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## Deviations from the Model of Clergyman After the Council of Trent. Selected Examples from the Inspection Books of Gniezno Archdeaconry

*Odstępstwa od wzorca duchownego w okresie potrydenckim. Wybrane przykłady z ksiąg wizytacyjnych archidiekanatu gnieźnieńskiego*

### ABSTRACT

This article aims at presenting examples of the Polish clergy whose behaviour deviated from the model recommended by the Church Council of Trent. The Council established the principles of obeying in praxis theological, formal, moral and material ideals as well as the apparatus of obligatory supervision.

The article describes the state of the affairs within the chosen area (i.e. the Gniezno archdeaconry) and within the period while the Church Council of Trent reform's recommendations were being implemented in Poland. In the paper, both the worldly parochial clergy and those connected to town hospitals are discussed. The data on the stances taken by clergy come from Old-Polish inspections of the Gniezno archdeaconry.

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The abovementioned data allow to confront the model set by the Council of Trent with the reality within the given area and period. Among the greatest problems were drunkenness and connected ailments, such as unruliness and airiness with reference to the duties as well as incorrect relations with women (including cohabitation and illegitimate children). There also occurred other trespasses, e.g. inappropriately administered sacrament of marriage. Among the extreme faults, theft may be counted. Might other negative behaviours have accompanied them, the present paper deals only with some of deviations, while – with respect to the volume of the article – those relating to cult-observing and pastoral care are omitted.

Moreover, this paper presents the church administration response to unearthed problems as well as the existing apparatus of supervision, punishment, and betterment.

**Key words:** Church Council of Trent, inspections, parochial clergy, Gniezno archdeaconry, post-Trent epoch model of clergyman

The foundation for the existence of the institution of the Church lies in the great idea created by Jesus of Nazareth. The ideals and the role models stemming therefrom ought to define the character and lifestyle of the clergy. However, at the turn of the Middle Ages and the Modern Times, it turned out that the condition of the Church and of the churchmen deviated from it significantly.

Instances of striking misconduct occurred at the highest levels of authority, the greatest aggravation being caused by the lifestyle at the Renaissance courts of the patrons of arts – subsequent popes, with Alessandro Borgia and his family at the pinnacle. The excessive wealth of the clergy was accompanied by the poverty, ignorance, and lack of opportunities for the lower clergy, including parish priests. Members of the First Estate led secular – and at times downright immoral – lives; they had concubines, lovers, and children. The vagrancy among them had become a menacing phenomenon. The situation within monasteries and in chapters was worrying as well. That led to the emergence of Reformation, and the division of the Western Christianity into Catholic and Protestant<sup>1</sup>.

In such circumstances, the Catholic Church undertook the great task of internal renewal, set as the objective at the Council of Trent, held between 1545 and 1563. During its proceedings, decisions were made regarding numerous ideals with respect to the crucial questions – be they

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed accounts of the situation of the Church and the phenomenon of Reformation in, for instance: W.H. Carroll, *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, vol. 4, *Podział chrześcijaństwa*, Wrocław 2011; J. Delumeau, *Narodziny i rozwój reformy protestanckiej*, transl. J.M. Kłoczowski, Warszawa 1986; S. Duda, *Reformacja: rewolucja Lutera*, Gliwice 2017; J. Dworzaczkowa, *Reformacja i kontrreformacja w Wielkopolsce*, Poznań 1995; J. Heers, *Dwór papieski w czasach Borgiów i Medyceuszy*, transl. K. Szeżyńska-Mačkowiak, Warszawa 2014; *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, ed. T. Dowley, eds. polish edition B. Bojar, P. Waclawik, P. Woszczenko, transl. T. Szafranski, Warszawa 2002, pp. 367–446.

theological, formal, ritual, structural, or related to property and ethics. Provisions were also made with the intention to reinforce the control over the various levels of Church's clergy and laymen<sup>2</sup>. It resulted, for instance, in requiring archdeacons to perform visitations of subordinate units, including parishes. Following such inspections, books were produced that described in greater or lesser detail the existing formal, pastoral, material, and personal situation in parishes<sup>3</sup>.

The regulations adopted by the Council of Trent faced both the challenge of misdeeds within the Church, and the changes introduced by the Reformation. Concurrently, a specific role model, founded on ideas, was defined as binding for clergymen henceforth.

In that respect Poland was no exception. Here, too, malpractice was committed at various levels of ecclesial hierarchy, pertaining to diverse sections of its structure and various processes<sup>4</sup>. The aim of the paper is to indicate some deviations from the model of the clergyman defined at the Council of Trent. A comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon would require a multifaceted, long-term investigation, far exceeding the scope of the current work; therefore, only a selection of examples will be presented. These come from the Archdeaconry of Gniezno, from a pair of visitation books created at the beginning and towards the end of the 17th century<sup>5</sup>, and pertain to the spiritual bearing of the clergymen working in the parish.

An ordinary member of the parish did not have any opportunity to come in contact with the Pope. Seldom or at all did he encounter Polish churchmen of the highest rank – archbishop, bishops, members of chapters, particularly,

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<sup>2</sup> The entirety of the regulations is presented in: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 1–2, (1511–1870) *Lateran V, Trydent, Watykan I*, eds. A. Baron, H. Pietras, Kraków 2007.

<sup>3</sup> In detail on the sources of the kind, for instance: S. Litak, *Akta wizytacyjne parafii z XVI–XVIII wieku jako źródło historyczne*, 'Zeszyty Naukowe KUL' 1962, 5, 3, pp. 41–58; B. Szady, *Wizytacje diecezji chełmskiej w XVII wieku*, 'Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne' 2004, 82, pp. 269–287.

<sup>4</sup> J. Kracik, *Prawie wielebni. Z dziejów kleru parafialnego XVII–XVIII w.*, Kraków 2011; *Statuta capituli et ecclesie cathedralis Posnaniensis ex annis 1298–1763*, ed. W. Pawelczak, in: *Papieski Wydział Teologiczny w Poznaniu. Studia i Materiały*, vol. 15, Poznań 1995, pp. 32, 36; A. Radzimiński, *Życie i obyczajowość średniowiecznego duchowieństwa*, Warszawa 2002; *Statuta ecclesiae Gnesnensis*, in: J. Korytkowski, *Prałaci i kanonicy katedry metropolitalnej gnieźnieńskiej od roku 1000 aż do dni naszych*, vol. 4, Gniezno 1883, pp. 584–585; *Statuty świętej kapituły w Łowiczu*, part 2, ed. S. Librowski, 'Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne' 1981, 43, p. 359; *Synody prowincjonalne arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich. Wybór tekstów ze zbioru Jana Wężyka z r. 1761*, ed. I. Subera, Warszawa 1981, pp. 106–339.

<sup>5</sup> Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie [hereinafter: AAG], Archiwum Konsystorza Generalnego [hereinafter: AKG], ref. no. E 40, Wizytacja archidiaconatu gnieźnieńskiego Wincentego de Seve 1608–1609; ref. no. E 6, Wizytacja archidiaconatu gnieźnieńskiego Stanisława Lipskiego 1696–1699.

the more prominent ones, nor could he frequently become acquainted with the closed world of monks unless the orders intended to encounter laymen, as did Franciscans, Bernardine Friars, Jesuits, etc. However, each of those average believers, even hailing from small villages, distant from the great world, had to deal with the parish clergy. The parish, the smallest unit of the ecclesial structure, was at the same time the fundamental one, and – as opposed to others – it was common and accessible to everyone. It combined various religious, administrative, and economic functions. It shaped the social life, for instance, by involving people in participation in specific ceremonies and festivities, by running schools, hospitals, and fraternities. Oftentimes, it constituted the only medium of acquiring knowledge of the world, of culture, of the latest information. It was supposed to educate and form people<sup>6</sup>. It ought to provide, not infrequently the only available, model of living according to the rules professed by Christianity. Hence it was of the utmost importance that the parish work be performed by suitable people, for it was those people who determined the condition of the community emerging around it, and were responsible for the image of the Church and the clergy among the widest spectrum of people. Moreover, parish priests, vicars, and church staff would usually operate not only in the sphere of the sacred, during the religious festivals, but also in the everyday life in the community of their brethren, associated with the latter by various relationships and dependencies.

During the Council of Trent, numerous provisions regarding the clergy was adopted, also pertaining to the parish clergy. They encompassed the entirety of the desired model: knowledge, commitment, attitude to one's duties, taking care of liturgical paraments and the Church's property, thrift, as well as customs, all the way to clothing. In this article, only selected elements of the model and instantiations of deviations therefrom will be demonstrated.

In light of the precepts of the Council, much attention was paid to the question of ordination in various ranks of the clergy: 'the bishop, calling to his assistance priests and other prudent persons, [...] well skilled in the divine law, and of experience in the constitutions of the church, shall

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<sup>6</sup> According to E. Wiśniowski, '[i]t has to be underscored that a parish is an institution comprising many different elements: the church, the priest, *cura animarum* [pastoral care], the Church jurisdiction, parochial district, the faithful, parochial duty, the priest's emoluments and residence'. E. Wiśniowski, *Parafia w średniowiecznej Polsce. Struktura i funkcje społeczne*, Lublin 2004, p. 18. Detailed information on the history, activity and importance of the basic organisational unit of the Church, see: E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej*; S. Litak, *Parafie w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI–XVII wieku. Struktura, funkcje społeczno-religijne i edukacyjne*, Lublin 2004; on its diversified role within the society, see: A. Jabłońska, *Funkcje społeczne parafii archidiakonatu gnieźnieńskiego w XVII w.*, Kielce 2013.

diligently investigate and examine the parentage, person, age, education, morals, learning, and faith of those who are to be ordained<sup>7</sup>. The earlier rule of possessing a benefice was also in effect.

Furthermore, the ordained were supposed to be appropriately educated, and that resulted in an entirely novel regulation, requiring the establishment of a seminary for clerics in every diocese<sup>8</sup>. Concurrently, as more and more prints considered dangerous were disseminated, a watchful eye was to be kept on what book the clergymen possess and read<sup>9</sup>.

Now, because 'it is most highly expedient for the salvation of souls, that they be governed by worthy and competent parish priests'<sup>10</sup>, when a parish church would become vacant, the bishop was to depute a vicar to the position, and the candidates for parish priests ought to be subjected to examination<sup>11</sup>. It was of major importance already for the reason that it was parish priests whose duty it was to educate the faithful with their homilies and their elucidation of the articles of faith and of the Holy Scripture<sup>12</sup>.

In order to avoid negligence, it was particularly important that the churchmen be resident, i.e. that they stay permanently at the church they were responsible for and that they employ vicars if need be<sup>13</sup>. However, 'forasmuch as illiterate and unskilful rectors of parish churches are but little fit for the sacred offices; and others, by reason of the turpitude of their lives, rather destroy than edify; the bishops [...] may depute to the said illiterate and unskilful rectors, if they be otherwise of a blameless life, coadjutors, or vicars. [...] But, those who live shamefully and scandalously, they shall, after having first admonished them, restrain and punish; and, if they shall still continue incorrigible in their wickedness, they shall have power to deprive them of their benefices'<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> 'biskup, z pomocą znanych sobie duchownych i innych świątłych mężów, [...] dokona pilnego badania i sprawdzenia pochodzenia kandydatów do święceń, ich wieku, wykształcenia, obyczajów, wiedzy i wiary'. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 1, p. 695.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 705–713. For detailed information on how this principle was actually realized and on the challenges faced by the newly established institution, see: M. Aleksandrowicz, *Początkowe dzieje seminarium duchownego w Gnieźnie (1602–1718)*, 'Nasza Przeszłość' 1966, 24, pp. 167–185; idem, *Wychowawcy i wychowankowie seminarium gnieźnieńskiego w latach 1602–1718*, 'Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne' 1965, 12, 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 1, p. 585.

<sup>10</sup> 'kierowanie przez godnych i odpowiednich proboszczów szczególnie służyć zbawieniu dusz'.

<sup>11</sup> *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 1, pp. 765–769.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 4, part 2, pp. 743, 747.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 4, part 1, p. 323.

<sup>14</sup> 'ponieważ niewykształceni i niekompetentni proboszczowie nie są zgoła odpowiedni do sprawowania świętych obowiązków, a inni z powodu haniebnego stylu życia raczej burzą niż budują, dlatego biskupi [...] mogą zadbać o wyznaczenie tym

There were, of course, pronouncements regarding the binding manner of performing the Eucharist and of administering sacraments<sup>15</sup>. Particular attention was paid to marriage; the ordinances mandated three public announcements thereof, the manner it was performed, the presence of witnesses, the stipulation of the degree of affinity that precludes entering into such relationship, the parish register of marriages, sanctions against fornicators and the need to severely punish concubinage<sup>16</sup>.

Furthermore, a tough stance was taken against immoral practices of the clergy, with the mention of the need to avoid any misconducts and crimes; while gambling, luxuriousness, feasting, dance and other improper profane behavior were reproached. Concurrently, 'how shameful a thing, and how unworthy it is of the name of clerics [...] to live in the filth of impurity, and unclean bondage'<sup>17</sup>, the servant of the Church ought to live life of contingency and integrity, 'that the people may hence learn to reverence them the more'<sup>18</sup>. 'There is nothing that continually instructs others unto piety [...] more than the life and example of those who have dedicated themselves to the divine ministry'<sup>19</sup>.

On account of the delineation of regulations that were to henceforth strictly oblige the clergy, another one was instituted. It pertained to the visitations to be made in the respective ecclesial units, aimed '[at] sound and orthodox doctrine, by banishing heresies; to maintain good morals, and to correct such as are evil; to animate the people, by exhortations and admonitions, to religion, peacefulness, and innocence'<sup>20</sup>.

Thus, midway through the 16th century, on one hand the ideals behind the principles of operation of the Church had been reinforced and regulated with formal obligations and prohibitions. While on the other, the precepts of the Council developed the ideal of the Church that would

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niepiśmiennym i nieuczonym przełożonym, jeżeli skądinąd prowadzą uczciwe życie, czasowych pomocników albo wikariuszy. [...] Natomiast żyjących haniebnie i gorsząco, po wcześniejszym upomnieniu, mają poskromić i ukarać, a gdyby nadal trwali w swej niegodziwości bez poprawy, wtedy mają prawo pozbawić ich posiadanych beneficjów'. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 2, p. 621.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 4, part 1, pp. 327–365, 377, 397–405, 407–426, 429–431, 441–459, 529–537; vol. 4, part 2, pp. 595–613, 627–651, 679–686.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 4, part 2, pp. 715–733.

<sup>17</sup> 'jakże wstrętne i niegodne imienia duchownych [...] jest zwracać się ku bezwstydomi nieczystości i brudnemu konkubinatowi'. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 835.

<sup>18</sup> 'a lud aby się uczył wobec nich szacunku'. *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> 'Nic tak bardzo nie pobudza wiernych do pobożności [...] jak życie i przykład tych, którzy poświęcili się służbie Bożej', p. 653.

<sup>20</sup> 'będzie wprowadzenie zdrowej i czystej nauki katolickiej, wypędzenie herezji, zachowanie dobrych obyczajów a poprawa złych, zachęcenie i umocnienie ludu w pobożności przez namowy i upomnienia, utwierdzenie w pokoju i prawości'. *Ibidem*, p. 739.

prove valid for several subsequent centuries, alongside the model of the clergyman that was to be deeply imprinted on social consciousness. That image proved to be a matter of crucial importance.

The great sweep of Trident came to gradually reach one country after another, while within them, extend to even the lowest units of the existing church administration<sup>21</sup>. Significantly, the regulations adopted by the Council of Trident already in 1564, were accepted by the King of Poland Sigismund Augustus during the Sejm in Parczew<sup>22</sup>, whereas the Church did that only in 1577, during the Synod of Piotrków. For, as rightly pointed out by Emperor Ferdinand in a letter to the Pope: 'It has come to that, that not only their enemies, but also the Catholics themselves not so much keep demanding a general council as they seem to be terrified of it; nothing to feel surprised about, as no-one willingly establishes a court for the betterment of themselves'<sup>23</sup>.

Therefore, it seems worthwhile to examine which of the elements constituting the model clergyman proved problematic for real people in their everyday life. As our examples, we will use the parishes from several selected deaneries in the archdeaconry of Gniezno, during the 17th century, i.e. in the period when the guidelines for renewal were being introduced.

The relatively common problems for the local parish priests included attraction to women and alcohol. Despite the fact that the struggle against marriages and concubinages of priests had been launched already in the 12th century<sup>24</sup>, several hundred years later some of them still more or less officially lived with women, either their mistresses or concubines. Such a life, referred to as scandalous, was led for a period of four years by the parson of Sokolniki, or – otherwise praised for his work – parson of Jabłków, who, on the order of his superior, sent away his partner, who was at the time expecting a baby<sup>25</sup>. Meanwhile others, such as, for instance, the parson of Panigródz, reported to perform his duties appropriately, or the parson of Mąkolin, had no intention of discarding the so-called 'unsavoury

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<sup>21</sup> For a detailed description of the situation of the Church in Poland in the Modern and Post-Trident Era, see: *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, eds. B. Kumor, Z. Obertyński, vol. 1, *do roku 1764*, part. 2, *od roku 1506*, Poznań 1974; J. Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 101–186.

<sup>22</sup> The presentation of the decrees of the Council of Trident to King of Poland (7 August 1564), in: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 2, p. 867.

<sup>23</sup> 'Dochodzi i to, że nie tylko przeciwnicy, ale i sami katolicy nie tyle usilnie żądają soboru generalnego, jak wydają się nim być przerażeni; i nic dziwnego, gdyż nikt chętnie nie ustanawia sądu dla poprawienia siebie samego'. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 2, p. 557.

<sup>24</sup> A. Krawiec, *Seksualność w średniowiecznej Polsce*, Poznań 2000, pp. 89–95, 102–103, 111–129.

<sup>25</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheets 27v, 35v.

women kept at home'<sup>26</sup>, despite admonitions from the church authorities or the owner of the village<sup>27</sup>. Andrzej, the parson of Racięcice, spent in all likelihood a dozen or so years living with his informal family: Małgorzata, two of her/their daughters, introduced as almost adults, and a six-year-old boy, officially named his son<sup>28</sup>.

Described as advanced in years, the parson of Dębno, probably considering himself to be most of all a nobleman, passed his time among noblemen, and paying no heed to the obligations of clergymen officially lived with his partner and their son<sup>29</sup>.

At times, against the backdrop of improper relationships with women, extreme situations would occur. For instance, a flagrant conflict emerged between the parson of Dziewierzewo, characterised as a drunkard, and the owner of the village and the patron of the parish church, which resulted in the priest having to leave the parish. The cause was supposed to have been the women who resided with him<sup>30</sup>. Another member of the clergy, also apparently suffering from problems with alcohol, was officially deprived of the right to his parish. So it happened, because the parson of Kołdrąb lived in concubinage with a Jadwiga, who he 'kept in Rogów'<sup>31</sup> and refused to end the acquaintance<sup>32</sup>.

As can be inferred from the above-presented examples, the striving towards the ideal could also without a doubt be compromised by alcohol. This weakness of churchmen is mentioned in the case of many parishes. Thus, Walenty, the parson of Słupy – having been removed from his house by the owner of the village, who moved to the parsonage when his own mansion had burned down – would wander around the village, usually inebriated<sup>33</sup>. Almost daily practice for the parson of Janowiec was getting drunk, as diligently noted, on vodka<sup>34</sup>. Now, the parson of Niechanów was a drunkard hanging out at the inn, where he was fittingly discovered by a servant of the archdeacon performing the visitation of the parish, after the latter had sent his man looking for the priest. No wonder it led to negligence of parochial duties<sup>35</sup>. In Wągrowiec, a select group of vicars established itself, with the local parson, an old man, completely unable to supervise them. It

<sup>26</sup> 'podejrzaney kobiety trzymaney w domu'.

<sup>27</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheets 57v–59, 65, 241.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 236.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 241.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 78.

<sup>31</sup> 'trzymał w Rogowie' [Polish translation by the author].

<sup>32</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheet 45v.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 76v.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 43.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 152.



is not without a reason that they were described as 'scandalosi' [causing outrage] and 'excessimi' [perpetrating crime, sinful]. Benedict was 'merely' a drunkard, whereas the misdeeds of the pair of his colleagues involved more than simple visits at the inn. The first, Marcin, lived with a woman, whereas the other, Jan, had a concubine and four children<sup>36</sup>.

To make matters worse, parish priests indulged in alcohol not only within the confines of their abodes. One could come across them at the inn, during a feast celebrated with parishioners, in a state 'verging on infamy'<sup>37</sup>. Additionally, alcohol stimulated other instances of behavior unworthy of clergymen, such as fights and quarrels they participated in. A proportion of the parsons and vicars hitting the bottle besides that lived with women<sup>38</sup>. Alcohol was accompanied by other defects as well, such as sloppiness, ignorance, crudeness, improper attire. However, the various imperfections did not necessarily always result from drunkenness.

Many a principle applying to the clergy was challenged by the existence of Stanisław Kłęcki. The lifestyle of the commendatory of Mieścisko was described as scandalous and filled with excesses. He would get drunk. He would keep an 'unsavory woman'. Unauthorised, he officiated a wedding of noblemen hailing from another parish; hence, the situation must have involved a conflict within the local ecclesial unit. A fact particularly important for the considerations pertaining to the betrayal of ideals in the post-Trident period, the demeanor displayed by Stanisław resulted in him being subjected to the punishment pronounced by a judicial vicar. Kłęcki was forced to do penance and make a promise to ameliorate his behavior. It may be that it was when and why he sent his woman away from his house<sup>39</sup>. In this case, his compliance with the expectations was, so to speak, enforced by the apparatus of control which in that instance fulfilled the guidelines in operation at the time.

Be that as it may, the absolute record holder in failing to meet the standards of living the life and performing the duties of a clergyman at the outset of the 17th century in the archdeaconry of Gniezno was the parson of Gosławice. He failed to perform the duty of fixed residence, he did not have dispensation to join benefices, nor did he take care of the church he had been put in charge of. None of the above, however, constituted the gravest problem of our priest. Apart from the fact that he lived with his informal family, a woman and a child, he opposed the

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 55v.

<sup>37</sup> 'do niesławy blisko' [Polish translation by the author]. AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheets 189, 36v–37, 152, 187, 41v.

<sup>38</sup> As mentioned above.

<sup>39</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheet 41.

fundamental requirements of his profession: he saw no reason not to accept the confession of an excommunicated penitent, or to join relatives in holy matrimony, and – worse still – to marry a peasant with a young girl, even though the former was thus becoming a bigamist, as he had already had another wife, who lived in Czarnków. The vicar adjusted the tone of his writing to the lifestyle of his superior: the parish priest was described as a crude drunkard wandering around the village, showcasing his outrageous lifestyle<sup>40</sup>.

The priest representing the Sts Peter and Paul parish in Grzegorzewo towards the end of the 17th century had absolutely nothing to do with the post-conciliar model of clergy, or even with the basic commandment of 'thou shalt not steal'. Both the church and its direct vicinity were in a rather pitiful state. The poorly fenced cemetery saw the sprawl of houses erected by burghers. Meanwhile, the priest inhabited a cramped and ill-suited building. Foundation was not executed. The church was notorious for its sloppiness and dirt, also in the metaphorical sense of these words. The most intriguing was nevertheless the appearance of the pastor of the place, allegedly a presbyter with the right of presentation in the town of Grzegorzewo, and canonically instituted. However, no evidence as to the above was produced, and consequently the visitor had some reservations. Furthermore, Piotr Bedoński was absent during the latter's sojourn, and only returned at night, drunk. Worse still, he was in possession of a chalice that he had personally robbed from the parish church. As a result of the visitation, he was ordered to return the chalice, put the church and its surroundings in order, and erect a fitting parish home out of his own funds. Under pain of suspension, Bedoński was also to report in the Benedictine monastery at Koło, in order to spend a week there fasting, to be attested to by the father superior<sup>41</sup>.

A notion of utmost importance during the Old Polish period, both before and after the Council of Trent, was that of charity. It stemmed from the principle of mercy, that in turn originated from the crucial idea of Christianity, i.e. love, the love of thy God and thy neighbour. Thus, charity constituted a practical application of the fundamental idea behind the principle of mercy. Besides, the so-called poor that required assistance were seen as the image of Jesus. In return for various forms of alms – anywhere in the spectrum between founding a hospital and throwing a side of bacon and some coins into the so-called *pushka* [collection can]

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 254–256.

<sup>41</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 325v–326, 328v. For more details on the situation of the church in Grzegorzewo, see: A. Jabłońska, *Kościół parafialny w Grzegorzewie w świetle siedemnastowiecznych wizytacji kościelnych archidiaconatu gnieźnieńskiego*, 'Polonia Maior Orientalis. Studia z Dziejów Wielkopolski Wschodniej' 2017, 4, pp. 41–58.

– the poor were expected to say a prayer for the soul of the benefactor. In the Middle Ages, special institutions were set up to support the poverty-stricken, i.e. hospitals. Initially, these took the distinct form of monastic infirmaries, later of municipal provostship. Owing to the reforms of Trent, the Modern Period saw another, ever more popular type of the parochial hospital, falling within the duties of the pastor.

All the above *xenodochia* had little to do with the hospital as it is understood today, their objective not being to treat patients, but firstly to serve as stopover places for wanderers, while later and predominantly as asylums for the old, the ill, the crippled, orphans, and those unable to live independently, or alternatively – for the more affluent, as comfortable and pious nursing homes. In the era of Renaissance and Reformation, there was a growing outcry against hospitals supporting freeloaders, young and healthy beggars, perfectly able to work<sup>42</sup>.

The ideal of taking care of brethren was forcefully highlighted by the Council of Trent, as ‘the holy Synod admonishes all who hold any ecclesiastical benefices, whether Secular or Regular, to accustom themselves, as far as their revenues will allow, to exercise with alacrity and kindness the office of hospitality [...] being mindful that those who cherish hospitality receive Christ in (the person of) their guests’<sup>43</sup>. Hence, the Council Law placed emphasis on the duty and necessity of the establishment and maintenance of hospitals, with many other issues also being tackled, such as the management of property and the administration thereof<sup>44</sup>.

In spite of the above, however, the attitude of the superior of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and St Leonard hospital, situated outside of the Pyzdry Gate, near Słupca, had little to do with any principles whatsoever, let alone with the model of a clergyman. The establishment was a provostship of a medieval origin (est. 1470), meaning that – as opposed to

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<sup>42</sup> For a detailed account of the history of hospitals, see including: K. Antosiewicz, *Opieka nad chorymi i biednymi w krakowskim szpitalu Świętego Ducha (1220–1741)*, ‘Roczniki Humanistyczne’ 1978, 26, 2, pp. 35–79; *Charitas. Miłosierdzie i opieka społeczna w ideologii, normach postępowania i praktyce społeczności wyznaniowych w Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku*, eds. U. Augustyniak, A. Karpiński, Warszawa 1999; A. Jabłońska, *Funkcje*; eadem, *XVII-wieczny szpital św. Marty w Gnieźnie w świetle księgi rachunkowej*, ‘Nasza Przeszłość’ 2008, 109, pp. 117–166; M. Słoń, *Szpitaly średniowiecznego Wrocławia*, Warszawa 2000; M. Surdacki, *Opieka społeczna w Polsce do końca XVIII wieku*, Lublin 2015; *Szpitalnictwo w dawnej Polsce*, eds. M. Dąbrowska, J. Kruppé, Warszawa 1998.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Święty sobór upomina wszystkich posiadaczy beneficjów kościelnych diecezjalnych czy zakonnych, aby w miarę posiadanych dochodów chętnie i łaskawie przyzwyczajili się wypełniać posługę gościnności [...] pamiętając, że ci, którzy miłują gościnność, przyjmują Chrystusa w osobach swych gości’. *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, vol. 4, part 2, p. 823.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 823–825.

the post-Trident parochial hospitals – it was an independent administrative, economic, and proprietary unit. It accommodated its own priest, provided with a prebend, as chief administrator and provider of pastoral care, it enjoyed municipal patronage, and it constituted a well-defined urban complex, comprising: the church, a cemetery with a chapel, an almshouse for the poor, the provost house, and utility outbuildings. There was a separate estate to ensure the subsistence of the poor. At the outset of the 17th century, the number of inmates could even exceed sixteen, while their house was comfortable and well-organized. The hospital management was additionally entrusted to a pair of administrators delegated by the city, who were obliged to submit annual reports to the municipal authorities. Clearly, by the Polish standards of the period it was a rather solid institution.

Nevertheless, the inmates there were only able to support themselves from alms, i.e. with what they could scrounge, and in fact not even that. For their provost was considered to provide them with very poor care. Above all, he would reave his helpless residents. He appropriated a large portion of the aforementioned *elemosyna*, that was in no way due to him. Moreover, he sequestered two funds intended for the hospital. He did not even pass up on the candles. Illumination was a very significant feature both of the church interior and of religious rituals. The most desired light, the brightest, the best – and the most expensive – was that given by wax candles. And so, pastor Jan of Kazimierz did not consider it undignified to seize the wax donated to his church, and set the tapers for his own private use.

From the general tenor of the visitation book, one may also infer that a group of servants was to be employed to assist the poor, as was the case in the hospitals of higher standard. Just like in the instance of the revenue, however, the person to benefit from their ministrations was, of course, the provost, at the expense of his paupers.

Nor did he value other important principles of hospital functioning – for against all regulations he admitted another inmate, concealing the fact from the city authorities, and having received no such recommendation.

And to top it all off, in the house that he inhabited, that is the provost house within the hospital premises, he officially and ‘scandalously’<sup>45</sup> kept his daughter.

All that did not leave the governors of the city indifferent, as they stood out against the injuries and iniquities perpetrated by the alleged churchman<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> ‘ze skandalem’ [Polish translation by the author].

<sup>46</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheets 310v–311v.

Several issues attract one's attention when analyzing the situation towards the beginning and the end of the century. First of all, it is the selection of the priests and the granting of parochial benefices. Both in the case of the clergymen at the beginning of the century and those at its end, they were properly ordained (as presbyters), thus being formally priests<sup>47</sup>. The procedure of granting a benefice (parish, vicarage, altarage), with minor exceptions, also did not raise any objections – it occurred on the presentation of the patron, with the subsequent institution performed by the appropriate authorities<sup>48</sup>. Nor was permanent residence the problem, as deviations therefrom were seldom<sup>49</sup>. What is more, there is an apparent concern about providing the church and parishioners with adequate care on the occasion of a vacancy, by employing a vicar, a commendatary – a replacement priest, or simply the parson of a neighboring parish<sup>50</sup>. Such was also the case when the pastor was unable to perform his duty because of an illness<sup>51</sup>. An immediate negative reaction of the visitor was also stimulated by the cumulation of benefices, conflicting with the principle of permanent residence in a single location, and leading to neglect of one's parochial responsibilities<sup>52</sup>. There was a demand that a parson who did not possess a fitting dispensation 'against the canons and decrees of provincial synods' should remain with a single benefice, officially resigning from the other, and that within a relatively short period of, for instance, two months<sup>53</sup>.

Thus, the community of the parish clergymen was constituted not by random, but at least in theory suitable people, who tended to permanently reside at a given location. An extreme case was that of the vicar Walenty Bydgoski, wandering around various dioceses, referred to as '*persona vagabunda*', who was elected into the office against the law, and who was confronted with many scandalous and downright criminal charges. The situation may have resulted from the fact that the pastor had been ill and proved unable to contain it. The archdeacon performing the visitation commanded the dismissal of Bydgoski and the employment of a new priest

<sup>47</sup> A. Jabłońska, *Obraz duchowieństwa w świetle wizytacji Wincentego de Seve (1608–1609) – wybrane aspekty*, 'Roczniki Humanistyczne' 2017, 65, 2, Historia, p. 14; AAG, AKG, ref. no. E6, sheets 37v, 44, 80v, 106, 122, 129v, 321, 336, 416, 450v, 458v, and many others.

<sup>48</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheets 24, 34v, 40, 57v, 68v, 150v, 156, 238, 252; ref. no. E, sheets 38v–39, 46, 53, 77v, 98v, 110, 127, 313, 331v, 333, 418, 462, 467–467v, and many others.

<sup>49</sup> A. Jabłońska, *Obraz*, pp. 14–15; AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 27, 42v, 64v, 81v, 90v, 123, 323v–324, 331, 422, 446v, and others.

<sup>50</sup> A. Jabłońska, *Obraz*, p. 14; AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 51, 61, 335v.

<sup>51</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 130v, 131v, 335v, 451v.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 88, 93–93v.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. *Ibidem*, sheets 96v, 112–112v.

to replace him<sup>54</sup>. Thus, the cause of deviations from the required model did not originate from inappropriate primary selection – the members of the clergy did meet the basic formal requirements.

The habits, the way of life, and the execution of responsibilities depended, among other things, on the level of education and the social origin of priests. The characteristics of the clergy in the archdeaconry of Gniezno extant in the visitation records of the area do not provide the data on their formal education. An exception to that state of affairs constitutes, for instance, the information on the pastor of Czerniejew: Sebastian Taliński was described as a doctor of philosophy, the prefect of the seminary, the penitentiary at the Gniezno Cathedral, and a canon in Szamotuły<sup>55</sup>. However, here the education was an element of the description of the position and the office, both rather elevated for a parish priest.

The education and the intellectual level of Old Polish clergymen are difficult to ascertain also in other territories, because of the sources<sup>56</sup>. Similarly, regarding the parish priests of the Gniezno archdeaconry we do not know whether they received their schooling at the seminary, as recommended by the Council of Trent, say, the nearest one, situated in Gniezno, or in another parish school, or a gymnasium. The information provided in the 17th century visitation records indicate, however, that the knowledge and culture of that group were rather mediocre, and at times even lower than that, though there were among them those commended for their intellectual qualities and learning<sup>57</sup>.

Save for a single pastor-nobleman whom, as we have learned, cared little for the regulations, the analyzed selection of churchmen was not identified according to their social background. It transpires from the tone of the commentary, that it was more of an exception than the rule. Much like education, the social origin of parish priests proves very difficult to examine due to (the nature of) the sources. However, parish prebends in little villages with small income could not have been attractive for the representatives of the nobility; thus, it can be inferred that similarly to other territories of the Polish Church, some members of the clergy hailed from among the local: burghers and peasants<sup>58</sup>. In the 17th century, only

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 130v–131v.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 65.

<sup>56</sup> For detailed account of the phenomenon, see: S. Litak, *Parafie*, pp. 187–205.

<sup>57</sup> A. Jabłońska, *Obraz*, pp. 13, 18; AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 50, 70v, 103.

<sup>58</sup> For detailed information of the issue of social and territorial background of the Old Polish clergy, see, for instance: S. Litak, *Parafie*, pp. 177–187; M. Róžański, *Duchowieństwo parafialne archidiecezji uniejowskiej w XVIII wieku. Studium prozopograficzne*, Łódź 2010, pp. 98–125.

few cases of parish benefices owned by a better established priests were noted, among them the aforementioned pastor of Czerniejów, the pastor of Kłeck – the penitentiary of Gniezno, the pastor of Grzegorzewo – at the same time the canon of Łęczycza and Uniejów, Łukasz Czermiński, the pastor of Kcynia – the canon of Gniezno and the provost of Oleśnica, and the pastor of Łekno – the canon of Szamotuły and the dean of Łekno<sup>59</sup>. Their bearing towards parochial benefice might have been varied: from complete negligence, through the provision of a fitting replacement, all the way to personal involvement and residency – depending on the point in the course of the career that the benefice befell upon, and its pecuniary value. It is important to note here that the clergy associated with the chapters would generally have originated from the nobility.

The dominant role in the country, in all its various aspects, was played by the nobles. Hence, it is hardly surprising that it was their lifestyle that constituted the model desired by the other estates of the realm, rivalling that required from the clergy by the Tridentine Church.

In the case of the pastor-nobleman, it can be observed that the disregard for the regulations stemmed from his social wont, the belief that that he did not have to yield to anything that he found disagreeable, and the sense that he was predominantly a representative of the privileged nobility, instead of being a mere cleric.

Among these deviations from the model clergymen, one is able to discern features typical not only of the nobility, but of the majority of Old Polish – and concurrently baroque – society: its weakness for alcohol and inns, argumentativeness, the heedlessness of the law – there are numerous works dealing with the legendary drunkenness and recklessness, the ways of passing time with people, the typical culinary customs, the house, the family and sexual life, the mentality of the Early Modern Poles<sup>60</sup>.

The churchmen working in the parishes of the archdeaconry of Gniezno, comprising people of varying intellectual endowments, customs, characters, and attitude towards their duties, in certain aspects did constitute a homogenous community, at least due to the specificity of their shared profession.

<sup>59</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 100v, 323v–324, 428, 432, 455, 456v.

<sup>60</sup> Including: J. Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, vol. 1–2, ed. R. Pollak, Wrocław 2003; J.S. Bystroń, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce. Wiek XVI–XVIII*, vol. 1–2, Warszawa 1976; M. Ferenc, *Czasy nowożytne*, in: *Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych*, ed. A. Chwałba, Warszawa 2005, pp. 117–213; Z. Kuchowicz, *Człowiek polskiego baroku*, Łódź 1992; idem, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII–XVIII wieku*, Łódź 1975; W. Łoziński, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach*, Kraków 1987; J. Tazbir, *Kultura szlachecka w Polsce – rozkwit, upadek, relikty*, Poznań 2002.

In the case of the first estate in the Gniezno archdeaconry, one is able to recognize a common denominator of sorts in the discussed deviations from the models and ideals. It is the old habit of leading the normal life of the laity. A 17th-century priest employed in an average parish in the archdeaconry of Gniezno should be perceived in a different light to his contemporary counterpart. He belonged as much to the Church, as to his secular community. His everyday private life, his monetary opportunities, habits and standard, and partly also his range of experience, pastimes, problem, and worries were typical for the people and places where he operated. He was bound to his environment by various attachments: be they familiar, economic, or social in nature. The extent to which such a life might have been ordinary and downright prosaic is attested to in the statutes of the chapter – theoretically expected to represent a much higher level than the parochial clergy – that prohibited the keeping of, among others, pigs, goats and dogs within the premises of the temple, attacking people in the vicinity of the church, and obstructing the performance of the hours<sup>61</sup>.

The way of life, the work in a homestead, the entertainments and human feebleness of the clergy, from the propagated point of view and in comparison to the desired model oftentimes prove to be no more than aberrations. Hence, the question arises: what constituted the norm for such a priest. The existing order of his life, or the new, restrictive ideas of the authorities? Obviously, the examples cited in the paper pertain only to a fraction of churchmen, at times being merely singular instances, or even rather radical exceptions.

The data analysed for the purposes of the paper pertained to circa eighty ecclesial units from four different deaneries, in the periods at the beginning and towards the end of the 17th century. The most common moral and ethical misdemeanors included drunkenness and women. At the turn of the century, ca. 19% of the clergy working on various positions had improper relationships women, in ca. 27% of cases the problem with alcohol and with alcohol and women has been discovered (partly, these were the clerics already selected because of their affairs, included in the above 19%)<sup>62</sup>. At the end of the century, these irregularities continued to be noticeable and strongly stressed; however, quite interestingly, the scandalizers constituted only singular exceptions to the rule. Problems with women were recorded on five occasions, described in the following manner: the priest is obliged to send away from the parish house an unsavory women and employ another one, appropriately advanced in years; the pastor lives in concubinage and

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<sup>61</sup> *Statuta capituli*, p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> A. Jabłońska, *Obraz*, p. 20.



is an adulterer; the pastor of Morzysław publicly lives in concubinage; the commendatory of Jaktorów had yielded to the regulation and sent the woman away. The priest causing the greatest outrage had for several years employed a female servant, at the time pregnant, who kept his child in his other parish, later with his brother, and eventually sent the child away to another village to be brought up. In line with the precept, he was to remove the woman to never bring her back to his abode, besides he was subjected to the punishment of the dark cell<sup>63</sup>.

Meanwhile, inebriety is mentioned entirely sporadically – pastor Maciej Wąsowski accused of it by his neighbor, was to beware of it<sup>64</sup>. So, had the ethics of the clergy improved so much as a result of the new Tridentine obligations, and had the existing plagues of deviations waned? or maybe some new – more lenient – standards and norms of drunkenness had emerged, and hence it was no longer as striking? or maybe the methods of concealing it had improved? or the visiting archdeacon did not pay as much attention to the problem?

In any event, in the early modern period very apparent are the actions undertaken by the authorities aimed at changing the demeanor and elevating the clerics. Archbishops and bishops were driven by top-down regulations, but also by their honest desire to improve the situation in the structures they were in charge of. This activity is best instantiated in the synods and the legal acts produced at the time<sup>65</sup>. Their decrees constitute at the same time a catalogue of misdemeanors and the expression of the church authorities to the already existing wrongdoings. The records of the 17th-century visitation books cite, among others, the very regulations devised during provincial synods<sup>66</sup>.

The offences committed by the members of the clergy did not remain without a reaction of the superiors, as indicated by the examples already mentioned in this article. The authorities of the archdiocese/diocese had at their disposal an apparatus of control, comprising, among other institutions, the archdeacon performing systematic visitations in the subordinate units. It is precisely during such controls that various faults and misdemeanors were officially revealed. During the visitation, the evaluation of the priest may have been influenced by other clerics, his parishioner, or neighbors, who submitted their opinion of him, or even

<sup>63</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 84, 317v, 318, 346, 437, 453v–454.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, sheet 333.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. *Constitutiones synodorum metropolitanae Ecc. Gnesnensis provincialium auctoritate synodi provincialis Gembiciana per deputatos recognitae [...] D. Joannis Wężyk [...]*, Cracoviae in Officina Andrea Petricovii [...] M.DC.XXX.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 6, sheets 112–112v.

filed denunciatory reports against him<sup>67</sup>. Apart from that, certain duties were transferred to rural deacons. Above all, they were responsible for the tutelage and custody of the clerics under them, twice a year holding a meeting of all the pastors under their presidency, in order to discuss the Church and recognize the scandalizers and those requiring a brotherly admonition, with a concurrent information for the supervisors<sup>68</sup>.

On the basis of the cited instance, one can also trace the mechanism activated following a negative assessment of the visiting deacon: the identification of the misconduct, a formal evaluation and determination of the punishment, recorded in the visitation book. The general system of monitoring, penalizing, penance, and improvement within the analyzed deaconries required the involvement of the vicar *in spiritualibus*, the judicial vicar, the visiting archdeacon, the rural deacon, the consistory, and even the local monks<sup>69</sup>. The penalties described in the discussed visitations encompassed, depending on the kind of the misdeed: the need to formally resign from an illicitly obtained, additional benefice, sending away of women, being expelled from the parish, or ultimately – the dark cell, for instance in a monastery, involving a bread and water fast, that was to be attested to by a specified friar. Maladjustment to the various penalties could land one in prison, end up in suspension, being deprived of the benefice, or excommunication<sup>70</sup>.

The catalogue of deviations from the required model of the clergyman included: alcohol, women, misbegotten children, argumentativeness, entertainment at the inn, as well as the larceny of liturgical parakeets, or appropriation of the things belonging to the paupers, a deed constituting a transgression of the fundamental notions and rules of Christianity. Additionally, the visitation books recorded breaking the regulations pertaining to the cultic practices, pastoral care, irregularities in administering the estate, and negligence regarding the building and the furnishings of the church, many of which I left unanalyzed, as it is a broad issue, requiring a distinct and comprehensive research.

In the first half of the 18th century, unwavering attention was paid to the essential requirement that the parochial clergy be adapted to the model developed during the Council of Trent. During a subsequent visitation of the Gniezno archdeaconry in 1727, among other things, it was recorded that sheep ought have the words and the example, while the good shepherd

<sup>67</sup> E.g., *Ibidem*, sheets 41–41v, 119v, 315, 333.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, sheets 322v–323.

<sup>69</sup> E.g. AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheet 41; ref. no. E 6, sheets 41, 338v, 437.

<sup>70</sup> E.g. AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 40, sheet 45v; ref. no. E 6, sheets 131v, 318, 338v, 347.

'gives his soul away to his prayers'<sup>71</sup>, with in turn provides his sheep with life at the time of misfortune and liberates them from the experience of sudden death. In the case of the parish of Czarniejewo, it was recommended that the local pastor, 'bent to the ground', awakened his mind, looked upon this earth from above, elevated himself in his pondering towards heavens, and that bad time has to be balanced with the good one. In the description of Sampolno, the need to purify oneself of the dirt of the spirit and of the body in the presence of God, an act to occur prior to that in front of people. In Śleszyn, drunkenness received a mentioned, and so did wine and everything that can lead to inebriation, and of bad reputation, including a benefice grated owing to a crime, and an abandoned and ruined church<sup>72</sup>.

Thus, as is often the case, the role models and the laws sanctioning the latter at times proved to have little to do with the so-called 'normal' life. The Polish reality after the Council of Trent demonstrate a rather idiosyncratic attitude towards the desired attitudes and examples of blatant irregularities. Concurrently, it makes us aware of the existing control mechanisms and the striving for improvement.

Acting in line with the ideals, according to specified role models is always a difficult feat, as it requires effort, self-discipline, motivation, sacrifice, and courage. It is much easier and simpler to ignore or oppose them.

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

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<sup>71</sup> 'daje duszę swoją dla modlitw swoich' [Polish translation by the author].

<sup>72</sup> AAG, AKG, ref. no. E 15, Wizytacja generalna Franciszka Józefa Kraszkowskiego, pp. 123, 137, 326, 327, 336.

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#### STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł ma na celu ukazanie przykładów duchownych, których zachowanie stanowiło odstępstwa od wzorca wypracowanego przez sobór trydencki. Sobór ten określił zasady przestrzegania w praktyce określonych ideałów teologicznych, formalnych, moralnych, materialnych, jak również obowiązujący aparat kontroli.

Artykuł opisuje sytuację na wybranym terenie (archidiecezja gnieźnieńska) w okresie, gdy wprowadzano w Polsce zalecenia reformy. W pracy zostało omówione świeckie duchowieństwo parafialne oraz związane z miejskimi szpitalami. Dane na temat postawy duchownych pochodzą ze staropolskich wizytacji archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej.

Pozwalają one na zestawienie obowiązującego, posoborowego wzorca duchownego z rzeczywistością konkretnego miejsca i czasu. Do największych problemów należały: pijarstwo i związane z nim inne elementy, jak np. awanturnictwo i niedbałość w obowiązkach oraz niewłaściwe relacje z kobietami (w tym konkubinat i posiadanie nieslubnych dzieci). Zdarzały się również inne występki, jak np. niewłaściwy sakrament małżeństwa. Do radykalnych przewinień zaliczyć można natomiast kradzież. Towarzyszyć im mogły różne inne negatywne zachowania. W artykule ukazano jedynie pewne odstępstwa, natomiast została pominięta część dotycząca wywiązywania się ze sprawowania kultu i opieki duszpasterskiej ze względu na objętość pracy.

Praca pokazuje także reakcję władz duchownych na odkryte problemy, jak również istnienie i funkcjonowanie aparatu kontroli, kary i poprawy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** sobór trydencki, wizytacje, duchowieństwo parafialne, archidiecezja gnieźnieńska, wzorzec duchownego epoki potrydenckiej

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