

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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PhD dissertation subject:

The history of the Congregation of Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in Poland.

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Sisters Servants, Greek Catholic Church, reconciliation, ecumenism, Cyryl Sielecki, Jeremiasz Łomnicki, Josophata Hordaszewska, Uniats

Summary:

The main purpose of the dissertation entitled: "The History of the Congregation of Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in Poland" was to reconstruct the history and to research the activities of the institute in Poland. Social needs in 19th century Europe contributed to the creation of many new religious communities, institutions, associations, fraternities whose main task was to care for people, care for orphans and the poor, raise the level of education of children and youth, and to provide medical aid to the sick. Among many Latin orders, in 1892, the first active Congregation of Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate was established in the Greek Catholic Church. The young institution was so dynamic that in less than ten years of operation it covered not only Galicia, but also Canada and Brazil, extending the presence of the sisters to other European countries: Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia and Italy. The author undertook to study the genesis and history of the congregation, with particular emphasis on the history of the Province of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Poland, referring to its beginnings in the 19th century and analysing the delegalisation of institutions and the difficult situation of the sisters in the post-war period. Moreover, the activities of the people who co-created the assembly and were responsible for its management were thoroughly described. In this way, an answer was sought to the question what image of the Sisters Servants of MI was created over the centuries and how the functioning of individual communities looked like in a wider socio-cultural context.

The study has been divided into four chapters in a chronological and substantive/factual order. In the first chapter, explaining the beginnings of the Congregation of Sisters Servants of MI, historical events that influenced the creation of a new religious

institution were presented. Particularly noteworthy are the co-founders, Fr. Cyryl Sielecki, Fr. Jeremiasz Łomnicki OSBM and Sr. Josafata Michalina Hordaszewska, who together with the first community of sisters built a work from scratch that played a huge role in the life of the Greek Catholic Church. The readiness of the first female candidates to serve the poorest with disinterestedness became a direct stimulus for the emergence of a new institution and for seeking solutions to the social problems of the time. It is worth noting that the congregation obtained the status of an institution under papal law, which contributed to the independence of the congregation and more efficient functioning in various countries under the direct supervision of the Roman Curia.

The second chapter is devoted to the situation of the congregation during the Second World War and immediately after it. Political disorganization and social changes caused by military operations were of decisive importance for the functioning of the religious community in Central and Eastern Europe. The post-war situation forced the Sisters Servants not only to conduct underground activities in connection with the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in the Ukrainian SSR and other communist countries, but also to completely reorganize the structures, including the transfer of the General Administration to Rome.

The third chapter covers the organizational and legal matters of the newly established vice-province in Poland and the life of religious communities in Chełm, Adampol, Gościeradów, Janów Lubelski, Matczyn, Nowogard Szczeciński, Goleniów, Maszewo, Wałcz, Świdwin, Stary Kurów, Karlino, Miastko, Koszalin, Halemba and Piątek. Much attention was also paid to the revival of religious life in Przemyśl and the acquisition of jurisdiction over the communities in Rome and Paris. In this part of the work, the activity of the Greek Catholic congregation for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church and its support in pastoral activities were also analysed.

The fourth chapter presents the activities of sisters living in religious communities in Warsaw, Olsztyn, Krukłanki, Bartoszyce, Przemyśl and Prałkowce during the ongoing political transformation in Poland. This part of the work analyses the transformation of the congregation's structure in Poland in the context of the ongoing political, social and religious changes.

The author hopes that the study of the history of the Congregation of Sisters Servants of MI in Poland will bring closer not only the specificity of the spirituality of the Eastern tradition, but will also fill the gap in the previous studies on the charisma and commitment and activity of religious communities of the Greek Catholic Church in improving the quality of religious, social and educational life, and become the subject of further studies and scientific research.

Treua Dwork