

REV. MAREK CHMIELEWSKI
& REV. ADAM RYBICKI

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIRS.
DIPLOMA THESES AT THE INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY
OF THE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN
AND OTHER FORMS OF ACTIVITY IN 2016

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CHAIR OF THEOLOGY OF SYSTEMATIC
AND PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

I. REV. PROF. DR HAB. MAREK CHMIELEWSKI

A. DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

Olga STREMBSKA, M.A., Lic., *The Subjective Aspect of Spousal Love in the Doctrine of St. John of the Cross*, Lublin 2016, pp. 219.

Starting from the right assumption that the goal of spiritual development is love, because God is love (see 1 John 4:8), Olga Strembska addressed a very interesting topic of spousal love in the doctrine of St. John of the Cross, considered in the subjective aspect. Her goal was to answer the following research questions: how does man experience a spousal relationship with God? What is happening inside of him? What are the stages and manifestations of spousal love?

Although spousal love in the writings of John has been a subject of many studies and publications, in world and Polish literature, it was not presented from the perspective of the subject, a Christian, who entering the higher stages of spiritual life experiences that he has been gifted by God. The subject of the research is, therefore, a real human being with his specific conditions and unique way of experiencing faith.

In this respect, the subject of the research must be considered innovative and original. An additional advantage is the fact that Strembska, having a good command of the Spanish language, used original texts, thanks to which she could bring out different shades of meaning of the symbolic terms used by John to express the subjective experience of God's love.

To carry out her research project, Strembska used the research method based on the theological method generally applied in theology, which consists in referring first to the so-called greater premises, which in this case are the details of biblical Revelation, Tradition and Church teaching. The starting point is the "personalistic system, which makes it possible to study the spiritual experience understood as a personal relationship, which in a special way takes into account the ontological and existential uniqueness of the person" (p. 15). As for the science-creating means, she used the theological and spiritual analysis

of sources, that is, the scriptures of John, at the same time pursuing synthesis, which aim was to show spousal love in John's doctrine in terms of originality and relevance. The adopted research method corresponds to the structure of the dissertation. In the first chapter, Strembska starts from the semiotic analysis of anthropological and spousal terminology characteristic of the subject matter. She concludes that in the light of Revelation and in the opinion of many mystics, including John, the relationship of love between man and woman is the best analogy for God's love for man.

Accepting the obvious fact that spousal love is a mutual reference of people, in the second chapter Strembska analyzes John's writings regarding God as the Spouse. It should be noted that when describing spousal love on the part of God, she considers it from the point of view of individual Divine Persons. Each of Them acts in relation to man as the Bridegroom of his soul. Dwaring attention to the trinitarian character of spousal love in John's doctrine is a valuable and original contribution of Strembska to the studies on the thought of John.

The resolution of the doctoral thesis is the third chapter, in which Strembska describes the experience of spousal love of the individual Persons of the Holy Trinity, which is actualized in the subject. This description is carried out in three aspects, often regarded as three stages of spiritual development, namely: purification, enlightenment and unification. In this last aspect, using the terminology of John, Strembska analyzes the state of engagement and mystical marriage characteristic of Carmelite spirituality.

From the research, Strembska draws a number of conclusions, out of which the most important thing is that both on the philosophical and theological grounds, John strongly emphasizes the unique value of the human person and his final vocation for loving union with God. His doctrine is clearly Trinitarian, however the personification of spousal love, experienced by man, is Jesus Christ. Therefore, we should speak about the sanctifying and saving spousal love, using the trinitarian-Christological-personalist key.

An attempt to update John's doctrine on spousal love leads Strembska to the conclusion that it is a response to "a widespread demand for spirituality" as written by John Paul II in the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (No. 33). This is probably the reason for the unflagging popularity of Carmelite spirituality, especially among young people.

It is worth mentioning that the dissertation was prepared with great care when it comes to graphic design. No major deficiencies in the bibliographic description were found. In conclusion, Strembska has the appropriate intellectual and methodological qualifications for obtaining a doctoral degree in theological sciences in the field of spiritual theology.

Reviewers:

Rev. Prof. Dr. hab. Jerzy W. Gogola OCD, Pontifical University of John Paul II, Cracow.

Dr. hab. Adam Rybicki, Prof. at KUL

Public defense — 22 September 2016.

Daniela CHWAŁEK CFS, *“The Little Way of Love” as a Christian lifestyle according to Sister Maria Consolata Betrone (1903-1946)*, Lublin 2016, pp. 379.

The post-Council spiritual theology is practiced first and foremost as a theological reflection on spiritual experience, which also includes mystical experiences and attitudes resulting from this regarding God, the Church, neighbor, world and oneself, and as the phenomena related.

In this perspective, the doctoral dissertation of Sister Jadwiga Danieli Chwałek CFS, M.A., completely falls within the scope of spiritual theology, as a full-fledged theological discipline. The material subject of the dissertation is the “little way of love,” which is the original style of Christian life, primarily marked by the personal spiritual experience of the Italian Capuchin Sister Consolata Betrone (1903-1946). The descriptions of this “way” and practical indications contained in her autobiographical writings (spiritual diary, letters and other sources) are the basis for developing a concept of spiritual life, which is part of the “way of spiritual childhood” of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Doctor of the Church, which is known and sanctioned by the Magisterium Ecclesiae. For this reason, Chwałek describes and examines the “little way of love” not only as a manifestation of the personal spiritual experience of Sister Consolata, but especially as a relatively comprehensive program of striving for Christian perfection.

Using the language of technical sciences, one can say that in this respect the case of Sister Chwałek is of an innovative and implementation nature. It is not pure theory, but showing the implications for the practice of the spiritual life of a modern Christian that arise from the personal spiritual experience of Sister Consolata. How interesting is this new style of spiritual life, is evidenced by the fact that in Poland (in Warmia) an association of worshipers and followers of Sister Consolata was established, while the cult of Sister Consolata itself is still spreading.

From the point of view of the substantive value of the dissertation, it should be noted that this is undoubtedly the first scientific dissertation of such size and rank in Poland, and in the world, devoted to Sister Consolata. Moreover, it is entirely based on original, Italian-language source texts, which is justified by the multiplicity of citations, especially in references, and the meticulousness of the analysis carried out. Due to this, the reader has a thorough and detailed insight into the personal spiritual experience of Sister Consolata, and an effective testimony of cooperation with the grace of God.

An additional merit of the discussed dissertation in terms of content is that Chwałek confronts the spiritual lifestyle of Sister Consolata with Franciscan spirituality, examining whether and to what extent the “little way of love” is an emanation of the original Franciscan spirit, especially in the Clarian version.

The dissertation consists of four chapters.

The first chapter is the historical and social background of the life and work of Sister Consolata. In this chapter, Chwałek also describes the Clarian charism in which Sister Consolata lived being a member of the Order of the Capuchin Sisters.

Other three chapters are a reliable application of the modern concept of spirituality, according to which it manifests itself in a set of personal attitudes that have a cognitive, affective-axiological and practical reference to the object of spiritual experience. Accordingly, the second chapter provides the description of the theological foundations of “the

little way of love,” the third chapter discusses its motivational and experiential aspect, and the fourth chapter presents the practical answer of Sister Consolata to the received knowledge of God.

Excellent knowledge of the characters and writings of Sisters Consolata, which gives the dissertation a high cognitive and practical value, corresponds to the graphic design, the correctness of the bibliographic description, and the appropriate language of the dissertation. It can be said that the work is, in a sense, model and deserves to be printed.

All this shows both very good substantive preparation of Chwałek in the field of spiritual theology, and her ability to consciously use the appropriate methodology of research. Therefore, the dissertation of Sister Chwałek is a competent and modern theological-spiritual study, far from traditional descriptive and devout reflections on the life of saints and their doctrines.

Reviewers:

Rev. Dr hab. Stanisław Suwiński, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń

Dr. hab. Stanisław T. Zarzycki, SAC, Prof. at KUL

Public Defense — 15 December 2016.

B. MASTER’S THESES

Antonina BOROVSKA CDC (Lviv), *Elements of Ignatian Spirituality in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*; defense: 28 June 2016.

Róża DUDZIŃSKA (Poznań), *Ecclesial Consciousness of the Youth of the Paderewski High School of Lublin in the Light of the Research Carried Out*; defense: 28 September 2016.

IMPORTANT FORMS OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF REV. MAREK CHMIELEWSKI

27 January 2016 — delivering a lecture on *Mercy in the Teaching of Pope Francis* as part of the XXV Symposium of Retreat Preachers, Spiritual Directors and Confessors on “New Life in Christ. World Youth Day. Year of Mercy,” organized at Jasna Góra,

23 February 2016 — receiving the title of professor of theological sciences from the President of Poland,

12–17 March 2016 — Lent retreat in the Polonia parish of Our Lady of Częstochowa in London (Ealing),

8–10 April 2016 — delivering a lecture on *Maternal Reign of Mary and Spiritual Life* during the symposium on the occasion of the 360th anniversary of the vows of King Jan Kazimierz, organized by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv;

19 April 2016 — delivering a lecture on *The Embodiment of Spirituality of John Paul II* as part of a nationwide scientific conference on “Body — Mind — Spirituality in Theory and Research,” organized at the University of Economics and Innovation in Lublin

28 April 2016—delivering a lecture on “*Totus Tuus*” of John Paul II during a scientific session on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the death of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, organized at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

4 June 2016—delivering a lecture on *Youth and Spirituality* as part of the symposium in honor of St. James the Apostle on “Young people on the roads of Europe to the Merciful Father” in Kotuszów-Chańcza;

22 VI 2016—reviewing the dissertation of Sister Anna Duda, *Theology and Cult of the Heart of Mary in the Tradition and Life of the Congregation of the Sister-Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, at the Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

6–11 September 2016—participation in the 24th Marianological and Marian Congress in Fatima (Portugal) on the “Fatima Event One Hundred Years Later. History, Message and Topicality” and delivering a lecture on *Message of Fatima as a Remedy for the European Disease of Horizontalism* in the Polish Section of the Congress

5–6 October 2016—delivering a lecture on Pastoral-Spiritual Implications of the Maternal Reign of Mary as part of the symposium on “«Queen of Poland as of old, Mary». 300th anniversary of the coronation of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa (1717-2017) at Jasna Góra,

15 November 2016—delivering a lecture on “*Imagination*” and “*Balm*” of Mercy during the symposium of the parish Caritas employees on “Merciful by Deed,” organized by the sanctuary of The Gate of Dawn Mother of God Skarżysko-Kamienna.

Moreover, Rev. M. Chmielewski:

- has been conducting a series of Thursday broadcasts titled “Duc in Altum” (727 episodes) in Radio Maryja and TV Trwam since 2003;
- publishes columns from the “ABC of spirituality” series in the monthly “Exorcist.” 52 episodes were published, 33 of which were published in the form of a book entitled *The ABC of Spirituality, Part I* (Monumen Publishing, Warsaw 2016, pp. 184);
- participates in the works of the Enthronement Movement Team appointed by the Polish Episcopal Conference. Therefore, he developed a prayer book of the worshipers of Christ the King *Christ, Reign over Us!* (Opole 2016)
- is a member of the HS1 Expert Team of the National Science Centre in Cracow;
- was appointed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education, Jarosław Gowina, as a member of the Specialist Team for the first stage of the competition of the National Program for the Development of Humanities “Uniwersalia;”
- is on an annual academic leave in the academic year 2016/2017.

II. REV. DR. HAB. ADAM RYBICKI, PROF. AT KUL

A. DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

Rev. Dawid WASILEWSKI, *Spiritual Formation on the Neocatechumenal Way as a Process of Christian Initiation*, Lublin 2016, pp. 250; public defense: 23 September 2016.

Jolanta KRAŚNIEWSKA, *Spirituality of the Heart according to Tomáš Špidlík*, Lublin 2016, pp. 407; public defense: 22 October 2016.