

Activity of Archbishop Antoni Baraniak in the Archdiocese of Poznań in 1956-1977

Summary

The subject of the dissertation concerns the figure of Archbishop Antoni Baraniak. The purpose of the work is to analyze administrative activities during his episcopal rule in Poznań. The Archbishop tried to restore and consolidate order within the church resulting from the norms of the Code of Canon Law, as well as from the traditions of the Archdiocese of Poznań. This was reflected in many decrees, ordinances and instructions published in the "Church Monthly of the Archdiocese of Poznań", and especially in the Archdiocesan Synod convened, prepared and conducted by A. Baraniak in 1968. An important addition to the information of His administrative activities are also messages and pastoral letters, addressed to the clergy and the diocese of Poznan. They allow us to present the goals and assumptions that the Archbishop guided during the implementation of individual initiatives.

The work shows the multi-faceted activity of Archbishop Baraniak. It is a historical and legal study. It is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter describes the structure of the Archdiocese of time prior to the acquisition by Abp. Baraniak metropolis and the historical background of the period. This chapter contains an analysis of the pre-war achievements of the Poznań metropolis in the work of rebuilding the unity of the Catholic Church after the partitions and the role played by the archdiocese in interwar religious life in Poland. The influence of the German occupation on the development of the archdiocese was presented, followed by the beginnings of communist rule in Poland, during which A. Baraniak served in the office of the diocesan bishop.

The second chapter contains a legal and historical analysis of Abp. Baraniak's activities at the teaching level of the episcopal office. The bishop's public appearances as a shepherd were examined. The subject of the study were sermons and homilies systematized according to topics and recipients. The next part discusses the teaching task implemented through the school network. The bishop's office coincided with the removal of religion from public schools, so the Archbishop's particular concern was to create a catechization system independent of the state. In addition, this chapter presents efforts regarding formation and education at the Archbishop's Seminary in Poznań and the establishment of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology.

The third chapter is devoted to issues concerning legal regulations in the field of administering the sacraments and sacramentals. The legislative initiatives taken by the Archbishop, their importance for the legal order of the particular Church, as well as the legislative achievements of the archdiocesan synod of 1968 were analyzed.

The fourth chapter contains an analysis of the managerial activity of the Archbishop, expressed in the activities of metropolitan institutions and agencies, implementing the necessary reforms in them, and initiating new organizational solutions. It describes the regulations introduced by A. Baraniak, which concerned the clergy, consecrated persons and lay church workers. The Archbishop's efforts to develop the parish network were presented separately.

Antoni Baraniak was an outstanding Poznań bishop and an influential figure of the universal Church. This opinion is confirmed by the great trust he enjoyed in the eyes of the primates of August Hlond and Stefan Wyszyński. He also played an important role in the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council. He also aroused interest from the communist security service. He was kept under surveillance until the end of his life, and every step and speech he followed was closely followed. The measure of his modesty was the great victim of physical suffering he bore in 1953-1956. He enjoyed universal fondness in the archdiocese. However, it is hard to look for a compact biography of Antoni Baraniak among the literature. More or less exact biographies published in lexicons, articles, sometimes of a memorial nature, written by people who know the bishop seem to dominate. Therefore, the intention of this paper was also to fill the gap in this matter.