



Latin and Vernacular: *Vota* of Polish Bishops to the Second Vatican Council

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Abstract: This article seeks to answer the question of what language-related requests Polish bishops made to the Vatican in their *vota* to the Second Vatican Council. In inductive research, documents submitted by ordinaries and auxiliary bishops, collected in the “Polonia” and “Gedanum” sections, will be subjected to a content analysis. This will allow us to demonstrate the extent to which language issue were important to the local Church and, after sorting out emerging themes, detail the expected changes. The arguments justifying these requests will then be discussed, and, in the final section, a case study will present the most comprehensive proposal by Lucjan Bernacki, auxiliary bishop of Gniezno. The thesis, which stems from the research, assumes that the change in the language of liturgy permitted by the Second Vatican Council was not an exerted pressure on the Church in Poland but was highly anticipated by both the faithful and the bishops.

Keywords: Second Vatican Council, *vota* of Polish bishops, language of liturgy, Latin, vernacular

The changes that took place in Rome and around the world in the 20th century were among the main reasons John XXIII convened both a local synod and an ecumenical council.¹ The pope admitted this when, on January 25, 1959, after the liturgy of the feast of the conversion of Paul the Apostle, he publicly shared with the cardinals for the first time his plans for the future (Ioannes XXIII 1959c, 65–69; 1960c, 3–6). He echoed this idea in an apostolic letter published a year later. In it, he stated that the purpose of gathering the world’s bishops in the Vatican should be to better adapt Church discipline to the needs and conditions of the present time (Ioannes XXIII 1960b, 434). He entrusted the coordination of activities preceding the event, which he called “as if a new Pentecost” (*nova quaedam Pentecoste*) (Ioannes XXIII 1959b, 316; 1960d, 21; 1959a, 420), to the Antepreparatory Commission (*Commissio Antepreparatoria*), placing Cardinal Domenico Tardini, Secretary of State of the Holy See, at its head (Ioannes XXIII 1960a, 22–23). The team’s first priority was to establish contacts with bishops in various nations (Ioannes XXIII 1960a, 23). A letter was sent to them scattered around the world just a month after the team was established, on June 18, 1959, asking on behalf of the pope for opinions, advice,

¹ The circumstances of the convening of the Second Vatican Council and the *antepreparatoria* phase are presented in Alberigo 1993, 21–24; 1999, 27–61; Fouilloux 1997, 114–27; Schelkens 2010, 9–13; Cortesi and Giovannoni 2022, 57–75.

and postulates that were to become the starting point for the development of the matter that the future council was to deal with (Tardini 1960, x). Cardinal Tardini, proposing a reflection on various spheres of life for the community of believers, listed among them doctrine, the discipline of the clergy and laity, ecclesial activity, and the initiatives that Christians should undertake in the present era. Finally, he used a broad quantifier for possible questions, noting that they could concern anything that the recipient of the letter deems requiring clarification and consideration (Tardini 1960, x). The final recommendations asked that comments be sent by September 1 and that the text be prepared in Latin (Tardini 1960, xi). According to Alberto Melloni, 1,998 letters were received in response from 2,593 bishops, religious superiors, and university centers (Melloni 2012, 426).² Dirk Claes, in turn, reported that a total of 2,812 letters were sent and that by June 5, 1960, when the Antepreparatory Commission ceased its activities, 2,150 replies had been received, which constitutes 77 percent of the addressees (Claes 2003, 652).

The focus of this study is precisely the *vota*, or responses submitted by Polish bishops, in which they raise the issue of language.³ Analyzing the problems submitted to the Vatican will help us understand the social climate in which decisions on the place of Latin in the liturgy and other spheres of Church life were made. It will also provide a “voice from the past” in today’s discussion about the role of the Second Vatican Council, which is blamed for the fact that—as Paweł Milcarek puts it—“the ancient language of the Church disappeared from our churches.” (Milcarek 2009, 10)

1. *Vota* Letters Sent from Poland

The responses to the Vatican invitation constitute the most important part of the collection of *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando* [Acts and Preparatory Documents for the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council], in the “pre-preparatory” (*antepreparatoria*) part. The correspondence is grouped according to continental origin. The second part of the second volume contains the requests

² The methodology for analyzing the submitted *vota* letters was presented in Melloni 1990, 556–76; 2012, 426–27.

³ For more about the *vota* of Polish bishops, see Kłoczowski 1989, 165–77. For studies on the proposals of bishops from other regions of the world, see Aiello 1984, 95–103; Dayras 1989, 139–53; Hilaire 1989, 101–17; Rocca della Morozzo 1989, 119–37; Jacobs 1991, 323–40; Wittstadt 1992, 24–37; Komonchak 1994, 313–71; Fahey 1997, 61–72; Lamberigts and Pulikkan 1997, 61–79; Routhier 1997, 25–60; Claes 2003, 651–72; Schelkens 2010, 13–24.

of 43 Polish bishops (“Polonia” 1960, 643–776).⁴ This group included 13 ordinaries and 30 bishops of other dignity. Auxiliary bishops predominated among the latter, but there are also actual, though not state-approved, diocesan administrators. The “Polonia” section also included Eugeniusz Baziak, a Latin-rite bishop in Lviv, even though the city was no longer Polish territory after World War II (“Polonia” 1960, 653–57). Taking into account the current Church reality, to the analyses in this study following three bishops of Gdańsk were added, i.e., ordinary Karol M. Splet and auxiliary bishops Edmund Nowicki and Lech Kaczmarek, whose opinions, due to the ambiguous status of the city after the war, were placed in a separate place in the collection (“Gedanum” 1960, 545–57).

Following Cardinal Tardini’s guidance, all bishops presented various proposals that, in their opinion, should be addressed by the Council. Some of these concerned the doctrine of the faith and—notably—were raised by a larger number of people. This group included, e.g., a request to dogmatize the belief that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the mediatrix of all graces. A significant number of bishops also advocated discussing the mystery of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ. They also requested a response to contemporary intellectual and philosophical errors, especially materialism, naturalism, and communism. They devoted considerable attention to clerical discipline. They unanimously supported the maintenance of celibacy, and even its extension to Eastern-rite clergy. They pointed to the need to simplify monastic attire and regulate the responsibilities of communities of consecrated persons in diocesan pastoral care. Particular attention was devoted throughout the collection to the laity. The conviction that they should be given a new place and more responsibilities in the ministry of the Church was repeatedly expressed.

A significant number of proposals sent to the Vatican concerned Latin. Among the ordinaries, only three ignored the issue of language: Kazimierz Józef Kowalski of Chełmno (“Polonia” 1960, 643–44), Michał Klepacz of Łódź (650–651), and Ignacy Świrski of Siedlce (672–73). Interestingly, the auxiliary bishops of Łódź and Siedlce, Marian Jankowski (702–3), Jan Fondaliński (705–6), and Kazimierz Tomczak (758–60), also did not express any expectations regarding the application and role of Latin. Meanwhile, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński devoted considerable attention to this issue. As the Warsaw Ordinary, he presented the results of a special commission’s work, which, as he himself informs, was established to develop the *desiderata* for the

⁴ The Polish bishops included the following: Casimirus I. Kowalski, Zdzislaw Golinski, Ceslaus Kaczmarek, Michael Klepacz, Ceslaus Falkowski, Eugenius Baziak, Taddaeus Zakrzewski, Antonius Baraniak, Franciscus Barda, Ioannes K. Lorek, Ignatius Swirski, Stephanus Card. Wyszyński, Antonius Pawlowski, Petrus Dudziec, Stanislaus Czajka, Venceslaus Wicisk, Georgius Modzelewski, Franciscus Jop, Marianus Jankowski, Alexander Mościcki, Ioannes Fondalinski, Venceslaus Majewski, Vladimirus B. Jasiński, Adalbertus Tomaka, Ioannes Czerniak, Henricus Strakowski, Michael Blecharczyk, Ioannes Jaroszewicz, Ioannes Bucko, Franciscus Jedwabski, Lucianus Bernacki, Carolus Vojtyla, Franciscus Korszynski, Petrus Golembiowski, Sigismundus Choromanski, Thomas Wilczyński, Casimirus Tomczak, Iosephus Drzazga, Ladislaus Suszynski, Stanislaus Jakiel, Carolus Pękala, Boleslaus Kominek, and Andreas Wronka.

Council (“Polonia” 1960, 673). This document was accompanied by a more personal letter in which he, as Metropolitan of Gniezno, presented his own observations (679–86). Ultimately, 35 of the 43 documents included in the “Polonia” section mentioned Latin, representing over 81 percent of the submissions. Including the bishops of Gdańsk, this figure reaches over 82.5 percent. Taking this into account, it must be said that language was not a niche issue for the bishops but an important one they wanted to address during the Council.

Among the many issues raised by the bishops in their requests to the Vatican, only one sought to expand the use of Latin. In the opening section of the document sent from Warsaw, dated September 15, 1959, and titled “Generalia,” the first point included a request that, just as the acts of the Holy See are promulgated in Latin, the regulations of individual congregations should be disseminated in a similar manner. The document concluded with a statement by Cardinal Wyszyński that such a solution could greatly facilitate a better knowledge of the Latin language, which “should be of concern to the Church” (*quod Ecclesiae cordi esse debeat*) (“Polonia” 1960, 673).

2. Catalog of Requests Regarding the Language of Liturgy

In the document sent from Warsaw, in the section on the liturgy, there are encouragements to introduce the native language into the Mass, especially at the beginning of the rites. It is clearly stated, however, that the celebration after the Offertory, and especially the Canon of the Mass, should be recited in Latin (“Polonia” 1960, 677). Similar requests were also made by many other bishops. For example, auxiliary bishop of Lublin, Henryk Strakowski (721), requested that the Mass of the Catechumens be celebrated in the native language. Franciszek Korszyński of Wrocław (748) expressed the same conviction, pointing out that Polish could appear in the variable parts of the Mass liturgy. Tomasz Wilczyński (755–56) was in favor of people praying aloud (*clara voce*) and of allowing the native language in celebrations, except for sacramental formulas. Similar opinions were expressed by Stanisław Jakiel of Przemyśl (766), Zdzisław Goliński of Częstochowa (645), Franciszek Barda of Przemyśl (667), Waclaw Majewski of Warsaw (706), and Jan Czerniak of Gniezno (718). Piotr Dudziec (690) and Stanisław Czajka (693) postulated that greater freedom should be granted in admitting local songs to the liturgy. The latter, the auxiliary bishop of Częstochowa, however, believed that the use of Latin should be retained when celebrating Holy Mass (693).

Bishops advocated for the wider use of vernacular languages in other liturgical celebrations as well. Among the ordinaries, Antoni Pawłowski of Wrocław (“Polonia” 1960, 688) put this quite succinctly, stating that a wider use (*amolior usus*) of the vernacular and local chants should be introduced in public celebrations, in the

administration of the sacraments, and—as already noted—in the celebration of Holy Mass. Cardinal Wyszyński expressed the same conviction, seeing a place for the vernacular in the administration of all sacraments in those parts recited by the faithful, as well as in selected texts of the liturgy of the consecration of a church and in the liturgy of the renewal of baptismal promises during the Easter Vigil. Wyszyński also expressed the view that—except for the episcopal liturgy—the texts of all sacramentals should be recited by the faithful only (*tantummodo*) in the vernacular (“Polonia” 1960, 678, 682). This last theme was also taken up by Bishop Jan K. Lorek of Sandomierz, who called for simplifying the liturgy for the consecration of a church and its altar. He believed that the invocations of the Litany of the Saints contained in these rites should be spoken in the native language. Like the bishops mentioned earlier, he saw its place in the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals. Furthermore, Lorek pointed out that the younger generation of clergy expected the breviary to be recited in their own language (“Polonia” 1960, 670–671). Interestingly, he did not request changes to the liturgy other than those related to language. The same themes can be found in documents prepared by Archbishop Antoni Baraniak of Poznań (665–66), Goliński of Częstochowa (645), Czesław Kaczmarek of Kielce (648–49), Czesław Falkowski of Łomża (652), Baziak of Lviv (657), and Tadeusz Paweł Zakrzewski of Płock (659).

Auxiliary bishops also made very similar requests. Ultimately, most of their demands revolved primarily around the liturgy. A separate request came from Majewski of Warsaw (“Polonia” 1960, 707), who called for theology to be studied in the vernacular in seminaries. It is worth adding that, in the case of this hierarch, all six of his *vota* addresses to the Council concerned limiting the role of Latin (706–7). Franciszek Jop of Opole, in turn, encouraged the translation of Vatican documents, especially papal encyclicals, into the native languages as soon as possible and their dissemination in that version. He also expected that the Latin versions of the documents would use simple, understandable language (“Polonia” 1960, 701). While the last two requests are quite unique in that they do not concern the liturgy, which is the focus of all other bishops, the texts are quite similar in their form. All *vota* were formulated affirmatively. None suggested limiting the use of Latin but proposed to expand the use of the vernacular, employing phrases like “should be introduced more broadly” (*introducenda in ampliori ambitu*)—Bolesław Kominek (“Polonia” 1960, 774), “should be permitted more broadly” (*latius admittenda*)—Andrzej Wronka (776), and “wider use of the vernacular” (*amplior usus linguae vernaculae*)—Pawłowski (688). The way the bishops formulated their *vota* clearly indicates that they did not intend to completely abandon the use of Latin in the liturgy. This was explicitly stated in his letter by Bishop Czajka (“Polonia” 1960, 693), who—when requesting the introduction of certain parts of liturgical texts into Polish—clearly stated that Latin should be preserved in the Eucharistic celebration. The auxiliary bishop of Kraków, later pope and saint, Karol Wojtyła, also addressed this issue. He postulated that the vernacular

be permitted in the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals. However, Wojtyła emphasized that this should be done “always prudently” (*semper prudens*) (“Polonia” 1960, 747). Finally—and most importantly—he rejected “total nationalization” of the liturgy (*sine totali nationalisatione rituum*) (747). This last statement seems significant because it indicates that introducing the national language should not be done *ad extremum*. It is worth emphasizing because, as Gabriel Richi Alberti states, the bishop of Kraków was guided by pastoral considerations in all his postulates (Alberti 2013, 139). He therefore allowed changes, but not to such an extent that they would completely devalue the role of Latin in the liturgy.

3. Arguments for Using the Vernacular

Bishops did not always justify their language-related proposals for the Council. However, they sometimes pointed to the expected effects of introducing the vernacular into the liturgy, as well as the reasons for their demands to limit the role of Latin. Following Bishop Czajka and Zygmunt Choromański, all the presented justifications can be described as “pastoral reasons” (*rationes curam animarum spectantes*) (“Polonia” 1960, 693, 752). For example, the aforementioned Bishop Czerniak (718) stated that Latin was practically unknown to the faithful. Even if they knew some Latin, they were unable to understand all the phrases used in the Eucharistic celebration. Majewski (707) also drew attention to the lack of appropriate skills in this area among nuns and even among candidates for the priesthood. It is therefore not surprising that, according to Lorek (671), young priests made urgent requests to be allowed to recite the breviary in their native language. Michał Blecharczyk (725), auxiliary bishop of Tarnów, cited the situation of laypeople. He stated that they were increasingly interested in the liturgy and wanted to understand both ceremonies and sacred texts. Unfortunately, Latin, due to its lack of similarity with Polish, posed a significant obstacle to their fascination.⁵

Barda (“Polonia” 1960, 667) and Wojciech Tomaka of Przemyśl (712) noted that the schismatic Polish National Church has abandoned Latin and is therefore gaining followers. Korszynski of Wrocław (748) took up this idea and added that Protestant denominations are also popular thanks to the use of a universally understandable language. Czajka (693) added that allowing the national language in the Catholic Church would eliminate the critical arguments of the separated Churches. Therefore, introducing more Polish in the liturgy would be a response to the desires of

⁵ The thesis expressed by the bishop is in opposition to the statement made by Jop during the 18th General Assembly of the Second Vatican Council on November 13, 1962, in which he pointed to the special role of Latin in the history of the Polish nation (see Jop 1970, 653).

the faithful, in accordance with the suggestion of Bishop Zakrzewski of Płock (659). The argument most often cited by bishops for expanding the importance of the native language was the benefit of the faithful, as Majewski put it quite concisely, “for the greater benefit of priests and the faithful” (*ad maiorem utilitatem sacerdotum et fidelium*) (707). The hierarchs Baziak (657), Barda (667), Czajka (693), Majewski (706–7), Czerniak (716), Karol Pękala (771), and Kominek (774) draw attention primarily to the fact that the change would result in a deeper and, above all, more active participation of the faithful in the liturgy, especially in the celebration of Holy Mass. These arguments are also supported by documents sent by Cardinal Wyszyński. He sees the reform of the liturgy as a contribution to the faithful leading a deeper religious life and becoming more connected to the Church (682). A similar belief was expressed by Pawłowski, who saw in the changes he advocated an opportunity for the liturgy to become a school of prayer (*schola orationis*) and Catholic thinking (*sensus catholicus*) (688). Tomaka (712) hoped to increase the number of faithful attending the liturgy.

4. Letter from Bishop Lucjan Bernacki

The opinions of the bishops, generally expressed very concisely, were discussed more broadly in a letter dated October 25, 1959, sent to the Council by the auxiliary bishop of Gniezno, Lucjan Bernacki (“Polonia” 1960, 733). Like others, he advocated introducing the national language into the liturgy. Moved—as he himself wrote—by the global situation, he argued his position with a broader argument than others (736–39). He stated that, for practical reasons, the introduction of national languages into the liturgy should be considered. Given that Latin was little known, he believed it was simply incomprehensible (*incomprehensibilis*) to many people. He was also convinced that this ignorance affected not only the lay faithful but, to a large extent, the clergy as well, not only in Poland but also in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, England, Scotland, and Germany. Since such a situation occurred in regions historically influenced by Latin culture, this incomprehensibility affected nations even more distant from its influence, he concluded (“Polonia” 1960, 736–37). To support this view, the bishop draws on his personal experience. He explained that during World War II, he traveled through France, Spain, Portugal, and England. He spent extended periods in each region. Latin, he points out, did not help him establish contacts, as few people understood the language, and even if they did, it was only to a limited extent. This led Bishop Bernacki to conclude that Latin was only minimally useful as a tool for expressing thought, prayer, and the transmission of faith in the liturgy. He was therefore convinced that the faithful assisted in liturgical actions but did not live them or participate in what the celebrant was doing, which ultimately brought them

spiritual harm. He continued that the use of “prayers books for the laity” in their native language did not change this situation. While the faithful read the texts, the hierarch emphasized, “they are not nourished by the liturgy.” (“Polonia” 1960, 737) These observations led Bishop Bernacki to a powerful thesis. He stated that liturgical piety has weakened among many of the faithful due to the language barrier. Moreover, churches were becoming empty in France, Spain, Portugal, and even Poland precisely because of Latin (737). A little further on, he added that the reason for apostasy, or at least distance from participating in celebrations, was the language of the liturgy (737). To confirm this, the hierarch first referred to the realities of Church life in Poland. He reported that after introducing vespers in Latin in place of those previously sung in the vernacular, almost no one came to church, and the liturgy was celebrated only by the parish priest and organist. In places where the custom of singing in Polish was maintained, churches were filled with the faithful. The bishop also cited events in France. He wrote that he noticed that some priests celebrated baptisms in their native language, and this practice, he emphasized, brought “great benefit to the participants” (*magno cum fructu astantium*). Meanwhile, in Spain, where he served as a vicar, the liturgy was celebrated in Latin, and the faithful repeated phrases without understanding them. He therefore assumed that the Latin liturgy does not appeal to the faithful and was “exotic” to them. Referring to the realities of missionary work, Bernacki emphasized that the low evangelization effectiveness in China, e.g., stems from the same causes, that is, the use of Latin (737).

Bishop Bernacki also devoted some attention to the place of language in the life and liturgy of the Church. He began with the observation that the descent of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues that was revealed at that time indirectly point to the possibility of using vernacular languages in the Church. He admitted that Latin had always been the language of the liturgy, highlighting—without elaborating on the subject—that this need not always be the case. To support his unstated thesis, he cited Christ the Lord as an example, who, as he described, used his native Aramaic, abandoning Hebrew, which, while it was the language of religious rites, was no longer understood by the people. The Church, the bishop continued, following the Savior’s example, first abandoned Aramaic in favor of Greek and later Greek in favor of Latin. The hierarch also recalled that in the 9th century, the Holy See permitted Saints Cyril and Methodius to use the Slavic language in the liturgy. Pope Paul V granted similar permission for China, allowing the liturgical books to be translated into the local languages. Bishop Bernacki concluded this argument by stating that approximately 14 liturgical languages were in use by the Catholic Church (“Polonia” 1960, 736).

In the further course of his argument, Bernacki referred to the unity of the Church, a sign of which had always been the use of Latin as a recognizable symbol of the Catholic liturgy (“Polonia” 1960, 738). As one might expect, at this point he referred to the idea expressed only 12 years earlier by Pius XII in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, in which the pope called Latin “a sign of unity” (*unitatis signum*)

(Pius XII 1947, 545). The bishop of Gniezno believed that allowing the use of the native language would not harm the unity of the Church. This unity is based primarily on the primacy of the Bishop of Rome and the infallibility of the Church, as well as on the offering of the same Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the sacraments. He concluded that Latin contributes little to maintaining unity in the Church. To support his views, he again drew on life experience and mentioned Polish emigrants in France, who in their new surroundings quickly abandoned the Church and succumbed to the ideas of communism. In their homeland, they maintained their faith thanks to local tradition and family. In exile, they quickly abandoned the Church because the liturgy offered them no support in either Poland or France. Finally, the bishop proposed that, to maintain unity, the gestures and melodies in the liturgy be standardized. He also added that the Church should not fear language changes. He also admits that the use of national languages contributes to the popularization of Protestant ideas and the views of non-Catholic religious movements. Bishop Bernacki therefore expressed his belief that abandoning Latin in favor of national languages would not only not harm the Church but, on the contrary, would bring many benefits (“Polonia” 1960, 738).

Conclusion

Some scholars describe the changes in liturgical language at the Second Vatican Council with phrases “replacing Latin with the vernacular languages,” “the abandonment of Latin,” and “marginalization of Latin” (Hancock 2014, 39; Ryan 2012, 39; Panvini 2017, 110; Ponzo 2019, 48). Such statements may create the impression that the Council exerted some pressure on local Churches to abandon the use of Latin, especially in the liturgy, and introduce their native language instead. The realities of other countries require a separate study, but—as Colleen McDannell points out—the issue of language was a significant problem for the Council, if only because of communication problems among participants during its duration (McDannell 2011). The words of the Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV Seigh of Antioch also went down in history. He was convinced that it was incomprehensible why the faithful should pray in a language they did not understand. He argued that the language of the Church must be a living language, because it concerns people, not angels (Wiltgen 1967, 26–27). On the other hand, as Antonius Pelosi notes, Latin has many undeniable advantages that constitute a significant value for the Church (Pelosi 2000, 194–97).

The analyses undertaken in this article demonstrate that there was no unwanted interference with regard to the Catholic Church in Poland. On the contrary, the number of requests sent to the Vatican on language of liturgy clearly indicates that the introduction of Polish into the liturgy was eagerly anticipated. By formulating

demands for the Council, the hierarchs expressed this conviction. Presumably, they also expressed the expectations of the faithful and—as they clearly indicated—those involved in the celebrations and eager to learn about the liturgy. The bishops demonstrated a far-reaching intuition, as most of their demands aligned with the decisions later included in the Council documents. As indicated in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (nos. 36 and 54), they did not want to abandon Latin but saw a need for a broader use of the vernacular, especially in that part of the Mass formerly called the Mass of the Catechumens and now the Liturgy of the Word (SC 36, 54, 109–10, 114–15). However, they advocated retaining the sacramental formulas in the traditional version, especially the text of transubstantiation and the accompanying Canon. Bishop Wojtyła was the only one to warn against the complete nationalization of the liturgy of the Mass, which eventually became a reality. The complete abandonment of Latin was primarily manifest in parish celebrations, but it also found expression in *Mszal rzymski dla diecezji polskich* [Roman Missal for Polish Dioceses]. The liturgical book does contain an appendix in its final section with the Mass texts and prayers allowing for the celebration of the liturgy in Latin, titled “For Priests Who Cannot Choose Another Mass” (*MSDP 3**–58***). The rest of the collection does not provide alternative versions of the antiphons, chants, or other texts, including the formula of consecration, that would allow for their proclamation in Latin. Only the acclamations *Kyrie eleison*, *Christe eleison* were retained, but these—as is well known—are Latinized versions of the Greek text.

The arguments for introducing Polish into the liturgy was more frequently provided by auxiliary bishops than by ordinaries. This may have stemmed from the fact that their ministry was more pastoral than administrative, and they more frequently met with various kinds of faithful in parishes. It is possible that they also represented the younger generation of Polish hierarchs. Unlike, e.g., in German circles, where Karl Rahner reflected on the very nature of the Church’s language (Ponzo 2019, 48), the demands of Polish bishops in general, and auxiliary bishops in particular, stemmed from pastoral needs, a prime example of which were the proposals presented by Bernacki, who described the reasons that prompted him to vote for the wider use of the native language. He was also most critical of Latin, arguing that it was precisely because of the language that the faithful failed to understand and experience the liturgy, refrained from participating in ceremonies, and even committed apostasy. The most frequently cited reason for introducing Polish more widely into ceremonies was the activation of the faithful. For this reason, the language issue was usually discussed in those sections of the documents that addressed the liturgy. It is worth emphasizing that no Polish hierarch had advocated for expanding the use of Latin in any area other than administration. Aware of the lack of Latin skills among nuns, candidates for the priesthood, and young clergy, they submitted no proposals for changing this situation through education or other forms of teaching, beyond recommending abandoning Latin in favor of the national language. All of this led

to the already expressed belief that the Second Vatican Council did not force the Church in Poland to introduce the native language, but merely sanctioned requests expressing *vox populi* in the bishops' *vota*.

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