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Organization and system of the Częstochowa diocese in the years 1964-1984

Summary

The Second Vatican Council defined each diocese as a community of bishops, priests and the faithful making up a particular church in which one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is truly present and active. At the same time, this interpretation points to a twofold sense in the functioning of particular churches. Namely, apart from the supernatural (spiritual) factor, a diocese also consists of a material factor that is present in its administrative and legal structure. Thus, the essence of the development of a particular church is the pursuit of full religious and organizational maturity. As the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland shows, relatively young particular churches reach the aforementioned maturity as a result of a long organizational and systemic process marked by the influence of historical, political, cultural and social factors.

The aim of the study is to present the level of advancement of the organizational and political process taking place in the Częstochowa diocese in the years 1964-1984. The evaluation of this process will proceed around factors which, in the opinion of the author of this work, had a key impact on the above-mentioned part of the history of the Częstochowa particular Church. The first such factor is the recognition of the degree of acceptance by the Częstochowa Church of the legacy of Vatican II present in the conciliar and post-conciliar church legislation and the analysis of the pastoral activities of Bishop Stefan Bareła, an ordinary of the Częstochowa diocese, resulting from his rights enshrined in the provisions of particular and universal law. The second factor determining the formation of the Częstochowa diocese under the rule of Bishop Stefan Bareła was the social and political reality in which the Częstochowa Church functioned at that time. It was understandably marked by the existence of the communist system, hostile by nature to religious associations, in particular Catholicism. Undoubtedly, this situation left its mark on the life of religious communities in the segment of meeting their needs with the legal system of the Polish state. Especially in the case of matters related to the public celebration of worship, as well as matters of broadly understood sacred architecture and the organization of local structures in particular churches. The last factor influencing the organizational and systemic matters of the Częstochowa diocese was the way in which the bishop of Częstochowa exercised the pastoral authority and his individual approach to shaping the system of the Częstochowa Church.

The author of this dissertation assumes that the history of particular churches should be described primarily in the context of the activities of the bishops who headed them in a given period. Hence, the chronological framework of the work is identical to the period of pastoral service in the Częstochowa diocese of its third ordinary, Bishop Stefan Bareła. They cover the period from 1964, from the canonical assumption of rule in the Częstochowa diocese by Bishop Stefan Bareła, and extend to the nearly 20-year stage in the history of the Częstochowa particular Church, which was marked by many events of high religious and social significance, such as: the celebration of the millennium the baptism of Poland, two visits of the Holy Father

John Paul II in Częstochowa, the Visitation of the Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Częstochowa Church, many coronations of the images of the Mother of the Savior, and the instilling in the Częstochowa community of the diocesan vision of the post-conciliar church, both in the spiritual and institutional dimensions. The closing period of the dissertation is 1984, when the third shepherd of the Częstochowa Church died.

This work consists of six chapters, each of which is a synthesis of a separate problem concerning the organizational and political system of the Częstochowa Church. The proper content is preceded by an introduction containing the main research problem.

The first chapter is devoted to the past of the Częstochowa diocese as well as its characteristics and territorial diversity. Its purpose is to introduce the reader to the specifics of the history of the Częstochowa particular church. It describes the creation of the Częstochowa diocese, its formation during the Second Polish Republic and outlines the hardships of the struggle to preserve its identity during the German occupation of Polish lands. This chapter also presents the history of the Częstochowa Church in the first period of the functioning of the communist regime in Poland. The narrative ends when Bishop Stefan Bareła takes over the rule in the Częstochowa diocese. The chapter ends with a description of the territorial diversity of the Częstochowa particular Church shown through the prism of the regions of the Częstochowa diocese.

The content of the second chapter of the dissertation was focused on the hierarchical schematicism of the Częstochowa particular church. The sources of episcopal authority specified in the Codes of Canon Law of 1917 and 1983 and the decisions of the Second Vatican Council were discussed. Moreover, a biographical outline of Bishop Stefan Bareła was presented through the prism of his path to episcopal dignity, as well as his later pastoral activities, including activities related to the organization of the Second Synod of the Częstochowa diocese. The activity of the auxiliary bishops of the Częstochowa diocese, who supported the actions of the third Częstochowa bishop with their ministry, will also be discussed. Therefore, their legal position will be presented, as well as the scope of tasks assigned to them in the particular church in Częstochowa. Moreover, the issue of auxiliary bishops will be supplemented with biographies of clergymen who held this office during the pontificate of Bishop Stefan Bareła. This chapter will also consider the legal and canonical position of the clergy creating the personal structure of the Częstochowa diocese during the service of the third Częstochowa bishop. Therefore, selected issues concerning the ministry of the deanery in the Częstochowa particular Church, as well as the ministry of parish priests and vicars will be characterized.

The third chapter of this work is a description of the diocesan curia as the main administrative base of the Częstochowa diocese during the pontificate of Bishop Stefan Bareła. The concept of the diocesan curia will be discussed extensively, as well as the organizational structure of this office based on the chancellery, individual departments and, above all, the work of vicars general. Organizational and systemic issues relating to the functioning of the Bishop's Court were also presented, thus introducing the scope of duties of the clergy creating the diocesan tribunal during the years of Bishop Stefan Bareła's pastoral ministry.

The interpretation of the Second Vatican Council raised the co-responsibility of the bishop, the presbytery and the faithful for the fate of the particular churches in which they live. Hence, the fourth chapter of this work is devoted to the functioning of collegial bodies within the structures of the Częstochowa diocese, the task of which was to help the Częstochowa bishop in many elements of exercising power over the Częstochowa Church. The functioning of these organs was presented on the basis of the provisions of the Church law concerning the establishment and operation of this type of colleges. This chapter refers to the activities of the bodies responsible for advising the Częstochowa bishop in specific areas of the Częstochowa diocese. These were: matters of priestly life, material-economic and liturgical matters.

The fifth chapter is devoted to changes in the functioning of scientific, educational and social institutions of the Częstochowa diocese. It discussed: the Higher Theological Seminary of the Częstochowa diocese in Kraków, the Lower Theological Seminary of the Częstochowa diocese, and the institutions that were formed during the pontificate of Bishop Stefan Bareła, alluding to the activities of universities. The chapter presents the intellectual formation of the clergy and the faithful as one of the main pillars of the Częstochowa Church. Moreover, the significance of the Catholic Weekly "Niedziela" - a religious and social periodical that is an important tool of evangelization in the Polish Catholic Church was discussed.

The sixth chapter concerns the territorial development of the Częstochowa diocese. It discusses the transformations that took place in the shape of the diocesan dean and supra-decanal network, and then the problems of the development of the parish network and religious architecture in the territory of the Częstochowa Church. At this point, we will show the mutual dependencies of diocesan territorial structures, as well as the influence on their development of the factors influencing the changes taking place in the Częstochowa diocese.

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