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## **SOME ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY AT OPOLE UNIVERSITY (2000–2010)**

Department of Theology in Opole was the first in the new academic map of Poland. It was founded in 1994, together with the establishment of Opole University. It has been developing dynamically since its foundation and plays an important role in Opole Silesia as a research, didactic and cultural centre. The culture-forming role in the region, with its complicated political and economic history as well as the demographic and ethnic structure, is priceless. This region has been influenced by the Polish, Czech (Moravian) and German cultures since the Middle Ages. Still, the region is not homogeneous today; its various ethnic, cultural, denominational and religious differences with the Polish population as the dominating one, the Silesians and the German minority frequently raise problems but also enrich this part of Poland. The Institute of Ecumenism and Study of Integration established in the Department of Theology in 2000, thanks to the initiative of Archbishop Alfons Nossol, initiated research and analyses of these issues. Thanks to the involvement in ecumenical dialogue, this academic centre clearly influences the neighbouring provinces by offering education in three Faculties: Theology, Family Studies and Musicology. The centre became the integrating factor for the community of Opole Silesia thanks to cooperation with foreign universities and institutions, as well as the neighbouring centres.

Theology Faculty in Opole has been organised from the very beginning in Department of Theology, which has highly qualified staff and is authorised to award scientific degrees of doctor and habilitated doctor (*doktor habilitowany*) in Theology as well as prepare applications for professorships. Out of 52 academic teachers employed in the Department, 11 are professors, 19 have the degree of habilitated doctor and 22 are doctors.

The profile of a Theology graduate has been well defined. The graduate of master studies is focused on obtaining knowledge in Theology and on the ability to apply the knowledge in their professional activities. The offer of 2 specialisa-

tions allows to prepare graduates to creative professional work in didactics, research and development activities. It also gives an opportunity to start doctoral studies. The Department authorities' contacts with the graduates' employers (schools' headmasters, in particular) should also be emphasised, since they allow to monitor the demand for teachers in particular subjects and adjust the educational profile accordingly.

The study curricula let the students select their individual courses and adjust education to their interests and previous professional experience. The best students undertake individual studies program and combine courses from different faculties, under the supervision of their university tutor.

Vocational practices are very well organised and documented, and they are carried out in an efficient way. They let the students get familiar with modern teaching methods. The scope of vocational practices was also highly assessed.

The students' cooperation with other university centres is possible within the Erasmus programs, by participation in various conferences and thanks to the students exchanges within Students' Mobility Program "MOST."

International cooperation performed via the Erasmus program includes the following university centres: Olomouc (Czech Republic), Prague (Czech Republic), Münster (Germany), Erfurt (Germany), Bamberg (Germany), Arad (Romania), Leuven (Belgium), London (UK), Mainz (Germany) and Trnava (Slovakia). The program ensures high quality of international academic contacts. More than 20 students from the Department participated in the Erasmus program during 2006–2009.

The courses within the Theology faculty are offered by 26 academic teachers (including 6 professors and 9 habilitated doctors). Recently, also three foreign professors have conducted classes at the Department. The staff of the Department is renowned both in Poland and abroad, which is confirmed by over 400 publications, including 88 monographs and chapters in monographs, as well as 32 articles and essays published in the most renowned journals of global circulation, which has been achieved for the last 4 years.

The great dedication and attention paid by the staff of the Department to the preparation of university handbooks should also be emphasised. During their visit, the assessment commission reviewed several books and monographs published in the last few years. Among the 50 research circles registered at the Opole University, there are Students' Family Studies Circle and Theology Students Circle from Department of Theology, active in research, organisational and charity events. The Students' Government and the Research Circle of the Department of Theology organise Students Conferences, which include theological and psychological lectures completed by workshops. In 2005–2009, the students' activities focused in the Students' Ministry Resurrexit at the Department of Theology, which organised annual Student Festivals "Paschal Days";

they participated in the National Pilgrimages to Jasna Góra and organised Department Pilgrimages to the University Research and Culture Centre in Kamień Śląski. Six Theology students obtained the Ministry of Science and Higher Education scholarship for their educational achievement during the last three years. The Department's new proposal is the "Student of the Year at the Department of Theology" competition, which will be finalised during the new academic year inauguration ceremony.

In the course of 2008–2012, the Department's staff and students were actively involved in organisation and coordination of the Opole University Science and Research Festival, which aims at promoting the University studies.

The Education Quality Assurance System at the Department has been implemented and regularly improved. The education quality at the Theology Faculty is supervised by the Interdepartmental Centre for Enhanced Education and Skills in Teaching established by force of the Rector of the Opole University's Resolution No. 14/96–99 of 18 December 1997, on the University system for stimulation and assessment of education quality. The Education Quality Analysis Centre is responsible for performance of the search query.

The objective of these activities is to improve the didactic process and review the conditions of educational process performance. The Education Quality Analysis Centre performs an internal assessment of students twice a year: (1) on the level of the department and self-assessment of the research and didactic staff, and (2) on the level of faculties and departments. The survey is carried out by a person authorised by the Dean, with the use of a special questionnaire. Every member of research and didactic staff at the Theology Department undergoes the assessment, regardless of the title and function. The filled questionnaires are delivered in closed and sealed envelopes (individually for each employee) to the Education Quality Analysis Centre, where IT and statistical processing (qualitative and quantitative analyses) are completed with the use of a statistical program Ankieta ver. 4 for Windows XP 2007. The prepared survey results are handed over as a report to the Dean and the Rector. The results of the students' surveys are published in the "Indeks" magazine. The Education Quality Analysis Centre keeps the collected data on file and protects information for the period of 5 years.

The science and didactic staff employed at the Department of Theology at the Opole University, connected with the Faculty of Theology, carry out research in theological studies, in which they specialise, i.e. bible studies, systematic and pastoral theology, ecumenical dialogue and the history of Church. During the previous years, the already started studies were continued and a number of new topics were initiated, important to the modern society of the beginning of the 21st century, by analysing them from various points of view (e.g. ethical and moral issues, ecumenism, the European integration, etc.). Approximately 60

study topics have been completed for the last three years (within the statutory and individual research).

The studies prepared by the staff of Theology at the Department of Theology are directly related to the didactic process. The students actively participate in domestic and international seminars and conferences, for instance the students' participation in the project: "Człowiek – drogą Europy" [*Human Being – the Europe's Road*], which was a forum for meetings, discussions and potential further cooperation between the representatives of theological departments from Prague, Ostrava, Olomouc, Trnava and Opole. The result of the project is the publication titled "Człowiek drogą Europy", which contains, apart from research essays, the students' comments on the young people's view on the essence of "the soul of Europe." The students also participated in the project: "Chances and Risks of the United Europe" (*Šance a riziká zjednotenej Európy – Bratislava – Trnava – Budapest 2007*) or in conferences and workshops: "Prophets of the Central and Eastern European Area" – *A reménység prófétái. Közép- és kelet-európai hitvallók, vértanúk a XX. században*, szerkesztette Illés Pál Attila, Piliscsaba – Esztergom 2009.

An important project, which connects the scientific and didactic activities, includes regular conferences for the staff and students from Department of Theology at Opole University and Department of Theology from Munster. During the last five years, three such conferences were held (2005, 2007, 2009), from which two were documented with publications: *Church in the World. 40th Anniversary of "Gaudium et spes". Die Kirche in der Welt. 40 Jahre "Gaudium et spes"*, ed. J. Werbick, M. Worbs, Opole 2005, pp. 190; *Miejsca teologii [Places of Theology]/Orte der Theologie*, ed. J. Werbick, M. Worbs, Opole 2008, pp. 240.

Similar cooperation has been continued between the staff and students from the Department of Theology at the Opole University and the Department of Theology in Mainz. Throughout the last five years, two conferences and workshops involving representatives of both departments were held. One of the conferences was documented by the publication titled: *Parish and Family Versus the Integration and Transformation Processes in Europe/ Kirchengemeinde und Familie angesichts der Integrations- und Transformationsprozesse in Europa*, ed. P. Tarlinski, S. Knobloch, Opole 2005, pp. 216.

Special attention should be paid to the annual, international colloquia: "Ways of Reconciliation in Europe" (*Chemins de réconciliation en Europe*), in scholarly cooperation with the Departments of Theology in Lvov, Moscow, Paris and Opole. Four such meetings have been held so far (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009), with considerable participation of students. The content of the meetings is documented by the published two volumes: *Chemins de réconciliation en Europe/Ways to Reconciliation in Europe*, ed. S. Rabiej, Opole 2007, pp. 128;

*Chemins de réconciliation en Europe. II Colloque international/Ways of Reconciliation in Europe. II International Colloquium*, ed. S. Rabiej, Opole 2008, pp. 200.

Students of the Department of Theology also edit the “Studnia” magazine, where they publish their articles.

It should be emphasised that the assessed field of study is managed by an entity, which actively participates in the development of theology as a science discipline. The research carried out by the Department’s staff is valued both, in Poland and abroad. High scientific ranking of the Department is confirmed by the membership of some of its professors, for a number of terms of office, in the Theological Research Committee of the Polish Academy of Science as well as in other Committees and Sections of the Polish Academy of Science. The Department has been awarded the top (I) category in all classifications performed by the Committee for Research and, currently, by the Scientific Board of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The involvement of the Department in practical implementation of the continuous learning concept, by organising postgraduate studies, should be emphasised. Doctoral studies connected with the Theology course have been organised for several years. The following postgraduate studies have been offered since 2009: “Peaceful resolution of conflicts” (within Jean Monnet Chair).

Theology studies generate 6 publishing series and 5 scientific journals (3 annual: “Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego” [Opole Silesia Theological and Historical Studies]; “Studia Oecumenica”, “Scriptura Sacra”, 2 semi-annual: “Liturgia Sacra”, “Przegląd Piśmiennictwa Teologicznego” [Theological Writings Review]). All publications are reviewed, include summaries in foreign languages and, in general, are available in electronic format.

The prizes and honours awarded in the last 3 years to the employees and doctoral and regular students of the Department should also be mentioned; there were, among others:

- numerous honoris causa doctorates, international prizes and honours for Archbishop Alfons Nossol, a many-year professor of Department of Theology and Great Chancellor until 2009;
- the prize named after J. Ligoń for ecumenical activities for the sister Churches and close relations of Silesian regions, awarded by Catholic Association Civitas Christiana in Katowice (2007) – to Professor Ph.D. Zygfryd Glaeser;
- the prize from the Primate of Poland “Srebrna pizczałka” [Silver Pipe] for outstanding achievements in development of sacral music in Poland (2007) – to Professor UO [Opole University], Ph.D. Remigiusz Pośpiech;

- Jean Monnet Chair (Ecumenical ways to reconciliation in Europe), awarded by the European Commission in 2009 to the Rev. Professor Ph.D. Stanisław Rabiej – Dean of Department of Theology UO, (a five-year grant within the Jean Monnet Program).

A high ranking of the Department is confirmed by membership of its representatives in national and international scientific organisations, among others:

- The Rev. Professor Ph.D. Helmut Jan Sobeczko, a member of International Association “Societas Liturgica” (since 1977), Scientific Association at KUL [Lublin Catholic University] (since 1993), Committee for Theological Sciences of PAN [Polish Academy of Science] (since 2002), Liturgical Committee of the Polish Episcopate (since 1995);
- The Rev. Professor Ph.D. Tadeusz Dola – a member of Committee for Theological Sciences of PAN (since 2007); a member of the Management Board of the Fundamental Theologians Association in Poland (since 2005), a member of the Integration and Experts Team for Humanities at Polish Academy of Science;
- The Rev. Professor Ph.D. Piotr Jaskóła – the president of the Polish Dogmatics Chapter, secretary of the Polish Episcopate Council for Ecumenism, a member of the Committee for Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue in Poland, a member of the “Wiara i Ustrój” [Faith and Order] Commission of the World Council of Churches;
- The Rev. Professor Ph.D. Stanisław Rabiej – a consultor of the Episcopate of Poland Conference Council for Ecumenism since 2006.

Since 2000, the Department of Theology of the Opole University has been a member of the Catholic Universities Federation in Europe with the seat in Paris (FUCE), within which cooperation with foreign centres develops. Department of Theology cooperates with Polish and foreign universities by delegating its staff to scientific symposia and speakers' circuits. During the last three years, 28 employees from Department of Theology participated in domestic and foreign conferences and presented 210 articles. The conferences were held in scientific centres in the following countries: Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belgium, Switzerland, Ukraine, Belarus, France, UK and Italy. The Department's general reports contain detailed lists of scientific conferences in which the Department staff participated, together with the titles of the presented articles.

Cooperation with Polish and foreign centres included 12 important international conferences, in 2004–2009. The participating guests arrived from Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary, the UK and Italy. The most important conferences included:

1. the symposium *Chemins de réconciliation en Europe*, La Salette, 25–28 July 2006 (participants from Lviv, Moscow and Opole universities), 1st edition;
2. the conference and workshops: *Prophets of the Central and Eastern European Area*, Estergom – Budapest, Hungary, 8–10 May 2007 (participants from Budapest Trnava, Lviv and Opole universities);
3. the conference: *The Place of Theology in Science, Church and Society. Orte der Theologie in Wissenschaft, Kirche und Gesellschaft in Polen und Deutschland*, organised by Department of Theology at Opole University and Department of Theology in Münster, connected with workshops for students of both departments, Munster, 15–17 May 2007;
4. the symposium *Chemins de réconciliation en Europe*, La Salette, 22–26 July 2007 (participants from Lviv, Moscow and Opole universities), 2nd edition;
5. the conference and workshops – *National Minorities – Assimilation or Integration*, Opole, Jelowa. 21–25 April 2008, (participants from Budapest, Trnava and Opole);
6. the symposium *Chemins de réconciliation en Europe*, La Salette, 27–31 July 2008 (participants from Lviv, Moscow and Opole universities), 3rd edition;
7. *The State and Churches versus Educational Problems*; the conference organised by Minsk University, in cooperation with the Institute for Ecumenism and Integration Studies, 4–7 May 2008;
8. the international conference organised in cooperation with the Association of Liturgics Lecturers in German-speaking countries (AKL), Kamień Śląski, 1–5 September 2009;
9. *National and Ethnic Minorities. Assimilation or Integration?* International conference within “2nd Opole Meetings”, Opole, Jelowa, Głucholazy, Zlate Hory, 21–25 April 2008;
10. *Father Amando Ivančić OSPPE – life and creation in the context of the epoch*. International Scientific Conference, Częstochowa-Jasna Góra, 5–6 May 2008;
11. *Church Music – Silesia and Regensburg*. International symposium and church music workshops on the 35th anniversary of the Church Music College in Opole, within the scientific and artistic exchange with Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik in Regensburg and Institute of Church Music and Musical Education, Department of Theology, Opole University and Church Music College in Opole, Opole – Głubczyce – Głucholazy, 11–14 September 2008;

12. the symposium *Chemins de réconciliation en Europe*, La Salette, 27–31 July 2009 (participants from Lviv, Moscow and Opole universities), 4th edition.

Department of Theology has very good didactic and library resources. It has 35 lecture rooms with easy access to the Internet. There is direct access to the library with approximately 100 thousand volumes and over 1300 titles of magazines. Thanks to the excellent didactic and study resources, the courses can be held on the appropriate level. These resources have been regularly modified.

The Department is also quite active in the regional promotion of Theology as a field of studies, by publishing the university newsletter, participation in radio broadcasts, offering information in the Internet and lecturing in secondary schools of Opole Silesia. Important promotion activities also include the events organised within the “Festival of Science” and the “Open Days” in the Department.

The involvement of the staff and students of Department of Theology can be seen in the region through the inventory of cultural resources of the Opole region villages, prepared in cooperation with the Marshal's Office in Opole. The works conducted by several-person teams within the “Countryside Revival” program support cooperation with local governments within the countryside development programs. Completion of this task reveals large cultural resources of Opole Province, which has no large industrial centres. These activities identify the areas of future professional activities, also for the Theology graduates.

### **Wybrane formy ekumenicznej aktywności Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego (2000–2010)**

#### *Streszczenie*

Tekst w zasadzie w formie sprawozdania pokazuje działania Wydziału Teologicznego UO, w którego strukturze jest Instytut Ekumenizmu i Badań nad Integracją. Przypomniano, że Wydział ten pojawił się jako pierwszy na *nowej* mapie akademickiej kraju. Stało się w 1994 r. wraz z powstaniem Uniwersytetu Opolskiego. Od momentu utworzenia rozwija się dynamicznie i zgodnie ze swoim przeznaczeniem odgrywa ważną rolę na Śląsku Opolskim jako ośrodek naukowy, dydaktyczny i kulturotwórczy. Nie do przecenienia jest rola kulturotwórcza w regionie o skomplikowanej historii politycznej, gospodarczej i strukturze demograficzno-etnicznej. Od średniowiecza był to obszar z wyraźnymi wpływami kultury polskiej, czeskiej (morawskiej) i niemieckiej. Do dziś region ten nie jest jednolity, jego zróżnicowanie etniczno-kulturowe, konfesyjno-reli-



gijne z dominującą ludnością polską, żywiołem śląskim i mniejszością niemiecką, jest często źródłem problemów, ale stanowi też o bogactwie regionu. Analizą tych zagadnień zajął się powstały w 2000 roku na Wydziale Teologicznym – z inicjatywy abpa Alfonsa Nossola – Instytut Ekumenizmu i Badań nad Integracją. Dzięki swojemu zaangażowaniu w szeroko rozumiany dialog ekumeniczny ten akademicki ośrodek zaznacza się wyraźnie swym oddziaływaniem na sąsiednie województwa poprzez kształcenie studentów na trzech kierunkach: teologia, nauki o rodzinie, muzykologia. Poprzez współpracę zagraniczną z innymi uczelniami i instytucjami, a zarazem w ramach sąsiednich województw, stał się czynnikiem integrującym wokół siebie społeczność Śląska Opolskiego.

Z kierunkiem „teologia” związanych jest 9 serii wydawniczych („Opolska Biblioteka Teologiczna”, „Ekumenizm i Integracja”, „Colloquia Theologica”, „Sympozja”, „Podręczniki”, „Z dziejów kultury chrześcijańskiej na Śląsku”, „Człowiek – Rodzina – Społeczeństwo”, „Pomoce duszpasterskie”, „Liturgia – Musica – Ars” oraz 5 czasopism naukowych (3 roczniki: „Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego”; „Studia Oecumenica”, „Scriptura Sacra”, 2 półroczniki: „Liturgia Sacra”, „Przegląd Piśmiennictwa Teologicznego”).

Od 2000 r. Wydział Teologiczny UO jest członkiem Federacji Uniwersytetów Katolickich w Europie z siedzibą w Paryżu (FUCE), w ramach której stara się realizować współpracę z ośrodkami zagranicznymi.

Pracownicy naukowo-dydaktyczni zatrudnieni na Wydziale Teologicznym Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, związani z kierunkiem studiów teologia prowadzą badania w zakresie nauk teologicznych, odpowiadających ich specjalizacji, a więc biblistyki, teologii systematycznej i pastoralnej, dialogu ekumenicznego oraz historii Kościoła. W minionych latach z jednej strony kontynuowano rozpoczęte już wcześniej tematy badawcze, z drugiej zaś ciągle podejmowano nowe zagadnienia, aktualne dla współczesnego społeczeństwa początku XXI wieku, poddając je wszechstronnej analizie naukowej (np. problematyka etyczno-moralna, ekumeniczna, integracji europejskiej, itp.).

Oprócz wielu innych faktów artykuł przypomina, że od kilkunastu lat na Wydziale prowadzone są studia doktoranckie związane z kierunkiem „teologia”, w tym także ze specjalności ekumenicznej. Na podkreślenie zasługuje zaangażowanie Wydziału w praktyczną realizację postulatu kształcenia ustawicznego, poprzez organizację studiów podyplomowych. Od 2009 r. w ramach Katedry Jean Monnet funkcjonują studia podyplomowe: *Pokojowe rozwiązywanie konfliktów*. Katedra ta ściśle współpracuje z Katedrą Badań nad Integracją z Instytutu Ekumenizmu i Badań nad Integracją.

