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THE PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY OF JOHN PAUL II IN KRAKOW

The Krakow church and Bl. Bernardyna Jabłońska in the years 1896–1940

75 years ago, on 25 September 1940, at the Rakowice cemetery in Krakow, a funeral of the Superior General of the Third Order of Saint Francis Serving the Poor, Bl. Bernardyna Jabłońska (Bernardina) was held. The funeral procession preceding the coffin was composed of Albertine Brothers and Sisters; representatives of other congregations included Discalced Carmelites and Salesians, followed by diocesan clergy with Auxiliary Bishop Stanisław Rospond, who presided over the rites. In front of and behind the coffin there was a multitude of the city's inhabitants, the entirety of the Krakow church; mourners were not only from Krakow, and not only from the Church. They joined to thank God with their presence for the Superior General, and to thank her.¹

Bernardina arrived in Krakow as early as 1896 as an 18-year old candidate for monastic life. She instantly felt fulfilled in St. Anne's Municipal Home for the Disabled and the Incurably Ill in Lubicz 25, also known as the Angelic Garden. Bernardina started working in the kitchen of the establishment. After vestition in Brusno, she returned to the establishment in Lubicz 25, clad in her habit and with her new monastic name, to work in the laundry. In this unusual way St. Bernardina entered the monastic life, its charism and Krakow. First she met St. Brother Albert, then the sick in the Krakow Home for the Disabled and the Incurably Ill, meanwhile getting to know her own Convent.

In 1901 she became the superior of the monastic house at the establishment. Soon after, she participated in setting up and opening the Krakow branch of the Home for the Disabled in a tenement at the corner of Radziwiłłowska and Kopernika street, opposite St. Nicolas's church. St. Brother Albert was aware of St. Bernardina's organizational talents. On 7 April 1902 he gathered all sisters in the

¹ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim. Życie Sł. Bożej Bernardyny Marii Jabłońskiej (1878–1940)*, Kraków 1988, p. 8.

Home for the Disabled in Lubicz 25 and appointed 24 year-old St. Bernardina Superior General.²

Back then there were 41 Albertine Sisters in six establishments, of which three were located in Krakow (in Piekarska, Lubicz and Radziwiłłowska streets³).

In the very first months of her service as Superior General, St. Bernardina organized opening of the seventh house of Albertine Sisters, and the first (apart from Krakow) in the Krakow diocese, this time it was Kalatówki near Zakopane. The chapel and the house were consecrated by the Krakow Auxiliary Bishop Anatol Nowak on St. Clare's day, 12 August 1902. A total of seven sisters lived in the house. The monastery in Kalatówki became a place for novices. In 1914 the Kalatówki chapel were the venue of vestition ceremonies for newcomers. The Superior General arrived in Kalatówki for the entire winter of 1902/1903. It was then that she wrote the "The image of a good superior and her role in the Congregation."⁴

The opening of the Kalatówki monastery and the decision to make it a novitiate house meant brought the Superior General's relations with the Krakow diocese to a new level.

In the year 1904 Bl. Bernardina found a permanent confessor in the person of rev. Czesław Lewandowski, who played that role for another 30 years until his death in 1934. Rev. Czesław Lewandowski was initially superior in St. Vincent a Paulo's house of missionaries in Kleparz, and then in Stradom; later he became spiritual father in the Krakow Diocese Seminary.⁵

At the time of Cardinal Jana Puzyna important decisions were taken regarding the house in Krakow in Krakowska street 47. In 1908 the upstairs level of the front building was earmarked for a convent, with a shelter for poor women and homeless children located downstairs. In 1911 the establishment in Krakowska 47 became the Congregation's motherhouse. It was the place is where the Superior General lived and where the retreat was held, and where the vows were taken. In 1914–1932 it was the house of the novitiate.⁶ Further monastic establishments set up by the Superior General included a municipal nursery at the foot of the Wawel hill and a fostering centre for girls in Podgórze. Albertine

² M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 10, 14-15, 18.

³ The other three were outside Krakow and the Krakow diocese. Those included Lviv, Sokal and Prusie.

⁴ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 20–22.

⁶ Archive of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow [AKMKr], no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a typescript entitled "Dom Generalny".

Sisters became increasingly integrated with the community of Krakow. Surviving correspondence with the Krakow Consistory of the period concerns permissions to open an oratory, to gain a privilege to store the Blessed Sacrament, or requests for a permanent confessor in Kalatówki, or to receive the Porziuncola Indulgence. Letters were composed by mothers superior of respective monasteries, but always on behalf of the Superior General. Each letter opens with the words: "Superior of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving the Poor, requests". All request were approved. Sometimes consents were granted for a specific time, usually five or seven years, so they had to be renewed after expiry. Subsequent consents were granted for perpetuity.⁷

At the outbreak of World War I, St. Brother Albert and Bl. Bernardina decided that the Albertine Sisters should be delegated to the most vulnerable locations, i.e. epidemic barracks and military hospitals. In September 1914 doctor Artzt, commanding officer of the military hospital in lieu of the Jewish hospital in SkaWińska street, asked Bl. Bernardina to provide nurses to care for the sick with cholera, small pox, typhoid or diphtheria. Bernardina first sent 12 sisters, followed by another 20; many of them died of epidemic diseases.⁸

Soon it turned out that St. Brother Albert is terminally ill and there is no hope for him. Therefore he decided to offer help to Mother Bernardina. On 19 March 1916 sister Magdalena Józefa Sierko was appointed Assistant Superior General, i.e. Deputy Superior General, and on 2 August 1916 he made Helena Wilkołek the mistress of novices. It was Wilkołek who managed the Congregation after Bernardina's death.⁹

From the foundation of the Albertine monastery until St. Brother Albert's death, i.e. over 25 years, the sisters followed the rule of St. Francis in the Third Order. Their position as a congregation had not yet been legally formalized. The departing Brother Albert did not leave any written constitution. As he himself admitted to Bl. Bernardina, "they want me to write the rule for the order, but I can't to it. Maybe some nun and some priest will do."¹⁰ He died on Christmas 1916. Bl. Bernardina with a group of brothers and sisters was present at his

⁷ AKMKI, no ref. no. Albertine Sisters, several examples. A request from the Superior General to the Consistory of 25 November 1913 for the appointment of a permanent confessor in Kalatówki; of 30 April 1914 for granting permission to store the Blessed Sacrament in the monastic chapel in Krakowska street; of 26 May 1914 for the exposure of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel.

⁸ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 26.

⁹ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁰ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 27.

deathbed. She also participated in his funeral, which proceeded from Kazimierz to the cemetery in Rakowice.

Soon after St. Brother Albert's funeral Mother Bernardina went to Prince Bishop Adam Sapieha. She introduced sister Magdalena, her assistant, and sister Helena, mistress of novices, both of whom accompanied Bernardina. The bishop approved their appointments to relevant positions. As regards Brother Albert's death, Sapieha instructed Bernardina to assume the duty of admitting newcomers to and expelling them (as advised by the council) from the Congregation. At this time Bernardina requested Prince Bishop to appoint a special supervisor for the Congregation who would replace Brother Albert. Answering the question about her preferred candidate, she indicated Bishop Anatol Nowak. Sapieha acceded, on the condition that the sisters asked Nowak themselves. So they did: all three sisters approached Bishop Anatol Nowak, who approved of their request. He agreed to serve as an advisor to the sisters and to participate in the vestition ceremony for the novices.¹¹

In monastic matters, Prince Bishop Adam Sapieha consulted rev. Czesław Lewandowski, who suggested that first the Albertine order should write down all that is practised in their congregation, and thus gathered material would become the basis for creating a rule in line with the Founder's concept. Adam Sapieha accepted the idea and recommended that rev. Lewandowski should do the work with Mother Bernardina. Meanwhile, Bishop Anatol Nowak asked Bernardina to collect all Brother Albert's writings. Bernardina set about the task and completed it. First she gathered all writings of Brother Albert and submitted the collection to Bishop Nowak, who wished to study the written output of St. Brother Albert, now that he agreed to be the supervisor of the Congregation. In line with Sapieha's recommendations, Bernardina made sure that all teachings of St. Brother Albert were recorded in writing. The outcome of her work is a hefty book with detailed descriptions of all recommendations and Albertine customs. The work compiled by Mother Bernardina and rev. Lewandowski was entitled *The rule of brother Albert*. The book consisted of six chapters and contained information on the purpose of the Congregation, formation and its stages, monastic attire, monastic vows (poverty, chastity and obedience), relations between both Congregations, penance and mortification, as well as the order's activities in shelters and hermitages. This formed the basis for writing constitutions.¹²

¹¹ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 28.

¹² M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 29.

On 9 December 1921 Bernardina received a letter from Prince Bishop Adam Sapieha, reading: “We would very much like your Congregation, established in 1891 Krakow by late Brother Albert at the permission and blessing of late Krakow Cardinal Prince Bishop Albin Dunajewski under the name of ‘Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving the Poor’, to receive formal basis and consolidation according to standards set forth by canon law, which it still has not. To this end, by the power we hold as Bishop Ordinary of the Krakow diocese, in which your congregation was established and has its Main House, we decide as follows:

1. A canonical inspection of all houses of the Congregation within our diocese. To conduct this inspection I authorized rev. Bishop Anatol Nowak, our Vicar General. From the day on which Reverend Superior General receives this decision until the end of the canonical inspection, all sisters must stay in the houses in which they are currently based.

2. We hereby order that a general chapter should be held, composed of: a) Superior General, b) Assistant Superior General, c) all superiors of individual houses, d) delegates from individual houses [...]. As this will be the first general chapter, its competences will include the election of Superior General, her three advisers, the procurator general and the mistress of novices.

3. The matter of the order’s constitutions. The general chapter shall discuss the main provisions of the constitutions and request the Superior General to prepare the constitutions within a year.”¹³

The sisters acted accordingly. The first chapter was held on 9 February 1922, preceded by two days of spiritual preparation in the house in Krakowska street 47. It was supervised by Father Bernard Łubieński, a Redemptorist. The chapter was presided over by Bishop Anatol Nowak. All 43 sisters entitled to vote arrived. After the first vote was cast, Bernardina received 39 votes, on the basis of which Bishop Nowak announced her Superior General of the Congregation. After 20 years of service in the position bestowed upon her by St. Brother Albert, Mother Bernardina was now elected by the sisters. The Chapter authorised the Superior General to draft the Constitutions. Mother Bernardina undertook the task.

At the end of 1922 rev. Lewandowski submitted to Bishop Nowak a document entitled *Constitutions i.e. statutes of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving The Poor, the so-called Albertine Sisters*. Rev. Lewandowski requested

¹³ АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a letter from Bishop A. Sapieha to S. Sister of 9 December 1921 (draft).

Bishop Nowak to study the text and include his comments. In 1924, after death of St. Józef Sebastian Pelczar, Nowak became bishop of Przemyśl. Closing the Krakow period on 23 July 1924, he sent back draft constitutions, “enclosing comments by one remarkable monk in relation to certain sections of the Constitutions, namely the question of ownership creates serious challenges, particularly in the light of present relations.”¹⁴ Specifically, section 11 of the *Roman standards*, issued in 1901, stipulated as follows: “congregations which do not provide support for sisters shall receive neither *decretum laudis* nor any decree of confirmation.” Section 12 of the same documents read: “utmost care should be exercised when approving new Congregations which would be supported merely by alms and fundraising.” Roman standards required that the congregation owned property which would guarantee material support.¹⁵ According to St. Brother Albert, the Congregation should be supported through work and alms; he was a vocal opponent of ownership of property, especially real property. Presumably for that reason St. Brother Albert, who disagreed with principles widely accepted for monasteries, did not attend to drafting the Constitutions. Albert’s idea was closely followed by Bl. Bernardina. Finally, rev. Lewandowski and Mother Bernardina decided to hand the text over to rev. dr Józef Baron, a St. Vincent missionary and canonist, who offered his comments. The revised text was sent back by St. Bernardina to the Krakow Curia. She was consulted on the matter on 6 March 1925. A month later, on 3 April 1925, Bernardina was summoned again to the Curia, accompanied by vicaress Magdalena Sierko. The sisters were welcomed by rev. Stanisław Domasik, who returned the constitutions with his comments, annotations and deletions. Since rev. Domasik did not spare his words of criticism, which led to an argument between him and sister Bernardina, who defended and stood by the principles developed by St. Brother Albert. Rev. Lewandowski clashed several times with rev. Domasik. Reverend was not only a lawyer, but also an ex-military chaplain. Things were far from easy. The Constitutions had to be revised. This task was undertaken by rev. Lewandowski. He had several meetings with Prince-Bishop Adam Sapieha, who included his own comments. During holiday 1925 in Zakopane, in Kalatówki, he rewrote the text, implementing the comments. In October 1925 he submitted it to the Curia for approval.

On 20 October 1925 the Krakow Metropolitan Curia issued a letter to parish priests of the parishes in which Albertine houses were located. The letter read:

¹⁴ It was Father Jan Roth (1870–1944), a lawyer. Cf. S. Bernardyna Maria Jabłońska, *A selection of works compiled by Father Joachim Bar*, Krakow 1988, p. 13.

¹⁵ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 30–33.

“The Congregation of Albertine Brothers and Sisters pleads our final approval of their Congregation and constitutions. As we would very much like the keynote of late Brother Albert’s work and the spirit of St. Francis the Seraphic to be followed not only in written constitutions, but also in real life of the entire Congregation and its members, we would like to know the opinions of those parish priests who had the opportunity to meet brothers and sisters of the Congregations and witness their life, customs and work. On such basis we will be able to evaluate the real value of each provisions of the constitutions, amend, delete or add them, as required. Please provide your own sincere and impartial opinion in writing.”¹⁶

The letter was sent to rev. Władysław Miś from St. Peter and Paul’s church in Krakow, who was also a dean, rev. dr Jan Kanty Tobasiewicz from the parish of St. Nicolas in Wesoła, rev. Stanisław Pilchowski from Zwierzyniec, rev. provost Józef Górny from the Corpus Christi church in Kazimierz, rev. dr Józef Niemczyński from Podgórze, rev. Jan Symior, a Salesian from Dębniki and rev. Jan Tobolak from Zakopane. On 25 November 1925 Dean Reverend Miś invited rev. Lewandowski, who at that time was clerics’ spiritual father at the Krakow Seminary, to provide additional opinion. Reverend Lewandowski had already sent his comments to the Prince-Bishop; this is how he replied to the dean: “As regards the sisters, I have looked at their monastic life for over 20 years and I can assure you that they deserve approval of their Congregation and constitutions without any changes. Such regulations concerning their activity are perfectly in line with the ideas and spirit of their saintly Founder.”¹⁷ Other priests responded with similar enthusiasm. However, there were several critical comments, too:

1. Frequent changes of superiors. Rev. Józef Niemczyński, parish priest from Podgórze, pointed out that the monastic house in Podgórze had had as many as 10 superiors over 6 years.
2. Excessive centralization.
3. Shyness in voicing grievances.
4. There were cases when a newly appointed superior did not introduce herself to the parish priest and when superiors allowed priests to the altar without the parish priest’s knowledge.

Consulting parish priests was deemed necessary when editing the final text of the constitutions. Following consultation, the Curia demanded that the constitutions should be prepared in the number copies equal to the number of dioceses

¹⁶ AKMKI, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, Bishop A. Sapięha to Parish Priests, 20 October 1925.

¹⁷ AKMKI, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, Rev. Dean Miś to Rev. Lewandowski, 10 November 1925. Rev. Lewandowski’s reply of 21 November 1925.

in which the houses of the Congregations were located. Since the Congregation had its houses in seven dioceses, seven copies had to be prepared. The Superior General saw to it. In 1927 the Krakow Curia sent the copies to bishops of remaining dioceses asking whether they acceded to the attached version of constitutions, approved of it and if they had any comments. The letter to Archbishop Sapieha containing draft constitutions was sent to: Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski from Warsaw, Archbishop Bolesław Twardowski from Lviv, the Podlasie Bishop Henryk Przeździecki, the Tarnów Bishop Leon Wałęga, Bishop Augustyn Łosiński from Kielce and Bishop Anatol Nowak from Przemyśl. They bishops unanimously voiced their approval of the constitutions. Some of them included their comments, suggesting that the prescribed severe penance practices should be made more lenient.¹⁸

When it seemed that nothing stood in the way, the Superior General received a reminder from the Krakow Consistory urging her to submit the original document of which copies had been made for the bishops. The Superior General replied that she had not received any separate letter regarding the matter.¹⁹

The decree issued by the Krakow Prince-Bishop Adam S. Sapieha approving of the constitutions, dated 19 June 1926, reads: "We have studied these Constitutions, i.e. laws of the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving the Poor, the so-called Albertine Sisters, in great detail and found them in perfect compliance with the spirit of the Holy Church and canon law. Thus, we approve of the constitutions according to Canon 492 for the duration of three years and announce them as such, at the same time instructing the entire Congregation to strictly follow them."²⁰ The decree approving the Congregation in diocesan law is dated 22 June 1926.²¹

Rev. Domasik was not completely happy with the final text of the constitutions, demanding corrections, but the sisters did not agree to it. Rev. Lewandowski became a mediator in the dispute, paying a visit to the Krakow bishop. Eventually the constitutions were appended with a special amendment. It reads:

¹⁸ At the time (1926) houses of Albertine Sisters were located in the following dioceses: Krakow (8), Przemyśl (5), Lviv and Podlasie (4 each), Tarnów (2) and one house each in Warsaw, Częstochowa, Kielce and Łódź dioceses.

¹⁹ AKMKR, no ref. no. Albertine Sisters, a letter to the Superior General of 4 June 1926 and her reply of 11 June 1926.

²⁰ AKMKR, no ref no., Albertine Sisters, decree of Archbishop A. Sapieha of 19 June 1926, l. 5959/26.

²¹ L. Piechnik, *Zakony w Archidiecezji Krakowskiej za rządów Adama Stefana Sapiehy*, [in:] *Księga Sapieżyńska*, t. 1, red. J. Wolny, Kraków 1982, p. 342.

“Considering the Albertine sister’s request I express consent for corrections to the original text, as expressed by handwritten remarks in the text, or approaching the original text.” Below is a stamp and signature of the Krakow Bishop, underneath the date of 26 November 1926.

The Constitutions, i.e. laws of the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving the Poor, the so-called Albertine Sisters, were formally approved, and Albertine Sisters became a monastic congregation in the diocesan law. This success needs undoubtedly be attributed to Mother Bernardina and Prince-Bishop Adam Stefan Sapieha, who had always been very kind to the Congregation, rev. Lewandowski and many other priests. The constitutions were later copied on a newly purchased typewriter and sent to all 28 houses in early February 1927. In the attached letter, the Superior General instructed sisters to “read, remember and conscientiously follow” the text. “I suspect that by closely adhering the rules, and with God’s grace, sisters will become saints.”

An electoral general chapter was held on 13 April 1927. It had been 5 years since the previous one. The election was presided over by rev. Stanisław Piechowski, parish priest of the Most Holy Saviour church in Zwierzyniec. 62 arrived in total. In the first vote, Bernardyna was elected by 60 sisters. She accepted the outcome, which was approved by Archbishop Adam Sapieha. This was the first election after the approval of the constitutions.²²

This year Minister General of the Capuchin order, Father Melchior a Benisa, addressed a decree the subsuming the Congregation of Albertine Sisters under the auspices of the Capuchins.²³

The constitutions had been approved for a period of three years. In early June 1929 the Superior General applied for the approval of the constitutions for a subsequent period. In his reply, the Krakow Prince-Bishop wrote: “We would be happy to grant your request; first, however, a canon inspection of your Congregation needs to be conducted.” A visiting inspector was appointed in the person of the Guardian of the Krakow Franciscans, Father Stefan Wawrzkowicz.²⁴

The inspection of the Albertine Sisters’ congregation was carried out in all 10 monastic houses located in the Krakow archdiocese.²⁵ In total, over 100 sisters

²² M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 36.

²³ АКМКГ, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, decree of 6 May 1927.

²⁴ АКМКГ, no ref. no. Albertine Sisters, a letter of A. Sapieha to the Superior General 24 June 1929.

²⁵ 1. Motherhouse, 2. Old Age Home, 3. Branch of the Old Age Home, 4. Nursery, 5. Branch of the nursery in Koletek, 6. Branch of the nursery in Dębniki, 7. Fostering centre in Podgórze, 8. House in Prądnik, 9. Mników, 10. Zakopane.

were living in the inspected houses: 29 in the motherhouse in Krakowska street, 15 in the Old Age Home in Lubicz and Radziwiłłowska streets, 19 in nurseries, 4 in the establishment in Podgórze, 4 in Prądnik, 12 in Mnikowo and 17 in Kalatówki.²⁶ In addition, there were 63 novices in the motherhouse in Kazimierz.

In his inspection report, Father Wawrzkowicz wrote of Mother Bernardina: “The Superior General is very firm, she flatly announces, ‘that’s the way it has to be,’ and there is no questioning, though she still shows understanding and tries to make sure that the basic needs of the sisters are met.”²⁷

The approval of the constitutions and the recognition of the Congregation in diocesan law was a memorable moment on the history of Albertine Sisters. Most importantly, it enabled them to lead their monastic life based on vows. First, there was a year-long postulate followed by vestition, and a three-year novitiate spent in the motherhouse (in the second year novices were allowed to go to respective establishments and help nuns at work). Two months before the completion of the novitiate, the Superior General issued a request to the Consistory to delegate a priest to the exam and interviews. Further stages included novices’ yearly vows and three-year vows.²⁸

On 5 October 1927, 41 sisters in service for 20 to 38 years, i.e. since the establishment of the Congregation in 1890 to 1908, took three-year vows. On 9 January 1928, vows were taken by 40 sisters who joined the Congregation in the years 1908–1918. Another 38 sisters, each of whom had served at least 10 years in the monastery, took vows on 7 March 1928, followed by 55 sisters on April 10 – each of whom had spent at least 6 years in the monastery, with 88 more sisters in several subsequent months. From October 1927 to October 1928 three-year monastic vows were taken by a total of 262 Albertine Sisters. This was an important year in their history. In 1930 perpetual vows were implemented. That year 85 sisters took perpetual vows, with further 14 in the year 1931. The Superior General took temporary vows on 25 December 1927, followed by final vows in 1930.²⁹

Another important issue was the house. The approval of the Albertine congregation raised the question of the main house and a suitable site for the novitiate. These roles could not be met by the house in Krakowska 47, as the building doubled as a shelter for homeless women and children. Thanks to rev. Lewandowski,

²⁶ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a list of sisters based in Krakow as of 25 August 1929.

²⁷ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, Father. S. Wawrzkowicz report of the inspection at Albertine Sisters in 1929.

²⁸ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁹ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, canon exams 1926–1931; Sister. Bernardina Maria Jabłońska, *Selected works compiled by Joachim Bar*, Kraków 1988, p. 14.

attention was drawn to the House of the Society of Aid to the Homeless dedicated to Brother Albert in Prądnik Czerwony. On 31 May 1928 the Superior General requested the Krakow Curia to authorise Albertine Sisters' relocation to the Society's House. The Curia agreed. Almost three years later, the Superior General asked the Curia's permission to adapt the chapel in the Society's House, and later to store the Blessed Sacrament and hold holy masses. The permission was granted. In August 1932, by a deed of gift, the property and the plot hitherto belonging to the Brother Albert's Society of Aid to the Homeless was entered in the land and mortgage register as the object of perpetual usufruct of the Congregation of Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Serving the Poor. On their part, the sisters took it upon themselves to incur any taxes and fees connected with the use of the property.³⁰ On 15 November 1932 the Superior General inquired the Krakow Curia to grant permission for the relocation of the Main House and novitiate from the building in Krakowska 47 to the house in Woronicza 10. The house in Krakowska street became the motherhouse, and the house in Woronicza 10 the main house. It was there that the General Chapter of 1933 was held. On 12 May 1933 Bl. Bernardina was re-elected Superior General.

On 19 March 1932 the Superior General approached Prince-Bishop Adam Sapieha with a request to instigate a procedure to approve the Congregation and its constitutions by the Holy See. In his reply, Archbishop Sapieha wrote: "Despite the acknowledgement of your Congregation we do not think that the time for venturing to the Holy See to seek approval has come." In justification he explained that it had been only 6 years since the approval of the constitutions and that the Albertine vocation is very challenging and needs to be tested, hence the time necessary.³¹ In December 1935 the Superior General approached the Curia with a request to confirm the monastic constitutions. To her application was attached a list of supplements to certain paragraphs of the constitutions. They were accepted, and the constitutions were approved for a period of 10 years.³²

³⁰ АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, letters from the Superior General to the Krakow Curia regarding the building in Woronicza 10 of 31 May 1928 (permission granted 4 June 1928), of 30 June 1928 (permission granted 18 July 1928) and the letter of 9 March 1931 (permission granted 10 March 1931). The final letter in this matter of 15 September 1932 concerns the relocation of the Main House and the novitiate to Prądnik Czerwony.

³¹ АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a letter from the Superior General of 19 March 1932 and Archbishop Sapieha's reply of 22 March 1932.

³² АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a letter from the Superior General of 28 August 1935, approved on 31 December 1935.

Three years later Prince-Archbishop A. S. Sapięha concluded that time had come to seek the Congregation's approval by the Holy See. As instructed by Sapięha, on 25 March 1938 the Superior General sent a suitable letter to the Curia, in which she reported on the current status of the Congregation, in addition to applying for the initiation of the procedure of pontifical approval. At the time the order operated 48 houses in 12 dioceses, including 11 houses in the Krakow diocese. There were 507 members, of which 362 professed, 96 novices and 49 postulants.³³ On 3 September 1938 the Superior General informed the Bishops of the diocese in which the houses of the Congregation were located of the endeavours. She asked the bishops to provide feedback on the Congregation's work. The bishops directed their references either to Krakow or directly to Rome to Congregatio de Religiosis.³⁴ On 14 February 1939, as instructed by the Curia, the Congregation submitted 5 copies of its by-laws in Latin. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Second World War made it impossible to carry on with the initiative. It was not until the end of the war that the procedure could be resumed and completed.³⁵

Meanwhile, it was the time of hard work. In mid-1936 the Albertine Sisters ran 8 houses in Krakow, most of which were houses with care establishments. Let us name a few:

- a shelter for poor homeless women in Krakowska 47 – which housed ca. 350 women, served by 12 sisters;
- a nursery for infants and young children in Podzamcze 5, with branches in Koletek 10 and Polna 8 – with 260 children in the nurseries, served by 20 sisters;
- a Home for the Old and the Disabled in Lubicz 25, with its branch in Radziwiłłowska 2 – some 300 people, with 14 sisters to care for them;
- a fostering centre for homeless girls in Józefińska 47, with 66 girls cared for by 5 sisters;
- a novitiate and the Main House in Prądnik Czerwony, with 250 people.³⁶

Already in 1928, to cover the upkeep of all houses, and first and foremost provide sustenance for 900 people, the sisters decided to lease out the Mników

³³ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a request of 25 March 1938 from the Superior General to the Krakow Curia.

³⁴ The opinions directed to the Krakow Curia (currently kept in the Curia's archive) are overwhelmingly positive. They were submitted by the Łódź bishop Włodzimierz Jasiński, the Przemyśl bishop Franciszek Barda, the Częstochowa bishop Teodor Kubina, the Wrocław bishop Karol Radoński and the Tarnów bishop Franciszek Lisowski.

³⁵ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 49.

³⁶ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a list of 30 July 1936.

property, which belonged to Camaldolese fathers. The Superior's General letter to the Curia was accepted. The only remark was that the lease agreement should be sent to the Curia for approval. In 1936 the sisters also decided to lease out the property in Rząska.³⁷

In March 1939 the Superior General informed the Krakow Curia of the announced date of the general chapter and the selection of the Superior General. It had been 6 years since the previous election. It was scheduled for 12 May 1939 in the Main House in Krakow in J. P. Woronicza street 10. The Curia delegated Marian archpresbyter rev. Inf. Józef Kulinowski to the chair the election chapter. On the day of election 109 attendees arrived; 107 votes were cast in favour of sister Bernardina, and 2 in favour of Helena. As sister Bernardina had been elected for a third term, the Article 188 of the constitutions required a 2/3 vote and consent of the local bishop for the validity of the election. The 2/3 votes requirement was met. Rev. Kulinowski took it upon himself to notify the Prince-Bishop of the outcome of the election and obtain his approval.³⁸

The Superior General regularly sent her requests to the Curia.

a) They concerned the permission to take over further shelters and orphanages not only in Krakow, but also in various locations in Poland. (She first sought the consent of the bishop whose competence extended over the location, and, having received it, of the Krakow bishop.) Among the last ones was her request of 14 May 1940 to operate a house in Dębniki in Krakow (Zielna 41,) where Brother Albert's shelter was located and where the Department of Social Services relocated the Old Age Home from Lubicz 25 and Radziwiłłowska 2.³⁹

b) Other inquiries were related to postulants' vestition ceremonies, novices' annual vows and sisters' perpetual vows, and the appointment of examiners. The

³⁷ M. Kaczmarzyk, *Czyńcie dobrze wszystkim...*, op. cit., p. 48.

³⁸ АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a report prepared by Rev. Inf. J. Kulinowski, 12 May 1939.

³⁹ АКМКК, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters. Let us name but a few of the Superior General's letters of 1938 to the Curia: of 1 February 1938, regarding the permission to take over the shelter for the poor and the old in Skarżysko-Kamienna (the establishment was property of the St. Vincent de Paulo's Society of Ladies of Mercy); of 19 March 1938, regarding the permission to take over the Shelter for Homeless Women in Łódź (the house was to be transferred from the Society to Aid Beggars in Łódź); of 5 April 1938, regarding the permission to take over the Shelter for the Poor in Drohobycz and care for the aged and senile; of 4 August 1938, regarding the permission to take over the municipal Shelter for the Old; of 1 September 1938, regarding the permission to take over the church house in Wadowice, allocated as a shelter for the poor; of 4 October 1938, regarding the permission to take over the Church Shelter for the Poor in Jabłonna Lacka. The Krakow Curia consented to all requests, referring to Canon 495 §1 of the Code of Canon Law.

seat of examiner, until 1934 (i.e. the year of his death) was normally taken by rev. Lewandowski, sometimes Father Grzegorz Uth, commissioner of the Augustinian province and Lateran canon Father Józef Górny provost of the Corpus Christi church in Kazimierz. After rev. Lewandowski's death, the place was taken by Father J. Górny, during the absence of the latter by rev. Józef Tomer, and in the years 1939 to 1940 by rev. Władysław Mól.⁴⁰

c) There were also requests to dissolve vows of members leaving the Congregation.

d) The Superior General also appealed for granting jurisdiction to monastic confessors. Of particular interest are two Bl. Bernardina's letters concerning rev. Piotr Dańkowski, vicar of a parish in Zakopane. The Superior General asked the Curia to appoint the vicar as the confessor in Kalatówki, first in 1935, then after three years, in 1938. Today both are worshipped as blessed.⁴¹ Further appointments concerned mostly Discalced Carmelites, Salesians and Capuchins (Father Kosma Lenczewski.) These were requests either for permanent confessors or temporary confessors for the time of retreat. Rev. Józef Matlak (a Salesian) and several Discalced Carmelites became confessors in the Main House; they were also present at Bl. Bernardina's funeral. On 25 July 1940, less than two months before her death, the Superior General asked permission for Salesian rev. Marcin Jankowski to hold confessions for sisters in the chapel at the branch of the Dębniaki Old Age Home, in Zielna street and in the house in Krakowska street. In reply, the Curia issued a permission for the period of 3 years.⁴²

This article concerning the Superior General and the Krakow Archdiocese in the years 1902–1940 focuses on Prince-Bishop Adam Stefan Sapieha as the bishop competent for the location of the order's motherhouse and main house, Bishop Anatol Nowak, rev. Czesław Lewandowski, as well as priests who administered exams preceding monastic vows, who were permanent or temporary confessors, and parish priests in parishes where Albertine houses were located. But the above list of persons is far from exhaustive. The subject of the Superior General's relations with other monastic congregations – particularly with orders which cared for the sick, the disabled, the poor and the homeless – and the sisters' preparation for work, i.e. interaction with various institutions and

⁴⁰ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, canonical exam 1926–1931, 1932–1938 and 1939–1942.

⁴¹ AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, a request concerning Rev. P. Dańkowski of 31 May 1935.

⁴² AKMKR, no ref. no., Albertine Sisters, Superior General's request of 25 July 1940.

people, is yet to be thoroughly studied.⁴³ Finding material which could shed light on the attitude of Krakow's and the Krakow diocese's poorest inhabitants to the Superior General will probably be a challenging task. However, such records would show the Superior General in the history of Krakow and the Krakow Archdiocese not only from the perspective of priests and sisters, but also in the eyes of those to whom, in the name of the love of God, she devoted her life.

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Abstract

100 years ago died St. Brother Albert Chmielowski. 75 years ago died Bl. Sister Bernardina Jabłońska. We are thus commemorating two important anniversaries. They are important for the Albertine family, for Albertine Brothers and Sisters; they are significant for the history of mercy. Krakow was the place where the Blessed used to work; the city that is particularly entitled to commemorate them. St. Brother Albert died during the First World War (1916), Mother Bernardina at the beginning of the Second World War (1940). The article discussed the life and work of Mother Bernardina Jabłońska in Krakow from the perspective of Krakow Prince-Bishop Adam Stefan Sapieha, his collaborators, as well as secular clergy and regular clergy. Bernardina arrived in Krakow in 1896 as an 18-year old candidate for monastic life. Six years later, in 1902, 24-year old Bernardina became

⁴³ The Superior General used circular letters to communicate messages to monastic houses of her Congregation. In contacts with individual sisters, she preferred personal approach. Many of these conversations were recorded in writing after Mother Bernardina's death. They were included as evidence in the beatification proceedings. The records are also a valuable material, providing insight into how the sisters saw the Superior General and her instructions.

Superior General of the Albertine Sisters and in this role she continued to perform her duties until her death. The article opens with a sentence saying that “the entire Krakow” walked behind Mother Bernardina’s coffin at her funeral in 1940. The author attempts to make it clear who followed Bernardina’s coffin, who felt connected with her, who by the death of Bl. Mother Bernardina became part of the Albertine works of mercy. After St. Brother Albert’s death, Mother Bernardina took a number of decisions, e.g. sought to obtain a decree to approve the Albertine order as a monastic congregation in diocesan law, which was granted in 1926, decisions in matters of monastic formation, decision on the relocation of the order’s Main House from Kazimierz to Czerwony Prądnik, or on setting up further shelters in Poland. The establishments were open to everyone, regardless of age, religion or nationality. The author attempted to present at least selected signs of cooperation between the clergy (particularly Krakow clergy) and Mother Bernardina in her outstanding work.

Keywords

Bl. Bernardina Jabłońska, brother Albert Chmielowski, Albertines, mercy, Krakow, Cardinal Adam Sapieha

Abstrakt

Kościół krakowski a bł. Bernardyna Jabłońska w latach 1896–1940

100 lat temu zmarł św. Brat Albert Chmielowski. 75 lat temu zmarła bł. Siostra Bernardyna Jabłońska. Obchodzimy więc dwa ważne jubileusze, dwie ważne rocznice. Są one ważne dla rodziny albertyńskiej, dla albertynów i albertynek, są ważne dla dziejów miłosierdzia. Miejscem ich pracy i działalności był przede wszystkim Kraków, który ma szczególny tytuł do pamięci. Święty Brat Albert zmarł w trakcie I wojny światowej (1916), Matka Bernardyna na początku II wojny światowej (1940).

Artykuł podejmuje temat życia i działalności Matki Bernardyny Jabłońskiej w Krakowie z punktu widzenia metropolity krakowskiego Adama Stefana Sapiehy, jego współpracowników oraz duchowieństwa diecezjalnego i zakonnego. Do Krakowa przybyła w roku 1896 jako 18-letnia kandydatka do życia zakonnego. Sześć lat później, w 1902 roku, jako 24-latką została przełożoną generalną siostrzalbertynek i jako siostra star-

sza pełniła swoje obowiązki nieprzerwanie aż do śmierci. Artykuł rozpoczyna zdanie, że na pogrzebie Matki Bernardyny w 1940 roku za jej trumną "szedł cały Kraków". Autor próbuje wyjaśnić, kto był w orszaku Matki Bernardyny, kto się czuł z nią związany, kto przez bł. Matkę Bernardynę związał się z albertyńskimi dziełami miłosierdzia. Po śmierci św. Brata Alberta Matka Bernardyna podjęła szereg decyzji, m.in. starania o dekret zatwierdzający albertynki jako zgromadzenie zakonne na prawie diecezjalnym, który uzyskała w 1926 roku, decyzje w kwestiach formacji zakonnej, decyzję o przeniesieniu domu generalnego z krakowskiego Kazimierza na Czerwony Prądnik czy o zakładaniu kolejnych ogrzewalni w Polsce. Były otwarte dla każdego bez względu na wiek, wyznanie czy narodowość. Autor starał się przedstawić przynajmniej niektóre przejawy współpracy przede wszystkim duchowieństwa krakowskiego z Matką Bernardyną w tym niezwykłym dziele.

Słowa kluczowe

bł. Bernardyna Jabłońska, brat Albert Chmielowski, Albertyni, miłosierdzie, Kraków, kardynał Adam Sapięha