

**Wacław Makoś MIC**

**The Contribution of the Blessed  
Father Stanisław Papczyński  
to the Salvation of Poland  
and Christian Europe**



**The Blessed Father  
Stanisław Papczyński**



**King  
Jan III Sobieski**



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TO THE SALVATION OF POLAND  
AND CHRISTIAN EUROPE**

**FATHER WAŁAW MAKOŚ MIC<sup>1</sup>**

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**PUSZCZA MARIAŃSKA 2012**

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1 Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

## Editor's Note

The Mayor of the Municipality of Puszcza Mariańska, alongside the Municipal Council, wish to express their gratitude to the Senators of the Republic of Poland for the passing of the resolution in which they pay tribute to Father Stanisław Papczyński — a prominent priest, a theologian, the co-founder of the Polish school of spirituality, a patriot, a preacher and the founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, the first Polish male religious order (see: Monitor Polski, 2011, No. 28, item 305).

This illustrious man of God, who lived in the 17th century, not only founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers but, through his presence and his activities in the local area, he also laid the foundations for our town, which at first took its name from the nearby forested area and was thus known as Puszcza Korabiewska (Korabiew Forest), only to be later renamed Puszcza Mariańska (Marian Forest) in reference to the order founded by Father Papczyński. Then, in the mid 19th century, it became the seat of the municipality.

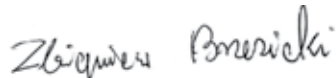
Sympathising with the intentions of the Senators to popularise the person and the work of the Blessed Father, we hereby join in their efforts to implement these intendments. The publication of this book is meant as a visible expression of this engagement.

At the same time, we wish to express our gratitude to Fr. Waław Makoś, a son in spirit of the Bl. Father Stanisław, for preparing this publication and for depicting the Bl. Father Papczyński's contribution to the saving of Poland and Christian Europe in the 17th century.

Wójt (Mayor)  
Michał Staniak



Chairman  
Zbigniew Brzezicki



## **1. The Senate Honoured Father Stanisław Papczyński**

On 31 March 2011, the Polish Senate passed a resolution to honour the Blessed Father Stanisław Papczyński, thus reminding everyone of the magnitude of his achievements. Most assuredly, the Senator of Ziemia Sądecka, who motioned for such a resolution to be passed, in justifying the need to honour Father Stanisław, did so with real conviction and enthusiasm. Indeed, the very listing of the numerous reasons for such a motion, and, notably, bringing forth the attitude of the Blessed Father toward God and Fatherland, which was full of wisdom and patriotism, shows that the Senator had, undoubtedly, gone to great trouble to familiarise himself with the life and work of Father Stanisław prior to raising his motion. Hence, we can safely assume that he knew what eternal and imperishable values were at stake here. He also understood that the values preached and practised by Fr. Stanisław in his time (who thus propagated them throughout the sphere of life and culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) have not lost any of their relevance and poignancy over the centuries, not even to a smallest extent, and that they continue to be an urgently needed commodity for all of us.

What seems to prove the strength of the purported arguments is the appreciation these values received from the senators, as well as the nearly unanimous adoption of the proposed resolution. This might serve as a proof, but not necessarily so. Some senators, well-versed in the matter, probably voted in favour of the resolution in the same spirit and understanding as the resolution mover: with deep conviction and enthusiasm. However, it is rather unimaginable that all of the senators, representing different political and ideological orientations, had the opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the life and achievements of Bl. Father Stanisław in such a short time so as to vote with such eagerness and confidence. Since, however, regardless of their level of knowledge and personal commitment, they took into account the good of Poland in accepting the proposed

resolution and offered their votes in favour thereof, we owe them our appreciation and gratitude. Undoubtedly, it is now time to facilitate a better understanding of the figure of Father Stanisław, and more fully reveal his importance to everyone.

As is apparent from the wording of the resolution, the senators did not merely intend to recall and honour one of many historically important figures, but also to *bring the person of Father Stanisław closer to the present generation of Poles, particularly to the nation's young people*, as a paragon of virtue, love of the country and concern for her welfare. This is why they call *on educational circles to popularise the figure and achievements of the Blessed Father*. For this reason, it appears to be even more necessary and urgent to show — in a simple and convincing way — at least those prominent values with which he embellished both the history and culture of Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as well as the whole of Christian Europe. The wording of the resolution, attached to this publication, is a genuine copy obtained from the Senate of the Republic of Poland upon the request of the representative of the Puszcza Mariańska Municipality; it makes mention of these values right at the outset of the document, stressing the need to *pay tribute to an illustrious priest, a theologian, the co-founder of the Polish school of spirituality, a patriot, a preacher and the founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers*.

## **2. The Road Leading to Knowing the Illustrious Figure**

When tackling the subject of the life of Bl. Father Stanisław, his activities and relationships with other people, one definitely needs to take into account the warnings aired by Prof. Eugeniusz Jarra. This expert in history and social sciences, who spent some time conducting research into the life and works of the founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, placed the following caveats at the end of his translation of *The Mystical Church of God (Mistyczny Kościół Boży)*:

*Let us hope, however, that future experts in this field shall bear in mind the cardinal rule of all scientific work, namely the fact that it requires thorough preparation, meaning prior acquisition of an adequate level of knowledge on the issue in question and adopting the most appropriate research methods, which entail their own particular ways and means in each branch of science. We should remember that, especially when entering the realm of history, since many writers, unaware of these matters, view it as a popular domain open and accessible to all those who wish to dabble in it. This results in history producing incomparably more amateur dilettantes than other academic fields, such as law or philosophy, not to mention mathematics or natural science.*

*The figure of Fr. Papczyński has fallen victim to this misunderstanding over the course of many centuries. Those writers who devoted their pens to his story have usually failed to gain accurate knowledge of his literary legacy, as this was inaccessible to them because of both the Latin robe and the scientific content in certain fields. Despite this, they zealously indulged in the presentation of his life story — but were unable to get to know the man, if only for the simple reason that they were not familiar with his work. Ignorant of history-specific research methods, they were not prepared to practice one of the more specific branches of history — biography writing. For this reason, instead of producing critical studies, these writers ended up spawning literary fantasies. This is why the essential merits of Father Stanisław have been long absent from the history of Polish culture.*

The above-cited statement by the Oxford professor can be summed up briefly in the following fashion: you first have to carefully study the figure about whom you wish to write or speak, and then adopt an appropriate method. Thus, in order to be able to shed full light onto the person and the values preached and implemented into reality by the Blessed Fr. Papczyński, and in order to show the simple and compelling truth about him, we need to investigate them first in the light of the sources at our direct disposal,

by way of applying an appropriate research method. We also have to pay attention to the character himself, his vocation, natural talents and supernatural gifts, to his life, activities and writings, because a politician, an academic and a social or cultural activist will present themselves differently than a charismatic, an order founder and a mystic endowed by God with special gifts and led by Him.

In our case, not taking into account this duality of perspectives could result in omitting or belittling the importance of significant religious phenomena, ascetic principles of spirituality, mystical gifts and supernatural facts, or following a secular mentality, would bring about excessive focus on specific details — objective, albeit irrelevant and bureaucratic. When ignoring the deeper reality and starting our discourse from a point of view of a seeming value, the details themselves (a large number of dates, places and other circumstances) are of little interest to the reader, as they fail to reflect the most important aspect. Hagiography entails, most of all, the depiction of the spiritual and the supernatural, which is the most crucial element in the life of a saint. When we discuss the ‘life’ of a holy man without understanding Christian spirituality, preferentially applying the criteria that are alien to it and contaminated with some preconceived attitude or ideology (e.g. materialistic, naturalistic, extreme rationalist or atheist), we often get some serious distortions as a result. And who would need such a false picture of the character?

An example of such a treatment is provided by the ‘demythologised’ biography of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, which was promoted during the times imbued with the influence of materialistic communism, and which described the saint as almost an unfortunate victim, bearing many a cross and affected with torments due to the shortcomings and demands of her superiors. In this case, it was rather easy to come to the conclusion that such an account of her life had no objective value because the protagonist herself accepted and experienced her



reality differently than the writer was able to imagine and describe it. The fact that the author's manipulations missed the truth and misled the readers was sufficiently brought to light by the autobiography written by St. Therese of the Child Jesus herself and entitled *The Story of a Soul*. Therefore, demands such as Jarra's were also voiced more recently and very categorically by Cardinal J. M. Lustiger:

*Judging a society of an earlier period from the point of view that we deem to be true constitutes an anachronism. A historical study makes an effort to see, or rather to imagine, a time that has passed. But there is no hope of successfully recreating the past if we fail to show respect for others and fail to recognise their identity [...]. I demand a minimum amount of research, and primarily some intellectual honesty and accuracy of the method adopted, so as to make sure that history is not being substituted with plain ideological interpretation<sup>2</sup>.*

In this study, we shall, first of all, take into account one of the most important issues at the time which involved Father Stanisław Papczyński to a great extent, namely, the averting of the catastrophic threat to Poland and the whole of Christian Europe that was brought on in the 17th century by the highly aggressive Islam of those times.

Hence, we will first try to assess the reality of the threat posed by the Ottoman Turkey, and then we shall move on to tracing the relationship that existed between Father Stanisław and King Jan III Sobieski. This will allow us to see how it is not only the King and other protagonists, but also Father Stanisław himself that should be credited with the salvation.

### **3. Europe in the 17th Century and the Prospects**

The legacy of the 16th century could not have been a source of optimism for anyone in Europe. The same destructive causes would continue to exert a negative impact

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<sup>2</sup> J. M. Lustiger, *Wybór Boga, z kard. rozmawiają J. L. Missika i D. Wolton [Choosing God, Chosen by God. Conversations with the Cardinal Conducted by J. L. Missika and D. Wolton]*, Krakow 1992, pp. 104-105; cf. a similar statement by Pope John Paul II, *Znak sprzeciwu [A Sign of Protest]* Krakow 1995, pp. 126-127.

on life in the 17th century. For the Commonwealth, that was the period referred to in history and literature as the 'Deluge', when too many things were dealt with by means of 'fire and sword'<sup>3</sup>. In other European countries — after the Reformation and Counter-Reformation — conflicts and bloodthirsty, horrifying wars kept breaking out against the complex religious and political background. They were often of a fratricidal nature and they were skillfully fuelled by the neighbouring powers for their own selfish political gain. An example thereof was the Thirty Years War, which almost completely depopulated large areas of what is now the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. European governments, which usually recruited their members from aristocratic families, were guided by a far-reaching religious and dynastic self-interest and were increasingly seeking absolutisms.

Therefore, emerging family and political systems, usually escorted by pride and arrogance, were weakening the entire Christian Europe, including Poland. The policy of the Vasas, vying for the thrones of Sweden and Moscow, proved to be particularly disastrous!<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to her best interest, the France of the reign of Louis XIV waged wars with the Catholic empire, Germany and the church state, entering into alliances with Turkey, which professed radical Islam, and with aggressive Protestant Sweden. At the same time, France did not cease to exert a strong influence on Poland's policy. Emperor Leopold I, driven with a similar desire, sought to establish and maintain good relations with Moscow and also tried to continue to have no lesser an impact on the policy of the Commonwealth. As a result, the country's unity was being constantly threatened and weakened, with Poland's ruling society being divided into warring factions, which nearly led to a civil war (the climax being the fratricidal struggle and the defeat of the king's army

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<sup>3</sup> A reference to *With Fire and Sword* (Polish: *Ogniem i mieczem*), a historical novel by the Polish author and Nobel Prize Laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz, published in 1884, set in the 17th century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Chmielnicki Uprising. Footnote added by the Translator.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Jasienica, *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów, [The Commonwealth of Both Nations] vol. 2, Calamitatis Regnum*, PIW, pp. 253-255.

at Małty, in 1666, by Jerzy Lubomirski). Moscow, which had been so often militant with the Commonwealth, also went to all possible measures to debilitate it, taking advantage of the similar-minded initiatives of the Tatars and Cossacks. She influenced its domestic policies (*liberum veto*) as well, with her own predatory goals in mind. If fighting was suspended for short periods of time and with great toil, and if truces or some other peace agreements were signed, then the battling would be resumed soon after that with much greater an ease.

The significant political and military weakening was accompanied by a decline in morals, disregard for the commandments, bribery, treason, the specific 'consumerism' of those times, selfishness, lack of love and social justice, as well as straying away from God and the true Christian faith. Naturally, this brought more and more misery for Europe, and threatened it with the otherwise announced and already looming punishment of God. According to W. Łaszewski, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) — a contemporary to Fr. Papczyński — who resided in France at that time, was believed to have received a message from Christ relating to this very matter. He writes:

*Allegedly, the notes of this 17th-century nun mentioned the conquest of Europe by Muslims, who would rule it for five hundred years, as foretold by the Saviour. When the affrighted visionary did everything in her power to compensate for the sins of Europe, Christ is said to have revealed Himself to her again over a year later and declared that God had changed his intention and that there would be no cruel punishment as previously planned. He apparently said he had been moved by her atoning prayer and painful acts of penance undertaken in the intention of reparation and withdrew His consent to the Islamisation of Europe. He also added something else: an additional argument in favour of this decision was the fact that «a king came to be who, having vanquished the Turks, shall not credit the victory to himself but to Me and my Mother instead<sup>5</sup>».*

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5 W. Łaszewski, *Proroctwo o Polsce*, [The Prophecy About Poland] Szczecinek 2010, pp. 49-51.

Most probably, King Jan III Sobieski was somehow aware of the foretold punishment, as indicated by his remark, made shortly after the Viennese victory, when he was impatiently awaiting the urgent decisions of the Emperor and his ministers, which were needed for making good use of the resulting advantage over the enemy. He wrote the following words to his wife on 17 September 1683: *They keep deferring us from day to day, while they are all sitting in Vienna, supposedly indulging in those gustoes and pleasures for which the Lord wished to punish them justly.* It was also a good time for I. Thököly, the leader of the Hungarian uprising, to reconcile with the Emperor, because — according to Sobieski — *he would now do anything for me and for my word. I let the emperor know that. But His Highness cares not, I can see now that it is all futile; again, they have reverted to their former pride and apparently they do not believe that the Lord is above us.*

The above-quoted author speaks of the prophecy in rather general terms, without specifying its source, so confirming it poses a certain difficulty. But even if there had been no Divine warning, the realistically minded politicians of that time, who knew the weaknesses of the Christian states of Europe and were aware of the many victories of the Turks and their growing military power, had to take into account the possibility of Europe being defeated. That is why Emperor Leopold I, feeling too weak himself to face the Turkish onslaught, called for King Jan Sobieski's help. Politicians did not specify how long the control of Muslims over Christians could have lasted, but history had already provided some instructive examples and scenarios: it was common knowledge what the plight of the people of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula was like following the Muslim conquest of these lands. It was also clearly seen how the Turks treated the inhabitants of the newly conquered lands in the Mediterranean region and the Balkans. Hence, the defeat they suffered in the south-east of the Commonwealth reassured no one and did not inspire much optimism. Turkey's military capabilities grew, and its

great preparations for war, undertaken on an unprecedented scale, made it impossible to rule out the possibility that the plight of the above-mentioned countries could soon be shared by Europe too.

However, let us not forget the revelation of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque; for it turns out that Muslims claimed to have received an analogous message from Allah<sup>6</sup>. Namely, following the second great victory of the allied forces at Parkany, King Jan III Sobieski writes in a letter to his wife, Marysieńka, about a dialogue between the Starosta (governor) of Chełm, and two captured Turkish generals (*pashas* or *bashaws*), which indicated that Muslims had also been granted a revelation on the same subject from Allah. On 30 October 1683, he recounts the details in a communication addressed to her:

*Those pashas, who are here in captivity, when discoursing with the Starosta of Chełm, kept asking him: «What's next? We were under the understanding that you were going to return after the Vienna victory». The Starosta responded that we were going to continue with the war and claim back these countries that they had torn away from the Christian grip. To which they said: «And so we see that the Lord has sent this king after our nation. But what do you have written in your books? What is this fallacy that is occurring right now? For we were supposed to be the first ones to acquire all Christendom and rule over it, and then you. So what is your hurry? Do you long so much for the Judgment Day? For our scriptures say that if, by a streak of luck, Christendom manages to rule over the Turks, then the Judgment Day is nigh. And why would you wish for the Judgment Day to come so fast?» The Starosta responded with a smile on his face: «we fear not the Judgment Day and we shall not cease fighting you».*

This goes to show that the pashas knew their scriptures, but, unfortunately for them, they had no means or will to

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<sup>6</sup> Z. Wójcik wrote about Jan Sobieski that when he was in Istanbul in 1654, as a member of Bieganowski's delegation, two Turks were talking of him as the future king and discussing his role, citing a prophecy of a Turkish clairvoyant. Since this particular event was originally described by Rubinkowski, reputed to have been a 'liar', perhaps Wójcik all too hastily qualified this incident as legendary (cf. Z. Wójcik, *Jan Sobieski*, Warsaw, 1983, p. 51).

confront them with the contents of the more recent revelation received by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. In the context of such an understanding of their mission by the Turks, we can better comprehend the attitude of invincible arrogance and hubris in Sultan Mehmed IV, who, after his initial successes (the capture of Kamieniec Podolski), on 17 August 1672, received homage and an oath of allegiance from Peter Doroshenko in Chocim. Simultaneously, as *the shadow of God on Earth* and believing himself to be empowered to decide on the *freedom and peace of the inhabitants of the world by virtue of his imperial might*, he 'graciously' submitted into the hands of the envoy of the humiliated Commonwealth a document that began as follows:

*I, who am the servant of two holy cities, the destroyer of systems of sacrilegious creeds and heresies, the monarch of all monarchs, the honour of monarchy and the shadow of God on earth — I who rule the states and provinces of Greece, Arabia and Persia, and am the most illustrious prince of the crown of Chaldea, Turkey and Dylim, the Emperor and distributor of royal crowns in the south, whose state extends between the two tropics, I who am a king and a crowned head, I who move troops, the victor of Mecca, Medina and the Holy Jerusalem, Constantinople, the Mediterranean Sea, the Archipelago and the Black Sea, Romelia, Natolia, Greece, Karamania, Erzurum, Diyarbekir and the lands of the Kurds, Mesopotamia, Georgia, Armenia, Cilicia, Cairo, Egypt's capital, Damascus, Said, Beirut, Tripoli, Syria, Alep and of all of Arabia, Baghdad, Bashor, Africa and the western isles, the island of Candia, the province of Tartaria and the vast fields and deserts of the Perekop Tatars and the provinces of Wallachia, Muntenia and Transylvania and all counties belonging to it, and, finally, of the so many other countries and states we have acquired by the right of arms and with swords in our hands; I who am the king, and the father of victory and looting<sup>7</sup>...*

<sup>7</sup> Jasienica, op. cit., p. 268. He notes the following: *the above list quotes a mere half of the titles and exaltations of the Padishah. The document with such a 'beautiful' foreword was found by W. Konopczyński in the Library of the Krasiński Family.*

This long enumeration may be associated with the temptation once presented to Christ: *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him: all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me* (Matthew 4:8-9, KJV).

Apparently, Mehmed IV accepted this proposal rejected by Christ and tried to implement it. Furnished with his imperial majesty, armed with the most advanced and most effective weapons of his time, he was convinced that the goal was almost within his grasp. What he laid out in writing, he tried to put into practice. He appointed Kara Mustafa, in whom he placed a lot of trust, to be the new vizier because he was endowed — to a great degree — with such qualities that seemed to guarantee success. The pride, arrogance and cunning greed of the new Grand Vizier ('serdar') were sufficiently commented on by Turkish chroniclers<sup>8</sup>.

Despite the terrible rout of Chocim (1673), the failure suffered by Szejtan at Żórawno (1676) and further defeats inflicted by Sobieski on the Turkish army and its allies, the Sultan did not know how to change the style of treating his opponents.

Let us see how the Turks received the Polish delegation sent to carry out the negotiations in Istanbul, under the leadership of Jan Gniński. Paweł Jasienica writes:

*Satan did not conquer the fiercely defended Żórawno camp, the great bombs and grenades «weighing fourscore and even more pounds each» were of no use to him. When the weather finally changed and the rains came, the pasha softened up, he no longer demanded the meeting of the Buczacz Treaty conditions, and signed a truce on 17 October 1676. A major step forward has been made, but the agreement had to be confirmed in Istanbul. For the time being — «they return all the captives while the Tatars are not supposed to make any incursions».*

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Z. Abrahamowicz, *Kara Mustafa pod Wiedniem [Kara Mustafa at Vienna]*, Krakow 1973.

August 1677 saw the arrival of Vice-Chancellor of the Crown, Jan Gniński, Trach coat of arms, to the Bosphorus. He was one of the closest collaborators of Jan III and a confidant of all his secrets. He received his ambassadorial mandate from the Sejm, while the money and other material resources came from the private coffers of the King. He was in need of quite an abundance of them, because from the very first moment of crossing the border he had to bestow all sorts of gifts onto Turkish officials, as well as to shine with true splendour and generosity in the capital.

Amber, which attracted merchants from the south to our lands as early as a thousand years ago, must have still been valued over there, since among the many gifts for the Sultan, there were «two caskets filled with amber and a grand amber looking glass». The technical skills of the Polish jewellers were exemplified by a «fountain of silver, which had to be carried by four men, and which for half an hour spurted out six streams of scented vodka, carried by the wind up to seven cubits high in the air».

The Turks gave the legates quarters which were uncomfortable, foul-smelling and so tight that «there was no room to walk in between the sleeping». The windows of those «hans» were sealed tight, even the ones that overlooked the sea. One of the rooms had previously served as a hospital or an asylum for those suffering from infectious diseases. The result was that the entourage of four hundred and fifty people suffered a fatal loss of one hundred and twenty-five, on top of thirty-eight ransomed captives. The Ambassador himself survived, but he was taken very ill [...].

The new vizier, Kara Mustafa, hated the Commonwealth. One could feel it with every step he took. It was only in May 1678 that Jan Gniński headed back carrying the peace document [...].

Gniński barely managed to obtain a confirmation of the Treaty of Żórawno, and only with great difficulty. Kamieniec Podolski, together with its administrative district, remained



*under Turkish rule, and with regard to Ukraine, the legate negotiated the mere return of Bila Tserkva and Pavoloch. Mehmed IV ceased to demand the payment of a tribute, which he attested in the following terms:*

*With regard to the requests posed by the Most Illustrious and the Highest Crimean Khan, we hereby grant our grace to the Poles, sparing them the tribute of 22,000 red zlotys, which they pledged to pay annually to our Emperor's stirrups under the name of an offering [...].*

*The fifth article of the Treaty, which Jan Gniński brought from Istanbul, read as follows: «The churches in the fortresses, not turned into mosques or oratories as of yet, and left for them instead, so that they would be able to celebrate their religious rites according to their false and superstitious creed, as is practiced in other borderland provinces, shall be free from all ridicule and left in tranquility».*

At this point, however, it ought to be stated, in the name of justice, that the attitude of the European Christian rulers of those times, who were veering towards absolutism, in many respects hardly differed from that of the Turkish hegemony. They were also faced with the same tempting prospects. Selfishness, pride, arrogance and greed, harboured in the heart, result in a lack of love and lead to death wherever they settle. They not only weakened European countries and posed a threat to them, but the desire for unlimited power allied with greed, demanding an ever-increasing accumulation of material goods and territorial expansion, consequently led to inflicting colossal injustice on weaker countries and peoples, trampling their rights and committing heinous crimes. Therefore, instead of receiving due gratitude and respect for helping its neighbours when they were the ones most threatened with an imminent disaster, all the Commonwealth got from them not long after was a gruesome and long captivity.

## 4. Biographies and Mutual Relations of the Two Men

### A. Personal Details and the Functions Performed

Father Stanisław was born in Podegrodzie, near Stary Sącz, on 18 May 1631, and ended his life as the General of the Marian Order in Góra Kalwaria, on 17 September 1701. King Jan III Sobieski, whose great grandfather was Stanisław Żółkiewski, was born a little earlier than Fr. Papczyński, that is on 17 August 1629, in Olesko, near Lvov (now Lviv), but he died before him, too — on 17 June 1696, in Wilanów.

We may infer that Papczyński, as a student at the Piarist and Jesuit colleges, first in Jarosław and then in Lvov and Rawa Mazowiecka, had not heard anything about Jan Sobieski, who passed his childhood years in Żółkiew, then completed his primary and secondary education in Krakow and travelled abroad to further his academic knowledge. But when Father Stanisław joined the Piarist Order and began his stellar career as a teacher of rhetoric, whose lectures were attended by the sons of the nobility, senators and other dignitaries (such as the sons of Jerzy Lubomirski: Hieronim Augustyn and Aleksander Michał, the Grzybowski: Franciszek, who later became the Ensign of the Land of Czersk, and Stanisław — the Castellan of Inowrocław)<sup>9</sup>, then Jan Sobieski, who had already returned to the country and was pursuing his military career, must have heard of Papczyński and must have taken a closer interest in him. Then, for a time, he was under the hand of Jerzy Lubomirski and waged battles under his command<sup>10</sup>.

What also served to boost the fame of Fr. Stanisław was his publication of a rhetoric textbook, entitled *Prodromus Reginae artium (Prodromus of the Queen of Arts)*, which was brimful of patriotic spirit. It enjoyed great popularity not only among his students, but also among the nobility, the envoys and the senators, so much so that within a

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Prodromus, Pisma zebrane [Prodromus, Collected Works]*, Warsaw 2007, pp. 569-578; *Positio Pap.*, pp. 531-534.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jasienica, op. cit., p. 218.

short period of time it had to be published as many as four times<sup>11</sup>. For those with deeper spiritual needs — over the course of the next decade — Fr. Stanisław wrote and published two series of reflections on the Passion of Christ: *Christ Suffering (Christus Patiens)* and *The Crucified Orator (Orator Crucifixus)*, and a manual of spirituality entitled *The Mystical Temple of God (Templum Dei mysticum)*; he also prepared *A Look Inside the Heart (Inspectio Cordis)* and he edited and printed monastic constitutions for his Marian brothers, which he entitled *The Rule of Life (Norma vitae)*.

Further opportunities to become better acquainted with Papczyński's work presented themselves to Jan Sobieski when Fr. Stanisław became a priest (1661), and began to gain fame as an eminent preacher, delivering sermons also in the churches of Warsaw. Another reason was that he enjoyed a reputation of being a very good confessor and spiritual father, whose ministry and counsel was well sought after by everyone: the ordinary folk, nobles, magnates and bishops.

Numerous witnesses claimed that his confessional was visited by Sobieski — the future king of the Commonwealth, as well as by the Apostolic Nuncio Antonio Pignatelli — later Pope Innocent XII<sup>12</sup>. Although there is no evidence of an official royal appointment, they sought his help as that of an outstanding confessor and spiritual father<sup>13</sup>. He gained an even greater public recognition when he founded an apostolic order for the purpose of spreading the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM and to bring help to the souls suffering in Purgatory.

Fr. K. Wyszyński mentions all this while also stating the reason behind such a towering popularity of Father Stanisław. In his biography of the Blessed Father, he reports a certain incident from his childhood when at some point

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11 The first edition of *Prodromus* was published in 1663, the second in 1664, the third in 1665 and the fourth towards the end of 1669.

12 Cf. APS 10, a. 7: Zapalkowicz, f. 58r; Hönnig, f. 109r-v; Fiałkowski, f. 132r-v; Kisieliński, f. 173v; Magnuszewski, f. 258r-v; Taudt, f. 316r-v;

13 and these idem a. 43; further: Leporini, *Vita Fundatoris* § 26 and 66; Wyszyński, VW § 54-57; Teixeira, § 115-121.

the academically-challenged boy, by the power of insistent prayers and supplications, was granted by God — with the intercession of Mary — the gift of illustrious intelligence together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he would be more than willing to share with others later on:

*He was a man of counsel, to whom people of different status, origin and gender flocked as if to an oracle, and walked away happy and comforted, expressing their gratitude to him. His advice was followed by King Jan III Sobieski, Apostolic Nuncio Pignatelli, later to be elected Pope Innocent XII, and bishops: Trzebicki of Krakow; Gębicki of Płock, Wierzbowski of Poznań and Warsaw, as well as many other prelates and representatives of the senatorial order of both genders. They followed the instructions given by him, even in difficult cases, and particularly in highly complicated ones. And they were very eager to put his advice into practice. Listening to him, as if God Himself were speaking through him, they always achieved the desired effect<sup>14</sup>.*

Father L. Zapałkowicz, the prosecutor appointed to the case of the beatification of Father Stanisław, presented a similar depiction of him from the time of his stay in Puszcza Korabiewska. After conducting interviews with various witnesses, he summarises their opinion of him in the following manner:

*It is true to say that the fame of the holiness of this Servant of God, which was spreading widely, drew to the hermitage of this holy man, as if to an oracle, many people troubled with different afflictions; so much so that this retreat, initially lost deep in the forest, became regarded as a sanctuary, since many of those who came here walked away comforted, as well as peaceful and joyful at conscience; he supported some of them with his prayers, while helping others with salutary advice; many of the sick who came to see him recovered their health owing to his prayers; as a result of that, he was pronounced a saint by all<sup>15</sup>.*

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14 He even released the possessed of evil spirits; cf. M. Leporini, VF § 79; also VW § 69. VW, § 57.  
15 L. Zapałkowicz, APS 10, f. 61r., a. 16.

We learn from Father G. Caputi what impression Fr. Stanisław made on the Deputies when he stood before them at the Sejm of the Commonwealth. Caputi was a member of the General Council of Piarists in Rome, who asked him to help in the ongoing beatification process of Father Joseph Calasanz, the founder of the order. Caputi describes Fr. Stanisław as:

*A very enterprising and knowledgeable man [...], he has won over nearly all the mighty and powerful, representatives of both the ecclesiastical and secular circles. He was able to convince them to do what he wished to attain, because they saw him as a humble and very pious man [...], so they promised him their votes in favour of sending petitions to the Pope asking for the beatification of Father Joseph, the Founder of the Piarists<sup>16</sup>. He would receive requests from the General Sejm of the Kingdom addressed to Pope Alexander VII asking for the inscription of Our Venerable Father Founder into the number of the blessed<sup>17</sup>.*

## **B. Mutual Relations of Fr. Stanisław and Sobieski**

We do not know exactly when Sobieski's closer contacts with Papczyński began, but it most probably took place in the mid-1660s. In his biography, Father K. Wyszynski mentions (albeit without stating the date) the presence of Father Stanisław in Żółkiew, which he infers from the statements made by witnesses who knew the Founder of the Marian Order personally and were familiar with his life:

*I have heard from our elders, and specifically from the late Brother Antoni Ciński, who lived piously in our Order and who, happily knowing the day of his death, departed this world within my lifetime, told me about the time when our Venerable Father Stanisław was staying in Żółkiew, in Ruthenia, where devils were said to have occupied the castle, so that no one could gain access to it; Ciński said that people*

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16 *Notizie Historiche*, see *Positio Pap.*, p. 84.

17 See *idem*, p. 84, note 6 and *Not. Hist.*, P. V., § 2, f. 16.

*reported hearing strange noises coming henceforth, as if crackling sounds of weapons or battling troops, and that the Venerable Father had entered this castle holding a Cross and expelled this satanic army, thus setting the castle free*<sup>18</sup>.

Based on the testimonies of the same witnesses, Father Kazimierz also mentions (without providing the date) that Fr. Stanisław accompanied Sobieski during the expedition and struggles in the Ukraine:

*I have also heard from this very Brother Antoni, unless I'm mistaken, and from other of our superiors, that the Venerable Father Stanisław, when staying in the Ukraine with King Jan and the Polish army, where there are many graves of soldiers slain in various wars, would leave the camp to walk among these graves and pray for the departed. And he was said to have been implored by the souls to save them and give them the means of salvation, as they supposedly begged him in these words: «there is a far greater Commonwealth of us in Purgatory than down here on earth; we are suffering great and unbearable torments, so Father please do have mercy on us and find a way to help us». And hence, they founded this Order, together with King Jan, to offer support to these souls, in which undertaking Wierzbowski, the Bishop of Poznań, provided them with great assistance, and so did many other benefactors afterwards, and the whole of the Commonwealth, seeing that the Order — bearing the name of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin — is direly needed for the redemption of so many souls, took it under its eternal patronage and that of the kings, granting a part of the royal land for the erecting of the said Order*<sup>19</sup>.

However, since we do not have any accurate data at our disposal, we shall leave the above statements without extensive commentary. We have decided to share them,

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18 Z. Wójcik says that when Jan Sobieski and his brother were visiting the site of the battle of Lützen against the Swedes, where King Gustav Adolf met his end, they apparently noted the existence of some ghosts and apparitions – as also attested by Gawarecki in his journal – such as are known to haunt other places (p. 40).

19 Wszyński, *Dziennik czynności, Listy [The Journal of Activities, Letters]*, in: PKW, § 8, p. 100 (110); cf. also § 14, p. 86 (96); §14, p. 92 (102); § 14, p. 36 (284); § 14, p. 41 (289); § 8, p. 49 (297); § 4, p. 51 (299); APS § 13, p. 24 (768); § 14, p. 26 (770); § 15, p. 26 (770).

nonetheless, because — as observed by Fr. Kazimierz — they constitute the testimonies of monastic brothers, who can be safely assumed to have had first-hand knowledge of the life of the Order's Founder. Therefore, it would appear justified to deduce from the above text that it was at quite an early stage in his life that he experienced the visions of deceased soldiers suffering in Purgatory, of which he most probably made no secret to Sobieski, which means, on the other hand, that he could have indeed served as a chaplain during the King's expedition. If he also performed the function of a confessor, then it is obvious that he knew Sobieski better than any of the outside observers or future historians.

Father Stanisław would officially undertake the mission to help those being tormented in Purgatory on 11 February 1676<sup>20</sup>, when he decided, together with Brother Jan of Our Blessed Mary, to say the *Officium for the Dead* for this very intention. The synopsis written by Fr. A. Fischer informs us that the manuscript by Fr. Papczyński entitled *Memoriale donorum, illuminationum etc.* contained a note that he had received, in 1675, a gift of a special prayer service devoted to helping the souls suffering in Purgatory, and that the above-mentioned year of 1676 saw him undertake this mission as one of the important tasks and specific assignments of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Another issue, that is Father Stanisław's contribution to the victory of Chocim, is quite a transparent one. Before heading off to the battleground, Sobieski asked Stanisław, the man of God he knew very well by then, for prayer support. Father Papczyński, who resided in the hermitage of Pustelnia Korabiewska back then, not only answered the appeal, but also took it upon himself to organise a prayer crusade or mission in the Masovia for the intention of the Hetman's victory. On the day of the victory at Chocim, Father Stanisław was staying in Chojnata. While performing the service and encouraging people to pray for the defeat of the

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20 A. 1675. *ingentem devotionem erga animas purgatorij concepit, finemque peculiarem Congregationis cum officio incoepit dicere 11 febr. 1676, cum Fratre Joanne a S. Maria* (Prot. Balsam., p. 200).

enemy, he had a vision, after which he publicly announced to everyone that the Polish army had defeated the Turks. The rest of the service consisted in thanksgiving only. As other sources inform us, the victory took place on 11 November 1673. Fr. Wyszynski describes it in the following terms:

*Those who, because of his merits, were accustomed to resorting to his ever-effective prayers, already referred to him as a saint while he was still alive. Also King Jan III Sobieski, who still waged many wars with the Turks, placed great trust in his prayers. Once, when the Turks crossed the Polish borders in great numbers and with impetus, threatening Christendom with ultimate destruction, the King commended himself and his army to his [Fr. Papczyński's] prayers when setting off against the enemy. Strengthened by them and by the power of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he reaped a great victory over the Turks at Chocim. He took down a countless number of them, so much so that the whole of the Ottoman Empire trembled with fear at the sound of Jan III Sobieski's name and was forced to make and swear eternal peace with Poland<sup>21</sup>.*

In continuation, Father Kazimierz describes the event in Chojnata as follows:

*On the very day of the victory over the Turks, the Ven. Servant of God, Father Stanisław of Jesus and Mary, fell into ecstasy while praying. And despite the distance of about 150 miles, he saw the entire victory clearly before his very eyes. He was then ordained to inform the people thereof without delay. Obedient to God's voice, he did so with all solemnity, in the presence of a myriad of people who had come to adore the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the church in Chojnata, where he was carrying out his mission to encourage the faithful to beg for victory in their prayers; and on the day when it took place and the truth was revealed to him by the grace of God, he called on the people to give thanks to God for such a spectacular victory over the vanquished and pulverised enemy of the holy faith<sup>22</sup>.*

<sup>21</sup> VW, § 54.

<sup>22</sup> VW, § 55.



Even before Father Wyszyński, the first biographer of Fr. Stanisław, M. Leporini OFM<sup>23</sup>, who knew him personally and collaborated with him, reported the same thing more briefly. Leporini wrote about the great effectiveness of his prayers and the announcement of Sobieski's victory at Chocim in Chojnata. However, Fr. Taudt, who was obviously less versed in the matter, in quoting Wyszyński, erroneously associates the vision of Father Stanisław in Chojnata with the battle of Vienna. J. Pietrzak, on the other hand, the later biographer of Father Papczyński, locates this event, contrary to historical sources, in the town of Jeruzal and exceeds the boundaries of the above-mentioned vision, mentioning the appearance of the Immaculate Queen of Poland before Fr. Stanisław, as well as the verbal communication of the news of the victory. If, after two hundred years, a biographer presents new circumstances without stating additional sources, then it is safe to assume that he derives them from his own imagination<sup>24</sup>.

Sobieski, as a hetman, and then as the king, used to ask Papczyński for his prayer assistance, knowing his teachings about the need and importance of prayer for a good cause, and being fully aware of the value of his prayers. Their effectiveness consisted in the fact that the fervent prayers, once offered up and heard, invited the intervention of the power of God. Fr. Stanisław published his teachings on this subject, following the Venerable Bede, in his handbook of spirituality entitled *The Mystical Temple of God*:

*Souls devoted to fervent prayer may in one moment help the whole Church more than all the preachers with their sermons, all the teachers with their lectures, or all the confessors administering the sacrament of penance. They can restore the dead to life, lead villains to moral improvement, destroy entire armies, reverse famine, avert a pestilence – they can achieve everything if they are supported in their prayers by two arms: faith and love*<sup>25</sup>.

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23 *Ordo Fratrum Minorum*, the Order of Friars Minor.

24 cf. VF, § 67 and 66; APS 10, f. 311v; cf. also the publication of J. Pietrzak's document by Fr. Ksawery Wilczyński, *Niepokalana Królowa Polski [Immaculate Queen of Poland]*, Krakow 1926. p. 28.

25 TDM, Chapter. 7; *Pisma zebrane*, [Collected Works], p. 1108.

Undoubtedly, the basis for such teaching was provided by the Bible itself:

*The Lord is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity. He does the will of those who fear Him, and He hears their cry and saves them. (Psalm 145<sup>26</sup>). Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (Mt 7:7-8, KJV). He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. [...]. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do (Jn 14:12-13, KJV). If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. [...] that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (Jn 15:7.16).*

Fr. Wyszynski writes about the gratitude expressed by Sobieski to Fr. Stanisław for his spiritual aid with the Chocim victory. Upon becoming king, he conveyed this indebtedness materially as well:

*Following the victory and his safe return, the King was filled with such gratitude to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception that he enriched with great privileges and a foundation both the Institute of Venerable Father Stanisław and the convent of Marian Hermitage, at the very location whence this Order originated. On the four sides of the convent, eastern, southern, western and northern, in order to visualise the mysteries of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Her twelve privileges, symbolised by the twelve stars adorning the head of the said Virgin, he generously allotted and donated in perpetual ownership, a dozen staje<sup>27</sup> of land, measured by a surveyor, greatly fertile and encompassing forests, meadows, arable grounds and a river flowing in the middle<sup>28</sup>.*

<sup>26</sup> The English translation after: Abegg, Martin, et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (1999, NY, Harper Collins), p. 570; Jacobson, Bernhard S., *The Weekday Siddur* (2nd Engl. ed., 1978, Tel-Aviv, Sinai) p. 93.

<sup>27</sup> An archaic Polish measure of land area. One staja (plural: staje) equals 1.2-1.5 hectares.

Footnote added by the Translator.

<sup>28</sup> VW, § 54. Translation: Marta Maria Chmielowiec.

Strictly speaking, the said document on the expansion of the foundation was issued somewhat later, following the further successes of (by then already king) Jan III Sobieski – to be specific, on 2 June 1679, and it reads as follows:

*Jan the Third, the King of Poland by the grace of God, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Masovia, Samogitia, Livonia, Podolia, Kiev, Volhynia, Severia, Smolensk and Chernigov. With the present letter, we wish to draw the attention of all individuals to whom this communication pertains or to whom it will be of interest in the future.*

*Since we wish to show mercy on the souls suffering unbearable torments in Purgatory, we hereby take under our royal care – as we have already agreed on a different occasion – the Congregation of Marian Fathers Recollectors of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived and the glorious Institute founded for the purpose of this mission in the City of Nowa Jerozolima and the hermitage of Pustelnia Korabiewska, so as to be able to help the faithful departed.*

*We also confirm all of the privileges granted to them by our predecessors. We hereby define the boundaries of the Hermitage of Pustelnia Korabiewska within the following roads: Wiskitska in the East from the side of Wola Zatorska, Bolimowska in the North from the side of Zator, Skierniewicka in the South and Biernicka, which runs all the way to the meadows on the west side; whatever may find its location within these boundaries we give in perpetuity to the said Priests who help the departed; the cottage on the outskirts of Warsaw and the pious foundation for the benefit of the departed, we hereby free from any due civil liabilities in favour of the Commonwealth and we include in the number of tax-exempt Church properties.*

*We agree and concede to the creation of this pious institute and to its foundation also in other regions of our Kingdom, promising on our own behalf and that our illustrious successors to keep it in peace. In faith whereof, we have hereby signed the above with our own hand and stamped with the seal of the Kingdom.*

*On the second day of June of the 1679 year of our Lord, in Nowa Jerozolima, in the sixth year of our reign, King Jan. The minor seal of the Kingdom Royal Secretary Ludwik Mikołaj Grabiański, m.p.*<sup>29</sup>

## **5. The Ideals the Two Men Had in Common**

### **A. The Love of the Fatherland**

Father Stanisław Papczyński had a great love for his Fatherland. He rejoiced when his own nation's son, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, was elected king, instead of a foreigner. Driven by enthusiasm, he wrote a eulogy for this occasion in his honour<sup>30</sup>. He was glad when the Poles led by Stanisław Rewera Potocki and Jerzy Lubomirski, achieved a spectacular victory at Cudnów (1660) in defence of their country, having conquered Siermietiew's army, which grossly outnumbered their own.

He was then filled with joy even more so when the fight did not entail an attack on a neighbouring country, but was waged in defence of the Commonwealth, and when, following the victory, the front men were not guided by vengeance against the defeated, but, unlike many other vanquishers of that time, they showed a human face to the captives. Fr. Papczyński put the following words into the mouth of Jerzy Lubomirski:

*It is not only a trait of the Romans, but also of Poles «to spare the conquered peoples and to subdue the bold ones with a sword» (Virgil, Aeneid VI, 853).*

*When we saw how you, Muscovites, brazenly took up arms against us, we did our utmost to oppose your strength with our might and with the help of God, the avenger of all insolence and harm, who showed support of our fair efforts, we have put a stop to your aggression and, what is more, we have repulsed it. However, now that you are begging for our grace and put yourselves at our disposal, we sheathe our swords and we show you the lenience we have for all people by nature.*

<sup>29</sup> *Protocolium Ordinis*, sec. 6, § 129.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Pos. Pap., pp. 115-117.

*We spare the defeated. Go and console your associates with the news of the treaty. Tell your descendants that our Poland has always treated you with grace*<sup>31</sup>.

Let us note the above principle, set out in the *Prodromus of the Queen of Arts* by Papczyński: it will be easy for us to see that Sobieski continued to implement it during his military conquests.

By the way, it would be fitting to observe already at this point that he was a very keen reader, as attested by the King himself in a letter to his wife dated 19 September 1683<sup>32</sup>. Undoubtedly, he must have had an intimate knowledge of the writings of his own theologian and confessor. It was Father Stanisław's wish — as he wrote in *Apology* — to make sure that the fruits of his work serve not only his contemporary audience and penitents on an ad hoc basis, but also the future generations. This was the reason why he tried to thoroughly elaborate the teachings he brought forth in his books. As a rule, he would first make notes during the preparation and conduct of his professional activities (teaching rhetoric) as well as his apostolic work (catecheses, sermons and spiritual counselling)<sup>33</sup>, and then he would sort them, put them together and use them as material for the textbooks he was publishing, whether in rhetoric or spirituality, constitutions for the religious, or, finally, books for other people. But even before they were officially published (*Inspectio Cordis* did not appear in print until our times), Fr. Stanisław used the material he had collected in a variety of ways, depending on the specific circumstances, namely, in lectures, sermons, conferences, deliberations, conversations, confessions, letters and manuscripts. There is no doubt that the spiritual teachings contained in these notes, which were later published in books for monks and pious observers of the Catholic religion, had served Fr. Stanisław even earlier as an aid in conducting confessions, spiritual direction and

31 Cf. *Prodromus, Pisma zebrane*, (*Prodromus. Collected Works*), pp. 564-565.

32 More on Jan Sobieski's literacy and his love of reading: cf. Z. Wójcik, *ibidem*, pp. 386-387.

33 Fr. Stanisław comments on his book writing method in *Apologia, Pisma zebrane*, [*Apology, Collected Works*], pp. 1451-1452.

conversations. Therefore, he must have had an impact on Sobieski also in this way, and not only through the actually published writings, which can oftentimes be traced— as in a mirror image — in the King’s life and in the actions he took.

Fr. Papczyński’s great concern for the welfare of the Fatherland was expressed perhaps at its most fervent in prayer and thoughts on the defence of the country against its enemies (such as Turkey). However, in order to avoid one-sidedness in showing his patriotism, let us first take a look — albeit briefly — at a few other matters that were also extremely important to him.

He condemned and fought against the ‘golden freedom of the nobles’ which was turning into lawlessness, thus being harmful to the country. Moreover, he pointed out the destructive qualities of the *Liberum veto*, that the freedom brought with it was often used by some politicians to satisfy their own selfish goals, even to the detriment of the country, and which was also skilfully manipulated by the enemies of the Commonwealth. For this reason, one of the potentates became interested in the matter and threatened to silence the author of the *Prodromus* of the Queen of Arts. Only by means of certain literary techniques was he at all able to save and publish the fourth edition of this handbook of rhetoric<sup>34</sup>.

Bearing in mind the dignity and equality of every human being, he strongly opposed the pride, greed and selfishness of the elites and the existing social injustice. He pointed to the egoism of the nobility and the ill-treatment of peasants. He quoted practical examples of their exploitation and their abuse through the passing of unjust laws and unfair sentences. He strongly warned his countrymen against the ‘Golden Ass’, which can penetrate the most bastioned fortresses far more easily than a ‘Trojan horse’, contributing to disasters and the loss of freedom.

*«Is there anyone who will not be spoiled by gold?» This transparent and almost golden idea is supposed to serve us as a warning and a piece of advice urging us to release*

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34 Cf. *Prodromus*, ed. IV, Foreword.

*our minds from the pernicious craving for this negligible ore. Even the sword suddenly pulled out of the sheath shall not subdue us so easily and lead us astray off the path of virtue as bullets of gold may indeed.*

Therefore, nothing can harm a state as much as a gold fever may. There have been many brave, wise and well-known statesmen who were entrusted with government and the care of the common good of the fatherland, but if they did not avert their eyes, or rather, their minds from gold, they immediately succumbed to its charms, letting it take a grip on them, and thus added the ruin of the entire state to their personal demise. For who shall resist the temptation of the empty glitter of the gold? Who, indeed, shall not be fooled and bought by a relatively high amount of money? Who can resist the power of money?

*In contrast, a mind which is far from lusting over that miserable ore and one which is not troubled — as the poet says — with the damned gold fever, is, thankfully, in full control of itself while being also able to successfully govern cities, provinces, kingdoms and empires. Gold does not threaten its adamant nature and might, nor does it weaken its sense of justice, obscure the light of wisdom, eradicate its virtue or cast a shadow over it.*

*It seems that those whose minds have been corrupted by greed resemble sailors eagerly listening to the ingratiating song of the Sirens, thereby exposing not only themselves, but also the ship on which they are sailing, to imminent ruin. This is the case of those affected by the gold fever: they fall into an abyss and drag whole countries down with them.*

*Therefore, the father of the wisest Alexander [...] the Great (aka Philip II of Macedon) used to say: «There is no such impregnable fortress into which it would be impossible to smuggle a golden ass».*

In dealing with religious affairs, he pointed to the lack of respect for holy things and the existing oppression of the Church. Those who were in power and were obsessed with self-interest, readily granted themselves concessions

and privileges while burdening the Church with such liabilities as winter quarters for troops and excessive taxing. Simultaneously, the rulers themselves usually did not care about the plight of the poor and the needy. Under the guise of an urgent need to save the fatherland, they even insisted on confiscating ritual vessels used for religious worship, while they were busy stacking up treasures beyond measure in their palaces and castles, which served as bait for such invaders and predators as the Tatars and the Swedes<sup>35</sup>.

Papczyński's concern (even before Konarski!) for the morality of the citizenry, especially members of the ruling class, is clear to any careful reader of the *Prodromus of the Queen of Arts, The Mystical Temple of God, or A God or A Look into the Heart*. By making men realise their own worth and dignity and by showing them the purpose and meaning of life, Father Stanisław leads everyone to a deeper understanding of their duties and to the acceptance of their full responsibility therefor. Bearing that in mind, they better understand the importance of the commandments and the need for virtue, especially in the social context. Furthermore, he reminds parents and educators of their obligation to raise their children to be good and wise citizens, who love their country and are ready to work and bear sacrifices for it:

*We were born not for ourselves, but for the country. He is not a citizen of the state (literally 'fatherland') who lives only for himself, although it can be hardly said that someone lives for themselves if they do not live for anyone else. It is shameful not to have grown out of the cradle for so many years, always looking back and still falling back on it.*

*Some people find themselves noble enough if they see their pampered children helping them out on the farm, and even more so when they climb their way up to the tribunals or councils. I should perhaps also add: or when they go to parties and drunken brawls, which is not suitable not only for a Pole, but for a human being as such.*

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. W. Łoziński, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach*, [*Life in Poland in Past Centuries*], Warsaw 1958, pp. 28, 114.



*We need real men, not villains or scums of the earth. Gift your fatherland with Poles, not flunkeys, that is to say, give it strong and brave folk who are capable of great efforts, who are primed for battle and prepared to participate in the councils. Your fatherland expects you to be such a person and is happy to see you grow into one*<sup>36</sup>.

Among the necessary conditions for human development and that of the community, among the prerequisites of fruitful work, there is security and liberty. The freedom and peace of the fatherland are so valuable that in their defence nothing is to be spared, not even life. However, peace and liberty depend on a number of factors, the most important of these being mutual love and respect, as reflected in the unity and harmony of the citizens. The examples brought forth by Father Stanisław are, undoubtedly, still comprehensible and relevant. Let us familiarise ourselves with them:

*Scillurus [Skilurus] had eighty sons... Once he gifted each one with a bunch of arrows, asking them to break it in two. When all of them started making excuses that it could be done only by the hand of Hercules alone*<sup>37</sup>, *he himself started pulling the arrows out of the quiver and broke each one in two easily with his age-weakened hands. In the meantime, while encouraging everyone to spiritual unity with his grave words, he said: «If you live in harmony, then believe me, you will grow very strong and invincible; but if you let yourselves be dragged into mutual contention and rebellion, then what the future holds in store for you is what you have seen me do to these arrows» [...].*

*Oh, you tenacious souls who share a mind and a will! Is there anyone you cannot defeat!?*

*Give me the most extensive empire, but one which is conflicted, or a Commonwealth that is the strongest but feuding, or the most fortified city, but one which is suffering internal discord; or any most serious and pious community of*

<sup>36</sup> Prodrumus, *Dodatek, Pisma zebrane* [Prodrumus, Supplement, Collected Works], p. 588.

<sup>37</sup> Hercules, or Heracles, endowed with great physical strength, a mythical hero, son of Zeus and Alcmene.

*people which happens to be struggling with inner tensions, then even its good name and the reputation of its holiness will be overshadowed by the discord, the strength of the city shall falter as a result of its citizens rioting and the fortitude of the residents of the Commonwealth shall fade away because of the conflicts the burghers of towns and cities are engaged in – thus the Empire shall reduce its area or even cease to exist altogether. [...]*

Oh, the teaching derived from this! Bearing it in mind has helped a countless number of people, whereas ignoring it has been regretted by a multitude of others! Lest you, Dearest Friends, have to regret, do your utmost to maintain stable and steady bonds with whomever you can and with *whomever you must, while preserving and harbouring concordance as the greatest and most useful of all human virtues*<sup>38</sup>.

This convincing appeal of the Bl. Father Stanisław for mutual love and harmony, which springs from the Bible, as well as the depths of ancient history and culture, had already been put into practice by Sobieski. Having distanced himself from the pro-French policy, which tolerated the actions of Ottoman Turkey, as well as under the influence of the efforts undertaken by the Holy See and the persuasion of Fr. Stanisław, he entered into an alliance with the Emperor, and together with him and the princes of the German Reich he undertook joint action to save Christian Europe from Islam. And he lived to see the accomplishment of this mission. However, soon after the victory, the above-discussed appeal by Father Stanisław for unity and concord was discarded and ignored by most Polish politicians and then, finally, forgotten. The competition and struggle between the factions and parties intensified more and more, while the then ‘consumerism’ was spreading vastly, for which a saying was soon coined: *Under the Saxon King, eat, drink and keep loosening your belt*<sup>39</sup>.

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38 *Prodromus*, fragments from Chapter III, *Pisma zebrane*, [Collected Works], pp. 137-139.

39 In Polish: *Za króla Sasa jedz, pij i popuszczaj pasa*.

Thus, although the end of the 17th century saw the rise of a king who saved Europe from the imminent menace of Islamic slavery, yet towards the end of the next century, Poland was struck by a similar disaster in the form of partitions and a prolonged captivity imposed by her neighbours. As for them, it is a shameful act that they failed to show their rightful gratitude for Poland's help in saving Europe from the slavery of Islam, but one should not turn a blind eye to the guilt of one's own countrymen: their selfishness, lack of love, harmony and unity, leading to self-interest and betrayals. These shortcomings of our forefathers had weakened our fatherland, thus leading it to a disaster<sup>40</sup>.

That is why, after so many bad experiences, such as partitions, slavery and world wars, with the third millennium of history already in motion, we should no longer put off the exhortations of the Bl. Father Stanisław. If we really want to honour him, then we should accept and implement his call for mutual love and harmony. Let us put into practice all of his teachings, which are taken from the Gospel and from the deepest roots of the world culture. Let us take advantage of the wisdom which emphasises the need for preserving unity. The new impetus given to us by Pope John Paul II on behalf of Divine Providence, which urges us not to fear Christ, but instead to open our doors wide to let Him in, and base our concord and unity on this rock-like reliable foundation, is as important and relevant today on a global scale as it was for Europe and Christianity at the time of the Viennese victory.

## **B. The Cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Divine Providence**

Jan III Sobieski grew up in Żółkiew, where he was raised by his mother Teofila (née Daniłowicz) — a granddaughter

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<sup>40</sup> It was already Jan Kochanowski who warned his fellow countrymen against discord, pointing to the Turkish threat, as exemplified by Greece and Hungary: *And Greece provides us with a fresh example thereof; it was here that the Turk has toppled each one of those discording princes one by one as chicks. In this very way the Hungarian crown has perished as well, for having elected two rulers, it gained one more, previously unasked for.* *Dzieła Polskie, [The Polish Works]* Warsaw 1953, p. 56.

of Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski — in the spirit of zealous patriotism and profound piety. The person of his great-grandfather, presented to him as a paragon of an ideal Pole, as a heroic figure, with his great devotion to Our Lady and the commitment to defend the Commonwealth and the holy faith, must have aroused a desire to emulate him in the young Jan. Hence his choice of a military career. Therefore, the figure of Fr. Papczyński, who rhapsodised about the Fatherland in his *Prodromus of the Queen of Arts*, was a subject of similar interest to the older Jan Sobieski, being well-known and sought after as a devout priest, a defender of the oppressed and a zealous devotee of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who also aided those in Purgatory.

What particularly stirred up Sobieski's interest in Papczyński was his devotion to the Mother of God, and especially to her Immaculate Conception, which entailed Mary, *a young virgin full of God*<sup>41</sup>, entrusting herself in perpetuity to God. Such devotion, very much appreciated and practiced by Father Stanisław and his Order, had been known previously to be a trait running in the Sobieski family. It was Hetman S. Żółkiewski himself, Jan's great-grandfather, who was found dead wearing a ring engraved with an inscription reading *mancipium Mariae*<sup>42</sup> (*Mary's slave*). We will desist from discussing the various forms of devotion to the Mother of God<sup>43</sup> practiced in the Sobieski family, or the reverence of Mary observed by the King and the Queen themselves, or, for that matter, the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception, because that would require a broader framework than the one we can afford in this publication.

It is worth noting, though, that Sobieski's special approach to the question of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary found its expression in such acts of gratitude for his victories as the expansion of the Puszcza

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41 Cf. *Prodromus, Pisma zebrane [Collected Works]*, p. 216.

42 Cf. F. Koneczny, *The Saints in the History of the Polish Nation*, Warszawa-Struga 1985, p. 156.

43 This is commented on by the following historians: F. Koneczny, p. 176; M. Rożek, *Zwycięstwo Jana III Sobieskiego pod Wiedniem, [The Viennese Victory of Jan III Sobieski]*, Krakow 2008; Bartnicki, *Odsiecz wiedeńska, [The Relief of Vienna]*, etc.

Korabiewska foundation, or erecting a chapel in honour of the Immaculate Conception in Warsaw, in addition to the many privileges granted to the Marian community. The cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the devotion to Her was connected, in turn, with helping the souls suffering the torments of Purgatory. We shall attend to this matter later on in this study.

However, it seems just to assume that the most important reason for the mutual understanding between the two men and — as many believe, the solid base of their friendship — was a living faith in Divine Providence and the belief that God is not only the Creator, but also an omnipresent and omnipotent being, and that, as such, He also sustains all things in existence, and since He is love incarnate, He provides every creature with support and care. And since He possesses the utmost power and control over all things, there is nothing that He could not do. These were the teachings of the theologian as offered to King Jan, all in accordance with the doctrine of the Church:

*I believe that God's favours should not be kept in hiding, and so I would like to urge you to praise God's omnipotence and His concern for us. To Him be praise, honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen [...]. Please My Lord, I beg you most humbly, make it so that the very Providence of Your Majesty, in which I place my hope for the future, and in which I truly believe, leads me to the end of my life, so that You may be glorified in all my writings, thoughts and words. Amen<sup>44</sup>.*

Father Stanisław was glad that Bishop S. Wierzbowski, when on his deathbed, left him no money, riches or jewels in the will, gifting him only with Divine Providence instead. He also looked upon the establishment of the Order — the fruit of his life — as a work of Divine Providence:

*Whatever God's goodness and wisdom wishes for, it can also create and do, even against hundreds of odds, and even — according to human opinion — in spite of the very impossibility brought on by a lack of resources. For nothing is*

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44 VW f. 6r-6v, § 20

*impossible for the Almighty. This became very clear to me, the most miserable of sinners, a mere piteous tool and one which is not at all suitable for setting up the last and the smallest Congregation of the Friars of Our Lady Conceived without Sin. With such a task, well beyond my humble mind, with my virtue scarce and prudence sparse — with all my endowments too negligible to take up such a significant mission, it remained rather within the realm of dreams than reality. But since God Himself (God, to Whom be glory and thanks for all times) urged me to carry out this work, so He himself accomplished it and shall see it through over the ages.<sup>45</sup>*

Stating in his *Mystical Temple of God* that man was created in the image and likeness of God, Father Stanisław urges all men, following up on St. Ambrose's preachings, to ensure the constant presence of God in their heart and to further acknowledge it with their deeds:

*May God always remain in the soul of the one who keeps Him in their thoughts and who loves Him, because since there is not a single moment in which man would not be using or taking advantage of God's goodness and mercy, so we should always bear in mind His omnipresence.*

*Furthermore, we should not stop at simply realising the presence of God — our actions and external works ought to serve as proof of the fact that what we carry inside is a truly vivid and pure image of God<sup>46</sup>.*

Undoubtedly, deeds attesting to the presence of God in one's heart are acts of virtue, of which God is the source, and especially those of love, purity, justice, kindness, obedience, humility, etc.

Since the King was raised in a similar vein by his own family and since his faith and religious convictions were being sustained and fed by his highly esteemed theologian and confessor during the Viennese expedition, he would express his belief in a loving God and His Providence, together with his humble attitude, both publicly and privately. With every step

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45 Papczyński, *Pisma zebrane [Collected Works]*, p. 1455.

46 TDM, Chapter. 2, pp. 16-17; *Pisma zebrane [Collected Works]*, pp. 1086-1087.

he took, he asked God for His protection, blessing and help; he oftentimes praised the Lord and thanked Him for the graces received and successes attained. In each letter to his wife, he kept reiterating the same words and expressions: God willing, thank God, with Lord's grace, placing all our hopes in God, etc.

### **C. Love for and Trust in God**

When we read the historians' accounts of Sobieski's victories, especially the most famous of them all — the Viennese victory — we learn from them that it was the King's great genius that was a crucial factor in all of them, so much so that he won nearly all of his battles and that he prevailed, not by strength, but also by art<sup>47</sup>, or that *Marysienka*<sup>48</sup> was the inspiration for his courage and an impulse towards his military effort and successes<sup>49</sup>. However, by the time he was a victor, the King was no novice knight at the stage of wooing the lady of his heart. He was a mature family man, already in his fifties, with some marital crises behind him, and thus, approached his duty to love God, Fatherland and his family with greater seriousness and a much deeper understanding. He entrusted his will completely to God and, therefore, the love for his dearest wife was not his primary concern, nor did he wish Marysienka to place her love for him, her husband, first and foremost. He writes to her on 24 September 1683:

*I ought to offer the whole of myself to God's Will and ask Him only for what pleases Him. And so, in the name of Lord God Himself, to whom your heart turns its prayer, I am now asking you to let these matters be and, instead, ask Him to do His holy will in all matters and things. Otherwise, I shall see no calm, my heart, until you do this for God, in the first place, and for me — second.*

Surely he was aware that he was endowed with leadership qualities and that the studies he had conducted and wars he had lived through prepared him well for the challenges of his

47 Cf. Jasienica, p. 304.

48 Polish for 'Dear Little Mary' (added by the Translator).

49 Cf. N. Davies, *Boże igrzysko* [God's Playground] Krakow, 1991, p. 624.

profession; he must have also realised that he loved his wife dearly, but he was never someone to credit himself with the victories gained. Following his triumph at Vienna, he writes the following words in the first sentence of the letter dated 13 September 1683, addressed to his wife: *God and our Lord forever blessed, gave victory and glory to our nation which was unheard of in the past. All cannons, the entire camp and inestimable riches fell into our hands.* And while sending the captured Islamic standard to Rome, paraphrasing Caesar's historic saying, he wrote to the Pope: *Venimus, vidimus, Deus vincit — We came, we saw, God conquered.*

The attitude of Queen Marysieńka harmonised with the mindset of the King. Along with many others, she prayed very earnestly for victory in Krakow. M. Rożek cites a historical source saying that when officer Philip Dupont departed from Vienna on the third day following the victory (on 16 September, at seven o'clock in the morning) and when he arrived in Krakow — the Queen was already in the church at the foot of the altar. Upon seeing him, and not knowing what his arrival signified, she cried out so loud that her voice reverberated throughout the church. Philip writes:

*I had barely expressed the reason for my arrival when she fell on her face before the altar and remained prostrated like this for some time*<sup>50</sup>. Thus, in a gesture of utmost humility and humbleness, she first gave thanks to God, the substantial maker of this triumph, and only then did she express her joy and gratitude to the human heroes.

Even a week before the Vienna battle, the King had been urging everyone to pray and ask God for victory, because *He called Himself the Lord of hosts and thus a Lord of victories*<sup>51</sup>. He reiterated that same sentence after the Mass on Kahlenberg, when the battle was about to begin. He was certain that only God possessed such power by which success could be achieved<sup>52</sup>. This demonstrates that he had memorised well the teachings of his much

50 M. Rożek, *Zwycięstwo Jana III Sobieskiego [The Victory of Jan III Sobieski]*, Krakow 2008, p. 30.

51 A letter of 4 September 1683, addressed to the Queen.

52 Cf. *Diariusz królewicza Jakuba, [The Journal of Prince Jakub]* under 12 September.



appreciated theologian, Father Stanisław — those which he had preached as a spiritual father, and which he also included for the benefit of the religious in the manuscript of *Inspectio Cordis* that was to be published:

*«Be of good heart!» (Mt 9:22). Bear in mind that you should have no fear, even if the whole world and hell have risen against you; nor should you ever lose the courage to fight, because the Lord has the power to support you and keep you free. Nor will He ever abandon you, unless He is testing you for your greater merit. For since you have been accepted into the ranks of God, know that you need to experience combat against various foes, so that you may train yourself in virtue.*

But place your trust in Him only, in God that is, for it is Him who fights for you. Do not place it in thousands of your tricks, but proceed just as did those who would say before the battle: «They lodge their hope in chariots and horses, and we place ours in the name of the Lord» (cf. Ps 19:8).

*Only then shall you conquer any foe, being shielded with perseverance and having prayer for a sword*<sup>53</sup>.

The King astonished the people around him, as well as the historians who were to write of his deeds<sup>54</sup>, with his confidence in the triumph to come, which was the case not only before the battle of Vienna, but also later. If a historian notes this ‘certainty’ of the King and traces it to the fact that it was the *mysterious leader instinct that allowed him to intuit the result of the conflict*<sup>55</sup> — he is not taking into account the real reason for Sobieski’s attitude of certainty. For the historian ignores the cause that the King himself mentions, saying nothing of his instinct or gut feeling; he believes in the power of God and rests assured that he will receive help since the fight he had undertaken is a good cause. The King’s frequent recourse to God and counting on His help were not only bigoted formulas spoken without conviction, or conventional phrases and platitudes aired

53 IC f 90v; *Pisma zebrane [Collected Works]*, pp. 806-807.

54 Cf. Jasienica, p. 370.

55 Cf. Jasienica, p. 370.

out of a mere habit. The King leaves no doubt whatsoever to anyone about it. For when he receives a letter from his wife at Strzygom, in which she quotes the aspersions cast by the opposition, he responds on 21 October and expresses his views quite emotionally on this occasion:

*I have entrusted my health and happiness into God's hands and to His holy glory; I am not taking any unnecessary risks and doing only what is just, for the whole world is looking upon my actions. My life is dear to me when it is spent in the service of God, Christianity, and Homeland, in the service of you, my darling heart, my children, relatives and friends; my honour, which I have spent all my life to build, should also be dear to me – these both, my life and honour, shall coincide with God's mercy and protection.*

We know that he tried not to gamble recklessly, both in terms of his own health and life and also when it came to his soldiers. One has to take into account the fact that this outstanding and unique leader, who consciously and confidently trusted in God, the *Lord of the Heavenly Hosts*, loved his legions of soldiers. It strikes the reader of his letters to Queen Marysienka as particularly obvious. It is also noted by those who knew him personally, by those who fought beside him, and by historians. M. Dyakowski, an accompanying physician to the King, writes the following:

*He cares not only about the condition of the commanders, the accompanying parties, the soldiers, but also about that of the servants. This concern rubs off on the medics as well<sup>56</sup>.*

He deplored the fact that the imperial authorities, which had received financial resources from the Pope and had undertaken to supply the army with food and other practical necessities, began to neglect this duty taking care of their own interests instead. Already two days prior to the battle things started to go wrong. In a letter dated 12 September, he wrote to his wife:

*We have been fasting here so much this Friday and Saturday that each one of us could actually head off and*

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<sup>56</sup> M. Dyakowski, *Diariusz medyczny* [Medical Journal], under the date of 9 September.

*into the mountains to hunt down some deer with our bare hands. The worst thing is that the horses have nothing to eat except the leaves off the trees. As of yet, we still have not received the promised victuals – nor for horses nor for the men; our soldiers are, nonetheless, still very eager to fight.*

Soon after the victory, the King suffered a bitter disappointment. On 15 September, after a thanksgiving visit paid to him by the Emperor, albeit not a particularly courteous one, the situation of the Polish army rapidly deteriorated. In a letter dated 17 September, he informs his wife of those new developments:

*After this visit, everything changed all of a sudden, as if they had never known us before. [...] They provide us with no victuals, for which the Holy Father had sent the money [...]. Our sick lie in their own faces and there are many of our men who have sustained shooting injuries, and I'm not even able to sort out a simple punt for them, so that I could barge them down to Pressburg<sup>57</sup> and heal them over there at my own cost. They refuse to bury the corpses of the noble merited soldiers in the town's churchyards, suggesting unhallowed fields instead or burnt suburban burial grounds full of pagan corpses. My page-boy, who was riding only four steps behind me was shot from a rifle by a dragoon, which injured his face and nose severely [...]. The second one, who was also riding behind me, had my cloak ripped out of his hands [...]. They steal our carts and rob our horses with great brutality [...]. Last but not least, since Poles are flocking into towns for they are desperately famished, the Commander has decided today not to let them in and ordered to fire at them, and that is because one of them fired his gun at the gate when they were wrestling his horse away from him. [...] Marco d'Aviano, a holy and decent man, is crying his eyes out when looking at these things, and he is doing whatever is in his power in Vienna to change the way things are.*

He then adds the following in this regard: *I'm setting off today, regardless of the grave hunger, may it even be greater, but at least I'll be moving away from Vienna, where*

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57 Modern-day Bratislava (Slovakia) (footnote added by the Translator).

*they had decided to fire at our men; I will be sending some of my men to the suburbs to collect the sick and to supply those in good health with provisions, so as to make sure we shall not be having any major confusion on our hands.*

In a letter of 24 September, he continues as follows: *Padre d'Aviano, who departed immediately from Vienna to Linz, from where he was going to head off to Italy, complained about the severe sins of the court and the city of Vienna, on a scale which he had never witnessed before; he also bewailed the Emperor's ministers, together with the pride, the injustice, the fierce licentiousness of the city and the court, the Emperor's d'omission sins, and that he allows his ministers to wallow in such malfeasance, while he himself stays away from this malaise, turning a blind eye to all that is happening [...] not being able to even face it, he simply departed from the city.*

This state of affairs, dependent on the Emperor and the politicians involved with his court, was also perceived with horror by the Germans. The Saxon Prince von Leuenburg, a very kind-hearted man who led the right imperial wing, felt affronted by the inappropriate treatment he himself and his companions had to face, left the troops and headed off home. *My ears are hurting when I hear from afar what the servant folk are saying; they are even complaining about us now: «and you have protected him; you should have left this vanity to rot away utterly at the root!»* Dyakowski had some awareness of these developments. Under the date of 24 September, he writes: *Our army men are beginning to say that we should not have bothered to relieve the Emperor: «We wish this pride had been wiped out completely».*

Although, obviously, there are reasons for outrage, we should try not to become consumed with the feelings of anger and resentment at our allies of those times. Let us also consider their standpoint and, above all, let us take a closer look at how Father Marco of Aviano, considered to be a personal friend of the Emperor, having evaluated this situation. The scandalous behaviour of the imperial court and its politicians remained beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The same must be said about the permission that was granted to open fire against the Poles. But what Father Marco says of the Emperor is that his guilt was his excessive tolerance and leniency and the fact that he neglected taking control and disciplining his subordinates. Of course, this was also great wrongdoing on his part, which should not be treated lightly, but it was not so much an effect of ill will as a sign of the Emperor's weak nature. Such a character blemish was something even Father Marco, the Emperor's theologian, counsellor and confessor, could not cure or aid. And this reduced him to tears.

The Emperor's omission to give due courtesy to the prince, as well as the lack of response to Sobieski's proposal regarding the Hungarian uprising, were dictated by political considerations. Sobieski must have been indignant, but the stakes involved his and Queen Marysienka's political plans for Hungary. They had taken certain steps to ensure the marriage of their son, Jakub, to the Emperor's daughter, which would grant him the title of the King of Hungary; the Emperor did not consent to this marital union because he did not wish to lose this country for the Empire. These issues are discussed in greater detail by Jan Wimmer<sup>58</sup>.

When it comes to the supply of food for the soldiers and feed for the horses, the Poles themselves had their own stocks, but they were forced to leave them behind in the camps which had got submerged in mud in Tulln and that was why they were running short of their supplies. Given the similar problems experienced by others, we cannot be certain that Austrians had everything aplenty in some critical moments.

However, we know for sure that the besieged city would have to capitulate after a day or two (the King speaks of five days), not only because of the lack of gunpowder necessary for the defence, but also due to the lack of food for the defenders and the general population. Therefore, soon after the liberation, the city authorities took some overly drastic

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58 Cf. J. Wimmer, *Odsiecz wiedeńska 1683 roku [The Relief of Vienna of 1683]*, Warsaw 2008, p. 99.

measures against the hungry visitors flocking into the town, including the Poles. All the more so that a rumour had been spread at that time that the Poles had gained the richest spoils, having seized the vizier's tents, and were exporting cartfuls of their contents! Hence the attacks of local rascals and impoverished Viennese, who were simply jealous, and hence the theft of horses and other violations.

From the very onset, the attitude of love and responsibility that the King showed towards his army met with great approval on the part of the commanders of the allied forces, who were not affected by the influence of the imperial court — so much so that they grew to trust him almost instantly. And so at first, they began to express their satisfaction that he would be in general command at the Battle of Vienna and they then paid such heed to his orders and showed such subordination and obedience that the King was deeply moved by their actions. When they realised later on that the Emperor did not care enough to continue the campaign and that the King was being contested by the Polish opposition, which had been dominated by Austrian influences, they tried to convince him to stay with them as their leader, as they were willing to bring the campaign to its end fighting at his side.

The King wrote to his wife: *We held a great discourse about the day that the Lord has destined for us to confront our foe in the battlefield, and there was a great contentment that they will have me a leur tête [...]. At first, both electors treated me like a stranger, but now that we have begun to approach the enemy, there are no words to describe just how pleased I am with them, they always follow my orders, asking me tenfold at times whether I am sure that there is nothing more they could do for me [...]. They keep a few knights always at my side to receive orderlies; they even sent a few dozens of armed horsemen tonight to stand on horseback in front of my tent [...]. They have expanded the right wing of my Polish army with four big regiments of infantry: and a mere captain simply could not be any more obedient than they*

*are, which makes us hope that some good results are to be expected, God willing [...]. And so here and now, when our army was standing in formation here on this bank of the Danube, all the generals asked me to approach them alone, so as to avoid a turbation of the Polish army*<sup>59</sup>.

He was appreciated even more by the Polish soldiers! Already after the struggles in the Ukraine, they held him in such a high esteem that their attitude during the election in Warsaw contributed to him being chosen as king. And now they also considered him to be not only their leader, but also their father. They gave expression to this when the Turks, having murdered the Pomeranian Voivode, Władysław Denhoff (who bore a great physical resemblance to Sobieski), spread the false rumour that the King had been killed. He writes to his wife on 10 October: *And then the soldiers of the infantry regiments, dear poor souls, when they were informed that I no longer lived, shouted out to their officers: «Alas, that means we're already doomed for we have lost our father! Lead us away, let us all get killed out there!»*

#### **D. Care for Those Who Departed from Life in Battle and as a Result of Diseases**

Reassured by his theologian, King Jan III Sobieski strove to fulfill God's will in such a way so as to make sure that care is offered not only to those soldiers who were in good health and able to fight, in providing them with good food and armament, but also to the wounded and sick, and especially to those who gave their lives in defence of the Fatherland, or died as a result of the many diseases afflicting the camps. Because he loved them dearly, it was his primary concern to help the deceased as soon as possible by relieving their pain and releasing them from the shackles of Purgatory. One of the first decisions taken by him following a battle and a due thanksgiving to God for the victory just gained would be to celebrate a

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<sup>59</sup> Letters to the Queen dated 31 August, 12 September and 28 October 1683.

Mass and prayers for the dead. The masses for the dead were celebrated not only locally, but the King also ordered that services and obsequies for those who were killed in the battlefield to be held in Krakow, where many people continually supported him in this mission by way of their prayer and worship<sup>60</sup>.

How, then, could he have not appreciated Father Stanisław and his institute, whose sole purpose was to aid those suffering torments in Purgatory, especially if they had not been prepared for death because it surprised them on the battleground or when they ebbed of life suddenly as a result a plague and died forgotten!

Hence, the approval of the foundation of the new Congregation of Marian Fathers in the Puszcza Korabiewska (Korabiew Forest) by the Sejm in 1677 and its being taken under the special care of King Jan III Sobieski and the Commonwealth did not encounter many difficulties. Fr. Stanisław considered it to be a particular manifestation of God's grace<sup>61</sup>, because his contemporary deputies, who were mostly recruited from the nobility, were generally reluctant to approve any new religious foundations<sup>62</sup>. Their disinclination stemmed from the fact that they saw such foundations as an alienation of goods, which they regarded as the general property of the nobility in view of their duty to fight for the integrity and safety of the country. Of course, in this particular case, an important and effective argument, mentioned in the royal document approving the erection of a hermitage in the Puszcza Korabiewska, that is of the House of Marian Fathers Recollectors dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, was the tasks for the fulfillment of which it was created in the first place: promoting the glory of God and aiding the souls suffering in Purgatory, especially the fallen soldiers and the victims of pestilence. Let us take a look at this royal document: *The*

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the letters of 20 September and 10 October 1683 r. and Dyakowski, *Diariusz, [Journal]*, under the date of 2 October.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Protocollum Bals.*, p. 200.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. S. Sydry, *Organizacja Zgromadzenia Księży Marianów w XVIII w.*, [*The Organisation of the Congregation of Marian Fathers in the 18th Century*], Stockbridge 1965, p. 18.



*Ordinances Passed by the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Sejm in the Year of the Lord 1677, on the 14th day of the month of January, whose deliberations were held in the name of Our Lord over the course of six Sundays. Amen.*

*Jan III, the King of Poland by God's Grace, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Masovia, Samogitia, Kiev, Volhynia, Podolia, Podlasie, Livonia, Smolensk, Seversk and Chernigov.*

*Approbation of the foundation of the Hermits in the Korabiew forest.*

*We hereby inform all and sundry [...] of our approval of the foundation of the Retreat House of the Clerics of the Immaculately Conceived Blessed Virgin Mary erected in the Korabiew Forest (Puszcza Korabiewska) for the propagation of God's glory and for the salvation of the souls suffering in Purgatory. We incorporate ecclesiasticae immunitati<sup>63</sup> the foundation where the monastery is standing, together with the meadow, and we take this Congregation under our perpetual auspices and the protection of the Commonwealth.<sup>64</sup>*

## **6. The Participation of Bl. Father Stanisław in the Relief of Vienna**

Those who learn about Fr. Papczyński from different books or articles and who read about the support he offered to King Sobieski during the relief of Vienna, may be asking themselves one particular question: did he actually participate in the expedition in person? For there are authors who claim that he would accompany the King as his counsellor, confessor and chaplain, and, if necessary, he kept up his spirits. These writers include J. Pietrzak, M. Kołodziejski, F. Koneczny and others. Therefore, historians are subjected to heavy criticism by some who deem it unjust to write only about Fr. Marco of Aviano, a friar, a delegate sent by the Pope and acting in the capacity of the king's chaplain, whereas the name of Papczyński, who was

63 i.e. "to the ecclesiastical immunity" (fiscal exemption). (Footnote added by the Translator).

64 Vol. Leg., vol. V, p. 241.

far more meritorious and also present, remains silenced<sup>65</sup>. Taking the lead in this perspective of thought is J. Pietrzak. Others usually quote him or simply reiterate the arguments and grievances originally brought forth by him.

It must be said that J. Pietrzak held Father Stanisław in very high esteem and wrote about him with reverence, because — as he was deeply convinced — it was thanks to Father Stanisław’s intercession and support that he was miraculously healed of a serious and potentially fatal disease. Out of gratitude for the received grace of healing, he decided to write a biography of the Bl. Father Stanisław. Although he was convinced of his own ineptitude, he still felt that the gap existing in the area of Papczyński’s life urgently needed filling. He was hoping that his meagre effort could spur someone else to write a better work. He shows his modesty in the “Introduction”:

*Despite our own inability, we wish to prompt some more talented writers to propagate the worship and glory of Polish Saints, which is why we undertook to write the Life of Blessed Stanisław of Jesus and Mary in the hope that if someone should note our zeal in trying to recognise the honour of this great saint, and having read our inadequate work, they will take it upon themselves to write a more befitting one.*<sup>66</sup>

In fact, the issue here is not a lack of certain literary flair and good writing skills, for it may be said that the author possessed these, but rather a lack of a proper method required by the genre of hagiography. As a result, instead of a strictly conceived biography, his work resembles a historical novel, in which facts are constantly intertwined with the assumptions and interpretations of the author. Especially the latter are usually served up to the reader in such a way as one would expect historical sources to be quoted. In his imagination, the author sees Papczyński at the King’s side throughout the entire expedition, acting as his counselor, principal chaplain, preacher and confessor, although none of the actual

<sup>65</sup> Cf. J. Pietrzak, O. S. Papczyński a J. M. Instytut Zakonu oo. Maryanów, [Fr. S. Papczyński and the JM Institute of Marian Brothers], Krakow 1913, p.11; M. Kołodziejski, Zakon oo. Marianów a Zgrom. Księży Marianów, [The Order of Marian Brothers and Their Congregation], Toruń 1983, pp. 26-28.

<sup>66</sup> Pietrzak, *ibidem*, pp. 24-25.

eyewitnesses ever gave any testimony of seeing him beside the King. He states a number of detailed facts pertaining to Fr. Stanisław, such as time-frames, thoughts, actions (preaching, sermon subjects, the King's confessions and keeping his spirits high), etc., first in Puszcza Korabiewska, then in Częstochowa, Krakow and Vienna, although no eyewitness ever mentions Papczyński's presence. J. Pietrzak wrote:

*The Eucharistic Congress in Vienna, held on 12-15 September 1912 saw a tribute being paid to the memory of King Jan, and rightly so, but why did they keep the name of our Holy Saint in silence? Why didn't anyone raise his merit in this? Why wasn't there anyone to mention that the Polish troops at Vienna were all blessed by Fr. Stanisław Papczyński and that he absolved the wounded of their sins among the hail of Muslim bullets? And, further, that he was the one who assisted «His Highness Jan III, the King of Poland on his expedition to Vienna» and that «he was constantly at his side»? Why would they only mention Marco d'Aviano and say naught of our Holy Marian Brother? (The History of the Marian Order, 1773, Berdichev)<sup>67</sup>.*

M. Kołodziejski, who is relying on Pietrzak's writings, makes the same claims: *It happened just as predicted by Fr. Stanisław Papczyński. But our history seems to be drawing a strange veil of silence over this saintly man. Instead, a lot is said about Fr. Marco d'Aviano. Why was the main initiator of the Viennese expedition overshadowed by someone else and why is no one speaking his name?*

*Was it his humility and modesty that caused his merits to be forgotten by historians? Some authors even go as far as to state that Papczyński's participation in the expedition of Vienna is of a purely legendary nature (Henry Gapski «Marianie», [The Marian Brothers], p. 68). Among other sources, Father Stanisław's presence during the Battle of Vienna was mentioned in the «Note on BVM's Robe or Scapular Held by the Marian Fathers<sup>68</sup>», Berdichev 1773<sup>69</sup>.*

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, pp. 11-12 and pp. 115-118.

<sup>68</sup> Uwiadomienie o sukience albo szkaplerzu NPM 00. Marianów, Berdyczów 1773.

<sup>69</sup> M. Kołodziejski, ibidem, pp. 27-28.

With regard to the above-discussed accompaniment of Father Stanisław to King Sobieski during the relief of Vienna, in all fairness, Pietrzak is quoting a historical source, which is, however, a third-hand account<sup>70</sup>, written by Jan Kajetan Jabłonowski (1699-1764), the son of Jan Stanisław Jabłonowski (1669-1731) and the grandson of the Grand Crown Hetman Stanisław Jan Jabłonowski (1634-1702). The latter individual commanded at Vienna on the right Polish wing and he also fought at Parkany. The presence of Father Stanisław in the expedition is also commented on by Kisieliński, one of the witnesses in the Poznań beatification trial, but his account sheds no new light on the matter, since he is merely quoting the very same Kajetan Jabłonowski. It is hard to speculate as to who could have invented the legend of Papczyński's personal accompaniment to the King, which was brought up nine years after Kajetan's death by the Marian Fathers in their *Note on the scapular*<sup>71</sup>. For it is rather doubtful that Kajetan Jabłonowski was the actual source of this legend, since Fr. K. Wyszynski knew him personally and had a good relationship with him as the founder of a new facility for the Marians in Berezdów. Before going to Rome in the capacity of the Order's Prosecutor, Father Kazimierz discussed with him the foundation conditions and, therefore, there can be no doubting of their relationship<sup>72</sup>.

However, Father Wyszynski, as the author of the biography of Father Stanisław, says something else about the support he offered to Sobieski than what is attested by the aforementioned authors who cite Jabłonowski:

*When the Turks besieged Vienna in Austria, where the Roman Emperor Leopold was residing, and when a great multitude of enemies entered the city, the whole of Christendom and Rome itself fell into the grip of fear; in order to defend them and to defeat this powerful foe, King Jan III Sobieski hurried away with the Polish army. He asked for prayer support*

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<sup>70</sup> The booklet on the scapular was published only 9 years after the death of Kajetan Jabłonowski.

<sup>71</sup> *Uwiadomienie o sukience albo szkaplerzu* [Note on BVM's Robe or Scapular], Berdyczów [Berdichev] 1773.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *Positio Wysz.*, pp. 163; 208-209.

*for himself and this difficult mission, requesting personal intercession from the Venerable Servant of God, Stanisław of Jesus and Mary. Soon after, with the aim to support the King, who was departing from the Kingdom to face the enemy, this Holy Father planned missions in various locations for himself and for his confreres in order to urge Christians to pray and perform acts of penance so as to beg God for a victory over the Turks. King Jan III, trusting in his prayers and the supplications of the people, went ahead and attacked such a powerful enemy, and, fighting bravely, he managed to conquer a myriad of Turks and to liberate Vienna, which brought great joy to the whole Christian world, trembling at the prospect of such mighty a tyrant, and consolation to the Holy Church.*

*When the king returned to Poland after the victory, he decided to further support the Marian Institute of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with his foundations. But firstly, not sparing on great royal bounty, he founded a chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Warsaw. The Venerable Servant of God Father Stanisław of Jesus and Mary, received many graces and privileges for his Institute from the king.<sup>73</sup>*

To learn the truth and gain certainty, we are not forced to look for sources written by the generations following the relief, because we have the sufficient testimony of eyewitnesses — for they saw with their own eyes who was the chaplain and the confessor and which priests celebrated masses and preached. In the matters that are of interest to us, the King's own words are available. Then, his son Jakub started writing a journal (*Dyariusz*). General Marcin Kątski, the commander of the artillery and a close companion of the King also dedicated himself to journalling; Father W. Kochowski, a poet who formed a part of the King's entourage, as well, gave a poetic description of the victory. After some time passed, the story of the Battle was also depicted by M. Dyakowski, who had assisted the King during the expedition in the capacity of a physician

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73 VW § 56.

(before the arrival of Dr. Pecorelle and later on as well). And then there were also the accounts written by Jan Chryzostom Pasek, whose nephews were actively involved in the relief. As for events which are remote from us by more than three hundred years, we have at our disposal a wealth of information provided by those witnesses, and it must be added that not all of them have been listed here. Absolutely none of them ever mentions Papczyński's personal presence during the expedition, although he was very well-known in the country. Fr. Michał Kraus, Father Stanisław's colleague from his Piarist times, also says nothing of his participation in the relief, in spite of the fact that he gives quite an ample description of the battle of Vienna in his *History of the Polish Piarist Province*<sup>74</sup>. This is understandable, because — as attested by Fr. Wyszynski — he was staying in Masovia back then, where he was organising a crusade of prayer for the intention of Sobieski's victory, which Sobieski had asked him very eagerly to do prior to his departure for the Austrian capital.

So there can be no doubt that Marco d'Aviano, an apostolic delegate sent by Pope Innocent XI, played the role of the chaplain during the siege of the city. And while many names of other priests are mentioned in the context of army service during the expedition, none of them is called the chaplain of the king.

Marco d'Aviano was born in Aviano, near Venice, in 1631, which happens to be the same birth year as that of Father Stanisław. He died in Vienna just two years before Fr. Papczyński passed away (1699) and only after 300 years, in 2003, he was elevated by Pope John Paul II to the altars as a blessed one, which is just four years before the Polish friar. He was educated at the Jesuit College, following which, Marco d'Aviano entered the Capuchin Order, where he completed his theological studies and was ordained a priest a little bit earlier than Fr. Stanisław. He quickly became known as a preacher, a writer of ascetic works, a zealous apostle of

<sup>74</sup> Michał Kraus, *Historia Polonae Piarum Provinciae (1642-1686)*, a compilatory studio edition, Puszca Marińska 2008, § 13, pp. 604-614.

mercy, a great devotee of the Lord's Passion and the Blessed Mother, especially Her Immaculate Conception. Father Marco d'Aviano was considered a mystic, a charismatic and a miracle-worker, and at the same time he was also a talented papal diplomat. For those reasons, the rulers of the time would invite him to visit the different European capitals.

As a mature man, he was believed to be a friend of Emperor Leopold I, and therefore he was appointed by Pope Innocent XI to organise an alliance against the Turks. The Pope insisted that the alliance was also entered into by King Jan III Sobieski. This was why both the Apostolic Nuncio and Father Marco of Aviano asked the King for relief. After the Viennese victory, Fr. Marco remained at Emperor Leopold's side, serving him as a theologian and a confessor in a relationship which was even closer than that of Papczyński and King Jan, so much so that the Emperor was present at his deathbed.

The King took quite an immediate liking to Father Marco at their first meeting (on 8 September) — the monarch described him later on *as a man of God, not a simpleton or a bigot*. Directly after a mass celebrated for the King, he encouraged the congregation to establish a living relationship with Jesus and Mary and to put all of their trust in God — much like Father Stanisław. Father Marco did not hesitate to reveal in a personal meeting with the King that he had warned the Emperor during a private conversation, and, further, that he exhorted him and cited the reasons for which God was punishing those particular countries. Regardless of the political pressure imposed by the imperial court, he explained to the Emperor and convinced him that it would be all for the better if he did not show up at the battle front before the commencement of the actual military confrontation<sup>75</sup>. Thanks to his persuasion, the hesitant Emperor did not make an appearance, and thus, the matter of command by King Jan during the Battle of Vienna was a foregone conclusion. Jan Sobieski's son

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75 Cf. the letter of 9 September 1683, addressed to Marysieńka.

Jakub, also writes in his *Journal*, under the same date of 8 September, that on this very day his father received the Holy Communion during the mass service and that during his sermon Fr. Marco assured the King that he would win<sup>76</sup>.

Under the date of 12 September, Jakub Sobieski writes that the King, together with all his senior commanders, went in the early hours of the morning to the burnt-down Camaldolese monastery in Kahlenberg to deliberate on the budding skirmishes with the janissaries, and on the first orders issued by the King and the artillery pacification of the Turkish attack; he then moves on to describe the already incipient military action in the following terms:

*Meanwhile, the war command could be heard in unison with the pleasant sound of the trumpets, which sent a Martian tremble down everyone's spines. Each of the princes hastened to fulfill his duty. The King thought that any victory should be attributed not to men, but to the Lord of the heavenly hosts; therefore, wishing to be gifted by His hand, he went to the chapel to ask God for a fortuitous course of the ensuing battle. After attending a mass, he was full of hope that, after such a good start, a successful end would follow.*

The prince then goes on to say that his father, already ensured of the victory, went to eat something after the mass, so as to strengthen himself after some earlier fasting, lest he may faint during the hard work ahead of him that day. What made it particularly difficult was a strong gale.

The following morning after the victory, the King visited the seized camp, and then went to the city. Having reviewed the situation of the besieged, he went to the Capuchin chapel of Our Lady of Loretto to thank God for the triumph and to attend a mass. After the mass, he made his way to St. Steven's church, where he was surrounded by a big crowd of people thanking him in all manners possible for saving the city. Right after the dinner at the commandant's, he returned to the camp. Jakub does not state in his *Journal* who celebrated the mass for the King just minutes before the

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76 Cf. J. Duchniewski, *Cristofori*, EK 3, Lublin 1979, col. 632-633.



battle commenced, or in the chapel of Our Lady of Loretto, but the circumstances indicated elsewhere by the King himself lead us to believe that it was Father Marco of Aviano.

Jan Sobieski's confessor during the expedition was Fr. Kamieniecki. This fact is mentioned by M. Dyakowski, a physician to the King, who was held by him in high esteem and who caused the monarch a great deal of worry when he fell ill. When Dyakowski informed him that his health had improved, the King replied that *this bit of news delighted him so much as if he gained a few thousand people*. He did not hesitate to put the same in writing in his letter to the Queen<sup>77</sup>.

When it comes to those officiating the services and preachers, the sources do not state any specific names. For those that are clearly stated, in addition to the said Apostolic Delegate and confessor, there are several mentions of the name of Fr. Przyborowski (he preached a sermon during the Thanksgiving Mass following the victory, celebrated in the camp on 19 September; he died during the campaign) and priests Zebrzydowski, Sarnowski and Szumlański, as well as Fr. Hacki, SJ, and Fr. Skopowski, OP<sup>78</sup>. The latter is one of the three priests that Father Wyszyński describes as the friends of Father Stanisław, who cooperated closely with one another (the other two, absent at Vienna, were Benedictine Father Ch. Mirecki and Father Jan Ligeza of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri). In a letter to his wife, the King writes about his gratitude to Fr. Skopowski for the sermon he delivered before the second, this time winning, battle of Parkany. He also states that it definitely lifted the spirits of the soldiers, depressed after the defeat suffered the day before.

The frequency with which the monarch attended the masses varied depending on the circumstances, but, in general, it was day after day. Although it is a chaplain's obligation to celebrate masses and deliver sermons, the Pope's delegate did not always had the time to fulfill it, as his hands were busy with different responsibilities, and on

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<sup>77</sup> Dyakowski, *Diariusz medyczny z wyprawy wiedeńskiej*, p. 14. See letters to the Queen of 4 and 9 September.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Positio Pap., p. 692; and also VW § 76.

24 September, he was already on his way back to Italy. His presence is mentioned by the King: in Tulln — a letter of 9 September, during the battle — a letter of 13 September, in a letter of 17 September and before his departure for Italy, of 24 September.

Therefore, Bl. Father Stanisław's participation in the relief of Vienna did not consist in holding an office and having to be constantly present by the side of the King. Back in the homeland, he was also no 'court theologian'. Fr. Papczyński was a man of God, a priest, a monk, a mystic and a charismatic well-versed in theology and greatly endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit; he would never shun anyone while working as a Piarist in Podoliniec, Rzeszów and Warsaw, and as Marian Father in Puszcza Korabiewska and Góra Kalwaria.

His work was very much appreciated by the monarch himself, who wrote letters to him and visited him, seeking advice and confession, which is why he was regarded as the King's theologian, counsellor and confessor. Similarly, as noted by Leporini (VF § 26), although he was not living in the Nunciature, he served as confessor and theologian to the nuncio, A. Pignatelli, for three years.

One has to admit that the genre of literature referred to by prof. Jarra as 'literary fantasy' contributed to a number of questions being raised about the person of Fr. Papczyński, and, effectively, pushed him into the background. This kind of literature brought about some serious confusion, for although it was marked by great reverence for Father Stanisław, it was also tainted with the exuberant fantasy of its authors. Many readers and researchers thus raised doubts as to the authenticity of the facts it presented, together with suspicions of falsification and historical bias, because much of the content of these works was disparate from various certifiably original documents and eyewitness accounts.

In addition, when an author started describing what Father Stanisław was thinking, feeling, experiencing, or intending at a particular moment without stating their sources, it is rather

obvious that, having none of the protagonist's confidences at his disposal, he was no longer writing a historical account, in the strict understanding of the term. Using his own *licentia poetica*, accompanied by an unbridled imagination, he had begun to write a work of fiction.

The reaction of critics to this kind of literature has proven to be no remedy and it has failed to bring us anywhere closer to the truth, because most of those critics generally occupied an extremely opposing standpoint, questioning virtually everything that these works contained without sufficient justification, or even treating the first biographies and source documents in the same fashion. They regarded it as a consequence of the known general unreliability of histories from the Baroque period. This was the reason why someone raised a question during the beatification trial as to whether King Jan III Sobieski, as well as the future Pope Innocent XII, actually did meet with Fr. Papczyński and benefited from his counsel as a theologian and a confessor. They suggested that the reason why different authors might have resorted to falsification and legend creation was to use the authority of the figures described for vain boasting<sup>79</sup>.

Such a doubt could be easily cleared simply by an attentive reader of these deliberations. By principle, we base our research on testimonies of eyewitnesses and texts excerpted from source documents, not on novels or other works of fiction.

However, we cannot write the above questions off, since each illustrious historical figure usually gets a legend built around their person by those who lived in their immediate milieu. Papczyński might be no exception here. Hence, the folk tradition of Puszcza Mariańska and Góra Kalwaria encompass different stories about him and his deeds. Some of them are factual and documented, while others may belong to the realm of legends, such as the story of the King's prophetic dream in Puszcza

<sup>79</sup> Cf. RVH, p. 19 and the note; Fr. Leporini knew Fr. Stanisław and collaborated with him (VE, § 26).

Korabiewska, which he supposedly had on his way to Vienna. Our task here, however, shall not consist in determining the degree of accuracy and authenticity of each one of these stories, because our only focus is on the relief of Vienna and the matters it implicates. At the same time, one should bear in mind some important circumstances allowing us to get to know the reality of that time better and to reach into it more easily.

At first, we must realise that, in some cases, the lack of written documents does not prove anything. Some matters were not recorded in writing because there was no such custom, or, with regard to their very nature, it would not have been considered proper to do so. Serving as a good example of such personal issues, shrouded in a veil of discretion, can be the practice of confession and its frequency, and the repeated visits of some dignitary with the aim to benefit from the advice of a spiritual and charismatic father.

Moreover, even if an event was recorded in a chronicle or in the form of a document, that does not mean that it is certainly traceable today. This is because history has also served us with the monastery dissolution orders imposed by different tsars, during which documents were often seized, transported elsewhere or simply destroyed. Then there were also times when archives and libraries ceased to exist, as, for instance, in the case of Puszcza Korabiewska and Góra Kalwaria, where for about one hundred years there were no Marian Brothers. What also succumbed to the relentless passage of time was the historic linden tree, which fell to its end in the middle of the 20th century (it was a good thing too that J. Pietrzak had immortalised it in a photograph which he then used in his book on Fr. Stanisław).

In such conditions, it is almost a miracle that some documents have actually survived, or that the vizier's shabrack, a gift from the King to the Marians too, still exists today, although it is already crumbling with age.

And what we ought to recognise as the workings of Providence is that the first two biographies were written within the lifetime of many eyewitnesses, and also that during the trial, the postulator formulated articles about Fr Papczyński as a theologian and confessor to Jan III Sobieski and the nuncio, having conversed with the living witnesses to the events, as well as with the elderly. Apparently all the witnesses were questioned about this issue while under oath. Moreover, they also had an obligation to tell the truth about the source of their accounts.

We need not repeat the answer to the question of their relationship posed by the consulter, because it has already been given in this work. Let us only take a look at a statement (as yet unused) made by Fr. C. Fiałkowski, a former General of the Order and its archivist:

*It is true that the Servant of God was a good theologian and played the role of a confessor to the Polish King Jan the Third, as well as that he was considered a theologian by Monsignor Pignatelli, the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland at that time. To what I have testified, I have heard so from our fathers, such as from the Honourable Władysław Trzeciński Castellan of Rawa, who knew the life of this Servant of God; I have also gained my knowledge from the letters written to the Servant of God by the said King and the Nuncio, which I myself read.<sup>80</sup>*

## **7. Harbingers, Omens and the Victory Itself**

### **A. Harbingers and Omens**

And so, there is this aforementioned story about the prophetic dream the King had in Puszcza Korabiewska when setting off for the Relief of Vienna<sup>81</sup>. The story has it that in his dream, the Holy Mother assured him of the victory to come. It is difficult to verify whether this noon nap of the King really took place or whether it is only a fabric of

<sup>80</sup> C. Fiałkowski, APS 10, f. 132r-132v.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Łaski potwierdzone świadectwami wiernych [Graces Confirmed by the Testimonies of the Believers]*, p. 15.

legend. The same applies to the talk between Jan Sobieski and Father Stanisław that is supposed to have taken place under the historic linden tree – a talk during which the priest supposedly gave the King his last instructions before the battle and his assurance of the triumph to come; some authors consider this conversation to be a factual matter.

The uncertainty stems from the fact that at that time, Father Papczyński no longer lived in Puszcza Korabiewska, but in Góra Kalwaria. Moreover, in his *Journal*, Jakub Sobieski lists the localities in which the King's troops stopped alongside the corresponding dates. They set off from Warsaw on 18 July and spent the night in Falenty; the following day they stopped for a night's rest in Radziejowice, on 20 July, they stayed overnight in Rawa Mazowiecka and subsequently in Olbórz, Rosprza and Kruszyna. The army spent the entire day of 25 July in Częstochowa. Thus, they did not stop over or sleep in Puszcza Korabiewska. Nonetheless, there are other important reasons for which the story should not be treated as a mere legend.

Although the troops followed a slightly different route, though running in the proximity of Puszcza Korabiewska, one should bear in mind that the king made frequent stops during his entire expedition — even if only to attend a mass service — whether at roadside or in the nearby located sanctuaries — not only the biggest ones, such as Częstochowa, Krakow or Piekary. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine that he could omit Puszcza Korabiewska, so well-known and so dear to him, thus missing the chance to pray before the image of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Moreover, the story does not mention a stopover for a night's rest, but only a prayer and the dream the King allegedly had during a nap.

As for the second issue we are facing here: although Father Papczyński lived in Góra Kalwaria, he must have gone to Puszcza Korabiewska at some point, assumedly at the very beginning, in carrying out this mission to summon his fellow brothers to pray for victory, as he had promised

the King — for Puszcza Korabiewska, as a ‘hermitage’, was of particular importance to Marians as a special place of prayers and penitential practices. Such circumstances as time scarcity and noon naps did not afford the opportunity for a longer talk, but Sobieski surely was not expecting one. Counsel-seeking as well as longer discussions about the siege and its relief were long behind him, as these were the factors which had influenced the decision of the Sejm with regard to undertaking the expedition. And surely, none of the two men would have left such important issues to be discussed in a passing moment. However, Father Stanisław must have had a quick opportunity to wish the King good luck and reassure him of his prayerful support and the future victory.

As a result, Sobieski set off in peace, assured of his triumph, which must have seemed surprising to some. What lay at the basis of his strong conviction were surely not only the priest’s assurances, but also the King’s former experiences gathered in the Ukraine. Before that expedition as well, the King had asked Father Stanisław for his prayerful assistance, and, although usually outnumbered by his enemies, with God’s help, he was victorious in the end. He had also learnt to look for the divine support by way of various omens and events.

Jasienica is of the opinion that the King’s victories were the fruits of the great military talent of Hetman Sobieski. This is how he dramatises the description of the battle of Chocim:

*On 10 November 1673, the military talent of Jan Sobieski reached its peak. His mind was fully concentrated, while his will controlled his nerves. The offer of assistance made by the hospodar of Wallachia was kindly rejected. The Hetman demanded only that the regiments of Grigore Ghica be moved aside from the battleground. He preferred not to enhance his military forces by those several thousand belonging to the highly suspicious ally who until only the day before had been in the service of the Turks. The past mistake made by Stanisław Żółkiewski was not repeated.*

As we can see, the historian ignores the actual author of the victory, raising Hetman Sobieski to the highest rank and glorifying his military talents. But are the reasons he provides sufficient to state so? Even a chief of average military skills should know how to take advantage of the terrain and the weather conditions in a battle; he should also be smart enough to learn from past mistakes and not accept the support offered by a treacherous ally. However, let us find out about the circumstances which, according to P. Jasienica, proved decisive for the victory:

*The onrush was over, the night was falling, but the order to leave the posts was not given. The companies remained alert, repeatedly alarmed by their own trumpeters. Sobieski did not agree to have his tent put up. He stood among his shivering soldiers and horses that were growing stiff with the cold. He invited November to be his ally. The night, the icy wind and slush were a torture for the Poles and the Lithuanians, but an absolutely deadly torment for the Turks. The dawn exposed their thinning ranks. The number of fatalities was unknown. Thousands of them did not stay at their posts, and left them in the search for shelter and a bite of warm food.*

*At dawn, the artillery commanded by Marcin Kątski fired from all the cannons, the infantry quickly stormed the ramparts and began to fill in the moats — thus clearing the way for the cavalry. «Cut my neck if I fail to seize their headquarters!», the Hetman shouted, storming off with a sabre at the head of the dragoons who were being urged to attack. It was just like erstwhile Chodkiewicz at Parnawa. The soldiers supported their commander, even though only at the ramparts.*

*Stanisław Jabłonowski's hussars stormed into the camp through the southern gate, while the Lithuanians attacked from the west.*

*Those cruel men of that warlike century drew real pleasure from the view of escaping survivors. Crowds of the Turks fell down into ravines «breaking their necks, along with those of their horses», while others «died jumping off a steep rock and into the Dniester River». The spectacle was*



considered particularly charming when a bridge filled with a multitude of people collapsed: «and they drowned...». The companies commanded by the Rittmeisters Miączyński and Ruszczyk swam across the river. They slew many, additional several thousands were slaughtered by local peasants<sup>82</sup>.

After the victory, Hetman Sobieski sent a report to Vice-Chancellor Olszowski, describing the battle in these terms: *This miracle was all God's making, one reaching far beyond human imagination. To Him be glory forever.* He did not forget that before heading for Chocim, he had asked Father Stanisław for his intercession before God. He was aware that the appearance of the favourable weather was no making of his orders or his 'invitation'. He also expressed his conviction of the Divine assistance, by showing his gratitude and awarding — as we have seen earlier on — Father Stanisław and his Order. It turns out that such a Divine intervention was no isolated incident. Its next instance has been described by F. Koneczny:

*The newly-elected King felt urged to accomplish his work. For Sobieski, the victory of Chocim was only the beginning. He began his rule from delaying the very coronation ceremony, as he set off to join his troops straight from the election field. Lvov was in serious danger. The new King had only 6,000 soldiers when on the early morning of 25 August 1675, the battle at Lesienice, near Lvov, commenced. The crowds were praying on their knees before the image of Our Lady Victorious in the Jesuit church, when the Polish knights shouted loudly: «Long live Jesus, Long live Mary!» during their attack on the enemy which outnumbered them tenfold. And they gained a spectacular victory. It was ascribed to Holy Mother that a terrible thunderstorm turned against the Turks, and that on their side a gale-force wind threw horsemen off their horses. [...] The King seized the Braclaw Voivodeships and almost the entire Kiev region of the Ukraine, where some time earlier, the Hetman of the Cossacks, Doroshenko, acknowledged himself as a vassal of the sultan.<sup>83</sup>*

82 Jasienica, op.cit., pp. 283-285.

83 Jasienica, op.cit., pp. 283-285.

The personal presence of Father Stanisław during the battle of Chocim and the Relief of Vienna was not necessary, as his real assistance was of a spiritual nature and, as such, it was far more effective. By the mediation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, he begged for Her help, together with his fellow brothers and the people, praying and performing acts of penance. They addressed the Lord of the Heavenly Hosts, as it was Him alone who had the actual power and decision about victories and defeats.

Częstochowa was exceptionally dear to Sobieski; he spent there the entire day of 25 July, praying together with his troops. This city had always been the spiritual capital of the Queen of Poland, the capital of the Virgin Mary, who not so long before that had relieved the Fatherland from the Swedish occupation and aggression. Indeed, the family of Jan Sobieski had given Her the sabre once belonging to Żółkiewski, the one worn out in the defence of Poland, but She did not need such a gift. Thus, the weapon was passed down to the great-grandson, King Jan. Now he receives the sabre from the hands of the Prior with his blessing, as a sign of the victory, of which the Divine Providence shall remind him after the Viennese triumph. The scabbard, adorned with jewels — which are useless in the fight — he leaves behind.

Krakow — this is the former Polish capital, full of venerable national monuments and sanctuaries, the tombs of the patron saints of Poland, and living men and women of passionate hearts cherishing God and Poland. The King knows that he can rely on them and their spiritual support, all the more so as this is where he leaves his beloved family. And now, together with his wife, Maria Kazimiera, as well as the Apostolic Nuncio, the highest dignitaries and crowds of people, he goes from one holy place to another so as to avert defeat and beg for victory and mercy at the feet of the Holy Mother, the national patrons and saints. Then he shall visit the Silesian sanctuaries, including Piekary, as well as the more remote ones, located abroad. The King

follows in the footsteps of Father Stanisław<sup>84</sup>, imitating the saints who on their travels and pilgrimages, turned to each of the local patrons and holy angels asking for blessing, help and protection.

If Sobieski had already departed from Warsaw assured of his victory-to-be, then having received a blessing from the Church representatives, with the support of people praying in the most important Polish sanctuaries, he stood strong until the end of the campaign. He remained certain of his victory until the very end, as he knew that he was not fighting for his own cause, for his splendour and honour, but for a right cause, in the name of all those who were supporting him, in the name of the entire nation. He knew that he had taken on the challenge for the sake of his Fatherland and Europe, the whole Christian world and, above all, so as to fulfill the will of God and to multiply His glory.

Sobieski had no doubts of victory and this surprised the others, for the military power of the enemy in many respects exceeded the Christian forces. Although the Polish soldiers, as well as Austrian and German commanders visiting the King on their march, gradually began to share his optimism, some of them surely may have had nightmarish visions and dreams. God came to them as well. Having crossed the Silesian border on 30 August, an eagle is said to have appeared above the King's head, circling over it for a long while and leading him towards Vienna. This is mentioned both by Jakub Sobieski and by General Kałski, who writes:

*Die 30. Augusti, on Monday, as soon as the King got up, an eagle, large and magnificent, appeared circling the air above the King's head, as if guiding Him, and stayed with His Highness all day long<sup>85</sup>.*

The soldiers saw the eagle and spontaneously interpreted it as an auspicious sign given by God. After all, the eagle is the symbol of Poland.

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84 Cf. VW § 46, f. 11v-12.

85 Kałski, *Diariusz*, [Journal], p. 33; see: Jakub Sobieski *Diariusz* [Journal], p. 7.

On the following day, another sign appeared in the sky: at an unusual time of the day and in an unexpected spot of the cloudless sky, a beautiful, unique, multi-colour and moonlike rainbow could be seen high above the army marching with the King towards Vienna. Surely nobody has doubts that a rainbow is a Biblical symbol — yet another auspicious sign of the alliance with God. The King and all the others spend a long while contemplating the phenomenon and describing it next. Let us read General Kałski's account again:

*Die 31. Augusti, on Tuesday, we set off in the morning. The day was clear; cloudless was the sky, with no fog and no obscurity of any kind. Circa horam 721, well after the sunrise, a rainbow of an unusual shape appeared in the skies. At that moment, the sun was behind us and this rainbow was as if in the middle of the sky, directly above our heads, in the shape of the moon in the first quarter. Its ends were quite pointy and turned back from the sun. The colours were typical of any rainbow, vivid and bright, ab ipsa basi of this moon, facing the sun, ran in both directions, a second rainbow of darker colours, the one on the left being much brighter. This metheorum lasted circa two hours, and next, circa nonam disparuit, [it disappeared at about nine o'clock]. All of us gathered there, along with the King, watching the rainbow for quite some time.<sup>86</sup>*

On the same day, in addition to the rainbow, Prince Jakub spotted an eagle soaring towards it and a flock of other birds forming the symbols of victory: 'V' 'I' (*Vinces, Ioannes*) and 'J' 'W' (*Jan, You Shall Win*)<sup>87</sup> during their flight.

Undoubtedly, those external signs were of great importance — assumedly not so much for the King, as for his troops — since they seemed to prove that the whole undertaking was being guided by God and that the King's conviction of the Divine will, the justness of the cause and the certainty of the victory was something more than just a mere subjective figment of his imagination or a mere

<sup>86</sup> Kałski, op. cit., p. 34; see: Sobieski, a letter of 31 August.

<sup>87</sup> Jakub Sobieski, *Diariusz [Journal]*, pp. 7-8.

mental concept. Thus, secondary motives indicated by external observers of the campaign and historians later on, such as the desire of fame or bravery to endear himself to the Queen, faded into the background or were put into the right proportions.

## **B. Before the Battle and on the Day of the Victory**

As they were approaching Vienna, larger and larger difficulties began to pile up: night-time alarms between 8 and 10 September raised by someone who has never been identified (sabotage?); the thefts of horses and harnesses, the fleeing of terrified servants; the discovery of a basement full of wine by thirsty soldiers in a town burnt down by the Tatars and its consequences; difficulties related with the terrain, which, initially, was so muddy that cannons and wagons got bogged down in it and, subsequently, the slope of Kahlenberg, fraught with obstacles, cultivated by vineyard owners, full of deep ditches and walls, of which the King had not been informed.

To make matters worse, they were subjected to a weakening, forced, two-day fasting when the promised supplies of food for soldiers and horses stopped arriving. What is more, the expected 10-thousand Lithuanian corps 'did not make it on time', arriving as late as one month after the battle. In addition, on the very day of the commencement of the battle, they witnessed the activity of a demon imitating God, which took the form of a hurricane-force wind blowing straight in the faces of the Christian troops. The King was absolutely convinced that this came about due to the intervention of evil forces, and in the letter of 12 September, addressed to his wife, he referred to the fact that Vizier Kara Mustafa was believed to be a *practitioner of witchcraft*.

Even if it really was the intervention of a demon, vain were his efforts. Not only the King, but also the soldiers, although extremely exhausted by their hardships and efforts, and weakened by the fasting, did not lose their spirit.

The King briefly described their readiness to fight: our people are very eager. Kochowski, on the other hand, writes that the infantry moved into the battle as if dancing straight into the fire. If someone happened to think that this was only an exaggerated description made up by the poet, they can confront it with the words written by a greater realist, the general of the artillery, Kątski, who also said the Turks *did not manage to withstand the zealotness of the soldiers, who went into battle headlong as if into the dance*<sup>88</sup>. Both Jakub Sobieski and General Kątski speak of the militant attitude of the Turks with great respect and recognition, even though all their efforts proved vain. These efforts failed despite the fact that before the battle they were all treated to some coffee by the Vizier (back then, a very little-known beverage in Europe), who was hoping to enliven their spirits in this way.

Although we shall desist from describing the whole strategy of the battle or the formation of the troops at this point, as it is not the subject of our work, but of such experts as J. Wimmer, J. Wójcik and others, we must, however, draw attention to certain issues.

On 3 September, at the general meeting of commanders allied with the King, which was held in Stettelsdorf, after certain hesitations on the part of the Emperor, it was agreed and decided, with satisfaction, that King Sobieski would be the commander of the allied forces. The imperial army and the Saxons were entrusted with the left wing of the front line under the commandship of Duke Charles of Lorraine, the Germans, under Prince Georg Friedrich von Waldeck — with the central part of the formation, and the Poles, commanded, apart from the King, by Field Crown Hetman Mikołaj Hieronim Sieniawski and Grand Crown Hetman Stanisław Jabłonowski — with the right wing. However, this division of duties was not at all that strict in practice. The Austrians were assisted not only by the Saxons but also by the troops of Hieronim Lubomirski as well as several companies of Polish hussars. The Polish

<sup>88</sup> See: W. Kochowski, *Dzieło Boskie [The Work of God]*, Krakow 1683, p. 30, LXXV; Kątski, *Diariusz*, p. 43.

troops were reinforced by four large regiments of German infantry, while the German centre was supported by Polish cavalry. Some of the details are provided by the King, whereas most information is given by General Kątski and particularly by Jakub Sobieski.

The fighting began at 6 o'clock in the morning on the left imperial wing and it was quite heavy. After several hours, at about 9 o'clock, the German centre joined the battle. Its advancing divisions over-ran the Turkish skirmishers and gained their front line, which had already been reached by the left wing at about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The Polish divisions, which had also left their camp early in the morning, advanced with their equipment through the most difficult section of the forested terrain, and cleared the area of the enemy in a series of heavy clashes, in which they were supported by German infantry. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon when they reached the line of the left wing and the centre. Now the whole front stretched in one line over a distance of about six kilometres.

According to Wimmer, when the Polish troops emerged from the forest and the hussars appeared before the eyes of all in their full splendor, they were greeted by their allies with a loud cheer of joy. It seemed to have pierced the clouds, because those who felt exhausted after the long struggles against the enemy and had barely taken any rest, anxiously awaiting the Poles, now, filled with enthusiasm, suddenly felt enlivened and eager to return to the fray, ready to attack their foes right away. The commanders had to stop them almost by force.

They were overwhelmed by the same mighty power which had given life to all beings and which encompasses the whole of creation. It sustains the existence of the world, decides about the rotations and routes of billions of planets, stars, galaxies and the entire universe. It is the same Divine Spirit that Sobieski referred to several times as *the Lord of Heavenly Hosts*; the Spirit that had already entered his heart and the hearts of his army and was now rubbing off

on his allies. He came here in His might, for He found the unity and harmonious cooperation of those who many a time in the past were enemies destroying one another. Now they were allies, and where there is cooperation, harmony and love, there is also God with His omnipotence, for He is Love — as the Gospel teaches us and as Blessed Father Stanisław<sup>89</sup> often reminds us in his teachings.

A similar scene occurred once again, when the King, stripped of his armour and wearing royal robes, and enlightened by the Divine Spirit, tangibly represented by a white dove, gave the order for a general attack. When thus attired, he appeared before his allies in all of his royal splendor, together with his hussars, everybody stood in awe, contemplating the sight for a while<sup>90</sup>.

The decisive impetus of the Polish right wing took place at about three o'clock. The main attack of the entire front line against the Turks, at about four o'clock, was so violent, and the strength and will to fight were so powerful in the army that the Turkish front soon began to collapse, much sooner than it had been expected, initially from the side of the left wing under Duke Charles of Lorraine. In this crucial moment, the King consulted the commanders of the allied armies and changed the previously planned strategy of the battle. He gave the order for an immediate attack, although — according to the plan — the decisive impact was to take place on the following day. He then rode off towards the tent of the Grand Vizier. General Kałski writes that the Polish troops stormed into the camp at about six o'clock<sup>91</sup>.

Before darkness fell, the result of the battle was already set in stone. The enemy suffered an ignominious defeat which nobody had expected. Many Turks managed to save their lives only because they escaped into the dark of the night. The tent of Kara Mustafa<sup>92</sup>, as large as the old town in Lvov or Warsaw was seized too. The Vizier fled

<sup>89</sup> Cf. IC f. 46r-v, § 2; *Pisma zebrane* [Collected Works], p. 699.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Wimmer, op.cit. pp. 87; 93.

<sup>91</sup> Kałski, *Diariusz*, [Journal], p. 45.

<sup>92</sup> Apart from that given by the king, a similar description of the tent of the vizier is provided by J. Ch. Pasek in *Pamiętniki RP*, 1683, [Memoirs of 1683 AD], p. 3.



hurriedly on horseback, crying and wearing only one shirt. The allies also took numerous tents, wagons, horses and treasures, in addition to mules and camels, cannons and various military equipment, large supplies of gunpowder and ammunition, as well as all the goods in which the Turks had sought hope for victory.

*When the vizier realised that he could not resist any longer, he called his sons and cried like a baby. Then he said unto the khan: «Save me if you can!» The khan responded: «We know the king, we shall not defeat him. We must think of saving ourselves»<sup>93</sup>.*

In a letter of 13 September, addressed to his wife, the King nearly paraphrases the ritual Biblical words: *Let everybody rejoice and give thanks to God for he did not allow the heathen to ask: «Where is your God now?»* (see: Ps 115:2 and Ps 42:4,11).

The authentic Europe, relieved from the terrifying prospect of the future, celebrated the victory with great joy and vivacity. Let the victorious leader himself describe this first moment:

*All the troops, who performed their duty with excellence, ascribed this victory to God and to us. When the enemy began to run and its formation gave in under our attack – as I had to fight the vizier, who threw his entire army against my right wing, so that our centre and the main body of the army, as well as the left wing had nothing to do, and therefore all of the German reinforcements returned to me – all the princes and the Elector of Bavaria, Waldeck, gave me a hearty hug and kissed my face, and my generals laid kisses on my hands and my legs; and let alone the soldiers! The officers and all the regiments of cavalry and infantry shouted: «Ach, unzer brave Kenik<sup>94</sup>!» They obeyed me like our soldiers never did. And let alone today morning, the Prince of Lorraine and the Prince of Saxony (as we did not meet yesterday, because they were at the very end of the left wing, which I had reinforced with several companies of hussars sent to the marshal of the*

<sup>93</sup> The letter of 13 September 1683, addressed to the Queen; cf.: Kałski, *ibidem*.

<sup>94</sup> Correct German spelling: *Ach, unser brave König!* Footnote added by the Translator.

court); and this commander Staremerk<sup>95</sup>! They all kissed me, hug me and called me their Saviour. Later on, I visited two churches. The ordinary folk kissed my hands, my legs, my robes; others only touched me, exclaiming: «Ah, let us kiss this hand so brave!<sup>96</sup>»

What the King needed most among the tumult and excitement, and although full of indescribable joy and gratitude to the saviour, was spiritual balance and humility so that all this adoration did not to 'go to his head'. Therefore, Divine Providence, which he trusted so much, helped him to resist the temptation to believe only in his own power and glory. It opened his eyes to the fuller reality. Hence, he continues:

*They all wanted to shout «Vivat!», but one could see that they were afraid of their officers and their seniors. One group could not help it and shouted: «Vivat!», but I could see their fear, and that it was not approved of by their superiors; so, having only eaten a dinner at the commander's, I left the town for the camp and the crowds led me towards the gate, raising their hands.*

*I could see that also the commander looked askance at the municipal magistrate, for when they greeted me, he did not even introduce him to me. Princes have arrived and the Emperor has sent a message that he is only a mile away; I shall have to finally finish writing this letter in the morning, for I ought to stop writing now, not being able to indulge my heart with your presence.*

This manifestation of negative sentiments could be understood even without pointing to Divine Providence, when taking into account the order given by the Emperor and his court that the triumphal entrance into the city be reserved for him, as well as Sobieski's erstwhile pro-French orientation and the vindictiveness of the opposition, which was not so easy to quench. Still, it might not have served as enough of a deterrent for the King against the temptation of seeking only his own glory. Therefore, God introduced a

95 Correct German spelling: *Stahremberg*. Footnote added by the Translator.

96 The letter of 13 September 1683 to the Queen.

papal delegate into the scheme of things. The King reports further: *Padre d'Aviano, who simply could not stop kissing me, says he saw a white dove flying above our troops*<sup>97</sup>.

In all this modesty, Sobieski fails to be accurate here. Father Michał Kraus, who also wrote about this matter, claimed that the Capuchin Father, who had given blessings to the King and the entire army before the battle, saw a white dove flying over the King's head for a long time into the fight. This symbol of the Holy Spirit, expressing the light and power of God, was obviously sent to the commander during the heat of the conflict. If Fr. Marco could not stop kissing the King's head, then it was only because — as is further explained by Fr. Kraus — he had seen with his own eyes how that head was sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit<sup>98</sup>.

*We are pursuing the enemy into Hungary today. The Electors will not leave my side for a moment. This must be God's blessing upon us, for which may He be honoured, glorified and praised forever!*

This is how the King continued his account in the same letter. Interestingly, his son Jakub Sobieski makes no mention of a white dove anywhere in his *Journal*. Apparently, the King wished to convey Fr. Marco's observations to his wife only. Divine Providence, however, decided to avert the temptation to look for his own personal glory in this victory even from his son.

On this ground, still red with the recent battle, Providence reminded him of the Mother of God and of the promise of victory given to the King, showing the face of the Queen of Poland from Częstochowa, not unlike a seal or a signature under the gained victory. This is only described by the Prince, because the King only informed his wife that he intended to write to her about it on a future occasion.

*On the 17th day of the month, we spent the night at Fischau, where an image was found that was very similar to the one in Częstochowa and that had an inscription reading: «under this image of Mary, Jan shall be the victor»;*

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>98</sup> M. Kraus, *Historia*, [History], op. cit., pp. 609 and 610.

*the reverse side read: «Under this sign of Mary, you shall be the conqueror, Jan». This inscription was white-painted, as if cut out of paper, and each of them was held by an angel.*

This gesture of Divine Providence, in a situation where no one knew by whom and when such a picture was painted that heralded so well Jan III Sobieski's victory, was of such great importance to him that he decided to write a separate letter about it to his wife. The discovery was a highly significant fact for him, since not so long before that, the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, as the Queen of Poland, had saved the country from the Swedish invasion. So then, every encounter with this image of Our Lady stirred in him the memory of his treason against King Jan Kazimierz, against the Fatherland and, hence, against Our Lady, the Queen of Poland. At that time, in an atmosphere of fairly widespread defiance and aversion to the King's policies, he crossed over to the enemy ranks and fought under their flag against his own countrymen. Within a few months time, he understood his mistake and was granted a pardon by King Jan Kazimierz, and shortly afterwards he was even given high offices and the greatly responsible duties associated with them. In the spirit of retribution for the sin of treason, he tried to perform them selflessly and with such dedication and commitment, especially at Podhajce and Chocim, that Poland not only forgave him, but also put a royal crown on his brow. Finally, here in Vienna, he lived to experience the highest glory of victory, which served as a proof of God's forgiveness, additionally confirmed by the painting found, as if the seal of approval as given by the Queen and Mother of Poland. This divine method, leading to a consolidation of character in humility, is shown by Bl. Father Stanisław through the shining example of St. Peter the Apostle:

*«I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven» (Mt 16:19). Consider how great was the Providence and the wisdom of God in appointing not the innocent John or the righteous James, but the wicked Peter, who had denied Jesus, to be the supreme head of the Church, the leader of the Christian hosts,*

*His deputy. Indeed we needed a Shepherd who could forgive the stray lambs, and when they repent, mercifully take them back into Christ's flock. Since he himself had strayed once, he realised the strength of the human tendency to do wrong, he knew how easily it is to fall, and once a sinner rises again, what great will they have to do good!*

*Therefore, you too must learn how to be compassionate with the sinners, rather than angry with them. For this is the rule of Providence, to allow a great temptation or even a fall to happen to the righteous and to those who wish for perfection, as well as to others, such as superiors, so that, once they come back to their senses, they support others and know how to hasten with help to those poor souls who are inexperienced in the field of evil.*

*Yes indeed! You have to know that sin is sometimes a means of salvation. Someone once said: «For many it is far more useful not to be completely free from temptations, but rather to be attacked by them on a more frequent basis (and even down to the point of succumbing to them) – so that they do not feel too confident and perhaps avoid succumbing to pride<sup>99</sup>».*

### **C. The Attitudes of the King and the Emperor Following the Victory**

The Emperor, conscious of the fact that he is located on the highest pedestal possible and reassured of this position by his court and politicians, knows what to do in order to save his honour and grand majesty.

However, following the victory gained by Sobieski, he resembles a self-conscious child rather than a serious statesman. At first, he tries to use his officials to muffle any spontaneous manifestations of joy and gratitude that people feel for the victorious commander. He, thus, takes leave of his senses, tolerating the order to fire at Polish soldiers given in the city by his subordinates. Moreover, surrounded by his entourage and preceded by

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99 O naśladowaniu Chrystusa, [The Imitation of Christ], Vol. I, Chapter. 20, n. 19, [IC 122v, n.1].

two trumpeters, he makes a ritual of his visit to Sobieski with grotesque pomp. Although he does thank him for the victory, he then fails to show due gratitude to the prince and other merited commanders out of fear of diminishing his own greatness in the process.

Having only his own political goals in view, he is tardy with his consent to the continuing of the war campaign and once the Turkish threat is over, he is no longer seriously thinking about entering into a peace treaty with Hungary. He has his courtiers and politicians, who will do everything in their power to make sure that no one can overshadow the majesty of his glory. J. Wójcik writes the following about Sobieski:

*Almost since the very beginning, the country which owed him so much refused to acknowledge his decisive contribution to the victory; they even went so far that the instruction of the imperial chancellery, targeted at the countries under the Habsburg rule, regarding the festive celebrations of the triumph of 12 September 1683, issued a few days later, Sobieski was not even mentioned, and nor was the Polish army or their contribution to and role in the liberation of the imperial capital, as well as in the Battle of Parkany<sup>100</sup>.*

Being mostly interested in strengthening his own prestige, the Emperor pays no heed to others; he does not care enough to supply provisions for the meritorious allied army, famished and exhausted after the battle; he cares not to provide medical attention to the injured, nor to bury the killed with due dignity. His main concern right now is to organise a triumph for himself, as the only deserving victor.

Sitting on his throne, he tries hard to convey an image of himself as an *Übermensch*, forgetting that he is but a regular mortal. He is nourishing the same idea which will become deeply rooted in Austria and Germany in the future, bringing partitions and long-drawn bondage to the Commonwealth, only to get even fiercer later on in adopting the form of Nazism and devour millions of Europe's inhabitants, not unlike an insatiable monster.

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100 Wójcik, op. cit., pp. 528-529.

In contrast, with regard to King Jan Sobieski, when it comes to the basic course of action taken, despite his grand success as a commander, he does not give in to pride and he does not succumb to the temptation of vanity. For he does not forget that Our Lord is the true Commander of the Holy Troops, the actual maker of victories, and the One Ruler of the World. This is why Sobieski does not seek glory without restraint. Carefully watching the actions taken by the Emperor, he slowly begins to lose his patience. Seeing how this man's main priority is to secure his own fame, he lets the Emperor be and is glad to excuse himself from the bombastic celebration of the Emperor's 'fame' in the city.

Therefore, King Sobieski declines merry-making and celebrations, instead he sings the hymn *Te Deum laudamus* and celebrates a thanksgiving mass among his soldiers in the Polish camp outside the city.

On 13 September, he writes: *The Emperor is but one and a half miles away, sailing on the Danube; but I can see that he does not really wish to see me. To secure his pomp, he allegedly requested to be taken to the city as soon as possible pour chanter le Te Deum [to sing the Te Deum], which is why I am not in his way, taking it as a great luck not to have to partake in these ceremonies, in which he has not even acknowledged us.*

This King, who never forgets the unceasing Divine help and still remembers how to put his faith in God, does not stop being a just and humble man, one with a good, human heart. The accounts that depict him as a xenophobe, whose heart is filled with hatred for his foes, are nothing less but lampoons, actively disseminated by his political adversaries, rather than serious historical sources.

Owing to God's help, his royal heart does not harden, retaining its sensitivities. He suffers great emotional torments when he sees the multitude of Austrian women and children killed by the fleeing Turks; he is deeply moved when he beholds his soldiers — abandoned, injured and dying; he cannot stand the sight of the famished, dying

horses and he feeds them — he even takes pity on a hungry lioness left behind by the Turks and bemoans the fate of a beautiful dead ostrich.

He is sympathetic towards others, even the enemies, and he knows how to respect everyone's human dignity. This is why he feels sorry for the Hungarian insurgents, who were fighting against the Emperor, and he pities their fate:

*Why should these innocent folks suffer so much? Wouldn't they be glad to stay at home? I am even sending back home the Hungarian war captives I took, assuring them that we were here to fight the heathens, and not Christians or Calvinists (as they had been told). This nation is constantly raising their hands to God thanking us and gives itself under our protection, placing all their hope in us – and what am I supposed to behead them for? May they be together with those who are feeding us here and will continue to do so!* <sup>101</sup>

Even the Turks themselves, who fear him as their slayer, quickly note his virtues, appreciating them and trusting him, which many examples testify to. They also have an interest in it, for it is saving thousands of their poor countrymen from death. The king cannot help but wonder that they are surrendering to him so easily, whereas they were ready to fight the Austrians and the Germans until the end, until the last drop of blood has been shed. In a letter of 17 September, addressed to his wife, the King describes the following incident:

*Having left Vienna, I was walking alone along the advance guard; all of a sudden, I saw a castle which hasn't been savaged, and so I asked what it was. They told me this was the castle where they kept lions; so I went there, and while approaching it, I heard gunshots. [...]. I sent someone to find out what the shooting was about; and they tell me that a few dozens janissaries, who had crawled out of the Viennese trenches under the cover of the night, had locked themselves in one of the towers, expecting the vizier would come back for them and claiming that they would never surrender themselves to the Germans.*

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101 King's letter of 20 October 1683.



*Since they have shot a lot of men already and nothing would get them out of there but only a bomb of sorts, I ordered to let them know that I was there. And having heard my name, they left the tower and I led them in good health to my camp. I found a lioness there as well – very hungry was that beast, so I fed her. But more importantly, I found there some fifty thousand sacks filled with Turkish crackers, which I then had delivered to the camp on a daily basis.*

*And on 28 October, he writes again: May Our Lord be praised for ever and ever! For He sends graces upon us daily in His unspeakable kindness! Against the expectations of all and beyond all imagining, we relieved this fortress in a heavy rainfall, in bitter cold, with no feed for the horses and no food for ourselves; thanks to God's miraculous work, the enemy had only three mosques in this city and surrendered the same night, that is only on the fourth day of the siege, having heard of me and our armies, without the Brandenburg troops, for they stayed out of this fight, claiming to be weak and diseased. There were some five thousand Turks on this fortress and two pashas, whom the vizier had ordered to defend the fortress until the last drop of blood, while he himself fled to Buda, causing a just outrage among all the Turks here – for he escaped alone leaving others to fight and threatening to behead them if they failed. This troop left for Buda with nothing but hand weapons and their souls.*

Naturally, those two pashas from Strzygom, who, having surrendered themselves to Jan Sobieski, saving something in the region of five thousand Turkish soldiers, were soon after beheaded by their vizier.

What describes the King's attitude in detail is the letter of 11 October 1683, addressed to his wife, which he had written after the surrender of another fortress in Szecsény:

*Lord God graced us with such luck then and showed us such holy benevolence, listening to our sighful prayers, that only after a non-stop three-hour fire did they raise a white flag and laid their hands out in the open on the walls, begging for mercy. [...].*

*They then asked to see me; once they were brought before me, they started shivering like fish, they fell to the ground and kissed the trims of my robe. And when they begged me to spare their lives, I told them: «I give you my word, although I would have preferred if you had surrendered yesterday». Upon hearing me say that, they fell to the ground again and started excusing themselves, saying that: «the vizier would have had us beheaded straight away». To which I said again: «Fear not. Not a hair shall fall off your heads. We do not pride ourselves in good fortune, for it is all God's doing». And they replied all together: «We were vain and that is why God is punishing us now».*

As we see, the common Turkish officers and soldiers trusted him because they were convinced that he is a just man, devoted to God, who keeps his word and who does not indulge in cruelty or stoop to treachery, political ambushes and lies. Jan III Sobieski will come to understand them even better once he lays his hands on the letters written by these poor commanders and soldiers fighting on the frontline that are filled with complaints about the inhumane vizier. As the King learns, they are forced by their 'Übermenschen' to fight under the pain of the sword or the hanging noose — by those who believe they deserve to be the rulers of the entire world.

Their supreme Turkish ruler — *the shadow of God on Earth* — sends a green noose as a token of warning to all military commanders, even those of the highest rank. Having set off on a campaign, even Vizier Kara Mustafa, powerful, dangerous and merciless also for his own people was gifted with such a keepsake. However, his time of strangling and hanging people will come to an end, for he himself will find a noose around his neck soon enough. Here, death is lurking behind every corner, because this is a price to be paid by those who have let themselves be tempted with the riches of the world promised to them by the Devil, overlooking the fact that they were dealing with the Father of Lies.

But why would they fight so tenaciously against the Emperor's troops? They fight the Austrians and the Germans until the very end, for such people are burning far too strongly with their vengeful desires and their wish to eradicate them as harmful weeds. They even killed the boys that the king had left for himself as servants, before his very eyes.

Under the date of 12 September, Dyakowski writes: *There are over ten thousand injured and sick in the Turkish camp, who in the prolonged fighting.* But then he continues on 18 September: *A rumour has been spread that the allies, having seized the Turkish camp, «slew all the wounded with sabres in a blink of an eye». It seems to be a probable expression of revenge, especially when it comes to Austrians, for the cruel deeds committed by the Muslims on the local folk.* This fact is also stigmatised by Turkish chroniclers.

Let us be honest now: they murdered over ten thousand sick and helpless people out of revenge! The Turks also murdered without mercy, but they were of a different creed, whereas these here were Christians, for whom there is no greater commandment than that urging one to love his God and neighbour. And as Fr. Stanisław used to say so very often: the commandment to love one's foe as well. They should be able to realise the magnitude of evil they perpetrated. After all, these were someone else's sons, who would then be impatiently awaited by their parents. They were husbands, whose love and support would be awaited — day in, day out — by their lonely wives. Most probably, quite a lot of them were also fathers, whose children would never see their fathers again, having been orphaned for life.

As we have seen, Sobieski took a different course of action, for he trusted the Creator, who is the source of life, peace, happiness and joy. As a theologian, Fr. Stanisław follows the whole Church in saying that these words describe the state of the soul to which Christ leads everyone, for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He reminds us that a human heart should be a home for God and His treasury of grace, for the human being was created

for happiness in God's image and likeness. God should be in the heart, as He is on His altar. When He comes to it in the Eucharist as love and life, then the heart of the man is filled with love for everyone without exceptions:

*I shall not go any further – let me just limit myself to the question of the heart and finish my discourse: if – according to the thought of St. Bernard – «the heart is indeed God's altar», then it should be dedicated to God alone. The author of The Imitation of Christ reminds you, Christian: «He wishes to possess your heart all to Himself and as its King to sit on His own throne<sup>102</sup>», just as God at His altar. Oh God! Please make it be so for ages and ages to come!<sup>103</sup>. When it comes to mutual love, may each and every one of you know that he shall be dearer to the Divine Majesty whom God shall deem as distinguishing himself with mutual love. Lest anyone forget that love is the soul of his institute and as far as he strays from it, thus far shall he stray away from life<sup>104</sup>.*

#### **D. The Defeat and Victory of Parkany**

The awareness of God's protection, which Jan III Sobieski, who was doing his best to fulfill God's will, had at all times, accompanied him for a while yet, and not just in the moment of triumph and victory, but also at the time of defeat. Divine Providence still remembered about him in the pursuit of the enemy and brought him help, showing him clear signs which he was able to interpret and which he knew how to use, as evidenced by his letters.

Chasing the foe, he was expecting a defeat, because he had seen the causes leading to it. He predicted that it would be just punishment because, as a result of the weakening of the army's morale and discipline, some soldiers began to commit banditry: robbing Hungarian villages, killing people and burning houses. The three worst offenders, who were

102 Tomasz à Kempis, *O naśladowaniu Chrystusa*, [*The Imitation of Christ*], vol. 2, Chapter. 7,2, Krakow 1949.

103 TDM, *Pisma zebrane*, [*Collected Works*], p. 1091.

104 *Norma vitae*, chapter II, § 4. Cf. also IC f. 46r, § 2: Wherever there is true love, Jesus shall be as well.

additionally charged with an act of sacrilege, were burnt in the camp, while several others were hanged.

At all times he kept his eyes peeled for signs; on the eve of the defeat, he saw a black dog persistently loitering in front of the army — a dog whose ears had been cropped. The sight of this animal bothered him immensely. He also noticed a black eagle, which is usually a harbinger of bad news; the bird was flying low above them and then towards the back of the formations of the advancing army. A black eagle was a particularly easy symbol to interpret for the King, and so it probably is for all of us, especially in the context of the complications already emerging in the cooperation with Austrian politicians. In order to achieve their goals, they managed to sway the Emperor to their own benefit, as well as to mobilise the Polish pro-Imperial opposition against the King. Jan III Sobieski learned about this from the letters received from his wife; he was nervous about it and let himself be tormented by this realisation, because, unfortunately, he could not fully reap the rewards of the advantage he had achieved over the enemy. But the black mutilated animal must also have served as a clear omen to him, because the Turkish army, albeit defeated at Vienna, was crippled, yet still threatening — just as a wounded animal would have been; the following day it would deal the Polish army some serious blows.

After the defeat and — according to the King's understanding — once the debt to Divine justice had been settled, he regained his confidence in a victory ahead. He kept his eyes peeled for other signs: already the very next day, he spotted a white eagle circling over the army and once again leading it into victory; he also saw — this time, he was the only witness to the omen — a white dove, the symbol of light and power.

Sobieski informed his beloved Marysieńka of all this, hoping that she would be able to understand him well. After the defeat he had suffered, he counted on the help of God and 'infallibly' — as he writes in a letter dated 10 October — *expecting triumph*, which he did gain the following day:

*Marysieńka, my only love! How good is our God! In return for a little set-back, He gave us a greater victory than that we gained at Vienna. And so, we shall not cease to thank Him and to assure Him of our love, and to constantly keep on asking for further signs of mercy to His people.*

*We shall order again that Ossowski in Krakow should officiate obsequies for those who died in these battles. [...] I am, by the grace of God, in good health after yesterday's victory, as if the clock had moved twenty years backwards, but those two nights had taken their toll on me, for I deplored the tarnished fame of our nation. But all that, by God's good will, has changed for the better now and the Germans lavish praise on us again.*

This second defeat suffered by the Turks finally put an end to the threat they had posed to Christian Europe. Never again would they regain such power as that which they had had before — for a king was found who gave glory to God, attributing the victory he had achieved to Him and to the intercession of Our Lady.

The Blessed Father Stanisław did not forget about the King, who after days of triumph and glory, followed by arduous criticism and the sabotaging of his plans by political adversaries, finally fell seriously ill and ended his time on Earth. It was at this very point that the Lord God allowed Fr. Stanisław to fully comprehend the situation of the late King, that he was awaiting help. This help is described in the following manner by Teixeira, the Portuguese author of a biography of Father Stanisław:

*Advancing in years, the Venerable Stanisław was wholly dedicated to the service of God and the good of others. Humble prayer and ardent love overwhelmed him and detached him from the earth so much that he would levitate while contemplating the greatness and perfection of God, as if he was giving in to holy impatience and could not wait to get to Heaven, where he would finally enjoy the blessed sight of God.*

*At those moments, when he was being elevated in spirit in the contemplation of the infinite Good, the merciful Lord revealed to him the special secrets of His Divine Providence.*

Once, when he was engulfed in choir prayers in the company of his Brothers and standing in front of the awe-striking tribunal of the Supreme Judge of the living and the dead, Jesus Christ, the eternal God and Lord, he saw one soul who was being severely tried and trembling in fear of eternal damnation for his sins. Moved with compassion and pity for the poor soul, the Venerable Father broke his silence and spoke these words to the Friars: «Let us pray together for the soul which is being judged at this very moment». Although the Reverend Father did not disclose the identity of the soul to anyone, many had reasons to believe that it was King Jan III, who died at the same time in Warsaw. The Venerable Father, who was his theologian, could have supported him with his own prayers and those of his religious brothers because the King had been very dedicated to the Marian Congregation<sup>105</sup>.

Although God had placed him in the foreground, he summoned many agents for the execution of His plan and He prepared them for harmonious cooperation. The main initiator of the relief, inspired by God, was not Fr. Papczyński, as Kołodziejski suggested, but rather Pope Innocent XI. He used Marco of Aviano as a tool to organise a Christian coalition. It comprised the Austrian Emperor Leopold I with his army, including the eminent Duke Charles of Lorraine, followed by the princes of the German Reich with their armies, and finally, King Jan III Sobieski with his Polish army — famous for its hussars.

A unique, providential role to play was given to the King, as chief strategist and leader, well-experienced in fighting this particular enemy. The Blessed Father Stanisław, as a theologian and man of God, served the King with his spiritual guidance and prayerful assistance. It would have been unthinkable to be lacking any of these components decided upon by God Himself. In the absence of unity and fruitful cooperation under the leadership of this particular commander, the fate of Christian Europe could have turned out differently.

105 J. Teixeira OFM, *Vida do Veneravel Servo de Deos o Padre Estanislaw de Jesus Maria*, Lisboa 1757, p. 36, § 103-104.

For, after all, it was Christ who promised that wherever two or three gathered up in His name, He would come, too. And He is not only the third man, but also God, with all His omnipotence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it is worth considering what could occur if God's plan were to be implemented and the greatest countries in the world started cooperating in peace and love! If they were to direct their efforts not towards mutual destruction, through the use of increasingly expensive and effective weapons, but rather if they were to undertake such initiatives that would benefit all of humanity: if they began to develop the barren deserts of the Earth, and maybe even inhabit other planets! Would it not be better if they took care of praising God and, in accordance with the plan of the Creator, did not destroy but rather *subdued the earth?* (Genesis 1:28).

In general, the task stated at the beginning seems to have been successfully accomplished. We have seen what was entailed by the efforts on the part of the Bl. Father Stanisław for the welfare of the Fatherland and we have been presented with a depiction of his contribution to saving Christian Europe. His role as a theologian, confessor and prayer companion to the King, appealing for joint action in love and harmony, was significant. He performed these tasks faithfully and diligently together with his people.

Our mission has been accomplished, but certain questions may arise:

- 1/ Did the Turks evaluate the defeat and identify its causes similarly to the way we did it?
- 2/ If King Jan III Sobieski did God's will faithfully, why do some historians accuse him of many wrongdoings?
- 3/ Having such a capital of greatness and fame at his disposal, why did the King fail to use it for the benefit of the country?

Should we not continue to search for the surely existing answers to these questions, even if it means widening the scope of research?



**RESOLUTION  
OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
dated 31 March 2011**

**For the Honouring of the Figure and Attainments  
of the Blessed Father Stanisław Papczyński**

The Senate of the Republic of Poland hereby pays tribute to Father Stanisław Papczyński, an illustrious priest, a theologian, the co-founder of the Polish school of spirituality, a patriot, a preacher and the founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers — the first Polish male religious order.

Father Stanisław Papczyński was born on 18 May 1631, in Podegrodzie, in Kotlina Sądecka (the Sądecka Valley). He was educated at Jesuit and Piarist colleges. Upon graduation, he entered the Piarist Order, because of the Marian character of that particular congregation. In 1661, he was ordained a priest. He worked as an educator and gained a reputation of being a respected preacher and teacher of rhetoric.

In the 1670s, he began establishing his new apostolic work in Puszcza Korabiewska (Korabiew Forest, later known as Puszcza Mariańska, i.e. Marian Forest). Ever since he was a child, he had felt an intense and truly special bond with the Immaculate Virgin Mary. It was for this very reason that he founded the Marian Order, whose mission was to pursue three objectives of particular importance in his day and age: to propagate the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to urge believers to pray for the dead, to help vicars and parish priests in performing their pastoral duties and in teaching the articles of faith to the simple folk. It was a time when the Commonwealth was waging wars with Sweden, Transylvania, with the Cossacks, Muscovites and Turks — the time of the ‘Deluge’<sup>106</sup>, the Defence of Jasna Góra and the Lvov Oath of Jan Kazimierz.

<sup>106</sup> The Second Northern War - the Swedish invasion of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. (Footnote added by the Translator).

Many of the opinions, admonitions and recommendations preached by Father Stanisław Papczyński still hold their relevance today. He wrote that *a man without love is a shadow without the sun, a body without a soul, simply nothing [...] love is the soul, the light, the life of religious orders and every human community*. He also taught the following:

*[...] there is nothing more wonderful under the sun, nothing loftier, nothing more precious than Polish freedom. [...] They do not forget, your foes, about the Commonwealth — the greatest country of the greatest countries; your enemies do not forget that your position, integrity and your general salvation rests on the shoulders of the brave defenders of your freedom; the monuments of the eternal memory [...] are deserved by those who give their lives to save their homeland; they rightfully merit the unfading crown of glory. [...] The most glorious thing a noble mind can do is donate its property and life to public affairs. [...] All those who dream of securing immortality for themselves should take up this profound and noble thought — that the Commonwealth should be understood as something to which it is worth committing and dedicating yourself completely. [...] we are born not for ourselves, but for our Fatherland. He is not a citizen of the state who lives only for himself, although it can be hardly said that someone lives for themselves if they do not live for anyone else. [...] We need real men, not villains or scums of the earth. Gift your Fatherland with Poles, not flunkeys, that is to say, give it strong and brave folk who are capable of great efforts, who are primed for battle and prepared to participate fully in council.*

The writings of Father Stanisław feature many more potent and significant texts on the love of the Commonwealth, as well as the roles and responsibilities of its citizens.

Father Stanisław Papczyński died on 17 September 1701. He devoted his entire life to the creation of the Marian Order, as well as to the service to the Church and Poland,

especially to the poor. The fame of his attainments for the benefit of the Church and the country was so overwhelming that, on 20 December 1764, the Coronation Sejm of King Stanisław August Poniatowski submitted a petition to the Holy See for the beatification of Stanisław Papczyński.

Over the three hundred years following his death, Father Papczyński has become a moral, religious and patriotic authority for many. The day of 16 September 2007 saw the beatification of Father Stanisław at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Licheń.

The Polish Senate hereby recognises the Blessed Father Stanisław Papczyński as a paragon of the worthy role that a true Pole plays who is fully dedicated to the Fatherland's affairs. The timeliness and timelessness of his moral and civic teachings justify any attempt at bringing the figure of Fr. Stanisław closer to the present generation of Poles, particularly to the nation's young people. The Senate urges all educational circles to popularise the figure and achievements of the Blessed Father.

The Resolution shall be published in the Official Journal *Monitor Polski*.

MARSHAL OF THE SENATE  
(signature illegible)  
Bogdan BORUSEWICZ

## ABBREVIATIONS

- APS — *Acta Processuum Sacrorum*, in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Poznań.  
DW — *Dziennik czynności [Journal of Activities]*, Fr. Kazimierz Wyszyński.  
IC — *Inspectio cordis*.  
PKW — *Pisma O. K. Wyszyńskiego [The Works of Father K. Wyszyński]*, studio edition, Puszczka Mariańska 2002.  
Positio Pap. — *beatif. et can. S. D. S. Papczyński*, Romae 1977.  
Positio Wysz. — *beatif. et can. S. D. C. Wyszyński*, Romae 1986.  
PP — *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus*, Romae 1953.  
RVH — *Relatio et vota dell' Ufficio Storico, tenuta il 23 nov. 1977*.  
TDM — *Templum Dei Mysticum*.  
VF — *Vita Fundatoris, Leporini Mansuetus OFM Ref.*  
VW — *Vita ven. Servi Dei Patris Stanislai*, Wyszyński Casimirus.

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## T A B L E   O F   C O N T E N T S

1. The Senate Honoured Father Stanisław Papczyński	7
2. The Road Leading to Knowing the Illustrious Figure	8
3. Europe in the 17th Century and the Prospects	11
4. Biographies and Mutual Relations of the Two Men	20
A. Personal Details and the Functions Performed	20
B. Mutual Relations of Fr. Stanisław and Sobieski	23
5. The Ideals the Two Men Had in Common	30
A. The Love of the Fatherland	30
B. The Cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Divine Providence	37
C. Love for and Trust in God	41
D. Care for Those Who Departed from Life in Battle and as a Result of Diseases	49
6. The Participation of Bl. Father Stanisław in the Relief of Vienna	51
7. Harbingers, Omens and the Victory Itself	63
A. Harbingers and Omens	63
B. Before the Battle and on the Day of the Victory	71
C. The Attitudes of the King and the Emperor Following the Victory	79
D. The Defeat and Victory of Parkany	86
8. Resolution of the Senate of the Republic of Poland	91
9. Abbreviations	94
10. Sources and Literature	95

*Hail Thee, the Ark of the  
Covenant, the Throne of  
Solomon, the Rainbow  
Composed of Beautiful  
Colours by the  
Almighty Hand!*



*Photo: Fr. M. Kordaszewski MIC (20 July 2008)*

**The Church of St. Michael the Archangel,  
rebuilt after the fire of 1993;  
it is home to the miraculous image of  
Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.**