

KAZIMIERZ PELCZARSKI, C.SS.R.

FATHER MARIAN PIROŻYŃSKI, C.SS.R. (1899-1964) –
A PRISONER OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

Introduction; 1. – Background Causes of Pirożyński's Persecution, and Time in Hiding; 2. – The First Trial and Imprisonment; 3. – The Second Trial and Imprisonment

Introduction

The period of communism's rule in Poland has already passed into history. It maintains, however, a strong influence on the present. Witness the recent attempts, at last, to undertake the inspection of the files of the communist Secret Service. There has been a firm conviction that inspecting these files would help to heal the old, painful memories. Moreover, it has been believed that taking this step might bring to justice those guilty of cooperation with the communists, and provide a certain satisfaction to those who were victims of the communist regime.

Despite efforts to publicize all the horrid facts and to search for ways of disclosing the entire truth about the era of the Polish People's Republic, too little has been said about those who were able to oppose communist domination. These were the brave ones who sacrificed themselves in order to save both our national identity and our country's religious freedom during those dark years.

Redemptorist priests and brothers of the Warsaw Province played a large role in shaping a Polish society which treasured, with just pride and dignity, its great heritage of Christian culture and national freedom. Numerous are the examples of members of our missionary congregation who did not spare any effort as they undertook the struggle for the survival of the nation and Church society in the post-war period.

One of these Redemptorists was Father Marian Pirożyński, who distinguished himself as a man, a religious, a priest, a spiritual leader, a journalist, a tutor, a preacher of parish missions and retreats, and an activist in charitable and social causes. He was born on 17 October, 1899, in Lublin. While still a student of the Department of Philosophy at Warsaw University, he joined the army and took part in the Kiev campaign during the Polish – Bolshevik war in 1920. He was captured for a time, and then managed to escape. Dramatic experiences connected with those events strongly influenced his decision to join the Redemptorist Congregation in 1921. Ordained a priest in 1925, he began an uncompromising defense of Christian values in individual and social life. Soon after World War II, on 16 June, 1945, he began his work in Breslau (Wrocław) as the wartime ruins of this city were still in flames. In doing so, he complied with the request of the Provincial, Father Franciszek Marcinek (1875-1955), that he take over the German Redemptorist church and residence. He was the third Polish priest who settled there as the city tried to recover from its widespread destruction¹. His commitment to ministry among recently repatriated Poles as well as his resilient attitude in shaping the Catholic face of the newly created Breslau society, resulted in a wave of repressions by the communist authorities. They not only harassed him, but had him arrested, judged him in a court of law, and twice threw him into prison. He is a figure worthy of being better known, and also someone on whom we can focus as we study the background events of those first decades of communism's introduction into Poland. He thereby highlights the heroic attitudes found in so many like him. Recalling such figures does them justice as examples worth imitating, independently of any political, social or religious situation. This article will present a small part of Marian Pirożyński's life², as he staunchly withstood the communist regime, defending religious and national freedom and basic moral principles of life within human society.

¹ M. BRUDZISZ, *Pirożyński Marian*, in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, vol. 6, Warszawa 1983, 684; J. PIETRZAK, *Pirożyński Marian*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 26, Wrocław-Kraków [etc.] 1981, 539-540.

² To learn more about this person see: K. PELCZARSKI, *Działalność wychowawcza o. Mariana Pirożyńskiego (1899-1964)*, Lublin 2007, 324.

1. – *Background Causes of Pirożyński's Persecution, and Time in Hiding*

Soon after Poland's liberation late in World War II, Pirożyński carried on work in Breslau which was recognized by his receiving the Silver Cross of Merit on 7 December, 1946. On the other hand it brought about a series of persecutions which he suffered at the hands of the communist authorities³. This complete change of attitude, within just a few years, towards him as a priest was related to the changes in state policy towards the Church in Poland. Until the spring of 1947, in the first phase of a power build-up, the communists seemed to leave the Church outside the range of their hostility. Nevertheless, in mid-1945, soon after the *Temporary Government of National Unity* seized power, indirect aggression could be felt. The communists limited certain Church activities, restricted Church influence, and used assorted intimidation tactics on those priests who were more active among the people⁴.

One of the most serious problems faced by the Catholic Church in Poland was its lack of legitimate status in the new political situation. Already on 12 September, 1945, the *Temporary Government* issued a stark Resolution which, however, was not announced publicly, nor revealed to the Vatican. This Resolution claimed that the Vatican-Poland Concordat of 1925 had been unilaterally violated by certain measures the Holy See had undertaken during World War II⁵. It stated the reason for now severing diplomatic relations was Rome's appointment of an Apostolic Administrator in the Chełmno diocese, the German bishop named Carl Maria Splett (1898-1964)⁶. This had been done in the first months of the war: The *true* reason behind the communist

³ BRUDZISZ, *Pirożyński Marian*, 685.

⁴ B. CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane: z dziejów najnowszych Kościoła katolickiego w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*. T. 2, „... i was prześladować będą”, Lublin 1990, 32.

⁵ H. RYBCZYŃSKI, *W sprawie konkordatu między Stolicą Apostolską a Rzeczypospolitą Polską 10. 02. 1925 roku*, in: *Kościół w II Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. Z. Zieliński – S. Wilk, Lublin 1980, 49-50.

⁶ A. PIEKARSKI, *Szkice o Kościele w Polsce*, Warszawa 1974, 78.

break in relations was that the Vatican would not acknowledge Poland's *Temporary Government of National Unity*, and still maintained within the Vatican State the Ambassador of the Polish Government-in-Exile⁷. The Holy See never confirmed violating the Concordat, but believed that it had to stop applying its terms. The one-sided breaking of the Concordat gave the communists a freer hand to decree the illegitimate status of the Church in Poland. They soon established new regulations which laicized marriage, and introduced liberal policies for granting civil divorce⁸.

Despite much uncertainty arising from its provisional decrees, the *Temporary Government* in these first years did give the Church a certain amount of freedom, and even made some public show of support for Church activities⁹. This stance was an expedient government maneuver because the Church could help a great deal in reconstructing the devastated country. Indeed, the freedoms which the Church did enjoy since 1945 were well utilized for rebuilding its material base, for organizing parish structures in the west and north of Poland, for restructuring *Caritas*, and for expanding ministerial activities.

Cardinal August Hlond (1881-1948), who returned to Poland from exile in August 1945 with broad faculties from the Holy See, played an important role in this rebuilding campaign¹⁰. He immediately took advantage of his special faculties by appointing apostolic administrators of six dioceses in the regained territories. A parish network soon developed there; school children were going willingly to catechetical class, although it was an optional subject. In December 1945 the Episcopate announced its own Catholic marriage decree, simultaneously delivering an attack on the new marital law of the government. The activities of the Church turned out to be unusually effective, as a strong connection between the hierarchy and the faithful was clearly visible. At the end of December 1945 Archbishop Adam Sapieha

⁷ K. KERSTEN, *Historia polityczna Polski 1944-1956*, Warszawa 1986, 33.

⁸ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 34-35.

⁹ M. CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego, redemptorysty*, Tuchów 1993, (MA thesis, PAT Kraków), 23.

¹⁰ J. KŁOCZOWSKI – L. MÜLLEROWA – J. SKARBK, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, Kraków 1986, 379-381.

(1867-1951), whose authority had been strengthened because of his patriotic attitude during the German occupation, was named a Cardinal¹¹.

Facing such facts, the communists therefore were forced to employ a more subtle, and less open, battle against the Church. They excluded Catholic parishes from aid distribution provided by the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency*. (They conveniently labeled these parishes as «reactionary institutions».) The agents of the Security Office recorded the contents of sermons delivered in churches. There were attempts to replace religious ceremonies (baptisms, marriages and funerals) with new secular ceremonies; these were now alluded to as childbirth registration and name verification, civil marriage procedures, and interment with no priest present. People were told that such secular events were aimed at «rebuilding social morality»¹². The national Church was established in the spring of 1946, duly legitimized, along with financial and promotional subsidies¹³. Also, the first arrests of priests took place; they were accused of cooperation with the armed underground¹⁴.

Of key importance in the post-war history of Poland were the parliamentary elections to the lower house in January 1947. The communists wanted these elections to show off how much societal support they had. But with little chance of such support being legitimately realized, they had to counterfeit the victory. Moreover, the authorities then wanted to lure the Church into celebrating the alleged victory. But the bishops, made it perfectly clear, that even amid such evident fraud, the Church had not lost its spirit and, in fact, was still intent on lending a hand to repair the broken political and social scene.

There was even a document of the bishops entitled *Catholic Constitutional Postulates* which was presented to Prime Minis-

¹¹ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 39-40.

¹² S. WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego. Na przykładzie Administracji Apostolskiej Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945-1961*, Wrocław 1995, 83.

¹³ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 39.

¹⁴ P. RAINA, *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński, Prymas Polski*, vol. I, Londyn 1979, 217.

ter Józef Cyrankiewicz (1911-1989). In this document Church-State relations were couched in terms of Poland's status as a Christian nation, with a *non-totalitarian* government, and with due respect for civil and religious freedom¹⁵. Nothing significant resulted, apart from a growing anger on the part of the authorities. In reality, the ideas expressed in the Polish bishops' document turned out to be mere wishful thinking.

The year 1947, according to many authors, marked the beginning of unfettered communist attacks on the Church. It must be said, however, that the hostility simply became more visible, because in truth it had begun when the communists entered Poland and seized political power. The Episcopate now officially began to warn the faithful of the need to oppose atheism, but had to accept the fact that the communists would apply forceful retaliation against any sign of resistance. The government authorities made it clear that their policy towards the Church would depend on whether or not the Episcopacy publicly supported the «present reality». When the Church did not grant this support, they began to meddle more boldly in internal Church affairs. Military chaplains were appointed without consulting their ordinaries, Church printing houses were confiscated, catechists and priests had problems teaching religion in their schools, while the Church schools-including boarding schools and orphanages-were destroyed by the communist administration. Youth religious associations were forbidden at schools¹⁶, and in this way the Eucharistic Crusade and the Students' Sodality were practically eliminated¹⁷.

In the spring of 1948 widespread anti-clerical propaganda was highlighted by verbal attacks on Pope Pius XII after his pastoral letter to German bishops. In this letter the Pope (among other things) alluded to the unfair displacement of Germans. Hence he was accused of anti-Polish activity, and of undermining of the rights of the Polish nation to the lands it had regained. Later a similar letter expressed the Pope's concern and compas-

¹⁵ „Tygodnik Powszechny”, 16: 1947.

¹⁶ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 85.

¹⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 52-55.

sion for Polish exiles who had been displaced from the eastern borderlands. But communist censorship kept this letter from publication-so that Catholic opinion was sincerely and painfully surprised by the «papal interpretation» of these post-war dramas¹⁸.

In the summer of 1948 certain members of the editorial board of the «Tygodnik Warszawski» («The Warsaw Weekly») were arrested. At the same time most secondary schools conducted by women and men religious were no longer allowed to exist¹⁹. Additionally, the strength of the Church was enfeebled from the inside by clergymen-turned-communist collaborators (the so-called «patriot-priests»), as well as by the secular pro-communist PAX Association²⁰.

From this perspective we can judge that in Lower Silesia the situation was much better. Father Karol Milik (1892-1976) had been appointed by the Vatican as Apostolic Administrator of Breslau. He was surrounded mostly by loyal priests who were zealously engaged in Church activity. But we now know from secret files that all Church-related matters were being monitored closely by the communist authorities. They were especially concerned about «clerical organizations» (so designated by the communists). Included among these was *Caritas* which continued to distinguish itself with its week of public fund raising. Coming in for their share of scrutiny were also the Marian Sodality, Rosary fraternities, church reconstruction committees, youth groups, and even units of altar boys. Despite being spied upon even more intently after the spring of 1947, Church life and activity was showing a degree of stubborn resistance to communist rule.

We learn from a secret memorandum that it was the clergy of Breslau who were organizing the resistance, and some communist party cells were bending to the pressure. The memorandum's conclusion was a demand for a closer investigation of cases wherever they occurred²¹.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁰ CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 24.

²¹ APWr (State Archives in Breslau), AKW PZPR (Files of the Polish Communist Party Voivodship Committee), Materials dealing with relations between the State and the Church, 1V40. Note on the clergy activity in the

As time went on Father Pirożyński developed his publishing activity on a larger scale, and was also experiencing a greater need for supplies of paper-which he could obtain only by methods not always in compliance with state laws²². Moreover his priestly ministries, his popularity among the youth, and his influence on the faithful through numerous publications all caused him greater disfavor with the communists²³. He found out that he might soon be arrested for breaching the state censorship laws and his illegal purchase of paper²⁴. An employee of the Security Office in Breslau warned him that real danger was lurking²⁵. Growing persecution towards the Church as well as a wave of arrests among the clergy were signs that Pirożyński had to get out of Breslau, which he did on 17 October, 1949²⁶. He escaped first to Warsaw where «Ósemki»²⁷ helped him to get the documents of a deceased priest named Józef Czerwiński, whose name and identity he adopted²⁸. Father Czesław Stefański delivered a birth certificate, Father Kazimierz Hołda, C.SS.R. (1907-1987) provided a current identification card, and a *celebret*²⁹ was issued in

Lower Silesia.

²² ADPW (Archives of the Provincial House in Warsaw), File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 10.

²³ S. BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła – z badań wrocławskiego IPN. Prześladowany za katolicką książkę i prasę (1 i 2)*, „Nasze Wiadomości”, 3: 2002, p. 152.

²⁴ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 10.

²⁵ Interview with Father T. Sitko, Warszawa 25 September 2000.

²⁶ IPN (The National Memory Institute) BU (Document Release Office) 0208/1504, v. 4, 51-58. The date when Pirożyński left Breslau is controversial; finally, however, we have decided the above as most probable (see., IPN BU 0208/1504, t. 3, c./card/ 41).

²⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 124. «Ósemki» was a secret group of women, existing since the German occupation, organized by devotees to the Church who studied under Father Professor (later Cardinal) Stefan Wyszyński.

²⁸ Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.SS.R., Warszawa, 25 September 2000.

²⁹ A *celebret* is an ecclesiastical identification document indicating one's permission to act as a priest in good standing.

the Kraków Curia and all were forgeries³⁰. Father Provincial, Ludwik Fraś (1901-1953), agreed to this period of hiding with a false identity, which would be spent outside the structures of Redemptorist life.

Throughout Poland the situation could be likened to a kind of wrestling match between the Church and communists over who was «stronger and shrewder». But to get the upper hand, the communists knew that it was indispensable to be more united and to plan a frontal attack. The decisive point in the struggle was the takeover of power by the Polish Communist Party (PZPR), formed late in 1948 by absorbing the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) into the Polish Workers Party (PPR)³¹. This joining of socialists with communists afforded a power-boost to the communists. At a conference of the now-unified groups Aleksander Zawadzki (1899-1964) verbally attacked the Church with full force. He accused certain clergymen of being «preoccupied with political issues», and of being «reactionary and hostile towards the People's Republic»³². Many decrees and instructions followed in the wake of Zawadzki's outburst, and the well-developed, effective activity of the Church felt their chilling impact³³.

Meanwhile a very painful blow fell on the Catholic society of Poland. On 22 October, 1948, came the death of Cardinal August Hlond³⁴. To replace this deceased Archbishop of Warsaw, the Pope appointed the bishop of Lublin, Stefan Wyszyński (1901-1981), who had to face the ongoing and ever-stronger repressions aimed at the Church. In the presence of a belligerent atheism, the new primate tried peacefully to engender better relations between state and Church. Since his first days in office he had been absorbed by the idea of a temporary settlement of the main controversies between the Church and People's Party, and between the Episcopate and the government. He was intent

³⁰ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 4, 51-58.

³¹ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 68.

³² WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 86.

³³ KŁOCZOWSKI – MÜLLEROWA – SKARBK, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, 383.

³⁴ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 63.

on working out some type of sensible *modus vivendi*³⁵. Thanks to his attempts, a contentious, but very important historical agreement was signed by the Episcopate and the government. Less than half a year after the Wyszyński's coming into office, in the summer of 1949 a joint Episcopate-government Committee began its work. After long negotiations the proposed agreement between the state and the Church was signed on 14 April, 1950³⁶. The Episcopate guaranteed that priests would respect state authority, would induce the faithful to be loyal to the state, and would bring about an acceptance of the system of the Polish People's Republic. The authorities, in turn, would respect religious education classes at schools, and assure the freedom of church services, processions and organized pilgrimages. Likewise they would guarantee the existence of Catholic schools and universities, would accept the activity of associations and newspapers, while government censorship would be less severe.

Despite the far-reaching concessions by the Church, the agreement assured only minimal possibilities of development and stability. Soon the government began to breach the agreement, and persecutions were soon again on the increase. A visible proof of this violation was the forceful removal of apostolic administrators from five dioceses (Breslau, Opole, Gorzów, Olsztyn and Danzig) on 27 January, 1951. Members of the Cathedral Chapters were compelled to replace them with vicars loyal to the government. This was followed by the closing of residences of women religious and placing the Sisters in secluded places³⁷. There appeared numerous proofs of the Church hierarchy being mistreated and oppressed; constant pressure was brought to bear on the bishops, making them look weak in the eyes of society. Many priests and bishops had to face trials on trumped-up charges, the most spectacular being the trial of the Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek (1895-1963) of Kielce. He was alleged to have favored the Germans during the Nazi occupation. The pretexts for persecuting the clergy had a pattern of sameness: they were accused of

³⁵ S. WÓJCIK, *Biskup Wincenty Urban, życie i działalność 1911-1983*, Lublin 2001, 281.

³⁶ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 78.

³⁷ CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 24.

some type of fraud, or of cooperation with «imperialists and foreign Secret Service personnel».

As the press started to publish more and more comments on the agreement, it focused on those points which urged submissiveness of the clergy toward the government. This move was related to the government's 1950 attempt to rally support for the *Stockholm Appeal* which called for a total ban on the production and use of nuclear weapons. This ban lacked details for practical control and so was only a moral ban, which made Polish churchmen suspicious. They held to the view that the *Stockholm Appeal* was an outright propaganda tool, pointing to the fact that the Soviet Union claimed one-hundred percent citizen support for the *Appeal*, and vaunted Russia as the only true «champion of peace». Polish communist authorities dearly wanted the Polish clergy, chiefly the bishops, to espouse the *Appeal*. Instead, the bishops continued to distance themselves from what they saw as a «false fight for peace» and a blatant maneuver for political power.

When some of the more disciplined priests steadfastly refused to sign on to the *Appeal*, they gained the reputation of being uncooperative, and once again were risking persecution. Some five hundred were dismissed from their positions as catechists. Later this «lack of cooperation» by the clergy became a pretext for discontinuing the teaching of religion in schools. The government Office of Religious Affairs, which managed all administrative operations against the Church, subsequently came into being in the same year of 1950³⁸.

Then came the «discoveries» of weapon depots and spy centers in the convents and residences of religious. Another wave of arrests among many priests followed with some being singled out for especially harsh treatment; in short, persecution was now being designed on an even wider scale³⁹. In early 1953 the authorities came across the trail of Father Marian Pirożyński. According to files now known to have been assembled in the Office of Security, the first thought was to recruit him to spy on Cardi-

³⁸ P. RAINA, *Kościół – państwo w świetle akt Wydziału do Spraw Wyznań 1967-1968*, Warszawa 1994, 5-6.

³⁹ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 86-88.

nal Primate Stefan Wyszyński and the Redemptorists. In the event that this ploy failed, then a court was to decide his fate⁴⁰.

A governmental decree issued on 9 February, 1953, was a zenith point among attempts to subordinate the Church to the communist government. This decree dealt with appointments to Church-ministry positions. Ordinaries, auxiliary bishops, deans, and parish priests were now required to get the endorsement of the government (or of a territorial administrative body) before holding any Church position. They also had to take a vow of faithfulness to the Polish People's Republic⁴¹.

The bishops answered this outrage with a document of their own on 8 May, 1953. It was some thirty pages long, directed to Prime Minister Bolesław Bierut (1892-1956), and it ended with two words of clear refusal: «*non possumus*»⁴². The document confirmed the strength of the persecuted Church and rendered the effectiveness of governmental operations dubious at best.

By the spring of 1953 agents of the Secret Service already knew that Father Pirożyński had the support of the bishops to function with his disguised identity. These agents insisted on speedily disclosing Pirożyński's disguise. A further aim of this disclosure was that they might make specific accusations against Waław Majewski (1891-1983) and Stefan Wyszyński. Wyszyński was now a prized target, for on 12 January, 1953, the Vatican had named him a Cardinal and the Primate of Poland⁴³.

On the one hand, the governmental strategy of terror was growing too large to conceal, but on the other hand it was not quite succeeding in crushing the spirit of the Church as the communists wished⁴⁴. Next, the outrage of the authorities grew to the point where they arranged for the cardinal's arrest and imprisonment on 25 September, 1953.

Then several days later, on 28 September, the Episcopate was pressured into issuing a declaration by which it condemned the «anti-people and anti-state activity» of Bishop Czesław Kacz-

⁴⁰ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 5-8.

⁴¹ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 87-88.

⁴² The Latin means «we are not able [to comply]».

⁴³ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 5-8; 14.

⁴⁴ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 107-111.

marek of Kielce. Unfortunately the bishops were thereby stating their agreement with the methods of government action taken against the Church⁴⁵. The declaration was also a silent acceptance of the arrest of the Primate and a lack of solidarity with him on the part of some bishops. A week earlier Wyszyński had *refused* to sign the same declaration, and this brought about more heavyweight action against him by the authorities. It was a shameful declaration, approving of the arrest of Bishop Kaczmarek, and even of the arrest of the Primate himself⁴⁶.

Soon afterwards two other eminent clergymen were taken into custody: Bishop Antoni Baraniak (1904-1977), Wyszyński's secretary, and Father Wojciech Zink (1902-1960), a Cathedral chapter member and curate in Olsztyn. They were suspected of preparing an even-larger protest against Wyszyński's imprisonment. Other bishops preferred to avoid a path of self-endangerment, and retreated instead into a passive silence. Then, in December 1953, the Episcopate took the required vow of faithfulness to the Polish People's Republic. Under threat of not being able to fulfill *any* priestly functions, the majority of the Polish clergy likewise took the vow of faithfulness⁴⁷. Now the authorities were more pleased with themselves.

Considering the above-mentioned events, Pirożyński's decision to abandon Breslau and go into hiding turned out to be wise strategy. It was now almost five years since his Breslau activity had been judged intolerable in the eyes of the regime. He was regarded as hostile towards the communist authority and to be very skillful in how to deal with the political maneuvers of the communist government.⁴⁸ For Pirożyński it was a matter of either hiding, or of being arrested. He went first to a group of Ursuline Sisters at Chylice. Then he moved to Pludy, to the Sisters of the Family of Mary. On 6 July, 1950, he went to another convent of these same Sisters located in Ostrówek⁴⁹. Primarily he

⁴⁵ CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 25.

⁴⁶ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 88.

⁴⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 118-119.

⁴⁸ IPN BU 0208/1504 v. 1, c. 39.

⁴⁹ IPN BU 0208/1504 v. 4, c. 44-50; ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biog-*

served as chaplain to these groups of Sisters but at times preached elsewhere, providing occasional sermons and retreats in parish churches⁵⁰. He also attended meetings with various intellectuals in which he spoke out in defense of priests who had been arrested (including Bishop Kaczmarek of Kielce), sharply condemning the actions of the authorities⁵¹.

2. – *The First Trial and Imprisonment*

The constant arrest of clergymen, which had continued from 1947 onward, served to keep in public view the government's conflict with the Church. Moreover, Communist propaganda made claims that these priests had collaborated with the Germans during the war, and after the war had supported the armed underground. The same propaganda said that priests were guilty of shocking deviant sexual behavior which «arose from the clerical environment»⁵². Then ensued more of the old accusations of currency fraud and cooperation with imperialists and foreign Secret Service agencies⁵³. Such vicious propaganda had a two-fold aim. First, it submitted priests to invasive searches which resulted inevitably in their arrests and pseudo-trials. Secondly, there occurred the confiscation of religious residences at well-known shrines and places of cult. In 1947 information was issued about the «discovery of weapon depots» hidden in monasteries at Leżajsk and Jarosław. Supposedly these caches belonged to the armed underground⁵⁴. More alleged discoveries, this time involving both spy-clusters and weaponry, were announced in 1950 when the subjects searched were the Salvatorians at Mikołów, the Franciscans at Radecznica, and the Jesuits at Krakow. These search operations were to «prove» that the majority of religious com-

raphy of Father Pirożyński (manuscript and typescript), p. 10.

⁵⁰ BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 152.

⁵¹ IPN BU 0208/1504 v. 1, c. 18; IPN BU 0208/1504 v. 3, c. 196; Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.SS.R., Warszawa 25 September 2000.

⁵² CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 55.

⁵³ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 87.

⁵⁴ S. JANICKI, *Działalność i likwidacja rzeszowskiego okręgu „Narodowej Organizacji Wojskowej” w latach 1944-1947*, in: *W walce ze zbrojnym podziemiem 1945-1947*, ed. M. Turlejska, Warszawa 1972, 252.

munities were actually centers of anti-state activities. The social climate was exceptionally favorable for believing that political crimes were being committed by these religious.

The sensationalized «information» divulged about these alleged crimes was succeeded almost at once by the next wave of clergy arrests, bishops included. As has been seen, Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek of Kielce, had been arrested in January 1951, and then subjected to a long investigation followed by a humiliating trial. Other bishops, too, were hounded by schemes to bully and intimidate them, though short of capture and trial⁵⁵. The police subjected many priests to prolonged scrutiny. Others were detained and sentenced⁵⁶.

The closing of junior seminaries in July 1952 brought out loud protests by some of the clergy who continued to fear the removal of all religious instruction from their schools. Bishop Stanisław Adamski (1875-1967) of Katowice was the figure who inspired one round of protest; this brought about his arrest a few months later. Bishops Herbert Bednorz (1908-1989) and Juliusz Bieniek (1895-1978) faced a similar fate. Five priests and two lay people from the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków were arrested, being accused of espionage and illegal currency trade. In a spectacular court action in January 1953 two priests and one student were sentenced to death, with others receiving sentences ranging from a minimum of six years, and up to life in prison⁵⁷. In September that year, after already spending two and one-half year in prison, Bishop Kaczmarek underwent another spectacular trial, in which the blackmailed bishop «confessed» that he had been an agent cooperating with a spy in the American Diplomatic Corps. This trial finished with the sentencing of the bishop to another twelve years in prison⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 88-89.

⁵⁶ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 87.

⁵⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 103-105.

⁵⁸ Those who allegedly cooperated with Kaczmarek received prison sentences as follows: Father Jan Danilewicz, ten years; Father Józef Dąbrowski eight years; and Father Władysław Widłak, six years. Furthermore a religious sister, Waleria Niklewska, received a suspended sentence of five years. *Ibid.*, 113-114.

It must be added that in Poland in the years 1951-1953 many political penal processes were directed against important military commanders; they were charged with acts of anti-communist conspiracy. In these processes thirty-seven officers were sentenced to death, and nineteen of them were eventually executed⁵⁹.

The deepening drama of Church persecution by the communist government was exemplified by the aftermath of arrest of the Cardinal Primate of Poland, Stefan Wyszyński. The government made its move against him when it was clear that Wyszyński did not want to condemn Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek. In the late evening hours of 25 September, 1953, two government envoys came to the cardinal's residence and presented a copy of the official decision that he be removed from the city, deprived of the right to fulfill any duties of office. Wyszyński strongly protested this act of lawlessness, refusing to take with him anything except his breviary and rosary. Nevertheless, that night he was transported to a deserted Capuchin monastery in Rywałd near Lidzbark. On 12 October he was transferred to yet another former monastery building in Stoczek Warmiński⁶⁰. After a time in Stoczek, he was taken to Prudnik Śląski⁶¹. He continued to be detained in seclusion, deprived of all outside contact. Usually he was kept in former monastery buildings which had been occupied by Security Forces. After the periods of detention in Stoczek and Prudnik Śląski, he was subjected to frequent transfers.

The time was approaching, which was undoubtedly the most difficult period for the Church in Poland in all of its post-war history. The intent of Primate Wyszyński's arrest had been to deprive the Poles of the man the communists considered their last, but strongest, spiritual opponent. The thinking was that destruction of the Catholic Church in Poland would soon be a reality; without Wyszyński it would be much easier to demand obedience not only of Polish society in general, but also of the clergy, including the hierarchy.

⁵⁹ KERSTEN, *Historia polityczna Polski 1944-1956*, 81.

⁶⁰ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 115.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

There is much evidence to show that many Redemptorists of this era were likewise induced into cooperating with the government. Some were the informants of the Security Forces for many years⁶². Many of the laity were interrogated regarding Father Pirożyński, but fortunately not everyone informed against him⁶³. Although during years of progressive terrorizing, Pirożyński was using his altered identity, it could not escape the attention of the communist authorities that he officially declared his opinion about the innocence of Bishop Kaczmarek⁶⁴. He was ever the same uncompromising priest, defending truth and justice and professing his Catholic faith. He openly demanded freedom not only for Bishop Kaczmarek, but later for Cardinal Wyszyński as well⁶⁵. It was not surprising, then, that Pirożyński was seized on 28 September, 1953, just three days after the arrest of Cardinal Wyszyński⁶⁶. It was also the very day of the shameful declaration by the Episcopate approving Wyszyński's arrest⁶⁷.

The authorities had known since the beginning of 1953 that Father Pirożyński was living under the assumed name of the deceased Father Józef Czerwiński⁶⁸. Upon arrest, during a personal search he was relieved of his breviary, his rosary, a little cross, and other items for his ministry. Pirożyński underwent interrogation at a prison site in Warsaw's Mokotów district⁶⁹.

After nine months of investigation he was brought before a Provincial Court in Warsaw. He faced a number of indictments. He had used false identification papers. He had disseminated false messages damaging to the interests of the Polish People's

⁶² See: IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 3, c. 57-58; 68.

⁶³ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 4, c. 42 (i.e. Stanisława Poprawa testified in a very vague way).

⁶⁴ Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.S.S.R., Warszawa 25 September 2000.

⁶⁵ "Przegląd Katolicki", 44 (1987) 2.

⁶⁶ PIETRZAK, *Pirożyński Marian*, 540.

⁶⁷ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 88.

⁶⁸ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 5-8; Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.S.S.R., Warszawa 25 September 2000.

⁶⁹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 10.

Republic and had abused the people's freedom of belief. He had done so with hostile intent against the people's homeland. While serving as chaplain of the Sisters of the Family of Mary, he had preached sermons in neighboring villages⁷⁰, openly visiting the parishes of Poświętne, Tuszcz and Kłembowo⁷¹. He had demeaned the people because of their ideological (communist) convictions. When he was in hiding, he had directed the «Błękitne» association (which the police designated as «a secret organization»)⁷².

However, the most serious accusations against Pirożyński were related to his Breslau activity. He had unlawfully purchased paper stock, and had engaged in publishing activity without censorship⁷³. He had dealt in illicit foreign-currency; specifically he had accepted two-hundred dollars from abroad for the subscription of the quarterly «Homo Dei», and had made a delivery of eighty dollars repayment on a loan, the original currency of which had been spent in his publishing enterprise⁷⁴.

Perhaps more threatening to his wellbeing than the list of accusations was the stress of not knowing what would happen to him when in custody. This was the strategic treatment of all who were being arrested and charged. No one, families included, knew either the location or the conditions in which people arrested were to be confined. The ability of the Security Forces to act with complete impunity, and the secrecy surrounding their abusive conduct, allowed for them to employ any reprisal towards those in custody⁷⁵.

An attempt was made to accuse Pirożyński of wartime cooperation with the Nazi Gestapo. His present captors, in the name of the communist regime, stood capable of sentencing him to death, if he was pronounced guilty of this charge of cooperation⁷⁶.

⁷⁰ "Przegląd Katolicki", 44 (1987) 2.

⁷¹ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 3, c. 188.

⁷² BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 152; IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 31-37.

⁷³ PIETRZAK, *Pirożyński Marian*, 540.

⁷⁴ BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 152-153.

⁷⁵ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 64.

⁷⁶ IPN BU 0208/1504, v 1, c. 4, 5-8; see: v. 3, c. 56; v. 4, c. 37-38, 205-210.

According to government regulations, Pirożyński's printing operations were illegal, as were the means he used to get needed paper stock. But he had decided he could not stand by passively when there was outright discrimination against the Catholic press. A higher law urged him to print things not officially allowed, although sacrificing himself in the process. At that time the circulation of Church materials was growing smaller because of governmental legalities. Censorship was smothering valuable ideological texts⁷⁷. At first it seemed that in the post-war years the Catholic press was flourishing, consisting of about thirty titles of periodicals. For the most part, however, these were monthly and bi-monthly publications with a strict set of laws controlling their subject matter and the number of copies to be produced. Hence their influence was kept in check⁷⁸.

As for the printing of religious textbooks, this too was hemmed in by thorny constraints. The communist effort turned absurd when they censored even the encyclical of Pius XI *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929) on Christian Education⁷⁹. Year by year the non-communist press was watched carefully. Arrests multiplied and bizarre accusations appeared during investigations⁸⁰.

Pirożyński, as the editor and publisher of the quarterly «Homo Dei», had done everything he could to oppose propaganda which called the Church a nest of ignorance. Considering his prolific production of books, pamphlets, articles and leaflets in his Breslau period, anyone had proof to the contrary.

The trial against Pirożyński took place on 26 and 27 July, 1954, and then was resumed on 20 August. On this last day of trial he was pronounced guilty, and sentence was handed down⁸¹. Among fifteen witnesses there had been those who defended Pirożyński. These were Jews who had been rescued by him during the war; however, their presence did not alter the formulation of

⁷⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 62.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁹ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 85.

⁸⁰ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 43.

⁸¹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński. W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 10.

his sentencing⁸². The Provincial court in Warsaw decided to punish him by one year in prison with some credit given for time already spent in custody⁸³. Counting the time before his trial and after, he spent almost a year and a half in seclusion⁸⁴. There is on file the statement of one member of the Security Forces who thought that Pirożyński was imprisoned much too briefly, and that this was due to his great cleverness⁸⁵.

Released on 22 December 1954, Pirożyński first stayed in a monastery in Gliwice, and then, after 1 January 1957, lived in Warsaw⁸⁶.

3. – *The Second Trial and Imprisonment*

During the time of Pirożyński's first imprisonment, and after the arrest of the Cardinal Primate Stefan Wyszyński, there was a fearful silence that settled over the Church in Poland. The weakness of the episcopate allowed for a visible growth of activity by the «patriot priests» and a larger influence of the PAX organization. The Secret Service was not able, however, to force a huge number of priests to advocate the falsehoods propagated by the regime. Churches were becoming places of refuge where people came and felt free at least to pray and to think⁸⁷.

Polish society was feeling more and more of the pressure came along with the public persecution of the Church. Any open practice of the faith, and even someone's simplest devout expression, was apt to warrant severe punishment. There was abundant evidence of the bad will and all-out dishonesty on the part of the authorities⁸⁸. Among many good priests there developed a kind of conspiratorial atmosphere in which they quietly met one ano-

⁸² IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 3, c. 239; Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.SS.R., Warszawa, 25 September 2000 and 19 May 2004.

⁸³ D. ZAMIATAŁA, *Pirożyński Marian*, in: *Leksykon duchowieństwa represjonowanego w PRL w latach 1945-1989*, ed. J. Myszor, vol. 1, Warszawa 2002, 220.

⁸⁴ BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 153.

⁸⁵ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 6, c. 32.

⁸⁶ BRUDZISZ, *Pirożyński Marian*, 685.

⁸⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 119-120.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

ther in seemingly informal contacts and discussed religious or business matters in veiled language⁸⁹.

In the meantime Cardinal Wyszyński, isolated from public life, undertook from his prison in Stoczek Warmiński new initiatives related to the religious life of the Polish people. In secret he worked out a program whereby priests might defend the faith against the prevailing militant atheism and also prepare the Polish faithful for a grand celebration in 1966 of the One-thousandth Anniversary of the «Baptism of Poland»⁹⁰.

Then out of Cardinal Wyszyński's own deep Marian devotion came another inspiration. Three and one-half years into the future, in 1956, there would be *the inauguration* of the Millennium Anniversary of the Christianization of Poland-by the observance of *yet another anniversary year*. This second anniversary would mark three hundred years since the 1656 Dedication of the Polish Nation to the Mother of God by King Jan Kazimierz (1648-1668). This King of Poland had authored «National Vows of Allegiance to Mary» in 1656. The year 1956 would, in Wyszyński's plan, be a *Rededication of Poland to Mary!* The «National Vows of Allegiance to Mary» would be repeated!

In his prison cell in Stoczek Warmiński Wyszyński himself, on 8 December, 1953, made a personal consecration of his life to the service of the Blessed Mother. He wanted it to be a prelude of the nation's 1956 rededication to Mary-which would then flow into the ten years of preparation for the Millennium Anniversary of the Christianization of Poland.

At that time it seemed almost utopian to expect that such initiatives for the renewal and rededication of the Polish Church would be a success. Narrow-minded doubters asserted this openly. In later years some historians have written about a political «thaw» beginning in Poland in December 1954. But whatever thaw there was, it most likely happened only among a few of the top party elite.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁹⁰ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 88. The «Baptism of Poland» refers to the baptism of Prince Mieszko I in 966; he was the first ruler of a united Polish state. His baptism was followed by the building of churches and the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

More significant was the breakthrough that came about in the summer of 1955. After two years of waiting, Cardinal Wyszyński at last received some of the periodicals he had been resolutely requesting. Though seemingly small, it was symbolic enough to alter the social atmosphere in the minds of the people, providing hope of greater freedom in the life of the Church.

Admittedly, this breakthrough did not have an immediate impact on the life of the Church in Poland at large⁹¹. The first, slight changes began to happen only in reference to the Cardinal Wyszyński. In October 1955 he was transferred to Komańcza. Though still not at liberty to function as archbishop, he now had much improved living conditions in his new residence with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. No longer did he have to tolerate the supervision of the Secret Service in his presence.

As for Father Marian Pirożyński, he was still harassed by the Secret Service, despite the freedom which he was supposed to enjoy after his imprisonment⁹². Records testifying to frequent interrogations by the Security Service are dated September and October 1955. Without doubt his case still had its roots in the ideological struggle between communist power and the Church. This conflict did not die out; it kept reappearing with new looks.

Nonetheless, in somewhat changing circumstances, the bishops, who had been mired in a sense of helplessness, slowly regained an internal equilibrium. Stirring among them was a kind of revived psychic ability for again taking up the defense of the Church.

Moreover, as proposed by Cardinal Wyszyński, preparation for the day of the «National Vows» was progressing. The Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa at Jasna Góra was chosen as the location for the event; its directors were expending maximum effort to fulfill the cardinal's wishes. Maria Okońska, the irrepresible leader of «Ósemki», lent her organizational skill and spirit toward the day's success, despite the frowning disapproval of the event by the government. Meanwhile, in May 1956 at the request of the Pauline monks (of the Shrine of Częstochowa), Cardinal Wyszyński composed the official text for the vows of rede-

⁹¹ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 127-131.

⁹² IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 6, c. 30-31.

dication in Komańcza. This text was brought by secret courier to Jasna Góra⁹³.

The vow ceremony took place on 26 August, 1956, the special feast day dedicated to the Mother of God at Jasna Góra⁹⁴. An unprecedented number of pilgrims, more than one million of them, gathered at the famous shrine. In the presence of all these faithful, Bishop Michał Klepacz (1893-1967) proclaimed the text of the vows before a painting of Our Lady of Częstochowa. The same act of entrusting the Polish Church to the Mother of God was simultaneously offered by the primate, Cardinal Wyszyński, in his detention place in Komańcza⁹⁵.

The communist authorities, dismayed by these events, were intent on not losing any of their earlier gains. Not surprisingly, Pirożyński again became a subject of interest. In the beginning of 1956, he had to face a new investigation as an activist priest and religious, and promoter of the principles of the Catholic Church. This 1956 investigation is documented in a set of files labeled with the significant code name «Thinker»⁹⁶.

Moreover, in the same year public life in Poland was again rocked by a drama which took place in the city of Poznań. On 28 June, 1956, a massive workers' strike took place, and then came seething street demonstrations. Before long some four-hundred army tanks were on the scene. Shots were fired into the crowds; presently scores lay dead with hundreds more wounded. These horrific events exposed two dynamic issues: the inability of the ruling communist powers to solve the growing conflicts in a political way, and the unified determination of a society yearning to be free⁹⁷. Polish communism was experiencing its first major crisis, a crisis which could be interpreted as signaling that the downfall of such a system was possible⁹⁸.

Strident protests rose up from circles of students and the intelligentsia. There was serious questioning of the ideological and po-

⁹³ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 134-136.

⁹⁴ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 88.

⁹⁵ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 136-137.

⁹⁶ IPN BU 0208/1504, t. 1, b.n.k. (the first page of this file volume).

⁹⁷ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 136.

⁹⁸ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 88-89.

litical tenets of communism that had been trumpeted into the ears of the people. Simultaneously there came outcries demanding that *practical conclusions* be drawn from all the political sloganeering.

In July of 1956 Father Pirożyński made similar, and very pointed, statements denouncing the policy of government authorities as he preached during the principal patronal feast of Our Lady of Tuchów⁹⁹. In this tense atmosphere the government called an assembly of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party in October of 1956. Władysław Gomułka (1905-1982) who had been the victim of a great purge a few years previously, was invited to this Central Committee Assembly. He was now judged to be a quite suitable leader for attempting a renewal of the Polish communist party. The Assembly debated how to deal with those who were demanding that the Soviet party delegation leave Warsaw—a demand made even though there was the threat of armed intervention by the Soviet Union. In the face of all this, Gomułka rose up as a possible resource person. He gained the authority and the confidence of masses, allowing for a unique, unwritten compromise to be reached between the anti-communist populace and the communist-controlled government. This agreement accorded the government limited control but wide support. It allowed the people a relatively generous range of civil liberties.

A few days after the assembly of the Party, on 28 October, 1956, Cardinal Wyszyński returned to Warsaw to resume all of his Church functions¹⁰⁰. He was assured by the representatives of the government that the Church would regain its basic rights and all the damage would be repaired by the communists.

The cardinal was a very important figure in the sequence of events in October 1956. The people were demanding that he be let out of detention, and when the demand was met, it was a symbol of the promise of new life for Poland, and also the first test of the credibility of the authorities¹⁰¹. Wyszyński's was set free along with those bishops still in prison.

⁹⁹ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 6, c. 38-44.

¹⁰⁰ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 89.

¹⁰¹ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 138-140.

A new agreement was struck in early December 1956 between the Church and the state. It contained the following provisions:

- cancellation of the infamous 1953 Decree about Church ministerial positions; a guarantee providing for the teaching of religion in schools (as an optional subject);
- a descriptive statement of principles about religious care of the sick and those in prison;
- decisions regarding the return of religious Sisters to their convents after their forced displacement into western Poland;
- prescriptives assuring the restoration of the legitimate bishops to their dioceses of Breslau, Opole, Gorzów, Danzig and Olsztyn¹⁰².

Yet another element of the new policy granted by the communist authorities was that these authorities would cease from any attempt at organizing and supporting the so-called patriot priests; this move almost immediately caused a decline of that institution. Elections to the lower chamber of parliament were to be held in January 1957 and the party unexpectedly offered seats in the chamber for Catholics connected with the weekly magazine «Tygodnik Powszechny». It was a formal beginning of the Parliamentary Group «Znak».

The year 1957 saw the beginning of the most dynamic period of the post-war Catholic Church in Poland. Permission was granted to organize religious public meetings, although the permission soon turned out to be limited, for the agenda of the meetings had to be reviewed by the governmental Department of Religious Affairs.

Nevertheless, within this milieu Cardinal Wyszyński initiated the multi-level, well-developed program of moral renewal called the «Wielka Nowenna». This was the name he gave to the ten-year ministerial cycle in preparation for the 1966 Millennium observance of the «Baptism of Poland» as mentioned above. The «Wielka Nowenna» was aimed at opposing the dangers left

¹⁰² A. MICEWSKI, *Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński, prymas i mąż stanu*, Paryż 1982, 164.

over from the years of secularist ideology. Cardinal Wyszyński was concerned that the atheistic ideology had truly weakened family values, undermined the work ethic, and shown contempt for human dignity. In summary, it had aimed at the annihilation of the Polish nation¹⁰³.

Cardinal Wyszyński played an active role the «Wielka Nowenna», often preaching in his vigorous style. The year which began with the «National Vows of Allegiance to Mary» at Jasna Góra ended with the repetition of those vows in all Polish parishes on 5 May 1957. In that same month of May, Wyszyński made a trip to Rome, where he had several audiences with Pius XII. On 18 May the pope held a special ceremony to confer the symbols of his status as a cardinal, something that had been impossible for him when so named in 1952¹⁰⁴.

The authorities soon came to know the great moral and social influence of Cardinal Wyszyński, both in Poland and abroad. The communist party, uneasy about his popularity, again launched a great ideological offensive. It organized activities keenly focused on full-scale secularization, especially of children and youth. Atheism was advanced on all fronts. Newspapers were created specifically to do battle with the Church, hoping to undermine its authority and break apart its unity¹⁰⁵.

Flexing its muscle still more, the party took the step in the autumn of 1957 banning the weekly publication named «Po Prostu», which by then, in this time of «thaw», had grown very popular. The paper's closure ignited student riots in Warsaw in the first days of October 1957 which were brutally squelched by massive squads of police, after which the dead bodies of several demonstrators and passers-by were lying in the streets. Further signs of outright hostility towards the Church were the state's opposition to the return of *Caritas* (which had been taken over in 1950), challenges to a revived Catholic press, and the refusal to allow any new parishes, or the establishment of a Catholic youth association¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ J. MAJKA, *Kościół w Polsce po drugiej wojnie światowej*, "Chrześcija-nin w Świecie", 1 (1994) 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 145-146.

¹⁰⁵ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 89-90.

¹⁰⁶ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 146-148.

It is not surprising that in the years 1957-1958 Father Pirożyński spoke out more often in defense of the Catholic community and the clergy after the authorities once again liquidated all schools where religion classes were held¹⁰⁷. New tactics of surveillance were used against him, such as electronic listening devices and the enlistment of collaboration from several turn-coat Redemptorists¹⁰⁸. This time the bishops broke out in unambiguous protest. They pointed out the various signs of discrimination in the policy of the free-thinkers: how they demeaned the good work of the Church, while spreading two-faced propaganda about allowing «liberty in the practice of religion»¹⁰⁹.

The hypocrisy of the government was keenly evident again in the life of Father Pirożyński. He believed his influence as a priest was in his publishing and editing. Soon after leaving prison he planned to reactivate «Homo Dei», the Redemptorist periodical banned by the communists in 1952, and succeeded in doing so early in 1957. Always holding the position of editor-in-chief, he enlarged the format and increased the circulation¹¹⁰. Though lacking governmental authorization, he was soon printing 10.000 copies of almost every number. In addition, he illegally printed many leaflets¹¹¹. With a strict government policy of censorship in effect, Pirożyński's resumption of his publishing endeavors, and his illegal purchase of needed paper stock, were sure to bring dire results¹¹².

A report on Pirożyński was filed in the public prosecutor's office by a censor called Kupraszkwili from the Office for Control

¹⁰⁷ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 196-197; see also v. 6, c. 117-119.

¹⁰⁸ IPN BU 0208/1504, t. 2, c. 283 – 284 (almost all vol. 2 files are records taken down in shorthand of phone calls listened to by means of electronic devices secretly installed at the Redemptorist house on Karolkowa Street in Warsaw); see v. 6, c. 120 n.

¹⁰⁹ WÓJCIK, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego*, 90.

¹¹⁰ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 11.

¹¹¹ Interview with Father Tadeusz Sitko, C.S.S.R., Warszawa 25 September 2000.

¹¹² CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 141.

of the Press¹¹³. There were also reports filed at the Office of Security by Pirożyński's very own assistant, who, as it later became clear, had been regularly informing the officials about what was being published and in what quantities¹¹⁴. This assistant was «Brother» F. Trzeszczkowski. The man was *not* a Redemptorist Brother and never took vows in the Congregation, yet, oddly, he wore a Redemptorist habit. His home was in Wołomin and he commuted to Warsaw to the Redemptorist residence on Karolkowa Street.

Strange but true, was the fact that after World War II, it had been none other than Pirożyński who took compassionate care of Trzeszczkowski, a former prisoner in the concentration camp of Auschwitz. While working at Karolkowa Street alongside Pirożyński, he had been deemed a trustworthy person whose task it also was to take care of everyday postal matters. But he turned out to be a mole (using the code name «Bush») who relayed to authorities all that went on inside the Warsaw Redemptorist community. Chiefly, however, he spied and reported on Father Pirożyński's publishing endeavors¹¹⁵. Hence the work of the Redemptorist editor of «Homo Dei» was again disrupted. The communists now had more than enough material to file serious accusations against Father Pirożyński.

He was arrested for the second time on 30 May, 1958. This came about after he had already been removed from his position as editor by Redemptorist superiors—an action taken for the sake of the safety of the newspaper itself¹¹⁶. He was again accused of illegally printing religious material, of making forbidden paper purchases, and dealing in foreign currency. To these charges was added another regarding the illegal import and dissemination of foreign printed materials. Confiscated religious bro-

¹¹³ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 218.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Father T. Sitko, Warszawa 25 September 2000.

¹¹⁵ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 57, 228; v. 5, c. 96 – 111; v. 6, c. 207.

¹¹⁶ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 11; Letters and writings, Letter from jail at 15 Nowotki Street (June 1958); BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła* 153. This author provides an incorrect date in reference to the arrest on 1 June.

chures and pictures constituted the pieces of evidence presented in his trial¹¹⁷.

Previous to this second arrest, the investigation of Pirożyński had gone on for almost six months¹¹⁸. The Redemptorist residence on Karolkowa street in Warsaw had been searched several times¹¹⁹. Besides evidence of Pirożyński's illegal publishing, the communists had hunted for a cash deposit of United States dollars which he was supposed to have left with his superior, but they found nothing. Besides this particular lack of evidence, the public prosecutor's office had another serious difficulty: their main witness, the already-mentioned «Brother» Trzeszczkowski, had died in an accident.

Nevertheless they proceeded on the Pirożyński case. He was now being accused together with seventeen other people¹²⁰. These latter were employees of publishing houses mainly from the area of Warsaw and Olsztyn. Eight of them eventually went to prison¹²¹. The indictment of 29 November 1958 stated that Pirożyński induced them to assist him in his illegal purchases of the paper stock used for outlawed religious publications¹²².

In 1957-1958 Pirożyński had released several dozen publications totaling about 500.000 copies. His paper purchases were not of minor quantity, totaling about thirty tons¹²³. In the files of the Secret Service there exists a note charging that he published about one million individual copies of his religious publications¹²⁴!

The investigation was continued until December when the formal indictment was sent to the Provincial Court for the capital city of Warsaw. The trial of Pirożyński and the other accused

¹¹⁷ PIETRZAK, *Pirożyński Marian*, 540; IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 13.

¹¹⁸ BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 153.

¹¹⁹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 12.

¹²⁰ Interview with Father T. Sitko, C.S.S.R., Warszawa 25 September 2000.

¹²¹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 12.

¹²² BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 153.

¹²³ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 34.

¹²⁴ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 38.

people lasted from 19 January to 8 February, 1959. Pirożyński faced, on the basis of gathered materials, the following official accusations:

1) Producing from a printing house in Olsztyn 100.000 copies of the leaflet: *Souvenir of the Holy Mission*, without permission from the Office for Press Control.

2) The purchase of paper for a sum of 8,000 Polish Zloty.

3) The duplication, without permission, of invitations to a Mass, and an appeal to the subscribers of *Homo Dei* all from his private publishing center.

4) Printing about 20.000 small pictures of the Crucified Jesus with missionary prayers on the reverse side, produced with the help of communication workers.

5) An attempt to publish a prayer book for the Sisters of Elizabeth, *Venite ad Me*, without a publisher's permit, and with the aid of advertising specialists.

6) Sending of thirty British pounds sterling to England, and of 90 United States dollars to the USA.

7) Importation and distribution of books among the Polish clergy without official trade authorization¹²⁵.

In face of such an accumulation of accusations Pirożyński expressed his wish to have as a defender a well-known attorney and his personal friend Henryk Nowogródzki¹²⁶. In the trial Pirożyński was to be judged as someone who corrupted office workers, and was thus responsible for making individuals commit crimes.

It turned out, however, that those office workers who shared the same accusations as Pirożyński testified that they did not perceive anything wrong in his actions. He was mainly accused by people, whom, according to Pirożyński's own words, «he hardly knew at all»¹²⁷. Indeed, there were no condemnations

¹²⁵ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 12.

¹²⁶ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński. Letters and writings, Letter from jail at 15 Nowotki Street (June 1958).

¹²⁷ ADPW, T File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Piro-

of him forthcoming in the testimony of all those arrested with Pirożyński, nor in the testimony of about fifty additional witnesses¹²⁸. Some Redemptorist priests also took the witness stand, such as the Provincial, Father Kazimierz Hołda, and Fathers Jan Piekarski and Stanislaus Wójcik (1903-1985). The testimony which they gave contained satisfactory explanations that could in no way harm the accused¹²⁹. Meanwhile Pirożyński blamed himself, and at the same time protected those accused with him¹³⁰. He requested that he be given the highest level of punishment, his wish being to underline the absurdity of the situation¹³¹. In this way he tried also to direct everyone's attention to the main issue of the case, namely, the campaign against the Catholic press and Catholic literature¹³². He noted that applications for reactivating church publications which had been previously suppressed were being delayed by the authorities¹³³. This ideological battle, Pirożyński said, was aimed at «making a martyr of the Catholic press», and he was becoming one of the victims of that wider battle¹³⁴. As Pirożyński was hoping for publicity for his case, he indeed got his wish, for the trial was widely publicized in Poland and also abroad. Many foreign newspaper correspondents picked up the story and shared it with their readers. Radios stations in both Poland and abroad did the same for their listeners¹³⁵.

żyński, *My Last Word* (typescript), pp. 1-3.

¹²⁸ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 12.

¹²⁹ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 1, c. 53-54; v. 6, c. 212-213.

¹³⁰ BOGACZEWICZ, *Represje komunistyczne wobec Kościoła*, 153.

¹³¹ Letter from Father Jan Piekarski, C.S.S.R., Rome, 9 January 2001.

¹³² ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *My Last Word* (manuscript), pp. 4-5.

¹³³ CYWIŃSKI, *Ogniem próbowane*, 148.

¹³⁴ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 13.

¹³⁵ IPN BU 0208/1504, v. 6, c. 224-225. The trial received wide commentary on Vatican Radio and in the press in: *L'Osservatore Romano*, "Il Popolo", "Il Quotidiano" and "Corriere della Sera". File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 11.

Pirożyński's personal testimony presented factual arguments to justify his actions. He said that he had bought paper for printing as regular writing paper; he sent or imported books at the request of priests; he had in mind that he was printing leaflets in the way the communists had printed them before they came into power. (In his case, he said, he was doing it for the benefit of the faithful). He stated that he gave money as a bonus, or a holiday gift, and that the money he had sent abroad was intended, among other purposes, to be spent on medical equipment for Polish hospitals. He compared his situation to that of the very first editor of «Homo Dei», Father Kazimierz Smoroński (1889-1942), who had been tormented by the Germans. Moreover, Smoroński, as Pirożyński was now doing, had also asked for the most severe punishment possible if such a sacrifice were necessary for saving the Catholic press in Poland.

In his final speech during the trial Pirożyński defined this «martyrdom of the Catholic press» in detail. He accused the Office for Press Control of not allowing the printing of religious leaflets while, in fact, Catholic publishing houses were printing only five percent of what they should be able to print. He referred to a speech by a Member of Parliament from Tarnów, Antoni Gładysz, who in 1957 spoke of the need for reproducing multiple copies of «Gość Niedzielny» and «Przewodnik Katolicki». That speech of Gładysz had been slated for publication in «Homo Dei», but instead was confiscated by censors of the Office for Press Control¹³⁶. Pirożyński reminded the court that several Catholic papers («Rycerz Niepokalanej», «Niedziela», «Przegląd Powszechny» and «Poślaniec Serca Jezusowego») had been suppressed and never allowed to resume publication. According to Pirożyński the trial was not about a political fight, but dealt more with ideological and religious issues. The trial itself was contrary to the lofty notion of a human being, a «Homo Dei», the individual created by God, and, as such, related to Jesus, the Son of God. So this was a trial about the reality of the Personal Christ, the Anointed One come into this World.

¹³⁶ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *My Last Word* (typescript), p. 5.

Pirożyński viewed himself as a knight in God's service¹³⁷. Before each trial he asked his Father Provincial for a blessing, and he greeted everyone with the words: «Let Jesus Christ be praised»¹³⁸! Also, his attorney, Henryk Nowogródzki, continually emphasized that his client was not involved in an economic trial, but an ideological one, and so deserved the highest respect, not condemnation¹³⁹.

Pirożyński also took the opportunity to repeat his difficulties connected with celebrating Mass and other religious rites in prison¹⁴⁰. Soon after his arrest he had inquired about the possibility of Mass and he also wanted his Provincial, Father Kazimierz Hołda, to request permission from Bishop Zygmunt Choroński (1892-1968)¹⁴¹.

Pirożyński was forced to remain in the Mokotów prison for the duration of the trial, all the while hoping to begin celebrating Mass. He wrote many letters about this, most being addressed to the Province Court in Warsaw¹⁴². In the last of these he laid down an ultimatum: if his request were not granted, he would begin a hunger strike¹⁴³. Finally, in January 1959 Pirożyń-

¹³⁷ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *My Last Word* (typescript), p. 2.

¹³⁸ Letter from Father Jan Piekarski, C.S.S.R., Rome 9 January 2001.

¹³⁹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *My Last Word* (typescript), p. 13

¹⁴⁰ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), pp. 12-13.

¹⁴¹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *Letters and Writings*, Letter from jail at 15 Nowotki Street (June 1958).

¹⁴² ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 14.

¹⁴³ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński. *Letters and writings*, Letter to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers delivered into the hands of Jerzy Zawieyski, MP, 14 October 1958; Letter to Jerzy Zawieyski, MP and member of the State Council, 16 November, 1958; Letter to the Presidium of the MP Group «Znak», 1 November, 1958; Letter to Bishop Z. Choroński 9 November, 1958, Letter to the First Secretary of the Communist Party, W. Gomułka, 25 November, 1958; Letters to the Voivodship Court of the capital city, Warsaw, 23 October, 3 December, 5 December, 1958.

ski celebrated his first Eucharist in prison, using a plain table and a mug¹⁴⁴. This occurred eight months after his arrest and he was so happy that he seemed indifferent toward the forthcoming court verdict, whatever it might be. He said God's Will would be done, even though it might mean his death as a martyr¹⁴⁵.

The verdict came on 8 February, 1959. The Province Court in Warsaw sentenced him to two years in prison, with credit for the time already served in detention, and 4.700 Polish Zloty fine. The press immediately publicized the sentence, to justify the legality of the authority's actions. It was reported that the court confirmed the main allegations: bribing workers of printing houses in 1957-1958 as well as committing foreign currency crimes. Out of fourteen others who stood trial with Pirożyński the court set three of them free; one was acquitted, and one was fined. The rest were given prison sentences ranging from a minimum of three months up to two and one-half years, and also assessed various fines¹⁴⁶.

After the verdict Father Pirożyński was transported from Warsaw to a more rigorous prison in Barczewo¹⁴⁷. Later he was moved to Olsztyn, and, finally, returned again in Warsaw. In Olsztyn he began to write briefs about the prison management, which caused an inspection from the Board of Prisons and, in effect, his transfer to Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw¹⁴⁸. This obviously came about because of the complaints he had registered.

Even earlier, when kept in Barczewo, he had created a ministry of letter writing. One was to the Presidium of the Parliamentary Group «Znak», explaining his great concern about the spiritual welfare of prisoners. He asked permission to edit a prayer book, using selected texts from Sacred Scripture which could be of spiritual help to the imprisoned. He wryly stated that no lay

¹⁴⁴ CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 110-111.

¹⁴⁵ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, *My Last Word* (typescript), pp. 10-11.

¹⁴⁶ Ks. Marian Pirożyński *skazany na dwa lata więzienia*, in: "Dziennik Polski", 34 (1959) 2.

¹⁴⁷ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, *Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński* (manuscript and typescript), p. 19.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Father T. Sitko, C.SS.R., Warszawa, 25 November, 2000.

propaganda would ever heal a prisoner, but only the all-powerful mercy of Christ; therefore, according to him, it was necessary to introduce a sacramental ministry in prisons¹⁴⁹.

On 25 October, 1959, in a memorial directed to the Central Board of Prison Management, he included a narrative of all his prison experiences. He criticized the lack of respect shown for the humanity of the imprisoned. He claimed a violation of one's right to religious practice, citing the prohibition against both offering and participating in Mass, the rules against carrying or placing of religious symbols in the corridors, and the banning of religious songs and carols.

He emphasized the lack of religious periodicals and books in the prisons. He also tried to present some theoretical directives for establishing educational programs and prison ministry¹⁵⁰.

Whenever he could, he himself undertook the spiritual care of his fellow prisoners, hearing their confessions, praying with them and blessing those transferred to different prisons¹⁵¹.

Pirożyński was set free on 1 June, 1960, because his pre-trial detention had been counted toward the length of his sentence¹⁵². After a short stay in Warsaw on 11 August, 1960, he moved to the Redemptorist residence in Gliwice, and returned again to the capital on 20 May, 1961¹⁵³.

A life of intensive work, as well as his continuous clashes with the communist regime ruined Pirożyński's health. After his imprisonment he lived a brief three years. The trials and prison stays had weakened him and brought on heart disease. He wrote about this from behind bars, referring to a «blow» to his physical

¹⁴⁹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, Letters and writings, Letter to the Presidium of the MP Group «Znak», March 1959.

¹⁵⁰ CHYROWSKI, *Działalność pisarska ojca Mariana Pirożyńskiego*, 125-126.

¹⁵¹ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, Jan Wysocki, Memories from the cell of Mokotów prison about a Redemptorist, Father Marian Pirożyński, Pruszków, 28 May, 1973 (typescript).

¹⁵² ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński (manuscript and typescript), p. 19.

¹⁵³ PIETRZAK, *Pirożyński Marian*, 540.

and mental state, making it impossible to function normally¹⁵⁴. His first heart attack probably occurred during a retreat for priests in Przemyśl, sometime around June or July 1962. In the summer of 1963 it was noticeable that the state of his health was deteriorating again and it seemed he was in danger of another heart attack. He was in the hospital many times as his physical strength went steadily downward.

On Friday, 1 May, 1964, he was taken to the hospital in Czerniaków, a district of Warsaw. By the following Monday morning it was obvious that his blood pressure was very low. He was fully aware of his poor condition, for he told others: «This is death, this is the end. I must go to the Lord». These were his last words.

Father Marian Pirożyński died soon after, on 4 May, 1964¹⁵⁵. He became a silent martyr defending the Christian norms of solidarity, justice and love. These were the guiding attitudes of his life, even during the court trials that resulted in his two imprisonments by the communist regime. It was an inhuman regime, which schemed to repudiate all that this priest represented. Thus he fulfilled his calling, and the sacrificial commitment into which he stepped forward on the day of his priestly ordination¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁴ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, «Pro memoria», materials for a funeral speech (manuscript); Letter to Father Provincial (probably of 12 February, 1959).

¹⁵⁵ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, W. SZOŁDRSKI, Materials for the biography of Father Pirożyński (manuscript and typescript), p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ ADPW, File n. 72 containing personal data of Father Marian Pirożyński, «Pro memoria», Materials for a funeral speech (manuscript); Letter to Father Provincial (probably of 12 February 1959.).

SUMMARY

There have been eras when to be a genuine teacher of the Christian faith has been utterly necessary. After World War II and in the days of Communist domination of Poland, Father Marian Pirożyński, C.SsR, (1899-1964) was such a teacher. In open opposition to the Communists, he helped his people preserve their nation, rebuild their lives, and remain strong in faith. In 1945 he volunteered to serve in Breslau, where huge portions of the city were still on fire. As missionary and writer he preached and published books and pamphlets. As an outspoken activist, he joined with other Catholics in organizing social reforms and works of charity, ever stressing the gospel values of Christ. In short, he was inspired to build where the Communists crushed and destroyed. In the end he paid the ultimate price. Two trials and two prison sentences were the direct cause of his broken health, and eventually his death. It is to be hoped that Pirożyński will remain a model of laying down one's life on behalf of those bereft of human and spiritual necessities-without counting the cost.

RESUMEN

Ha habido épocas en las que era absolutamente necesario ser un maestro auténtico de la fe cristiana. El P. Marian Pirożyński, C.S.S.R., (1899-1964) lo fue después de la segunda guerra mundial y durante la dominación comunista de Polonia. En abierta oposición a los comunistas ayudó al pueblo a preservar la nación, reconstruir su vida y mantenerse firme en la fe. En 1945 se ofreció voluntario para ejercer el ministerio en Breslau cuando todavía muchas partes de la ciudad estaban ardiendo. Como misionero y escritor predicó y publicó libros y folletos. Como activista declarado se unió a otros católicos para organizar reformas sociales y obras de asistencia proclamando siempre los valores evangélicos de Cristo. En pocas palabras, él supo construir donde los comunistas habían aplastado y destruido. Y al fin pagó el último precio. Dos juicios y dos condenas de cárcel fueron la causa directa del deterioro de su salud y de su muerte. Creemos que Pirożyński será siempre un modelo de cómo hay que entregar la propia vida por los que carecen de toda ayuda humana y espiritual, sin tener en cuenta el precio.