

Waldemar PARUCH (ed.)

Christianity in the History of Poland and the Poles (966-2016)

Translated by Jerzy Adamko, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warszawa 2016, 252 pp.

The anniversary of one millennium and half of century from Christianisation of Poland determined the publication of an interesting and valuable book-album that emphasizes the most important aspects of this topic.

Segmented in six big chapters and accompanied by interesting illustrations, photos, chronologies (pp. 233-248) and maps, the work has a foreword signed by the Primate of the country, Archbishop Wojciech Polak (pp. 8-10), but also two letters of gratitude, one of Andrzej Duda's, the president of the state (pp. 4-5) and the other of the Marshal of Sejm, Marek Kuchcinski and the one of Senate, Stanisław Karczewski (pp. 6-7).

After speaking about the jubilee from 1966 and the celebration moments related to it, Archbishop Wojciech insists on the necessity to see the moment that generated the publication of the book as related with the necessity to renew Christian commitment and the discovering of vocation. He underlines the fact that:

«Without any doubt, the present Jubilee Year should serve not only to remember the historical events, but, first of all, to honestly reflect on ourselves and commit ourselves to Christian vocation. At the next stages of this spiritual journey, each of us has the chance to discover the beauty of belonging to the Merciful Lord and His Body, the Church. What is more, not only should we discover but also share this truth with brothers and sisters to become merciful like He is... I trust deep gratitude to God for the gift of faith is going to awaken in us a desire for the renewal of Christian life. As there is nothing more beautiful than

feeling to be a part of God's People, among whom Jesus Christ is still active» (pp. 8-9).

Then, the author of the first chapter, Stanisław Rosik, presents the landmarks of history of Christian of Poland, using important moments to segment his research. Therefore, the first chapter of the book is dedicated to the period 966-1370. It starts with the baptism of Mieszko I and it shows on the one side the historical evolution of Christianity in Poland, and on the other, illustrations with ruins of monuments from those times, maps, stamps of that moments or passages from chronicles, inviting the reader to a complex trip into the history. Moreover, he does not avoid the interferences with other cultures or peoples, speaking, for example, about the German penetrations in the aforementioned space in the 13th century:

«The first decades of the thirteenth century saw the intense settlement of void areas and the founding of towns on German town law. This resulted in the establishment of municipal and village self-governments regulated by the rights granted in the foundation charter. The demographic and economic potentials of the newly established settlements or the existing ones but adopting the new law, increased the inflow of inhabitants from the West, mainly from Germany, but also Jews and Wallons. The Silesia was the most popular since the time of Henry the Bearded, but throughout the whole thirteenth century, intensified urbanization processes spread all over the other provinces» (p. 41).

In the second chapter (pp. 53-92), entitled *The Period of Reforms of the Church and Deeper Christianization. Poland under*

the Angevins and the Jagiellons, written by Pawel Kras, there is presented the history of Poland between 1370 and 1572. The moments of glory and expansion, but also the alliances or conflicts are taken into account, all of them in relationship with the history of the Church. Then, Dariusz Kupisz presents, in the 3rd thematic unity (pp. 93-124) the period between 1569 and 1795, while Wiesław Jan Wysocki speaks about the evolution of Christian faith in Poland between 1795 and 1918 (pp. 125-154). Using an interesting title: *Land of Tenuous Faith. On Nineteenth-Century Catholicism in the Eastern Borderland of the Former Polish Commonwealth* (pp. 155-188), Bohan Cywinski fulfils the anterior presentation, offering interesting information about political and social situation of this space and their interference with investigated spirituality.

The presentation ends with the research of Jan Zaryn entitled: *The Twentieth Century – the Century of Miracles and Martyrs. From the Second Republic to the Third Republic* (pp. 189-232), which offers an overview of the way how the Christian faith from Poland developed in the 20th century. The atrocities of some regimes, the role played

by personalities like Saint Pope John Paul the Second, or the contributions of charismatic people like: Saint Faustina Kowalska, Saint Urszula Ledochowska, Saint Maximilien Kolbe or many others, are presented there, in an interesting synthesis that offers to the reader the possibility to understand how much Christians suffered in some moments of the history in Poland of last century.

Written in an interesting way, easy to read both by theologians or for the ones who have no preparation in this area, accompanied by illustrations that help to a better understanding of the events, their context or cause, and in a special graphical form, the book entitled: *Christianity in the History of Poland and the Poles (966-2016)*, coordinated by Waldemar Paruch, it is not only an important encyclopaedia which offers an overview of Polish Christian history, but also an useful tool that can will be surely valorised in future historiographical and theological researches dedicated to the investigated space, or to the European one.

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Rodney STARK

Falso testimonio: desmontando siglos de historia anticatólica

Prólogo de Fernando García de Cortázar, Ediciones Sal Terrae, Cantabria 2018, 302 pp.

La nueva obra apologética del sociólogo americano Rodney Stark de la Universidad de Texas, bien conocido en nuestro país por sus trabajos sobre la expansión de la Iglesia Católica en los primeros siglos (Trotta, 2009) ha tenido fortuna tanto en Italia como en España, donde ya se han publicado varias ediciones. En esta ocasión,

se centrará en lo que se suele denominar en nuestra cultura las «leyendas negras de la Iglesia», es decir, cuestiones históricas deformadas y utilizadas como arma para desprestigiar a la Iglesia Católica.

Es interesante que desde la introducción, dirigida a los ilustrados fanáticos del siglo XVII-XVIII en la Europa de la Refor-