeteria in the boarding-house for student-priests – and 1 cafeteria in the Pilgrim's House in Częstochowa).

The new conditions resulting from the occupation significantly affected the congregation's activity during this period. In 1940 an institution for the raising of child victims of the war was established in Częstochowa. In Lublin 2 new outposts were set up with the aim of fighting malnutrition amongst the local population. They provided shelter and various types of aid for refugees and other victims of the war. The sisters also provided help and shelter for the Jews.

All over the country the period 1945-1947 was one of reconstruction after the destruction caused by the war. In all the congregation's homes necessary repair work was undertaken and the outposts were adapted to current needs. After the liberation the sisters began work in Olsztyn, Warmia, in the home of the bishop of the diocese and in the Lower Seminary. In 1947 the congregation directed 8 educational outposts, 2 shelters and 4 food establishments.

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SUMMARY

Congregatio Sororum Vestiarum Jesu was founded in 1882 by Father Honorat Koźmiński, with the assistance of Józefa Kawecka. The congregation received its first constitution in 1890, which was approved in 1908. Beginning in 1928 the congregation carried on its outside work as the religious union, „The Grateful Work”. Its basic task was to sew and embroider liturgical gowns and to look after the interior decoration of the church. A second channel of its activity was apostolic work amongst children which consisted of preparation for First Communion and education in pre-schools run by the sisters.

During the occupation, despite difficult living conditions, the sisters followed the principles outlined in the congregation's constitution. From 1939-1945 the novitiate was closed due to lack of candidates. The novitiate was reopened in 1947. At the outbreak of war the congregation owned 6 houses. They were both small and average-sized homes, numbering from 3-5 sisters. During the war these homes were located in 3 different occupied regions: 2 in the Reich, 3 in the German Occupied Territory and 1 in Białystok. In 1942 the congregation began work in 2 new outposts, in Celestynów near Otwock, and Duchnice near Pruszków. After the failure of the Warsaw Uprising the sisters were evacuated in October 1944 and the house on Kanon St. closed down. As a result of fighting the main house on Bracka St. 23 in Warsaw was totally destroyed.

When the war began the congregation numbered 45 sisters (20 in the first choir and 25 in the second). Tough living conditions during the war forced the congregations leaders to send some of the sisters (especially the younger ones) back to their family homes. Conditions under the occupation did not facilitate the performance of the congregation's assigned. In many outposts the sisters were forced to interrupt their work and undertake new duties connected with the needs of the time. Charity work amongst the local populations, evacuees, injured, sick, escapees and children orphaned by the war became a top priority. During the Warsaw Uprising the sisters accompanied priests around the city, providing the wounded with spiritual aid.

After the liberation the congregation returned to its original activities. Once again the sisters began work in the embroidery workshops, filling the demands of churches and the orders placed by guilds and other institutions.