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**REV. BOLESŁAW KUMOR. THE CHURCH HISTORIAN
AND EDUCATOR. THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH 2002-2017**

Rev. Bolesław Kumor, born in Sądeczczyzna into a large peasant family, fully developed his personality in the priesthood. Everything else he achieved, also in the academic field, came through the priesthood. In his academic work, he showed that the history of Poland is related to the history of the Church, to which the Polish nation owes so much.

Rev. Kumor was born on 1 December 1925. As a child, he worked hard on his family farm and even then he revealed his intellectual talents. In spite of the difficult years of World War II, he was fortunate enough to receive a school-leaving examination certificate. In 1947 he entered the Theological Seminary of Tarnów, where he was ordained a priest in May 1952. He also received a Master's degree in the History of the Church at the Jagiellonian University. In 1954 he obtained a Doctor's degree in the History of the Church, and in 1959 he was awarded a Habilitation degree. He started working at the Catholic University of Lublin in February 1960. In 1969 he received the title of associate professor and eight years later the title of full professor. He was a researcher and academic teacher at this Catholic university. He was buried in his family parish in the courtyard of the Church of St Stanisław Kostka in Niskowa-Szymanowice. He had strongly supported the construction of this church.

On 21 September 2017, a nationwide conference dedicated to Professor Bolesław Kumor, on the 15th anniversary of his death, took place at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). It was organized by a research unit at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lublin – the Institute of Church Archives, Libraries and Museums (based in Lublin at ul. Chopina 27/9) Rev. Professor Kumor was the director of this institute in the past. The conference was held at the KUL Library (Theological and Philosophical Reading Room), located at ul. Chopina 29/7.

The conference commemorating the person of Rev. Kumor and his death anniversary began with Mass celebrated at 8.00 am at the KUL College of Knowledge Transfer (as the academic church was being renovated). The Eucharist was presided over by the ordinary of the Kielce diocese, Bishop Jan Piotrowski. As a priest from the diocese of Tarnów, Bishop Piotrowski was a seminarist at the Theological Seminary in Tarnów, where Rev. Kumor gave classes. A sermon was delivered by Mariusz Leszczyński, an auxiliary bishop of the Zamość and Lubaczów diocese. The preacher talked about Professor Kumor as one of the greatest Polish historians of the second half of the 20th century.

The director of the Library of the Catholic University of Lublin, Barbara Zezula welcomed guests and opened the symposium as the host of the meeting place and on behalf of the organizers: the director of the Institute of Church Archives, Libraries and Museums – Rev. Waldemar Żurek. The session was presided over by Dr Sławomir Zych, an employee of the Polonia Institute at KUL.

Rev. Waldemar Żurek began the lecture series; his presentation was titled *A profile of Rev. Professor Bolesław Kumor*. The speaker familiarized the audience with a short biography of Professor, focusing on his academic life. Another speaker, the diocesan bishop from Gliwice – Jan Kopiec lectured on *„Silesian affairs in the academic biography of Professor Bolesław Kumor*”. It would seem to some researchers who are not thorough enough that Rev. Kumor’s academic achievements do not include Silesian subjects. However, although this author did not devote any works exclusively to this region of Poland, the region of Silesia is present in his research works. The diocesan bishop of Kielce, Jan Piotrowski, discussed the topic *„Professor Bolesław Kumor in the memoirs of priests and bishops*”. Piotrowski mentioned his compatriot from the parish of Szczurowa, in the deanery of Uście Solne – Rev. Stanisław Pieprznik (1911-2005), who only 4 years after his ordination – in 1937 – became a parish priest of Rev. Kumor’s family parish in Trzetrzewina. It was this priest to whom Professor owed Latin education, the knowledge of parish archives, the love of the history of the Tarnów diocese, and the history of the Church. Professor’s friendship and respect for his long-time parish priest – Rev. Pieprznik, who was in the Parish of Our Lady of Consolation in Trzetrzewina for 46 years, was widely known and admired. Certainly, Rev. Pieprznik watched over Professor Kumor’s vocation for the priesthood and sent him to the Theological Seminary of Tarnów. It should be noted that there were several other seminarists, later priests, with very great intellectual potential and extremely strong academic interests who studied in the same year as Professor Kumor; they were mentioned by the bishop of Tarnów, Jan Piotr Stepa. The last lecture of the first part of the conference was delivered by Professor Anselm Weiss; he talked about *„The years of my collaboration with Professor Bolesław Kumor*”, who was the supervisor of Rev. Weiss’s master’s and doctor’s theses. The lecturer also mentioned Kumor’s achievements in microfilming, and thus saving the collections of diocesan archives in the research unit – ABMK at the Catholic University of Lublin. In addition, he noted that the Professor contributed greatly to editing the volumes of the *„Catholic Encyclopaedia*”, published at the University of Lublin.

The first speaker of the second part of the conference, Rev. Dr Andrzej Kwaśniewski, talked about „Textbooks for the history of the Church written by Professor Bolesław Kumor”. He pointed out that Rev. Kumor’s research achievements are impressive, and not many Polish historians can equal him. The textbooks which are of considerable importance are the ones on the general history of the Church and the history of the Church in Poland; they are used by students and will be used by future generations. Prof. Dr hab. Kazimierz Talarek, a priest of the diocese of Tarnów discussed the topic „The clergy of the Tarnów diocese in the years 1945-1970. Personnel structure”. Rev. Kumor found and followed his vocation in the diocese, which held the first place among the dioceses of Poland in terms of the number of parishes – 430, diocesan priests – 1478 and seminarists – 240 (data of 2006). At the end of World War II, the Communists, led by the USSR, began their rule on our continent. All communist activities were aimed at disintegrating church life in the countries under Russian hegemony. This policy resulted in the arrests and imprisonment of priests, their surveillance, false accusations, intimidation and bribery attempts. Such was an atmosphere in which the priests of the diocese of Tarnów worked, the diocese which – according to church statistics – was in many respects superior to the other dioceses in Poland.

Krzysztof Perzyna in his speech „Academic papers written under the supervision of Professor Bolesław Kumor” synthesized Rev. Kumor’s scholarly achievements. Several hundred research papers on a wide range of topics were written at seminars on the history of the Church. These were the issues related to the history of church administration, the history of chapters, parishes, religious life of the faithful and the history of worship centres. Other subjects which were discussed quite frequently were the ones related to parish schooling and educational activities conducted by religious congregations. There were also works on prominent figures in the life of the Church: bishops, priests and laypeople.

The last of the speakers, Artur Hamryszczak, lectured on „Articles written by Professor Bolesław Kumor in the semi-annual journal *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne*, whose editor-in-chief is the above-mentioned speaker. He presented Rev. Bolesław Kumor, who was involved in the activities of the Institute of Church Archives, Libraries and Museums, as he was its secretary and a director for a short time. Rev. Kumor was a member of the editorial staff of the semi-annual journal *Archiwa Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne*. He published scholarly articles, and reports on the Institute’s activities and vocational courses for church staff of archives, libraries and museums. He also printed the microfilm catalogues of the Institute in the above-mentioned journal. Among the articles most often published in the journal were source publications (founding documents, bishops’ accounts, statutes, cartularies) and multipartite works on the demography and boundaries of the Catholic Church in Poland.

Rev. Professor Bolesław Kumor worked at the Catholic University of Lublin for over 40 years. He taught at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow. He was a lecturer at the Theological Seminary in Tarnów. His scholarly achievements include almost 700 publications. He was the supervisor of about 350 master’s theses and 30 doctor’s theses. He specialized in the history of the structure and organ-

ization of the Church in Poland. The books which earned him wide acclaim were „The History of the Church” (8 parts), „The History of the Church in Poland” (2 volumes in 4 parts) and „The Diocese of Tarnów. The History of the Structure and Organization 1786-1986”.

Rev. Kumor decided to write a monograph of the Cracow diocese until 1795 at the request of Pope John Paul II. Four volumes were published. The work on the fifth volume was interrupted by his death – it was ended on page 17. „Even a team of historians cannot complete Professor Kumor’s monograph on the archdiocese of Cracow. Nobody possesses such knowledge and has such research capabilities”, said Professor Jacek Urban from Cracow, the Professor’s former student and an editor of the monograph of the Cracow diocese. „To this day, there has been no team of historians who would finish the last volume”, said Rev. Urban.

Keywords: the history of the Church, the history of the diocese of Tarnów, the clergy of the diocese of Tarnów, Rev. Bolesław Kumor (1925-2005).