

Programming Religious Education in Secondary Schools at Catechetical Congresses in the Kingdom of Poland in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century

Programowanie nauczania religii w szkołach średnich na zjazdach katechetycznych w Królestwie Polskim w pierwszej dekadzie XX wieku

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Abstract: The subject of the article is the issue of developing a uniform religious education curriculum for secondary schools in the Kingdom of Poland. These activities were shown in connection with catechetical congresses of school prefects in the first decade of the 20th century in the Russian partition. These meetings became an opportunity to exchange ideas on the concepts of future religious education curricula and an attempt to develop a common version of the curriculum for the entire Kingdom of Poland. The main sources that were researched are materials from catechetical congresses of school prefects from that period, as well as framework and detailed curricula defining the content of religious teaching addressed to junior high school students.

Keywords: religious education curriculum, catechetical congress, school prefect, religious teaching, Kingdom of Poland

Abstrakt: Przedmiotem artykułu jest problematyka tworzenia jednolitego programu nauki religii dla szkół średnich w Królestwie Polskim. Działania te zostały ukazane w powiązaniu ze zjazdami katechetycznymi prefektów szkolnych w pierwszej dekadzie XX wieku w zaborze rosyjskim. Spotkania te stały się w tym czasie okazją do wymiany myśli na temat koncepcji przyszłych programów nauczania religii i próbą stworzenia wspólnej wersji programowej dla całego Królestwa Polskiego. Głównymi źródłami, które zostały przebadane, są materiały ze zjazdów katechetycznych prefektów szkolnych z tego okresu oraz programy ramowe i szczegółowe definiujące treści nauczania religijnego adresowanego do uczniów szkół gimnazjalnych.

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Słowa kluczowe: program nauczania religii, zjazd katechetyczny, prefekt szkolny, nauczanie religii, Królestwo Polskie

Introduction

The first years of the 20th century were filled with events that brought changes to many areas of public life for the Polish nation, which was under Russian rule. Russia's internal problems caused by the lost war with Japan and the growing expansion of social discontent led to the revolution in 1905. As a result, the political life was liberalized and a number of reforms in the Russian Empire were conducted, which also had repercussions within the Kingdom of Poland. This created the possibility for previously banned associations and trade unions to operate and to establish Polish institutions. It also mitigated Russification. Thus, the prospect of efforts was opened to improve and standardize catechetical work in schools. The conventions of school prefects, initiated in 1906 in Częstochowa and then continued in 1906 and 1907 in Warsaw, became a platform for exchanging ideas and programming catecheses. They initiated an important process of creating a unified and nationwide curriculum of religious education, which would only be fully implemented in independent Poland.

This publication attempts to present the development of the concept of the curriculum in secondary schools. It refers to eight-year junior high schools as at that time one primarily meant secondary schools when talking about them, which is confirmed by source materials from three conventions of catechist priests of the Russian partition in the first decade of the 20th century in the Kingdom of Poland.

Inspiration for a new religious education curriculum

The issue of religious education curricula for secondary schools was a priority for catechists. They considered it on two levels: creating their theoretical foundations and defining their content elements. This was evident already at the first catechetical congress of school prefects in Częstochowa (April 18–19, 1906). The topic of the curricula was so crucial that it became a starting point for its participants. The papers of Fr. Władysław Budny and Fr. Józef Jamiołkowski on this issue served as an impulse for discussion.¹ They emphasized the need to arrange religious education curricula that would form, in a narrower or wider sense, compact thematic blocks. This type of solution was intended to address the current education system, which allowed for the fact that some students left the

¹ *Dwudniowy zjazd prefektów w Częstochowie*, 'Wiadomości Częstochowskie' 1 (1906) 47, p. 2.

eight-year junior high school after the fourth or sixth grade (obtaining qualifications for certain professions). This meant that they ended their religious education in secondary schools earlier. Therefore, during the convention, it was urged to create new curricula that would be tailored in such a way that the content of teaching would constitute an organic whole in the indicated grades. It was argued that a religious education curriculum should be developed for an eight-year junior high school, but in such configurations that students graduating in the fourth or sixth grade would not be deprived of important theological content. These topics were to be rounded first—as it was then expressed—in a synthetic form. This means that at this stage, they should constitute a thematic monolith, which would later be specified and expanded in higher grades.²

In such an approach to creating the curriculum, there is a tendency to what in 1904 was defined in the *Educational Encyclopaedia* as the principle of concentration. It consisted in providing students with pieces of information in such a way that they were connected with each other and formed a harmonious whole in their minds, focusing around the main idea—the central content, which was the binder of the curriculum. This approach was supported by psychological premises, which assumed that attention was an indispensable condition for the student's assimilation of information. In order to awaken it, one should refer to the knowledge already acquired, and not to the reality alien to the student, having nothing to do with his/her thoughts, feelings, needs and intentions. Therefore, based on familiar concepts, it was necessary to stimulate curiosity and the desire to learn more about a given topic, to seek additional details complementing the existing knowledge. It was assumed that expanding this knowledge by combining facts and associating them became the property of the student's mind when it was fixed in memory through repetitions.³ At subsequent stages of education this method of selecting the teaching material was supposed to deepen and expand the student's knowledge acquired in the first years of school in a narrow but holistic approach by repeating and adding new content elements, striving to harmonize them and create an organic whole. This tendency can be seen in the statements of school prefects who debated theoretical foundations for creating new religious education curricula.

At the catechetical congress in Częstochowa, the second area of reflection concerning the curricula was the issue of religious education material. When considering the selection of the teaching content, efforts were made to determine the subjects that were to be included in the scope of religious education in secondary

² W. Gadowski, *Pierwszy zjazd XX. Prefektów w Królestwie Polskim*, 'Wiadomości Pastorskie' 2 (1906) 5, p. 316.

³ A. Szcówna, *Koncentracja* [in:] *Encyklopedia Wychowawcza*, red. R. Pleniewicz, vol. 6, Warszawa 1904, p. 301; R. Ceglarek, *Theoretical basis for curriculum development in Polish pedagogy between 1918 and 1939*, 'Edukacja Ustawiczna Dorosłych' 2 (2021), p. 38.

school. In the discussed period, the neo-scholastic approach was still prevailed, which divided school religious education into individual theological disciplines assigned to the appropriate grade. In this context, the topic of including apologetics as a separate subject in the curriculum of religious education in lower secondary schools was undertaken⁴. It was understood at that time as theological science that justifies the supernatural character of Christianity. Some school prefects directly saw the need to introduce it to the curriculum of religious education, claiming that it would contribute to a better understanding of the most important truths of faith by young people.⁵ Apologetics was supposed to provide them with rational arguments justifying the truths of the Catholic faith, help in refuting accusations and doubts undermining their authenticity, prepare them to identify with these truths and propagate them in the environments they would encounter after graduating from junior high schools.⁶ Some, however, were of the opinion that the content of apologetics could be distributed in the religious education curriculum in all grades (episodically), without the need to separate it as another subject within the religious education class.⁷

An important element of agreeing on the concept of the curriculum in the secondary school was the issue of priority of the teaching material in the early years. In catechetical practice, it was simply a question of whether to start religious education in the lowest grades with the Bible or with the catechism.⁸ In the first case, religious education was to be initiated with biblical stories, developing the so-called historical course, presenting the biblical history from the creation of the world to the times of Jesus Christ and His disciples. In the second case, the teaching material was to be focused on catechetical truths. It was referred to as a systematic course, presenting in an orderly and synthetic way the main truths of the faith of the Catholic Church. It seems that most of the prefects were in favor of the first variant, especially Fr. Rudolf Filipiński, who was the author of a textbook for learning the biblical stories of the Old Testament.⁹ It is therefore not surprising that he opted for this curriculum concept. The majority of catechist priests accepted this proposal during the curriculum debate and accepted biblical

⁴ *Uchwały I-go zjazdu prefektów*, 'Słowo' 25 (1906) 109, p. 2.

⁵ M. Szkopowski, *I-szy krajowy Zjazd prefektów*, 'Kurier Warszawski' 86 (1906) 108, p. 2.

⁶ *Słownik apologetyczny wiary katolickiej podług D-ra Jana Jaugey'a*, t. 1, ed. and published by W. Szcześniak, Warszawa 1894, pp. VII–XXV; A. Pechnik, *Zarys apologetyki*, Lwów 1901, p. 3; H. Wedewer, *Zarys apologetyki*, tłum. K. Budkiewicz, Warszawa 1907, p. 5; idem, *Zarys apologetyki*, tłum. K. Budkiewicz, Warszawa 1908, pp. 5–7; *Zarys apologetyki (teologii fundamentalnej): według Hettिंगera i Hakego*, red. A. Kwieciński, Warszawa 1910, pp. 1–2; *Apologetyka podręczna. Obrona wiary katolickiej z odpowiedziami na ważniejsze zarzuty: dziełko I. Schmitza*, tłum., uzupełn. S. Bartyński, Kraków 1911, pp. 1–3.

⁷ W. Gadowski, *Pierwszy zjazd...*, p. 284.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ R. Filipiński, *Historia biblijna Starego Testamentu dla użytku uczących się*, Łódź 1904.

material, especially from the New Testament, for the junior high school introductory grade, rejecting the catechism. Since religious education was to begin with the Bible rather than the catechism in the class preceding the eight-year junior high school, it can be assumed that it would be continued in subsequent grades, rather than interrupted by a lecture on the catechism. This concept is confirmed by the religious education curriculum project, which was developed during the convention. In its layout, the introductory grade and the first two grades were to be determined by biblical content. This does not mean, however, that the catechetical material was to be completely eliminated from the curriculum of these grades. It was still to be present, but the starting point for religion lessons were supposed to be biblical stories, on the basis of which the given catechetical truth was to be presented.¹⁰

Parallel to this issue, the question of the technical arrangement of teaching content in the curriculum of each grade was also addressed. It was discussed whether one or two subjects should be included in the weekly timetable, which allocated two hours for religious education lessons.¹¹ This was usually illustrated with an example of teaching biblical history and catechism. In this case, there was a dilemma whether to teach these subjects separately, devoting one hour to each, or to combine their content elements (biblical and catechism) within two hours of religious education at school. This division into separate subjects had functioned basically since the second half of the 18th century and was increasingly becoming the subject of discussions among catechists. It also concerned the other subjects that had been part of the previous religious education curricula. Arrangements in this regard were quite important, as they were to determine the method of selecting teaching material in the new curricula versions.

The achievement of this convention was the elaboration of a draft religious education curriculum. It was basically the first outline of a shared and unified curriculum for the entire Kingdom of Poland. School prefects proposed the following distribution of teaching material in secondary school: in the 1st grade—the Old Testament (first half of the year) and the New Testament (second half of the year) with particular emphasis on the pericopes on penance in order to prepare students for the first confession; in grade 2—continuation of the New Testament, especially the Gospel (first half of the year) and analysis of the Acts of the Apostles showing the outline of the history of the Church (second half of the year) with an emphasis on the sacrament of the Eucharist as a preparation for the first Holy Communion; in grades 3 and 4—liturgy and catechism (medium); in the 5th and 6th grades—history of the Church (with the division of material into the period before and after the Reformation), in the 7th grade—apologetics with

¹⁰ W. Gadowski, *Pierwszy zjazd...*, pp. 284–285.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 284.

a repetition of the dogmatic part of the catechism, and in the 8th grade—ethics including Christian sociology. The teaching content of the last two years was to be the subject of the matriculation examination.¹²

However, it was not a project to be directly implemented in school practice. Rather, it could be perceived in terms of working material, important for catechetical theory and practice, but not conclusive about the main lines and directions of the future religious education curriculum for the Kingdom of Poland. The project was supposed to be sent to a special curriculum committee, which was to continue working on its concept. During the meeting of delegates preparing the next catechetical congress of school prefects in Warsaw (July 3–4, 1906), the list of persons was prepared, each of whom was supposed to develop curriculum proposals for a specific grade and in a strictly defined field (subject of teaching). Thus, for the introductory grade—Fr. Józef Jamiołkowski (historical catechism); grade 1—Fr. Jan Niedzielski (lower catechism); grades 2 and 3—Fr. Rudolf Filipiński (biblical history of the Old and New Testaments); grade 4—Fr. Dionizy Bączkowski (liturgy); grades 4 and 5—Fr. Stanisław Rostafiński (dogmatics and ethics); grade 6—Fr. Antoni Grochowski and Fr. Marcin Szkopowski (Church history); grades 7 and 8—Fr. Jerzy Raczkowski (dogmatics and apologetics).¹³

The proposed curriculum developed at the meeting of delegates differed from the version adopted at the catechetical congress in Częstochowa. Only two months had passed since its completion, and during that time the original version underwent changes. This shows how complex, and at the same time difficult and dynamic, the issue of curricula was, since it evolved so quickly, becoming the subject of deep reflection of school prefects. It also reflects the desires of those catechists who wanted to develop a version of the curriculum acceptable to all dioceses of the Kingdom of Poland. The second convention of school prefects in Warsaw (August 21–23, 1906) became an occasion for this.¹⁴

Religious education curriculum project

Further work on the curriculum concept was continued already at the first meeting of the second convention. The discussion was initiated by the speech of Fr. Józef Jamiołkowski, who presented a project of the religious education curriculum for secondary schools, adopted at the convention in Częstochowa. In its main assumptions, the framework of the curriculum was initially approved. In general, all previously indicated subjects of religious education remained the

¹² Ibidem, pp. 284–285.

¹³ M. Szkopowski, *Zjazd delegatów księży katechetów*, 'Wiadomości Pasterskie' 2 (1906) 7, pp. 445–446.

¹⁴ *Zjazd księży prefektów*, 'Słowo' 25 (1906) 226, pp. 2–3.

same, but their location in the curriculum structure changed. There were some shifts in teaching material from one grade to another in this regard. The only doubt concerned apologetics. It was questioned whether the content presented in this course was not too polemical and selective, referring only to specific issues challenged by environments hostile to the Church, or whether dogmatics should not be introduced in this place, which systematically presented students with all the main assumptions of the Christian doctrine. At the request of Fr. Adam Pyzowski, this curriculum proposal was reconsidered¹⁵. As a result of the vote, the resolution of the first convention was rejected and apologetics was finally removed from the curriculum as a separate subject.¹⁶ However, it does not mean that this content was completely eliminated. In addition to the final version of the high school religious education curriculum approved by the convention, it was stated that apologetics would not be a special subject, but instead ‘all teaching units of religious education in the upper grades should be conducted with an apologetic element in order to explain the thoroughness of and deepen the understanding of Catholic principles.’¹⁷

In this way, the program was crystallized and adopted in the following structure: in the introductory grade—a short historical catechism with consideration of Christian life practices; in grade 1—lower catechism; in grade 2—biblical history of the Old Testament; in grade 3—biblical history of the New Testament; in grade 4—detailed dogmatics (doctrine of faith) and liturgics; in grade 5—morality teachings; in grades 6 and 7—history of the Church along with fundamental dogma; and in grade 8—ethics (philosophy of morality).¹⁸

It was only an outline of the curriculum, presenting the main idea assigned to each grade. It required further elaboration through the development of specific teaching materials. For this reason, several curriculum committees were appoin-

¹⁵ It should be mentioned that in the report on the second convention, Fr. Marian Leon Fulman reported that in the curriculum approved in Częstochowa, apologetics was to be taught in grade 8. According to his account, the vote in Warsaw concerned the removal of apologetics from the curriculum of this grade. However, this is not true as at the first convention it was included in the religious education curriculum in grade 7. Probably the irregularity in this respect is due to the fact that Fr. M.L. Fulman, while preparing the report from the second convention, used the data from the first convention contained in the journal ‘Wiadomości Pastorskie’ (he was a member of the editorial office), in which an error in the numbering of grades appeared. After grade 6, grade 8 was indicated twice, which literally assigned apologetics to grade 8, but in fact it was grade 7. Apologetics could not be taught in the eighth grade because ethics was included in the curriculum in the last grade of the junior high school.

¹⁶ *Uchwały 2-go i 3-go Zjazdu XX. Prefektów*, Warszawa [1907], p. 3.

¹⁷ *Program nauczania religii rzymsko-katolickiej w szkołach Królestwa Polskiego, proponowany przez II Zjazd XX. Prefektów w Warszawie*, Warszawa [1906], p. 46.

¹⁸ L. Fulman, *Drugi zjazd XX. Prefektów w Kongresówce*. ‘Dwutygodnik Katechetyczny i Wychowawczy’ 10 (1906) 21, pp. 618–619.

ted at the convention to develop a detailed curriculum for individual topics taught as part of religious education lessons. These proposals were presented and consulted during sessions, but they were not fully completed due to time constraints and the vast array of issues raised at the convention. This was especially true of dogmatics and ethics. Although Fr. Stanisław Rostafiński in his paper presented the curriculum assumptions for these subjects (accepted by the majority), they were not collected and arranged in the form of a precise curriculum. This was supposed to be done after the convention.¹⁹

Meanwhile, a detailed curriculum for *Roman Catholic religious education in secondary schools*²⁰ of the Kingdom of Poland was adopted. Since the members of the convention were eager for this curriculum to reach catechists as soon as possible so that they could implement it in their schools, it was published the way it had been adopted during the proceedings, i.e. without the last two grades. A curriculum for dogmatic and ethical education was planned to be developed for those grades in the near future and sent to the interested parties. The catechists were obliged to test the aforementioned curriculum during the school year 1906/1907 in order to communicate their conclusions at the next convention with the aim to improve the final version.²¹

The pre-primary curriculum was divided into four thematic blocks: everyday life order, prayer, proper historical catechism, and Church songs. The catechesis contained in the first block was to concern selected principles respected by a Christian and put into practice every day. The student was supposed to realize what their day should look like along with the schedule of activities, among which a well-established and permanent place was to be occupied by pious practices, especially prayers at various times and circumstances. Besides, it was about an inner predisposition, directing thoughts and work undertaken during the day to God. The second block was devoted to basic prayers recited daily by a Catholic. While in the initial catecheses students were made aware of the points of the day when prayer should be present, i.e. how it should sanctify its course, in the subsequent catecheses the prayers included in the prayer book were repeated and discussed. However, the central place in the religious education curriculum in the pre-primary class was occupied by the third block dedicated to the historical catechism. In this part of the curriculum, individual catecheses presented a brief history of salvation. In the form of biblical stories, they were to present selected episodes from the history of the Old and New Testaments and, based on them, present specific catechism truths essentially related to the topic of a given story.

¹⁹ Ibidem 22, p. 653.

²⁰ *Program nauczania religii rzymsko-katolickiej w szkołach średnich* [in:] *Program nauczania religii rzymsko-katolickiej w szkołach Królestwa Polskiego, proponowany przez II Zjazd XX. Prefektów w Warszawie*. Warszawa [1906], pp. 22–46.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 46.

In this way, they presented the history of salvation in a certain logical sequence, and simultaneously, discussed the content included in the catechism. First, the history of the Old Testament was presented, focusing primarily on such issues as: the creation of the world and the first people, original sin, Cain and Abel, the biblical flood, the fate of such characters as Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Moses, the journey to the promised land, the era of judges, the era of King David and Solomon, the fall of the kingdom of Israel, and the prophets. Conversely, from the history of the New Testament, the following were discussed: the birth of John the Baptist and the fate of Jesus Christ (annunciation and birth, adoration of the wise men, flight to Egypt, finding in the temple, baptism in the Jordan, calling of the apostles, wedding in Cana, driving out the moneychangers from the temple, sermon on the mount, the miracle of the healing of the leper and the centurion's servant, the transfiguration of the Lord, the teaching on prayer, the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful Samaritan, the resurrection of Lazarus, the solemn entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the passion and resurrection, Christophany to the disciples, the ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit). As the last block, Church songs were given, which the students were to learn and sing, so that they could serve as texts for individual or community prayer.²²

The motto of the first grade curriculum was the lower catechism. The initial topics were devoted to the question of defining the purpose of human existence and actions taken to achieve it, all in theological optics. In this perspective, three basic duties of a Christian were indicated: to have faith and to profess it (Apostolic Creed), to keep the commandments (Decalogue) and to use the means necessary for salvation (prayer and sacraments). These categories of duties constituted the three main pillars of the religious education curriculum in this grade. Faith and commandments were discussed in great detail. As for faith, this issue was analyzed by considering the articles of the Apostles' Creed in turn. The first article started from fundamental issues, namely the existence of God and the arguments proving it, both rational and resulting from revelation. Then, God's attributes (spirituality, eternity, omnipotence, goodness, justice) and His creative act in relation to angels (faithful and rebellious, their nature, ways of acting), the world (six-day work of creation) and man (his spiritual and bodily nature, fall and its consequences). Catecheses dealing with the second article of the Apostolic Creed focused on the person of Jesus Christ and made announcements and promises related to His work of salvation, starting from the Proto-evangelium, through messianic signs and figures in the Old Testament. In connection with the third article, the mystery of the incarnation (the divinity and humanity of Jesus) and the overall hidden and public life of the Son of God were explored, and the figure of Mary, who gave birth to Him, was analyzed. Jesus' further fate was dis-

²² Ibidem, pp. 22–23.

cussed along with article four, focusing this time on the mystery of redemption (passion and death) and its fruits, and then on the issue of descent to the abyss and resurrection, which was the subject of article five. The sixth article was analyzed in a broader context, not only considering the issue of the ascension, but also presenting the facts preceding this event. The sequence of articles about Jesus Christ ended with the seventh article, according to which during the catechesis it was necessary to acquaint students with the signs announcing the Parousia and the Last Judgment.²³

The next topics were related to the belief in the Holy Spirit. Article eight, dedicated to this topic was discussed in the light of the New Testament scriptures. Additionally, the curriculum proposed to show the action of the Holy Spirit in two dimensions: in relation to the Church (abides—governs—makes it infallible) and to the human soul (dwells—enlightens—sanctifies). The ecclesial part of the curriculum was considered in connection with article nine. It includes topics devoted to the issue of the beginnings of the Church, announcements and signs leading to its creation. There are also topics aimed at showing the truth of the Roman Catholic Church against the background of other Christian communities, emphasizing its infallibility and immortality. The teaching material also contained the issues of the duties of members belonging to the Church community and presented its hierarchical structure. This thematic block also included content regarding the mystery of the communion of saints, highlighting the mutual relations of those belonging to the triple community of the Church (pilgrim, triumphant and suffering), and the issue of those who did not belong to its community.²⁴

The analysis of the Apostles' Creed concluded with a consideration of the content related to the forgiveness of sins in the sacraments of baptism and penance, which was discussed in article ten. Along with the eleventh article, the mystery of death and the further fate of man (particular judgment, sentence, universal resurrection) were considered. This part of the material ended up with discussing the ultimate realities of man (purgatory, hell, heaven) in relation to the twelfth article of faith.²⁵

The second very important pillar of the first class curriculum was the commandments. This part of the teaching material (entitled Avoiding Sin) began with introductory topics about human actions and conscience, that is, the ability to make judgments about the moral value of human actions. On this occasion, the concept of sin (its types) and vices (dominant) were also defined. The main part of the material (entitled Doing Good) had two characteristic vectors: keep the commandments and strive for virtue. In the case of the former, the content ele-

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 23–25.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

ments were arranged in such a way that first, the information about the double commandment of love, acts of mercy and the content of the Decalogue were given, and then each of the ten commandments was analyzed in detail according to the key—duties and sins. The first commandment discussed the duties related to the veneration due to God, Mary, saints and relics, and warned against sins against this commandment, which included: heresy, unbelief, apostasy, doubt, despair, presumptuous trust, sacrilege, religious indifference, superstition, divination and witchcraft. The second commandment was to be analyzed in terms of upbringing to respect God's name, to invoke it with due esteem, and to keep the oath made to God (vow). At the same time, it was necessary to sensitize the student to perjury, blasphemy, invoking in vain or breaking vows. Another commandment required—according to the curriculum—to discuss the issue of proper Sunday celebration by participating in the Holy Mass, attentive listening to the sermon and avoiding hard work, while simultaneously sensitizing the catechized students to sins against these indications. Only the fourth commandment (in the curriculum) did not specify the sins against it, and only the obligations resulting from its content were given, which were considered in the following configurations: children—parents; students—teachers; servants—masters; subordinates—superiors. A significant emphasis in this commandment was placed on the duties of children towards their parents, obliging them to love, respect, obey and help. The first grade curriculum proposed that the fifth commandment should be related to the obligation to respect life and health (soul and body) not only of one's own but also of another person, while warning against sins: homicide, suicide, bodily injury, hatred, scandal, and lack of restitution. Successive commandments were linked and discussed together. The sixth and ninth commandments were considered first, then the seventh and tenth. In the first case, the teaching material concerned the obligation to maintain purity in thoughts, speech, deeds and desires, and provided the means to achieve this value in the life of a Christian, simultaneously pointing out the sins associated with not respecting this virtue. As for the second case, the obligation to respect someone else's property, to be content with personal goods and to value the need and importance of work in human life was analyzed, while warning against such sins as: violation of property goods or interests and unjust desire for them, theft, fraud, damage extortion, appropriation of another's property, and lack of restitution. The catalog of topics devoted to the Decalogue closed the teaching material related to the eighth commandment. In this case, the aspect of telling the truth was emphasized, which should be treated as a Christian's duty, and among the sins that violated this commandment, the curriculum listed: false testimony and accusation, suspicion, hypocrisy, backbiting, slander and lying.²⁶

²⁶ Ibidem, pp. 25–26.

Church commandments, which had to be thoroughly discussed during religious education lessons, complemented these topics in the curriculum.²⁷

In this thematic series there was also a second vector, which focused on Christian virtues. The content that was to be undertaken as part of the analysis of this issue concerned: three theological and four cardinal (moral) virtues, as well as virtues opposed to the seven deadly sins. In addition, such content elements as: acts of divine virtues, ways of acquiring moral virtues and evangelical counsels were to be included here.²⁸

Finally, the third pillar of the first-grade curriculum was the means necessary for salvation. The teaching material provided information about what grace was, why it was needed for salvation, what its types were, how it could be gained and when it could be lost. In this part of the material, several catecheses were devoted to the discussion of prayer. The basic information was to determine what it actually was, what ways of prayer could be distinguished and what its role was. Much more time was reserved for content related to the sacraments. After introductory topics on the general knowledge of the sacraments, each of them was subjected to a thorough analysis, discussing them basically according to the scheme: determination, institution, essence, effects and preparation. The whole was closed with teaching material about sacramentals. In the comments to the implementation of the curriculum, there was information that preparation for the first confession and Holy Communion should take place in church, outside of religious education lessons.²⁹ In the discussed period, bishops reminded of this in statements addressed to catechists and clergy.³⁰

The subject of teaching in the second grade was to be the biblical history of the Old Testament, i.e. a chronologically ordered narrative of events contained in these books. Several initial topics were devoted to a general introduction to the Old Testament and the history of salvation described on its pages (definition and sources of biblical history, division and meaning of the Old Testament). The curriculum further divided the entire teaching material into several periods: the original revelation, the patriarchal revelation, and the Mosaic revelation.

Both the first and the second were based on the Book of Genesis and aimed at showing biblical stories about the most important religious truths regarding the creation of the world and the beginnings of human history. The content elements first referred to the biblical cosmogony, showing the truth about eternal God the Creator, and later presented the history of the world and the first people. For this reason, topics such as the creation of the world, trial and fall (Adam and Eve),

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 26.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 27.

²⁹ Ibidem.

³⁰ *Kronika kościelna*, 'Gazeta Kościelna' 19 (1910) 1, p. 6.

Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, covenant and dispersion of nations (Tower of Babel) appeared here.³¹

The second segment of the curriculum, i.e. the patriarchal revelation, presented the story of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph as the ancestors of the Israelites, but also as the progenitors of humanity. The teaching material portrayed the history of the patriarchs, beginning with the calling of Abraham, revealing subsequent episodes from his life, for example, the meeting with Melchizedek and the sacrifice on the mountain (Isaac). Then it focused on Jacob, his dream on the journey to Haran, and his return to Canaan. In turn, presenting the fate of the last of the patriarchs, attention was paid to such events from his life as: the situation in the house of Jacob's father—Joseph as the beloved son, Jacob's journey to Egypt, Jacob's blessing of his sons and his death, and the end of Joseph's life. The curriculum also added the story of Job to this biblical period, as well as introductory information about the Egyptian captivity of the Chosen People.³²

The last segment of the curriculum was the revelation of Moses. It constituted the largest part of the teaching material, presenting the period from the time of Moses to Christ, which could be described as the stage of the economy of the Mosaic law. The program divided this time into several parts: the first—from the birth of Moses to the judges; the second—the times of the judges; the third—under kings; the fourth—the fall of the kingdom of Israel and the fifth—the period of national captivity. The first part was basically all focused on the figure of Moses. It showed his fate, i.e. his youth (birth, upbringing, escape), then his calling and return to Egypt (before Pharaoh, plagues, Passover, exodus), journey to the promised land (crossing the sea, signs of God's protection, journey to Mount Sinai), receiving the commandments, making a covenant, worshipping the golden calf, building a holy tabernacle, establishing altar servants, sacrifices, offerings, rituals and festivals, spies, wandering through the desert—waters of Meribah and the plague of serpents, death). In addition, the program included topics devoted to Joshua, as a continuator of Moses' mission, showing his actions related to the Israelites entering the promised land and the division of the country among individual tribes.³³

The second part of the curriculum—referring to the Moses' revelation—concerned the time of the biblical judges. It was a transitional period in the history of the nation of Israel, from Joshua's death to the establishment of the kingdom. Few catecheses were provided for this discussion, conveying general information and focusing only on a few characters, such as Ruth, Heli and Samuel. The third part was more content-heavy with the leading motif being the first Israeli kings. This

³¹ *Program nauczania religii rzymsko-katolickiej w szkołach średnich*, 1906, pp. 27–28.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 28.

³³ *Ibidem*.

part of teaching material began with the anointing of Saul as king, followed by his disobedience and rejection. Then there was the fate of King David, his ascension to the throne and the introduction of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, as well as his literary achievements. This part ended up with the story of King Solomon, highlighting such episodes from his life as the construction of the temple and its dedication, a collection of his advice and proverbs (scriptures), as well as unfaithfulness to Yahweh and punishment for it.³⁴

The fourth part described the history of the fall of the Jewish state, its split and idolatry. The teaching material first presented the situation after Solomon's death, the division of his great empire into two parts: the northern kingdom (Israel), whose ruler was Jeroboam, and the southern one (Judah), remaining under the rule of Rehoboam. It also presented the religious context, apostatizing and the fate of those who remained faithful to God of their fathers. Regarding the northern kingdom, the curriculum included several prophets of those cultivating the faith of the ancestors, among whom the prophet Elijah (the sacrifice of Elijah and the pagan prophets, the prophet's disciple—Elisha), Hosea and Amos were singled out. After discussing their activities, it showed the consequences of injustice in the country and polytheism, leading to the loss of independence and conquest by Assyria. This sequence of events in Israel ended with the story of Tobias being taken captive by Assyria. Further, the curriculum focused on the southern kingdom and selected prophets (Joel, Micah and Isaiah) who predicted its fall, caused by the lack of faithfulness to the covenant concluded with God, which consequently led to the subordination of these lands to Assyria. The next topics concerned the successive prophets announcing the fall of the state (Jeremiah and Baruch) and the history of the Israeli nation in Babylonian captivity with their prophets (Ezekiel and Daniel).³⁵

In turn, the fifth and last part addressed the issue of returning to the homeland and rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. These topics were combined with the presentation of biblical characters: successive prophets (Zachariah and Malachi) and Queen Esther. After them, the teaching material focused on the further history of the Israelites fighting for political and national freedom against successive aggressors (Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Romans), especially exposing the guerrilla warfare of the Maccabean brothers. The program ended with the establishment of Herod as king of Palestine, during whose rule and the reign of the Roman Empire, Jesus Christ was born.³⁶

The motto of the third grade program was the biblical history of the New Testament. Like the second-grade program, this one was also very extensive.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 28–29.

After introductory catecheses on the subject and sources of the New Testament salvation history and the topography of Palestine, the main teaching material began. It was divided into two parts. The first was dedicated to the life and work of Jesus Christ, while the second focused on the fate of the apostles and the early Church. The first part distinguished two periods: the hidden life of Jesus and His public activity. As for the first period, the curriculum included topics dedicated to John the Baptist (the story of his birth) as the predecessor of Christ. It was only after them that the entire panorama of events related to the childhood and youth of Jesus was located. The events were discussed in subsequent catecheses (annunciation, birth, offering, revelation, escape and return, in the temple, baptism) to end this part of the material with a return to the figure of John the Baptist, bringing closer the last stage of his life (activity in the desert, witness to Jesus, imprisonment and death). The second period, which is the main core of the curriculum, was divided into seven thematic blocks. The first one was devoted to the calling of the first disciples, the selection of the twelve apostles and their mission. The second confirmed His mission by showing the miracles of Jesus on nature (turning water into wine, multiplying bread, bountiful catch of fish, calming the storm, walking on the lake), on people (healing the son of a royal official, Peter's mother-in-law, a paralytic, a man with a withered hand, leper servants of the centurion, raising a young man, healing a lame man by the pool, a suffering woman, Jairus' daughter, two blind men, man blind from birth, ten lepers, raising Lazarus, healing blind Bartimaeus), and on evil spirits (healing a possessed mute, possessed in the region of the Gerasenes, daughter of Canaanite woman, epileptic—sleepwalker). The third block certified His mission with the holiness of His life, portraying Him as sinless, a model of all virtues, seeking God's glory and involved in the salvation of man (the obligation to love one's neighbor and the conversation with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, a wealthy young man and a rich man), a friend and protector of children and full of love for sinners (Matthew, Magdalene, Zacchaeus).³⁷ The fourth block was to confirm the truth of Jesus' mission through His prophecies, concerning His passion, death and resurrection, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world with the final judgment. The next part of this block—the fifth one, focused on Jesus' teaching, His wisdom and the community of the Church founded by Him (parables about: the sower, mustard seed, weeds, wheat and tares, net, treasure, pearl, workers in the vineyard, royal feast), God's attributes (parables about: the good shepherd, the lost sheep, the drachma, the prodigal son, the fig tree, the rich man and Lazarus), the most important virtues for people (parables about: taking the first places at the table, faithful servant, unjust judge, Pharisee and the tax collector, importunate friend, the merciless servant, dishonest steward, servants waiting for

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 29–30.

the master, ten virgins, talents) and His divine sonship (Jesus' assertion that He is the promised Messiah, the importance of the commandment of love, the content of the Sermon on the Mount). The sixth block contained topics related to the impact of Jesus' teaching on His friends (adjusting disciples' thoughts about the Messiah and His kingdom, James and John's desires, Mary and Martha's priorities, Peter's confession and authority, conditions for disciples to follow Him, the revelation on Mount Tabor) and enemies (blasphemies of the Pharisees against Jesus, a warning against the sin against the Holy Spirit, the episode with the rent coin, the intention of the Pharisees to stone Christ and then kill Him). The seventh block was usually a collection of topics related to the last events in the life of Jesus Christ (the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper and the washing of feet, the establishment of the Eucharist, the identification of the traitor, the farewell discourse, in the Garden of Gethsemane, before Annas and Caiaphas, Peter's denial, in front of Pilate and Herod, sentencing, crucifixion, last words, death, burial, guarding the tomb). The eighth and final thematic block completed the history of Jesus Christ. It contained a catalog of events described in the New Testament, namely: the resurrection, appearing to the disciples, the establishment of the sacrament of confession (the power to forgive sins), Christophany in Galilee and Jerusalem, and the ascension.³⁸

The second part of the curriculum was dedicated to the apostolic times. It presents the earliest history of the Church, the fulfillment of Jesus' farewell words that the apostles will be His witnesses to the ends of the world. The teaching material was presented chronologically and began with the completion of the group of the Twelve by choosing Matthias. Further catechesis concerned the descent of the Holy Spirit and what happened after Pentecost. Topics included the establishment of the first Christian community, the first miracles performed in the name of Jesus (healing of the lame), the first persecutions, and the everyday life of the early Church. The episode of the imprisonment of the apostles and their questioning before the Sanhedrin (Gamaliel's speech) was woven into the course of these events. Then, based on the Acts of the Apostles, the curriculum introduced students to the beginnings of the missionary activity of the Church. This part of the material began with the appointment of seven deacons, followed by the subject of Stephen's preaching and martyrdom. Subsequent catecheses focused on the issue of conversion. This cycle included topics on the conversion of the inhabitants of Samaria, an Ethiopian courtier, Saul and Cornelius. The last few catecheses showed the missionary commitment of the apostles, especially Peter and Paul, and the most important events preceding the end of their lives. The third-grade curriculum ended with a catechesis on the Assumption of Mary.³⁹

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 30–31.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

The main idea of the fourth-grade curriculum was liturgics (first part) and a dogmatic exposition of the Christian faith (second part). The intention of the curriculum was to deepen students' religious life by introducing them to the beauty of the liturgy and helping them understand in what they believe, or rather in Whom—discovering the mystery of God who creates, redeems, sanctifies and fulfills. In the first part, the curriculum had three leading vectors: a place of worship, liturgical celebrations and the church year. These contents were preceded by introductory topics making students aware of the essence of the liturgy, what it expresses and what it means for the individual. The main part of the teaching material began with information about the church as a place of worship (terms defining various churches, the interior design of the church, styles in sacral architecture) and liturgical paraments used for worship (equipment, vessels, robes, books). An important part of it was knowledge about celebrating the mysteries of the Church: Holy Mass (establishment, structure, way of participation), richness of prayers and various forms of services (breviary, hours, litanies, supplications, novenas, processions, pilgrimages, Stations of the Cross, May, June, October services, etc.), rituals for administering individual sacraments (the course of the liturgy) and selected sacramentals (consecrations, blessings, funerals). This part of the curriculum was concluded with issues related to the church year and celebrating the most important salvific events. The topic was first discussed in general terms (concept, purpose and division), and then the periods of the liturgical year, its most important feasts and celebrations were analyzed in detail.⁴⁰

The second part of the curriculum was dedicated to the presentation of the Christian faith in dogmatic terms. The dogmatic approach can be seen in the selection of teaching material, which consisted of short treatises, such as those on God, Christology, charitology, sacramentology and eschatology. The entire material was divided into five segments. The first two can be treated integrally, as they speak about God: His Divine nature, distinction of the Divine Persons (first segment) and the origin of creatures from God (second segment). The initial topics concerned the transcendence of God, focusing on His essence, nature and attributes, to later present the basic information about the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The following topics addressed the fact that God is immanent in creation. This means that the second segment of the curriculum was the work of creation: the world (out of nothing, freely, for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind), angels (nature, attributes, hierarchy, fall, attitude to the visible world) and man (image of God, immortal soul, life in paradise, original sin, its consequences). The motto of the third segment was the truth about God as a redeemer. The content elements here focused on Jesus Christ—the Son of God. Basically, they went in two directions: Christology—His person (the promised Savior, divinity and

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 32–33.

humanity) and Soteriology—His work of redemption (the atonement of the Son of God, sacrifice on the cross as the main work of redemption and its fruits). The fourth segment was a concise treatise of dogmatic theology on grace (charitology) and sacraments (sacramentology), showing God who sanctifies man. In this part, the curriculum provided several catecheses on the essence of grace (concept, types and effects) and justification through sanctification (nature and essence of justification, its fruits, multiplication and loss of grace). The dominant subject of teaching in this part of the material, however, was the doctrine of sacraments. First, the curriculum proposed several topics of a general nature (explanation of concepts, components of sacraments, matter, form and their fruits, institution), and then it was followed by a thorough analysis of all the sacraments according to the accepted order with respect to each of them: concept, institution, sign, minister, recipient, necessity and consequences. The last segment of the curriculum, i.e. the fifth, focused on key issues related to eschatology and pointed to God who fulfills everything. The issue of eternal life was considered on two levels: the particular judgment (death, judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory, the communion of saints) and the final judgment (end of the world, resurrection of bodies and final judgment).⁴¹

The curriculum axis of the fifth grade was Christian morality, which showed how one should live in God. The curriculum was divided into two main parts: general ethics and specific ethics. They were preceded by a prologue consisting of several initial catecheses, which introduced the issues of morality. In fact, they could be included in the scope of general ethics as they addressed such issues as: the concept of Catholic ethics and the ultimate goal of man, his true happiness and free will as an action related to responsibility for actions. It was only after these topics that the teaching material focused on general ethics was placed in the curriculum, the common denominator of which was the essence of morality. Basic issues concerning human acts (what they are, their division, their sanity—the ability to recognize them and manage one's behavior), elements on which their morality depends (selected object, circumstances of action, intended goal—intention), conscience as moral norms (concept and division), morally good deeds (merits, virtues, Christian perfection) and evil ones (concept, division, effects and causes) were discussed here. In the second part, within the framework of detailed ethics, the curriculum included divine virtues, the Decalogue and Church commandments as well as sins against them. In practice, this meant that the curriculum repeated, deepened and expanded some of the content that was the material of the first class teaching (about the commandments).⁴²

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 33–36.

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 36–37.

The subject of teaching in the sixth grade was the history of the Church. It was the last of the curricula developed at the second convention of school prefects, and was published in the form it was then adopted. Its teaching material was extremely extensive. It would have been sufficient for at least two years of religious education in high school, but it was supposed to be completed in one year. Therefore, it is not surprising that the introduction to the curriculum included guidelines for catechists informing them about the possibility to omit those facts which fell within the scope of universal history that young people got acquainted with as part of the same subject. As for the periodization of the Church history, a division into three historical epochs was adopted: antiquity, the Middle Ages and modernity.⁴³

The teaching material dedicated to antiquity began with the presentation of socio-political and religious contexts in Palestine during the birth the Church (Jewish and Hellenic philosophy and culture, monotheism and polytheism, political system and social structure, devaluation of customs and understanding of the messianic idea). This thematic section also included issues related to the life and activity of Jesus Christ, and especially His teaching. It was important for the history of the Church as Jesus was its founder. Subsequent topics focused on the apostolic times, their missionary commitment and the spread of Christianity, as well as the reaction of the Jewish community in Jerusalem and in the Diaspora to its ideology and expansion. Then the issue of the persecution of Christians by pagans (martyrs) was raised until the issuance of the Edict of Milan and religious freedoms under Emperor Constantine the Great. The curriculum included threads related to the figure of Julian the Apostate and his desire to eliminate Christianity and reintroduce traditional Roman cults as the state religion. Along with these topics, the problem of the first schisms related to Gnosticism, Manichaeism and monotheism was addressed. The penultimate thematic block in this part of the program focused on the internal situation of the Church of that time, namely: the activities of the Church Fathers and Christian writers, the formation of the hierarchical structure (primacy), the emergence of heresies and attempts to overcome them in theological discourse. The latter, in turn, gave reasons for growing tensions between the Eastern and Western Churches as well as the threat posed by Islam.⁴⁴

The second historical epoch—the Middle Ages—was divided into ten parts in the curriculum. The first one concerned the general characteristics of society in that period, and missionary activity in Western Europe. In the second part, the genesis of the founding of the Papal State was discussed by presenting the role of Charlemagne in bringing about the flourishing of the Church. The next one demonstrated the influence of religious orders on European culture (Benedic-

⁴³ *Ibidem*, pp. 38–46.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 38–40.

tines), the development of education (monastic, cathedral and parish schools), education and science (scholars and saints of the Church), customs (asylum, trials by ordeal, God's truce) and Church organization (bishops, metropolitans, cardinals, chapters). The fourth part concerned the Christianization of the northern peoples (Denmark, Sweden) and the middle-eastern ones (Bulgaria, Moravia, Bohemia, Ruthenia), and the fifth one concerned the Christianization of Poland (conversion of pagans and baptism, the first missionaries—St. Adalbert, the creation of an independent Church organization, the attitude of rulers to the Church, and the case of Bishop Stanislaus). The sixth part focused on the Eastern schism, exposing its historical background, causes of misunderstandings, the rise of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate and the actions of the patriarchs (Photius, Michael Cerularius), as well as attempts at reconciliation (Second Council of Lyon, Union of Florence). Part seven concentrated on the expansiveness of the Church, and particularly on the Crusades (causes, course), their positive consequences (unification of Christians around a common idea, cultural rapprochement and exchange of scientific ideas) and negative ones (religious innovations and freedom of morals). In turn, the eighth part showed the influence of the Church on the development of medieval culture. The curriculum highlighted the role of the Church in defending European civilization against erroneous religious and social movements (Cathars, Waldensians, Albigensians, Flagellants) and magical practices (witches' sabbath, black masses) and the importance of the Inquisition in combating them. It presented the flourishing of monastic life (Camaldolese, Carthusians, Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Trinitarians, Marcedarians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Bernardines), scholasticism—the philosophical and theological teachings of the Church (Anselm, Bernard, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, John Damascene, Bonaventure), as well as religious and secular art. In the ninth part, the content was focused on church-state conflicts and the decline of the authority of the papacy. The curriculum emphasized an attempt to subordinate the Church to the empire, so that it would have primacy in the Christian world over the papacy (German emperors: Otto I and III). It depicted Emperor Henry IV's resistance to reform decrees of Pope Gregory VII related to the sale of church offices and dignities (simony) and the prohibition of rulers appointing bishops (investiture), and the resolution of the conflict under Emperor Henry V and Pope Callixtus II. The curriculum showed internal tensions in the papal election at the beginning of the 12th century (Innocent II—Anacletus II) and the Roman rebellion against the secular power of the pope (Arnold of Brescia). It presented a further stage of the Church-political struggle during the pontificate of Boniface VIII and the rule of Philip IV the Fair, as a result of which the papacy significantly weakened and became dependent on the French kings during the so-called Avignon captivity, as well as the emergence of the Western Schism within the Church and its overcoming at the Council in Constance. The activity of two

heretics: Wycliffe in England and Hus in Bohemia, spreading hatred towards the Church and religious errors, as well as the resolutions of the Council of Basel, aiming to place the Council above the papal authority, were also part of the trend to weaken papal power (other topics included in the curriculum). The last part concerned the history of the Church in medieval Poland—the Church in the monarchy of the last Piast dynasty. The prepared catalog of topics from this period contained such issues as: creating a Church organization (networks of dioceses and metropolises), missionary activity of the Polish Church, introducing religious orders to the country and their forms of activity, heresies (Flagellants in Silesia) and the influence of the Church on political, social and intellectual life.⁴⁵

The most extensive in its content was the last historical epoch, namely modernity. The curriculum divided this teaching material into as many as twenty-one parts. It began with showing the role of the Church in the period of the Enlightenment (part I) by discussing such issues as: socio-political relations prevailing in Europe at that time, interest in ancient culture and attempts to combine it with Christian truths (Dante Alighieri, Petrarch), anti-clerical views of some thinkers (Giovanni Boccaccio), famous humanists of the era (Johann Reuchlin, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Ulrich von Hutten, Niccolò Machiavelli) and humanist popes (Alexander VI, Julius II, Leo X). Several subsequent thematic blocks were dedicated to the genesis of the Reformation and its course. First, the curriculum presented the circumstances of the birth of the Reformation in Germany (part II), pointing to the condition of the Catholic Church at that time and attempts to strengthen it and renew religious life (Jean Gerson, Nicholas of Cusa, Leonardo Ximenes, Girolamo Savonarola), the socio-religious situation and the speech of Martin Luther (science and severing ties with the Church), actions directed against him (Edict of Worms), as well as the reform movement, social tensions and wars on religious grounds (peasants' wars, Peace of Augsburg, Thirty Years' War). Later, the curriculum outlined the development of the Reformation in other European countries: Denmark, Sweden and Norway (part III), Switzerland, Hungary and Transylvania (part IV), the Netherlands (part V), France (part VI), as well as England, Scotland and Ireland (part VII). It addressed the issue of internal divisions within Protestantism (part VIII) and the destructive effects of the Reformation, which included: the decline of science and universities, the erosion of religious life and the rise of anti-religious organizations (Freemasonry and Illuminati) (part IX). The curriculum devoted a lot of space to the discussion of the Tridentine renewal, which was a response to the Reformation. The teaching material pointed to the resolutions of the Council of Trent as a source of religious and ecclesiastical renewal in European countries, the development of monastic life and monks' commitment to the papacy (Jesuits), missions (Capuchins, Reformati, Oratorians, missionaries, Redemptorists), edu-

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 40–43.

cation (Piarists, Visitationists, school brothers), philanthropy (Bonifratres, Sisters of Charity) and asceticism (Carmelites, Benedictines of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Trappists) and activities in mission countries around the world (part X). The content was complemented by topics related to the reformers of Christian piety—St. Francis de Sales, St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Alphonsus Liguori (part XI). The next part of the curriculum (part XII) covered issues connected with religious and political trends in the Enlightenment, marked by the negative influence of Protestant thought, including breaking with Catholic traditions, disregarding the laws of the Church or attempts to free themselves from the authority of the Holy See (Jansenism, Gallicanism, Febronianism, Josephinism).⁴⁶

As in the previous epoch, also in this period there was a large thematic block devoted to the history of the Church in Poland, with a focus on its modern history (part XIII). The teaching material included topics aimed at showing the impact of humanism on the socio-political and intellectual life in the country (University of Cracow), the spread of Protestantism and the mutual relations of religious communities originating from it and their attitude to the Catholic Church (*Consensus Sandomiriensis*, *Colloquium charitativum*). It also covered the influence of Protestantism on society in the intellectual dimension (Mikołaj Rej, John Amos Comenius, Fausto Sozzini), the opposition of the Catholic Church in Poland to Protestantism—the activities of Stanislaus Hosius and the Jesuits, the church union between the Latin Church and the Orthodox Church (the Union of Brest, the synod of Zamość), as well as the negative effects of Protestantism on national and religious unity.⁴⁷

Moreover, the curriculum included a catalog of topics devoted to the French Revolution and the fight against the Church (part XIV), first outlining the historical background and socio-political, economic and religious situation in France, and then presenting anti-religious ordinances and eliminating religion from public life. Subsequent topics were first to describe the attempt to repair Church-State relations under Napoleon I and Pius VII (part XV) by concluding a concordat. Then further conflicts between the two parties were discussed. They resulted from the emperor's arbitrary addition to the document of a set of laws relating to Catholicism (organic articles) and limiting the sovereignty of the Church. Following this, the curriculum presented the geopolitical situation in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, revolutionary movements and the processes of unifying Italy (*Carbonari*), as well as the fall of the Papal States. Against this background, the curriculum depicted the profiles of two popes—Gregory XVI and Pius IX, and their efforts to preserve the sovereignty of the Church and address religious matters (part XVI). The themes concerning the Catholic Church in France and Italy were followed by others presenting its fate in Germany and

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 43–44.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

Switzerland (part XVII). Further, the conflict between the state and Church authorities was highlighted, paying attention, among other things, to the government's decision on the procedure for entering into mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants with the obligation to raise children in the Protestant spirit. This material was supplemented with topics about subsequent anti-Church laws (*Kulturkampf*), which resulted in further restrictions on the Church, censorship of sermons, dissolution of religious orders and withdrawal of the right to supervise schools. This part of the curriculum ended with showing the fiasco of Bismarck's policy, the annulment of some decrees and the search for an agreement with Pope Leo XIII. These events were followed by content demonstrating the vitality of the Church in the 19th century (part XVIII), such as the scholars, writers and clergy converting to Catholicism in England. The curriculum included examples of great converts, such as: John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning. It also highlighted the significance of the *Syllabus errorum* document, which condemned ideas of religious freedom and separation of the state from the Church, as well as such theses or doctrines as socialism, liberalism, materialism or rationalism. The curriculum discussed the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the convocation of the First Vatican Council. In connection with the latter event, the curriculum showed the issue of opposition within the Catholic Church to the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility and primacy at the council, which ultimately led to a new division and the formation of Old Catholics.⁴⁸

A large part of the curriculum was dominated by issues related to directions of modern thought (part XIX). Among them, creators of new philosophical currents and outstanding thinkers were distinguished (Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Georg Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Nicolai Hartmann, Friedrich Nietzsche), representatives of religious rationalism (Leo Strauss, Ernest Renan), natural sciences (Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer), philosophical-social doctrines and socialist activists (Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Ferdinand Lasalle), as well as works of fine literature (Friedrich Schiller, Johann Goethe, Heinrich Heine).⁴⁹

The program could not lack further references to the recent history of the Catholic Church in Poland (part XX). The content elements were basically focused on the situation of the Church during the partitions. They were preceded only by topics about its fate at the end of the 18th century, with an emphasis on the development of education and the role played by the Jesuits in this regard, as well as on the period of the Four-Year Sejm and the contribution of the Piarists to reforming education in the national spirit and promoting education by the National Education Commission.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 44–45.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 45.

Regarding the Russian partition, the curriculum included the content that showed the persecution of the Catholic Church by the tsarist authorities, as well as forcing the Uniates to break ties with it and adopt the Orthodox faith. In addition, topics related to further repressions after the fall of the January Uprising were included: the takeover of Church property, the dissolution of religious orders, limiting the activities of seminaries and their closure. Under the Prussian partition, Polish Catholics shared the fate of German Catholics—as indicated in the curriculum—during the dispute over mixed marriages and the cultural struggle (*Kulturkampf*). Topics related to the participation of the clergy in organizing social and professional work were also included, which was an example of defending Polishness threatened by Germanization. When presenting the situation of the Catholic Church in the Austrian partition, the curriculum focused on closing monasteries and taking them over, limiting contacts between religious orders and the Holy See, disorganizing church life and subordinating it to state authority, including religious education.⁵⁰

The curriculum ended with a collection of several topics (part XXI), for which the pontificate of Leo XIII was the binding clamp. The leading content concerned primarily the encyclical *Rerum novarum* published by him, in which the pope presented the principles of the Catholic social teaching, reaching back to the thought of Bishop Wilhelm Kettler, a pioneer in the innovative understanding of social justice. Additionally, the curriculum highlighted the Pope's contribution to the study of biblical sciences, which he expressed in a special encyclical and by establishing the Pontifical Biblical Commission. What is more, the curriculum discussed his involvement in the development of Christian philosophy and theology (new research centers, scientific journals) and in reforming liturgical singing (research on Gregorian chant), promoting the Third Order of St. Francis as a center for moral renewal in society (constitution, catechism), and missionary activity and works. This thematic block was concluded with a catechesis dedicated to Pius X, who held his papal office at the time the curriculum was developed.⁵¹

The final version of the religious education curriculum

According to the agreements made at the second convention, the aforementioned curriculum was to be tested in catechetical practice, and all comments were to be presented to school prefects at the next convention. In fact, one of the main topics of the third catechetical congress in Warsaw (August 24–26, 1907) was the religious education program in high school.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibidem, pp. 45–46.

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 46.

⁵² *III-ci zjazd prefektów*, 'Goniec Wieczorny' 388 (1907), p. 5; *III-ci zjazd księży prefektów*, 'Goniec Poranny' 389 (1907), p. 5; *III-ci zjazd księży prefektów*, 'Goniec Wieczorny' 390 (1907), p. 5; *III-ci zjazd księży prefektów*, 'Goniec Poranny' 391 (1907), p. 1.

This issue was raised in their speeches by priests: Jan Mauersberger, Jan Kabata and Walenty Gadowski.⁵³

Especially the latter conducted a thorough analysis and assessment of this curriculum, simultaneously presenting his proposals in this regard. In general, he saw the need to move away from the curriculum of systematic theology in terms of separate scientific disciplines, for example: liturgy, dogmatics or ethics, in favor of socio-ethical and apologetic issues, and considering them in a more comprehensive way based on the catechism mediocre. Additionally, seeing a significant span of teaching material regarding the history of the Church, he appealed for two years to be devoted to it, and not one year as it was initially assumed.⁵⁴

The issue of the religious education curriculum in high school was also raised by other speakers, paying particular attention to the study of Church history (similarly to Rev. W. Gadowski) and to teaching dogmatics and ethics, i.e. those subjects that did not appear in the original edition of the curriculum after second convention. These topics were discussed by: Fr. Czesław Sokołowski—in the field of dogmatics; Fr. Stanisław Rostański—ethics; Rev. Antoni Grochowski—Church history.⁵⁵

The debate on the basic material (the first curriculum draft approved at the second convention) in the light of the presented papers and comments made by catechists, led to the development of the final version.⁵⁶ This time, however, no detailed curriculum was created, but only a framework—outlining in a sketchy way the main thematic ideas for individual grades. In its general outline, *The curriculum for teaching the Roman Catholic religion in high schools*⁵⁷ was as follows: introductory grade—lower catechism (part I); grade 1—lower catechism (parts II and III); grade 2—biblical history of the Old and New Testament (hidden life of Jesus Christ); grade 3—biblical history of the New Testament (public activity of Jesus Christ) and liturgics; grade 4—doctrine of faith; grade 5—Christian morality (ethics); grade 6—history of the Church (until the Council of Trent); grade 7—history of the Church (until modern times) and fundamental dogmatics; grade 8—Christian life in the face of contemporary trends and theories.

⁵³ Fr. W. Gadowski, living at that time in Galicia (Austrian partition), did not obtain permission from the state authorities to enter the Kingdom of Poland (Russian partition). His paper was sent by post from Tarnów to Warsaw and read at the third convention, and its content was published in 'Dwutygodnik Katechetyczny i Duszpasterski'.

⁵⁴ *Plan nauki religii w Królestwie Polskim*, 'Dwutygodnik Katechetyczny i Duszpasterski' 1 (1907) 13, pp. 491–498; 14, pp. 536–539; 15, pp. 583–586.

⁵⁵ R. Ceglarek, *History of the congresses of teaching priests in the Kingdom of Poland (1906–1917)*, 'Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne' 41 (2022), p. 210.

⁵⁶ *Uchwały 2-go i 3-go zjazdu xx. prefektów*, Warszawa 1907, p. 4; *Uchwały III-go Zjazdu księży-prefektów*, 'Goniec Częstochowski' 233 (1907), p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Program nauczania religii rzymsko-katolickiej w szkołach średnich*, Warszawa 1907.

As we can see, there were some shifts in the teaching material and corrections within each grade level. It was agreed that in the introductory class the lower catechism (part I) would be discussed, i.e. the sign of the cross, Our Father, Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed, in the form of accessible discussions based on appropriately selected biblical pericopes. In grade 1, the teaching of the catechism (parts II and III) regarding commandments, good and bad deeds and sacraments was to be continued. In turn, in the second grade, the focus was on the Old and New Testament biblical stories, with the latter presenting the life of Jesus Christ before undertaking public activity. All the biblical stories were to be used as a contribution to a more accurate repetition of parts of the Apostles' Creed (from the introductory grade). In the next grade, the presentation of the further part of the New Testament biblical history was proposed. It concerned the following: the person of the Son of God, along with the analysis of the other articles of faith and liturgy teaching, and preparation for the first confession and Holy Communion (outside of religious education lessons at school). In the fourth grade, students were to be presented with the teaching of faith, taking into account such key issues as religion, God the Creator, revelation, the divinity of Christ, the foundation of the Church, the sacraments and the afterlife. Moral education was planned for grade 5 and was supposed to concern positive examples, motivating students to accept the message of Jesus Christ and apply it in daily life. In grades 6 (part I) and 7 (part II), the history of the Church was provided, with the latter one covering basic assumptions of dogma. Religious education in high school was to be concluded with issues concerning the attitudes of Christians towards various trends and theories emerging in the modern world.⁵⁸

The curriculum developed in this way was a compromise solution, which means that it was not satisfactory for all catechist priests. This led to its modifications soon after.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it was this religious education curriculum that became the point of reference for all other curricula developed in the Kingdom of Poland.

Conclusion

The catalog of important issues discussed at catechetical congresses in the Kingdom of Poland at the beginning of the 20th century included the question of programming religious education, especially in secondary schools, where prefect priests were usually catechists. Therefore, it is not surprising that this issue was one of the main cores of all three conventions and became an example of valuable

⁵⁸ *Uchwały 3-go Zjazdu XX. Prefektów w Warszawie d. 24, 25 i 26 sierpnia r. b.*, 'Wiadomości Pasterskie' 9 (1907), pp. 570–572.

⁵⁹ *Program nauki religii rzymsko-katolickiej dla szkół średnich*, Warszawa 1908.

initiatives of school prefects aimed at renewing catechetical work through efforts to develop uniform religious education curricula, defining the content of teaching for eight-year junior high schools in the Russian partition. Their mature and planned activities resulted in the development of a study version of the curriculum, which, after a period of verification, was corrected and published in print, becoming the basic material for later curricula.

This curriculum was a reflection of the spirit of the era and is a manifestation of what was particularly emphasized in the teaching of the Church at that time. These include: knowledge of the basics of liturgy and love for liturgy, as well as bond with the Church, knowledge of moral principles and their respect in life, clearly defined religious doctrine, orientation in the history of salvation, knowledge of catechism truths and awareness of the Church's heritage, respect for it and its defense. Although this curriculum still had clear neo-scholastic inclinations, presenting teaching materials as separate theological disciplines and focusing on an encyclopaedic approach to content and its memorization, it nonetheless represented an important step in the evolution of thought in programming the catecheses.

These aspirations, related to the desire to develop a new curriculum in those realities of the period of partitions, should also be perceived in terms of a patriotic act aimed at abandoning the curricula of the tsarist authorities in favor of the Polish curriculum of teaching the Catholic religion. In this endeavor, school prefects' awareness of the need to depart from the previous author's curricula in favor of a common curriculum for the entire Kingdom of Poland can also be observed.

It can be confidently stated that these were the beginnings of developing a nationwide program, which was fully implemented more than a decade later in the reborn Polish state. Although in the discussed period it did not become obligatory in all dioceses of the Russian partition, it was nevertheless an important step towards the unification of the content of catechetical teaching and served as a point of reference for the authors of new curricula after Poland regained independence in 1918.

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