

The value of work in the spiritual life of a woman according to Jadwiga Zamoyska and Maria Karłowska

Wartość pracy w życiu duchowym kobiety
według Jadwigi Zamoyskiej i Marii Karłowskiej

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Abstract: The awareness that through work a woman participates in the work of creation is the deepest impulse to take up work in various sectors. Today we know that the role of work in women's lives is huge and determines their place in society. Work is also a woman's continuous personal development. Thanks to it, she acquires new skills, improves her competences and learns new things. Culture also plays an important role in the perception of work. Hence the need to promote the humanization of work, which was fought for at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, thus contributing to the development of humanity. The development taking place through work allows a woman to achieve a moral personality, which is a multiplication of her natural abilities for moral evaluation of a human being. The article indicates the need to combine work with the spiritual life of a woman, so that work leads her not only to improve things (products of work), but also to improve her internally as a person, therefore the moral and spiritual dimension of human work should be constantly restored (work as a spiritual and moral value). This current issue has been shown on the basis of the educational works of two women from Greater Poland — Jadwiga Zamoyska and Maria Karłowska — who lived at the turn of the last two centuries.

Keywords: human work; woman; spiritual life; Jadwiga Zamoyska; Maria Karłowska

Abstrakt: Świadomość, że przez pracę kobieta uczestniczy w dziele stworzenia, stanowi najgłębszą pobudkę do jej podejmowania na różnych odcinkach. Dzisiaj wiemy, że rola pracy w życiu kobiet jest ogromna i stanowi wyznacznik ich miejsca w społeczeństwie. Praca to także

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nieustanny rozwój osobisty kobiety. Dzięki niej zdobywa ona nowe umiejętności, doskonali swoje kompetencje oraz uczy się nowych rzeczy. Ważną rolę w pojmowaniu pracy odgrywa też kultura. Stąd potrzeba krzewienia humanizacji pracy ludzkiej, o co walczone na przełomie XIX i XX wieku, przyczyniając się tym samym do rozwoju człowieczeństwa. Rozwój dokonujący się poprzez pracę pozwala osiągnąć kobiecie osobowość moralną, która jest zwielokrotnieniem naturalnych jej zdolności do wartościowania moralnego osoby ludzkiej. Artykuł wskazuje potrzebę łączenia pracy z życiem duchowym kobiety, by praca prowadziła ją nie tylko do udoskonalania rzeczy (produktów pracy), lecz także udoskonalala ją wewnątrz jako osobę, dlatego należy ustawicznie przywracać pracy ludzkiej wymiar moralno-duchowy (praca jako wartość duchowa i moralna). To aktualne zagadnienie zostało ukazane na podstawie dzieł wychowawczych dwóch Wielkopolanek — J. Zamoyskiej i M. Karłowskiej — żyjących na przełomie dwóch ostatnich wieków.

Słowa kluczowe: praca ludzka; kobieta; życie duchowe; Jadwiga Zamoyska; Maria Karłowska

Introduction

In recent times much attention has been paid to the work of women, their rights and duties in various fields of the social and ecclesial community. The Church, contributing to the deepening of this important subject, in particular thanks to the teaching of John Paul II¹, must face those lines of thought whose theses prevent the promotion of women on the path of holiness². One of the essential planes of life that makes it possible to strive for holiness is human work³. Due to its relationship with man, it is a multi-faceted issue, just like human life, which it shapes and expresses.

This article is an attempt to look at the value of work in the spiritual life of a woman. The basic research problem is the issue of a woman's skillful combination of her spiritual development with work focused on its upbringing and sanctifying role. This problem should be considered on the basis of the educational works of two women from Greater Poland: Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831–1923) and Maria Karłowska (1865–1935). However, before we move on to the main implementation of the title issue, it is worth explaining the biblical and theological premises of the proposed problem.

¹ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *List do kobiet „A ciascuna di voi”* (Watykan, 29.06. 1995); E. Ozorowski, *Geniusz kobiety według Jana Pawła II*, in: *Kobieta. Etyka. Ekonomia*, ed. E. Ozorowski, R.C. Horodeński, Białystok 2009, pp. 11–22.

² A.J. Skowronek, *Godność i posłannictwo kobiety w Kościele*, in: *Duchowość kobiety*, ed. J. Augustyn, Kraków 2007, pp. 101–115.

³ Cf. M. Duda, *Praca*, in: *Jan Paweł II. Encyklopedia nauczania społecznego*, ed. A. Zwoliński, Radom 2005, pp. 388.

1. Biblical and theological premises

God has always wanted all people to be holy. It is a beautiful expression of His paternal relationship with creation. God's desire for each and all of us to be holy can be called His greatest desire, and the greatest gift that man can give God is the attainment of holiness (cf. Ex 13:2). The vocation to this state is therefore an expression of gratitude to God, who is Holy. Already the Old Testament showed the achievement of holiness as a participation in God's holiness and a task set before man.

A woman is not an aid to a man as a kind of labour force or a tool for satisfying the sex drive or merely procreating offspring. Each helps the other to reach full humanity (cf. Gen 2:22). From this flows the dignity of woman, i.e. the fact that she is equal to man in humanity. Both have the same human nature, and simultaneously each is a separate subject, but directed towards the other. A woman, therefore, is not half a human — she is fully a human⁴.

God, creating woman, invited her to 'create the world' and to sanctify it through His work full of love and dedication. The analysis of God's creative intention towards a woman allows us to conclude that the life vocation is contained in the mystery of love. A woman is a 'receiver' of love because of her femininity and at the same time a giver of it towards others. The ability to love is a gift that constitutes her. Through this, a woman finds herself. The Second Vatican Council teaches that 'man, being the only creature on earth that God willed for its own sake, cannot fully find himself except by a sincere gift of himself'⁵. A woman's vocation to 'being for' is already revealed in Eve's relationship with Adam. As we know, Adam, created by God and placed in a garden under his care, experiences loneliness. The presence of animals is not enough for him. He can name them, but he needs life help, a being equal to himself. This help is necessary for him to fully develop his humanity and to read his vocation⁶. This is expressed at the ontological level in the sense that the creation of woman by God characterizes humanity as a relational collectivity. A woman is a gift to a man, but a man is also a gift to a woman. Both are created for a mutual relationship, because the wealth of a man is the ability to love, therefore he cannot be alone⁷.

⁴ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *List apostolski „Mulieris dignitatem” z okazji Roku Maryjnego o godności i powołaniu kobiety*, no. 6, https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/listy/mulieris.html [accessed: 2.04.2023].

⁵ Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym „Gaudium et spes”*, no. 24, in: idem, *Konstytucje, dekryty, deklaracje*, Poznań 2002, p. 544.

⁶ W. Chrostowski, *Kobiety w Piśmie Świętym*, Kraków 2022, p. 39.

⁷ U. Michałowska, *Paul Evdokimov o charyzmacie kobiecości*, „Zeszyty Formacji Duchowej” 23 (2003), pp. 48–55.

A more mature picture of a woman's vocation to holiness and dedication to work is presented in the pages of the New Testament. Here, the most perfect model of femininity is Mary. In her, God's plan was fulfilled, she responded most fully to God calling her to be a woman and a mother⁸. It also sets the horizon for reflection on the sanctity of a woman's vocation. It is impossible to understand a woman, her vocation and her dedication, without taking into account Mary, the highest dimension of God's image and likeness among human beings⁹. All the women who met Jesus discovered themselves in this event to the fullest extent, they found the source of their vocation to holiness¹⁰. Jesus touched what was most important to them, what was the content of their everyday life¹¹. In dialogue, He gently guided women on the path of their vocation to be saints.

2. Examples of women from Greater Poland

The increase in the importance of work and professional career in women's lives is noticeable at the end of the 19th century. At that time, they appeared en masse on the labor market as a result of the industrial revolution and urbanization. Their professional position was strengthened by World War I and II — they were forced to replace men, who fought in the war, in factories. This does not change the fact that the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (until the outbreak of the World War) are also in Greater Poland a period in which strenuous attempts are made to maintain the traditional moral limitations of women's presence in public space, in the sphere of public life — above all in terms of work and professional development. Simultaneously, the unquestionable distinguishing feature of this period is the acceleration of changes in the upbringing of Polish girls and their adaptation to social and family life. Thus the question arises: to what extent does this acceleration of change relate to the search for the meaning of women's work, and to what extent to the combination of spiritual values regulating their presence in the sphere of social life?

This question is answered by Ludwika Jahołkowska-Koszutska (1872–1928), a well-known liberal-bourgeois activist of the interwar period, who set a woman from Greater Poland as an example to Polish women, writing about her in this way, 'In Poznańskie Voivodeship, a woman had to take all positions vacated by men; she is industrious and thrifty'¹². It can be assumed that the model of a wo-

⁸ E. Stein, *Kobieta. Jej zadanie według natury i łaski*, Tuchów 1995.

⁹ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *List apostolski „Mulieris dignitatem”*, no. 5.

¹⁰ M. Król, *Zwyczajne święte kobiety*, Częstochowa 2021, p. 67.

¹¹ M. Waluś, *Piękna kobieta*, w: *Duchowość kobiety*, pp. 79–89.

¹² L. Jahołkowska-Koszutska, *O kobiecie współczesnej i kobiecie przyszłości*, Warszawa 1929, p. 80.

man in Greater Poland officially promoted in the 19th century, later transformed into a stereotype, is a kind of resultant of several factors. The most significant are: the influence of German patterns concerning the behavior and duties of women in society; due to the relatively large and strong petty bourgeoisie layer in this area, widespread popularity and frequent acceptance of the patterns developed by the ideology of this layer; impact of the so-called woman-Polish model, shaped after the period of national uprisings.

These changes in the Greater Poland region will be illustrated by the presentation of two characters — J. Zamoyska and M. Karłowska — who wanted to change the existing reality under the occupation, both by working at the grass-roots, as well as by the way of faith and the Gospel, and by making an effort to sanctify the everyday lives of women of that time.

2.1. Jadwiga Zamoyska née Działyńska

For Zamoyska¹³, in the personal dimension, work is a means of human development, through work a woman, perfecting the world and cooperating in God's creative work, 'in a way becomes more human'¹⁴. Work serves the fulfillment of humanity and is a way to effectively realize the strong and noble personality of a woman on the path of sanctification. She used to repeat, 'My husband said that God created other people and invented me'¹⁵. What kind of woman was Jadwiga, apart from the obvious facts resulting from the meaning of the word 'Mrs General'? Her greatest achievement is the formulated program of social work, focusing on the upbringing of the young generation of Polish women, who, being perfectly prepared to take up family responsibilities, could effectively contribute to the revival of the homeland, 'How can it be that this most important training does not take

¹³ Jadwiga Zamoyska née Działyńska, called by her relatives a brave woman or a biblical woman, was born on July 4, 1831 in Warsaw. Her parents were Celina née Zamoyska (daughter of Stanisław and Zofia née Czartoryska) and Tytus Działyński. Jadwiga's father, the owner of Kórnik, was deeply involved in independence activities, he was the adjutant of the commander-in-chief, General J. Skrzynecki. After the fall of the November Uprising, persecuted by the invaders, he left for Paris, while his family's property was confiscated and they were deprived of income. In this difficult situation, they initially found shelter in Kraków with the Potockis, and later in Żurawica with the Sapichas; then they stayed in Wysock near Jarosław, where little Jadwiga was bestowed with protective love by Duchess Maria Anna Wirtemberska. Jadwiga's parents, in turn, moved to Żarzyce near Radymno, and finally, for some time, to their own house and estate in Oleszyce – cf. J. Ziółek, *Jadwiga Zamojska (1831–1923)*, „*Nasza Przeszłość*” LXX (1988), pp. 31 -73.

¹⁴ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika „Laborem exercens”*, no. 9, in: Jan Paweł II, *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2000, p. 164

¹⁵ K. Czachowska, *Generalowa Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831–1923). Życie i dzieło*, Poznań 2011, p. 145.

place? Why is it that a woman living in the world cannot train herself practically to fulfill her Christian, national and domestic duties to the best of her ability?¹⁶.

French oratorians advised Zamoyska to return from France to Poland, where she could set up the school she wanted. Jadwiga Zamoyska devoted the remaining 40 years of her life to the School of Housework for Women, which she founded in 1881. At school, apart from a deep life of Catholic spirituality, strictly life and practical matters were taught: professional housekeeping, frugality and diligence. The girls, leading everyday ordinary lives, were supposed to strive for Christ's perfection and sanctify themselves through work. Holy Father, Pius X, in a letter to the founder of the school wrote about the tasks of students, 'After receiving your teachings, they will somehow guard the Christian spirit that you nourish and nurture through them'¹⁷. Zakład Kórnicki — as the school was also called — was entrusted by Jadwiga Zamoyska to the care of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The symbols of the school became the combined cross, book and 'distaff'¹⁸. According to the assumptions, Zakład Kórnicki was to be a miniature of the Church, i.e. a suitable place for the development of all kinds of vocations, the most important of which was to sanctify life in everyday work. The work undertaken included physical work, e.g. gardening; mental work, e.g. translations and commentaries of the Holy Scriptures, preparation of textbooks, lectures and teaching in various fields of knowledge, depending on interests and abilities, translations from Latin, Greek and modern languages, copying musical exercises, drawings; spiritual work was developed through the development of contemplative life: retreats, meditation, learning the catechism, reading the Holy Bible, regular participation in the sacraments¹⁹. The school developed in its students a lifestyle between worldly (secular) and convent life. The duty of the pupils was to strive to imitate Christ everywhere and in everything²⁰.

¹⁶ M. Zamoyska, *Jak powstało dzieło śp. Jeneralowej Zamoyskiej*, Kórnik 1927, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁸ 'I dream of a triple emblem for our institution: a cross, a distaff and a book, i.e. prayer, work and study. I would like our house to be a house of prayer, work and study. These words are reflected in the statute of Zakład Kórnicki, where the goal is written, 'To give women the opportunity to supplement their education in the field of home life, putting them to triple manual, mental and spiritual work, to fundamentally observe order and save strength, time and property'. *3 x K, czyli krzyż, kądziel i książka. O początkach Szkoły Domowej Pracy Kobiet*, https://historiaposzukaj.pl/wiedza,wydarzenia,1487,3_x_k_czyli_krzyz_kadziel_i_ksiazka_o_poczatkach_szkoly_domowej_pracy_kobiet.html [accessed: 10.02.2023].

¹⁹ M. Zamoyska, *Jak powstało dzieło śp. Jeneralowej Zamoyskiej*, p. 30.

²⁰ Pope Pius X wrote in the aforementioned letter to Zamoyska, 'Your institution is both a practical school of Christian life and a school of household, which makes an even more pleasant impression on us and undoubtedly extends the scope of your activities, it is your desire to help the whole society, through the students you brought up. Through them, when they return to their families, imbued with deep reverence for the grace of holy baptism and the duties resulting therefrom,

Countess Zamoyska constantly emphasized and reminded women that striving for perfection in fulfilling household duties is of primary importance in relation to society and the nation. Anyone who strives to perfection in the performance of his/her duties becomes a 'benevolent power' in society. However, the pursuit of perfection requires a woman's continuous growth through self-education and development in spiritual work — to be able to cope with various difficult tasks, such as e.g. upbringing²¹. The School of Housework (after many perturbations on the part of the invader) survived until 1947 and raised many young Polish women.

In 1900 the first edition of the book *O pracy* by J. Zamoyska was published. The main thesis of the problem considered here was the idea that work is a real school of becoming and being a human. A man, learning to be himself, also learns to defend the values in which he believes. The concept of human work²², which Zamoyska included in the book, was based on many practical tips regarding what is usually done on a daily basis. Recalling her thoughts today is by all means justified. Firstly, a modern man still needs a broad discussion on the issue of work and its sanctifying role in human life. Secondly, when we want to improve the shape of social life, we often do not realize how mature thoughts and creative solutions stemming from Polish tradition remain forgotten.

Jadwiga Zamoyska, in the first goal of her assumptions, built a program of social work, at the same time emphasizing the need to correct national faults in order to deserve a heavenly homeland and work out the freedom of the earthly homeland. Bearing in mind laziness in its varieties, she wrote, 'Since lack of accuracy is one of the most negative aspects of our national disposition, every effort must be made to develop the opposite disposition'²³. As Zamoyska emphasizes, work is needed combined with constant reference to God, not in emotional life, but in 'every small and large deed, in every duty [...], in this faithfulness and conscientiousness in the smallest things'²⁴. She was convinced that in order to break out of passivity, to change the shape of social life, it is necessary to carefully examine the collective approach to work and its role in the sanctification of life.

you implant the Christian spirit in human hearts'. M. Zamoyska, *Jak powstało dzieło śp. Jenerałowej Zamoyskiej*, p. 23.

²¹ C. Kustra, *Kobieta i praca w koncepcji wychowawczej Jadwigi z Działyńskich Zamoyskiej (1831–1923)*, Toruń 2012, p. 27.

²² More about it in: M.J. Gondek, *Jadwiga Zamoyska i jej program pracy społecznej*, „Człowiek w Kulturze” 17 (2005), pp. 241–255.

²³ J. Zamoyska, *O pracy*, Lublin 2001, p. 34.

²⁴ A. Bogdański, *Generalowa Władysława Zamoyska i jej dzieło*, in: *Ze spuścizny Jenerałowej Zamoyskiej wspomnienie Zjazdu Kuźniczerek w Warszawie w dn. 22.4.1927*, Warszawa 1927, p. 33.

Simultaneously, she emphasized the importance of everyday work, done in small steps, not for show, but in a systematic, persistent and consistent way.

The issue of the vocation to holiness in the context of the structure of work perceived as physical, mental and spiritual work, as indicated by Zamoyska, brings a lot of light to the contemporary life of women. This tripartite division of labour serves to emphasize the need for a close connection between them and to show that each type of work is as important and meaningful as long as it remains connected, supported and supplemented by the other. Physical work ensures constant contact with the world, sharpens a realistic view, suppresses apriorism and daydreaming, contributes to mental and spiritual health, counteracts helplessness and lack of initiative²⁵. Finally, it is an invaluable pedagogical aid, teaching the best regularity and accuracy, counteracting conceit, because its results are directly tangible.

Mental work as science, intellectual education, aimed at constant exercise of intellectual powers, provides the ability to use general concepts, maintains the ability to think abstractly, make analogies, synthesizes and analyses. It determines the ability to reason and discuss correctly. Continuing it independently in the areas proposed by Zamoyska counteracts the passivity and immaturity of the mind, and has a decisive influence on the education of young people. Mental powers that are not used (e.g. after graduating from college or school) dull over time, and the main reason is usually laziness. However, prudence, the virtue of long-thinking, requires us to work for important, though distant goals.

Spiritual work, as a planned and systematic development of one's own inner religious life, is even necessary to fulfill Christian commandments and duties. By working spiritually, we can strive for full humanity, earthly matters will be outlined in the right colour: they will regain their essential proportions for us, they will become small again, which they are in essence, and they will be important only to the extent that they affect our and others' eternal life.

2.2. Blessed Maria Karłowska

According to Maria Karłowska²⁶, the role of work in sanctifying women's lives was determined by social views common in Greater Poland at the turn of

²⁵ W. Furmanek, *Praca jako wartość w pedagogice współczesnej*, w: *Praca człowieka jako kategoria współczesnej pedagogiki*, ed. W. Furmanek, Rzeszów–Warszawa 2007, p. 27.

²⁶ Maria Karłowska was born on September 4, 1865 in the Słupówka estate (today Karłowo) in the then Archdiocese of Gniezno as the youngest, eleventh child of Mateusz and Eugenia née Dembińska. As a result of the Prussian agricultural policy, the Karłowski family was significantly impoverished. In 1870, Maria's parents sold the rest of their property and moved to Poznań. As a five-year-old child, Maria was raised by her eldest brother Leon in Grąbków. For a child, the strict

the 19th and 20th centuries. At that time, work was understood as a way to social revival and regaining independence. The inspiration from the nascent Catholic social teaching was not without significance, and Greater Poland was a kind of laboratory for putting it into practice. All this was combined with the personal experience of Maria Karłowska, who in her youth worked professionally for several years. Also in the later period, after starting social rehabilitation activities and religious life, she considered work to be an important element of her spirituality and educational system in the Congregation. Her reflection on work was based on the conviction that her duty resulted from God's imperative, which Karłowska considered equal to God's command. God not only commanded men to work, but also in Christ gave an example of its performance, so that it may become a means of sanctifying life. Man, following the example of Christ, is obliged to undertake any kind of work if he is to develop properly²⁷.

Analysis²⁸ of *Dzielko o pracy* by Bl. Maria Karłowska allows to indicate its essential aspects. First of all, it is noteworthy that although the author did not have a university education in the field of theology or pedagogy, she perfectly understood the need for careful preparation in both these fields to conduct the work she undertook. She took up apostolic work in an environment she had not known before. She recruited her collaborators and it was for them that she wrote her *Dzielko o pracy*. In accordance with the currents of the era, she pointed to the educational value of threefold work: physical, mental and spiritual, which was to ensure that her charges started a new life in harmony with God and for the benefit of themselves and society. Staying in the home run by Karłowska (then the first one) was supposed to give her students the opportunity to regain their lost dignity, self-esteem and a chance to support themselves on honest work, so that they would not succumb to the temptation or material necessity to return to the practice they lived off so far. The latter effect was necessary for them to be deleted from the police records of women engaged in prostitution.

upbringing of her sister-in-law was a good, though difficult, school of life. At the age of ten, she returned to her parents in Poznań. Here she received her First Holy Communion on May 3, 1875. In 1882 both parents die. This year is special for Maria also in her spiritual life, because at the age of 17 she entrusts her confessor and spiritual director, Fr. Józef Pędziński, a vow of undying purity. In November 1892, she had the first contact with a prostitute she met by chance. God gave her a special grace of love and compassion for those who were afflicted by moral poverty. Maria accepted God's call with joy, but also with fear of whether she would be able to cope with this call. The first house of this congregation was established in Winiary near Poznań on July 16, 1894. The purpose of the new congregation was defined with words taken from the Gospel, 'Seek and save what was lost' (Lk 19:10).

²⁷ H. Nowak, *Praca w rozumieniu bł. Marii Karłowskiej*, „Colloquia Theologica Ottomana” 2 (2010), pp. 73–84.

²⁸ The fragments of the following text come from the conclusions contained in the author's elaboration by S. Suwiński for the book: M. Karłowska, *Dzielko o pracy*, Pelplin 2019, pp. 101–121.

Maria undertook her work out of the impulse of her heart, filled with compassion for someone else's misfortune. Initially not knowing its essential causes or extent, she wanted above all to show the women she met the way of conversion, the way of living in faith, which is why the beginnings of her activity are associated with individual catechesis. Gradually, she got to know the environment in which she started working. However, she was not a person who would be terrified by the enormity of previously unknown evil and forced to give up. Probably thanks to her independent reading, she became acquainted with pedagogical literature, which allowed her to develop plans for further activity. Writings of Bl. Maria Karłowska show that she was aware of the legitimacy of creating a religious congregation whose charisma would be 'saving souls' of women engaged in prostitution²⁹. Initially, her associates were lay people. Karłowska rightly decided that they needed clear indications for their hard work to bring the expected results. Therefore, *Dzielko o pracy* was written before the Congregation of the Shepherd Sisters of Divine Providence was formally established, before the constitutions and rules of the Congregation were created. Even then, however, Maria understood how it should function: to educate through work, without neglecting the development of the spiritual life of educators and students³⁰.

The first part of *Dzielko o pracy* deals with work in general. Karłowska emphasizes the universal obligation to work, which in paradise was a privilege, and after the original sin — without ceasing to be one — also became a punishment for sins, a way of satisfying God's justice. Using the example of Jesus Christ, she shows the pattern of work of all kinds, that is, the three dimensions she enumerated: physical, mental and spiritual work. It is through undertaking systematic work that the charges are to gain a new sense of self-esteem, lost contact with God and — what is very important — the ability to support themselves after leaving the institution. Only by taking up a job ensuring an independent livelihood could the charges be removed from the police register of prostitutes, who were not allowed to take up any other gainful employment. Educators need to know each type of work that is entrusted to their charges, moreover, they must undertake it themselves in order to be able to teach it effectively. Mother Mary knew that one was teaching by example rather than by word, so she required the joint work of those educated and educating³¹. She explains this idea as follows:

²⁹ M.M. Łobożek, *Błogosławiona Maria Karłowska*, „Folia Historica Cracoviensia” XV/XVI (2009/2010), p. 416.

³⁰ K.M. Wasilewska-Ostrowska, *Praca wychowawcza z dziewczętami wykluczonymi społecznie – w ujęciu bl. M. Karłowskiej (1865–1935)*, „Polska Myśl Pedagogiczna” 7 (2021), p. 343.

³¹ Cf. A. Solak, *Wychowanie chrześcijańskie i praca ludzka*, Warszawa 2008, p. 185.

It is not [...] that we should always work with our charges all day long; often age and health do not allow it. What is more, if the person who was supposed to supervise and direct the work of the charges, worked himself hard on one detail and in one corner, he/she would lose sight and memory of all the work in his/her department. But the point is to work in the laundry, in the kitchen, in the garden, etc., going from one student to another, and here and there, attracting and encouraging to work with your example, cheering up and making pleasant what is unpleasant with your own presence³².

Physical work, however, must be inseparably connected with shaping the mind and spiritual work, ‘the help of internal work is necessary, because without it none of us will survive in our position’³³. Without mental effort, proper organization of work would be impossible, it would be impossible to recognize the needs and limitations of the charges or to achieve perfection in the undertaken activities. Therefore, it is not just about ‘tiring yourself out’ of physical work, ‘One should strive in every labour department for everything that facilitates this work, without striving too much for novelties, without skipping for significant improvements. The more we perfect the work, the easier and more attractive we will make it, the more economical in our Homes’³⁴.

Reading is the best way to develop your mind. Pointing to the great role of appropriate reading, the venerable author also warns against reading worthless and even harmful publications. Suitable reading material is primarily the Holy Bible, the Catechism, selected writings and the lives of saints. It is also necessary to study everything that serves to know and properly conduct the work undertaken. Karłowska also encouraged the development of innate artistic talents, while soberly emphasizing that developing mediocre abilities is a waste of time and effort.

Spiritual work, on the other hand, is to be based mainly on prayer. This, in turn, should take the form of meditation, the subject of which is the Holy Scripture — a selected fragment or even a single verse. The author attributes an invaluable role to receiving the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, while emphasizing the role of spiritual direction.

The dominant part of the *Dzielko o pracy* is entirely devoted to spiritual work. And here it is necessary to emphasize the second feature of this publication that stands out in the foreground. It is the author’s deep personal piety, formed by her own prayer life, spiritual direction and reading: primarily the Holy Scriptures, but also the lives of saints and various spiritual literature. The model for her is the Son of God. She emphasizes, for example, that physical work, though often despised, is an expression of the desire to follow the Master in His hidden life in Nazareth, and therefore is the basis of life in the house run by the shepherds. For her, Christ

³² M. Karłowska, *Dzielko o pracy*, p. 33.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

is also a model of mental and spiritual work, the latter consisting in maintaining a close contact with the Father. She also refers to the attitude of Jesus Christ when she points to Him as a model of behaviour in the face of suffering, misunderstanding and the risk of being discouraged by monotonous and seemingly fruitless work.

The patriotism of Maria Karłowska, already shown in the quote above, is also worth emphasizing. It should be noted that *Dzielko o pracy* was created even when Poland was torn apart by partitions, and the rebirth of the homeland was the desire and the subject of efforts of many enlightened citizens. Blessed Maria Karłowska understood that it would not take place without the eradication of national faults and vices. This goal guided her also in her work with students. She wrote:

The Bible says that ‘nations are curable’. Everything we read, we learn, we look at, everything must be done with this thought in mind, so that it becomes useful for the healing of our nation. Never take yourself as the ultimate goal of your work, but educate yourself how to sharpen a tool or a chisel that you are going to use for some other purpose. In our materialized age, greedy for material progress, nothing more will serve to lift society than to awaken a taste for all that is noble, sublime, truly beautiful — we find in work³⁵.

Another part of the critical analysis of *Dzielko o pracy* was to examine whether its content changed significantly over time. It is known that *Dzielko* was created in 1897, when the Congregation of the Shepherd Sisters did not formally exist yet, and Maria Karłowska herself and her assistants were still lay people. It could therefore be assumed that with the development of the Congregation, significant changes occurred over the course of about 30 years. A version of *Dzielko* from 1928 with the note ‘After correction’³⁶ has been preserved in the manuscript. A comparison of two versions was made: from 1897 (primary) and from 1928 (secondary), as a result of which it was established that both versions are essentially identical, which indicates the originality of the primary text of *Dzielko o pracy*.

3. *O pracy* and *Dzielko o pracy* — comparison of sources

Jadwiga Zamoyska’s book *O pracy* was published for the first time in 1900 and was one of the three books in which the author included her educational program. The comparison of *Dzielko o pracy* with Jadwiga Zamoyska’s book aims to indicate possible borrowings, analogies and similarities in both works. First of all, it is important to note how different the goals of the two studies were. Jadwiga

³⁵ M. Karłowska, *Dzielko o pracy*, pp. 40–41.

³⁶ „Dzielko o pracy”, a manuscript kept in the Archives of the General Curia of the Congregation of the Shepherd Sisters of Divine Providence in Jabłonowo Pomorskie, reference number M.K. 62/8.

Zamoyska published her educational guidelines in print. They did not concern only the 'Zakład Kórnicki' (Kórnik Institute) founded by her, but were guidelines intended for the entire Polish society, part of the comprehensive educational program propagated by her. A separate regulation was devoted to the rules applicable at the Institute. Zamoyska's book *O pracy* consists of nearly 170 printed pages (2nd edition, Poznań 1938).

Maria Karłowska, conversely, created the foundations of formation for those women who — first gathered around her, later formed a religious congregation — were to be responsible for 'saving souls' by working with charges so different from the students of the 'School of Housework for Women'. Their task was difficult, not always successful, and often thankless, not rewarded by seeing the positive results of their efforts. It required constant zeal, perseverance despite obstacles, and due to difficult financial conditions, especially at the beginning of the Congregation's existence, also the spirit of asceticism. *Dzielko o pracy* is therefore not a general treatise on upbringing, it is only about 50 typewritten pages. It was never intended for a wide circle of readers, but only for the internal needs of the Congregation, handed over in copies to its houses, which were built over time. And although it did not gain such high recognition as the papal praise (in relation to Zamoyska's work), it was — like all Maria's intentions and actions — consulted and approved by the Church authorities. There is a note on the manuscript, 'Read by JWX. can. Echaust', who, as noted, 'goes straight to the details, enters with care into the troubles of the "Reverend Mother", [...] takes to heart the concerns of each of the wards — and always tries to have a soothing effect'³⁷.

Despite these fundamental differences, it must be said that in both works the general assumptions are analogous. Both authors pointed to the need for work in the educational process, both distinguished its threefold dimension: physical, mental and spiritual. In both, you can find similar or identical wording regarding these three types of work. A detailed analysis makes it possible to identify these similarities and to indicate the differences, which are discussed below:

a) Some single sentences are identical in both items. More often, however, one can notice the similarity of individual paragraphs in terms of content, using different words. Sometimes identical phrases can be found, except that what in Karłowska is a continuous utterance, in Zamoyska is found in individual fragments of a longer text. Due to the specificity of both works, Karłowska does not reflect large parts of Zamoyska's text concerning the domestic and social duties of women of that time. And vice versa: Karłowska provides her own studies, adapted to the educational work of the Congregation, and due to the specific nature of religious life, not undertaken by Zamoyska.

³⁷ Cf. *Historia Zgromadzenia Sióstr Pasterek od Opatrności Boskiej*, Jabłonowo Pomorskie 1936, p. 35.

b) Karłowska's parts devoted to the spiritual formation of the sisters are completely original. These are the chapters '*O czystości*' and '*O zmysłach*', which constitute more than half of her work.

c) Maria Karłowska wrote her *Dzielko* three years earlier (1897) than the first edition of the Zamoyska's book, *O pracy* (1900) was published, and left it unchanged also 'after proofreading' in 1928. It is therefore impossible to talk about a direct inspiration of this work, much less about copying relevant fragments from it.

d) A certain hypothesis was put forward on the basis of the entry in the second edition of Zamoyska's book, 'Nihil obstat — Poznań, April 11, 1938. Fr. Dr Karłowski'. Father Kazimierz Karłowski, son of Kazimierz, was Maria's nephew. It is known that he used to meet his aunt and talk to her a lot. However, the assumption that it was he who inspired Maria, perhaps knowing Zamoyska's works before they appeared in print, is refuted by a simple fact: Fr. Karłowski was born in 1895, i.e. two years before *Dzielko o pracy* was written, and he was ordained in 1917. Therefore, this hypothesis must be rejected as well.

e) Since there is no trace in Maria Karłowska's biographies or preserved correspondence that she maintained contact with Jadwiga Zamoyska — especially since the latter spent most of her life in Paris, and her stay in the Prussian partition was the shortest — it remains to be assumed that both authors used, regardless of each other, similar inspirations and readings.

f) It cannot be ruled out that both of the discussed authors were influenced by the same trends in pedagogy, learned from the same books and articles, just as both used the lives of saints, *Spiritual exercises* by St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, and the works of St. Teresa the Great and St. John of the Cross (or at least the lives of these saints or works dealing with them), and above all the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament, which presents its readers the Son of God, who became man, as the greatest model. Traces of these readings can be found in both works. Both women also recommended reading them to the addressees of their publications. This would explain the similarity of general remarks about work or the use of even identical phrases.

g) Indeed, as regards the entire content of the two works, they differ significantly in terms of their addressees. Zamoyska's book exhausts the subject of *O pracy*. Karłowska's work, by indicating the value of all types of work, is primarily aimed at spiritual formation of those people who undertook the work of saving souls with her. She wrote it at a time when they were not yet formally nuns bound by vows. However, she encouraged them to practice the evangelical counsels as consecrated persons do. Therefore, *Dzielko o pracy* did not require changes after 30 years. And it is this part of her work, serving the formation of the collaborators in maintaining chastity and practicing the pursuit of perfection through mortification of the senses, that determines the distinctiveness of the compared writings.

h) The importance of triple work in the pursuit of holiness (perfection), emphasized in the writings of both authors, takes on a special dimension in Karłowska. It is meant to serve not only educators, but also students. It was for them that all the efforts of young Maria were made, it was for them that the Congregation of the Shepherd Sisters was founded. Their Founder believed that every human being, even if they were the greatest sinners, could by grace return to the arms of the merciful Father, provided that they were enabled to discover God's love and taught that they should love God above all else and love their fellow human being as themselves³⁸.

Conclusions

A well-understood process of women's education and upbringing cannot omit the issue of the value of their work in the way of sanctification of life and the importance of this work in individual, family and social life³⁹. Hence, there is a need for active cooperation in this process of both secular institutions and the Church. On the basis of the presented considerations, a question arises: Does work really sanctify a man? The answer is positive, because work can lead to holiness, but it does not automatically do so. Work sanctifies if man considers it as a real participation in the work of creation and if he imitates God in creating and maintaining the world, thus completing the work of the Creator⁴⁰. The precursors of the words from the encyclical were certainly the presented women from Greater Poland. Their creative activity has shown that the human work done, even if the task seems extremely modest or insignificant, contributes to the ordering of temporal reality in a Christian way — showing its divine dimension and is accepted and included in the miraculous work of creation and redemption of the world. In this way, work is elevated to the rank of grace, and the woman sanctifies herself through it and transforms her action into the work of God.

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³⁸ M. Karłowska, *Dzielko o pracy*, pp. 114–121.

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