

Andrzej Kiciński

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) **<http://www.kul.pl/>**

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin – KUL is the oldest Catholic university in Central and Eastern Europe. It was founded in 1918, and the university motto is «Deo et Patriae – For God and Fatherland». The university's motto attracts people searching for truth and wisdom. 19,000 students are taught in nearly 50 courses at KUL.

1. History

The idea for the establishment of this Catholic university was born in February 1918 among the Polish community of Petersburg on Rev. Idzi Radziszewski's initiative, the Rector of the Spiritual Academy there. Lublin was chosen as the location for a new university. In July 1918 the Polish Bishops' Conference in Warsaw approved the establishment of a Catholic University. The first inauguration of the academic year took place on 8th December 1918 in the major seminary in Lublin, the provisional headquarters of the University. 399 young people began their studies in four faculties – Theology, Canon Law and Moral Sciences, Law and Socioeconomic Sciences, and the Humanities. The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was chosen to be the patron of the new university, which soon became the centre of Christian culture. The Rector's ambition was to provide the highest possible level of education and upbringing for young people in compliance with moral and patriotic values. Specialists recognized in many fields of science arrived in Lublin; among them there was also Father Jacek Woroniecki who upon Rev. Radziszewski's sudden death became the second rector of KUL in 1922, continuing the thought and activities of the founder. The prominent professors were not only great specialists but also kind, conscious and responsible citizens

of Poland¹. In 1928, Parliament bestowed civil legal status upon the university. By means of the Parliamentary act of 1933, KUL became entitled to bestow the title of Master and five years later it acquired the full rights of a state university, that is of conferring doctorates and professorships in all its faculties.

The promising development of the university was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. The main building of KUL was taken over and transformed into a military hospital. Numerous professors and students were murdered or transported to concentration camps. Despite all these repressions, the university carried out its teaching in a clandestine way.

On 21st August 1944, on Rector Reverend Antoni Słomkowski's initiative, KUL resumed its activity as the first university in Poland. The university started to develop; the Faculty of Christian Philosophy was created; youth flooded in from all parts of Poland. The funds were taken from the Episcopate's subsidies as well as from the contributions of the Catholic Church worshippers. Soon, it appeared that the positive attitude of the authorities of Polish People's Republic towards KUL was only a pretence: there were efforts to hinder the development of the University and to restrict its influence on society. The University was permanently invigilated by the Communist Security Service; it was forbidden to accept candidates for studies at many faculties; KUL's property was confiscated for fictional charged taxes.

16th October 1978 was an exceptional date because Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope. Rev. Karol Wojtyła started working at KUL in October 1954. He held ethics classes. Two years later he became the head of the Department of Ethics. He combined his didactic and scientific work with his pastoral service. He was among the Professors who left an indelible mark on the memory of their students. In 1983 the Holy Father was granted the title of honorary doctorate by all faculties at KUL. In 1987 this most famous professor of the Catholic University of Lublin visiting his Alma Mater, addressed the academic community with his unforgettable words: "University! Serve the Truth!". Upon John Paul II's death, in 2005, the University Senate passed on a resolution to name the university "The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin".

¹ P. Plisiecki, *The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL)*, in: *The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin*, Lublin 2011, KUL, s. 8-11.

2. KUL today

KUL is currently one of the fastest growing universities in Poland. It is known for its high standards of education and for conducting scientific research whose profile is determined by the humanistic traditions of the university as well as by its openness to the needs of the contemporary human being. At present, KUL consists of nine faculties: Theology; Law, Canon Law and Administrations; Philosophy; Humanities; Social Sciences; Mathematics and Natural Sciences; three off-campus faculties: Legal and Economic Sciences in Tomaszów Lubelski; Social Sciences and Law and Economic Sciences in Stalowa Wola² as well as many inter-faculty units such as the College for Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities³ or the School of the Polish Language and Culture⁴.

The Faculty of Theology inaugurated its activities in January 1918, and retains to this day, pride of place as the first teaching and formative institution at the Catholic University of Lublin. Among those persons instrumental in shaping the Faculty were the Servant of God Rev. Wincenty Granat, the Rev. Jacek Woroniecki, O.P., the Rev. Mieczysław Żywczyński and Bishop Marian Rechowicz. The Faculty provides students with three Master's degree programs on a residential and a tutorial basis. These programs are in theology, musicology and, since 1999, family studies. The Faculty also offers doctoral programs in seven concentration areas. The Faculty is made up of 14 Academic Institutes, two inter-faculty institutes, and 71 chairs. The teaching staff consists of approximately 150 persons. In the course of a typical academic year, approximately 500 students earn master's degrees, 40 receive doctorates, and 10 attain the rank of habilitated doctor. The Faculty of Theology is responsible for the publication of approximately 300 works annually, including about 50 books. It publishes ten scholarly journals and numerous collective works. At present, research carried out at the Faculty has an interdisciplinary character, focusing mainly on the issues connected with ecumenism, the history of the Church, musicology, biblical studies, family studies and dogmatic, fundamental, pastoral and catechetical⁵, and moral theology and the theology of spirituality⁶.

² The Off-Campus Faculty of Social Sciences in Stalowa Wola. <<http://www.kul.pl/off-campus-faculty-of-social-sciences-in-stalowa-wola,211.html>>.

³ College of Interfaculty Individual Studies in the Humanities. <<http://www.kul.pl/college-of-interfaculty-individual-studies-in-the-humanities,210.html>>.

⁴ The School of Polish Language and Culture. <http://www.kul.pl/school,art_8284.html>.

⁵ The Catechetics KUL. <<http://www.katechetyka.eu>>.

⁶ The Faculty of Theology. <<http://www.kul.pl/faculty-of-theology,26.html>>.

The Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration is structured into four institutes: the Institute of Law, the Institute of Canon Law, the Institute of Administration and the Institute of European Studies (created in 2009). The faculty offers programs in four majors: law, canon law, administration and European studies. The courses are full-time and part-time. Currently, the faculty personnel totals 133 employees; there are 4,640 students, including 1,796 law students, 242 canon law students, 1,682 administration students and 266 undergraduates pursuing European studies. 222 graduates attend PhD programs. In addition, the faculty offers a number of postgraduate courses. An important element of the faculty's involvement in the social and political reality is the cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations and contribution to the work of parliamentary committees. Their research activity is discernible through the organization and participation in international and national conferences and seminars that gather theorists and practitioners of law. Their outcome is promoted through scientific publications on political and social reforms, European law, economic law, constitutional law, state finance, the law of State-Church relations, concordat law and matrimonial law⁷.

The Faculty of Philosophy conducts residential and tutorial master's degree programs in Theoretical Philosophy as well as Philosophy of Nature and the Natural Sciences. Both degree programs culminate in master's degrees in philosophy in the student's field of specialization. Students who have earned the master's degree may continue on to doctoral studies. The Faculty also conducts a two year non-residential Postgraduate Philosophy and Ethics Studies Program, whose dual purpose is to deepen a student's knowledge in the field of philosophy and prepare the student to teach philosophy and ethics in high school. All graduates, irrespective of their fields of specialization, receive comprehensive preparation in the fields of metaphysics, anthropology, ethics, history of philosophy, logic, scientific methodology, and philosophy of nature and the natural sciences. This broad education is valued and respected both within and beyond the KUL community. The Faculty is renowned as the venue in which the Polish School of Classical Philosophy, also known as the Lublin School of Classical Philosophy, was shaped. Among the distinguished thinkers who have shaped this Faculty, one is bound to mention: Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II, who served as a professor in this Faculty for over 20 years); Stefan Świeżawski, Stanisław Kamiński, Włodzimierz Sedlak, and Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, O.P. The Faculty is made

⁷ The Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration. <<http://www.kul.pl/faculty-of-theology,26.html>>.

up of 21 chairs and seven research centers employing approximately 80 faculty members⁸.

The Faculty of Humanities consists of eight institutes, providing master's programs in history, art history, Polish philology, Classical philology, Romance philology, English philology, Germanic philology, and Slavic philology. Doctoral programs are conducted in history, art history, English philology, Germanic philology, Polish philology, Slavic philology, Classical philology, and Romance philology. The Faculty is composed of 67 chairs, 3 research centers, and one extra-sectional unit: The School of Polish Language and Culture. The Faculty employs a teaching staff of approximately 240. The area of research at this faculty is mostly dominated by the issues connected with the history of culture of European countries, their languages and literature. The faculty offers interdisciplinary studies in Christian culture on the national as well as on a European level (originality of research programmers at Polish Studies, History, History of Art, Classical Studies and Slavic Studies). Research results are presented in various organizational forms: symposia, national contests, publications and conference cycles co-organized with other academic centres, e.g. "Kolokwia Norwidiana", "International Translation Workshops", "Kolokwia Staropolskie", "Sympozja Kazimierskie" devoted to the culture of late antiquity and early Christianity, "Editorial Workshops", and "Meetings of Lublin Linguists". Due to the exceptional location of Lublin, where the cultures of the West and the East meet, faculty employees carry out research on the heritage and the influence of Greek and Roman antiquity on European culture, the interaction of the cultures of the West and of the East of Europe in modern times, the history of Christianity as well as non-Christian religions in the context of all social, political and cultural relations of Poland and the world. The year-long Programme in Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students and the Summer School of Polish Language and Culture are conducted by the Faculty⁹.

The Faculty of Social Sciences consists of five Departments: Journalism and Social Communication, Economics and Management, Pedagogy, Psychology, and Sociology. In the Faculty there are 13 Professors, 31 Associate Professors, 104 lecturers possessing a doctorate, and 55 lecturers possessing an M.A. Altogether in the Faculty there are 57 chairs. Currently, the Faculty of Social Sciences has around five thousand students. Both the research and the teaching serve to prepare specialists of the future, whose challenge it will be to help solve the country's problems and to contribute to building its future. The Faculty prefers to focus

⁸ The Faculty of Philosophy. <<http://www.kul.pl/faculty-of-philosophy,27.html>>.

⁹ The Faculty of Humanities. <<http://www.kul.pl/faculty-of-humanities,29.html>>.

on the comprehensive vision of man as a human being, because this allows us to observe more fully human activities and their effects. The Faculty bases the social sciences on a strong foundation of philosophical anthropology, looking for inspiration in Catholic social teaching and referring in particular to ethical aspects¹⁰.

The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences has at its disposal well-equipped laboratories and computer rooms; it cooperates closely with numerous scientific centres in Poland and abroad. Co-operation with self-government has been established in order to build ecological strategies based on the forecasts of changes occurring in natural and anthropogenic landscapes. Research done by faculty employees entails the following disciplines and scientific fields: biology (cytophysiology and cytotoxicology; molecular biology; comparative immunotoxicology; morphology; nematology and entomology), ecology and environment protection (oxygenology; hydrobiology; human ecology; bioenergetics; eco-development; spatial planning; phytosociology; nature protection; ecological modelling), chemistry (geochemistry, chemistry of bioinorganic materials and natural polymers, X-ray capillary optics, research in paleoclimate), landscape development (rural and city landscapes), visual arts, IT (numeric methods and programming, computer cryptography; neuron networks; information protection in computer networks; picture analysis methods) and mathematics (computational number theory and asymmetric cryptography; special functions in the theory of quasi-conformal mapping; theory of ordinary differential equation; theory of likelihood; application of mathematics in other fields of science).

The University Library consists of a main library and 38 departmental libraries at the faculties, institutes and other research units of KUL. The book collection comprises over 2 million titles.

The most fundamental mission of KUL is to conduct scientific research in the spirit of harmony between science and faith, to educate and bring up Catholic intelligentsia and co-create the Christian culture. In comparison with European universities such as Sorbonne, Oxford, Padua or Bologna, the nearly one-hundred-year-old KUL seems to be a young university. The University's history is not only the result of the number of generations of students, the layers of its tradition or the

¹⁰ The Faculty of Social Sciences. <<http://www.kul.pl/faculty-of-social-sciences,28.html>>.

age of university walls. What is essential is the accumulation of knowledge which determines the shape of the university. Therefore, it is precisely the Catholic University of Lublin – where the effort to investigate the truth about God, man and the world has been made since the beginning of its existence – which retained its links with the oldest universities thanks to its scientific and moral courage. KUL is proud of its alumni. They occupy an important position in the social, cultural and political life at home and abroad, putting the mission of our University into practice.