

Blessed

Józef CEBULA, O.M.I.

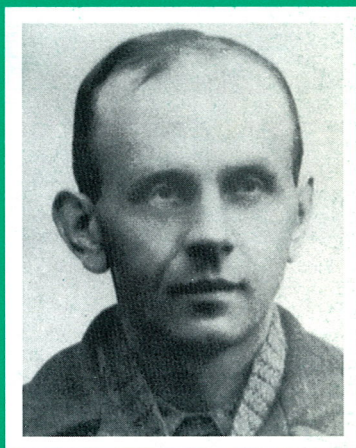
1902 - 1941

Youth educator and martyr because of his priesthood

Biography by Józef Pielorz, o.m.i.

Writings

Testimonies



Oblate General Archives
Via Aurelia, 290
Rome, 2001

Collection: *Oblate Writings* II, 6

Blessed

Józef CEBULA, O.M.I.

1902-1941

Youth educator and martyr because of his priesthood

Biography by Józef Pielorz, O.M.I.

Writings and testimonies

Oblate General Archives
Via Aurelia, 290
Rome, 2001

Printed by
MARIAN PRESS LTD.
BATTLEFORD, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

Table of Contents

FOREWARD	7
INTRODUCTION	9
CHRONOLOGY	11

I. Biography

<i>Chapter I</i> - His Youth (1902-1920).....	15
<i>Chapter II</i> - On the Road to Religious and Priestly Perfection (1921-1930)	25
<i>Chapter III</i> - Superior and Animator of the Juniorate in Lubliniec (1931-1937) ...	33
<i>Chapter IV</i> - The Worrisome Appointment as Provincial (February-April 1936)	53
<i>Chapter V</i> - Superior and Master of Novices at Markowice (1937-1940)	59
<i>Chapter VI</i> - Father Cebula's Deportation to the Concentration Camps (April 1941)	87
<i>Chapter VII</i> - Father Cebula's Calvary at Mauthausen (April 18 - May 9, 1941)... ..	95
<i>Chapter VIII</i> - Towards Beatification (1989-1999)	115
ARCHIVES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

ILLUSTRATIONS	125
---------------------	-----

II. Personal Writings and Testimonies

A. Personal Writings of Blessed Józef Cebula, o.m.i. . .	145
----------------------------------------------------------	-----

B. Testimonies	173
----------------------	-----

INDEX OF NAMES	219
----------------------	-----

Blessed

Józef Cebula, o.m.i.
1902-1941

Youth educator and martyr because of his priesthood

FOREWORD

In his presentation of the first volume of the second series of the *Oblate Writings* collection in 1987, Father Marcello Zago, Superior General at the time, reminded us that by choosing Oblate Writings as the title of this series, Father Jetté had intended to publish, not only the writings of Bishop de Mazenod, but also "other important sources of our history, especially selected writings of Fathers and Brothers who in various capacities wielded a noteworthy influence at the Founder's side."

The present volume on Blessed Józef Cebula broadens the scope of the original project, but remains faithful to the spirit that inspired it. Indeed, we find here many historical details about the origins of the Polish province and the Oblates who founded it, the life and the sufferings of many Oblates who went through the concentration camps during the Second World War and, finally, about the life and the martyrdom of the third Oblate to be beatified, our first Oblate martyr. Consequently, his biography, his writings and the testimonies collected about him find their rightful place in this collection which features the writings of the Founder as well as the biography and the writings of Blessed Joseph Gerard.

The author of Father Cebula's biography is Father Józef Pielorz. Father Cebula was his superior for four years (1933-1937) at the juniorate of Lubliniec and his master of novices as well in Markowice (1939-1940). Like Father Cebula and for a much more extended period of time (1940 to 1945), Father Pielorz was interned in the concentration camps, especially in Mauthausen-Gusen, hardly five kilometers away from Mauthausen where Father Cebula was murdered.

Father Pielorz is no stranger to us. However, it is worth our while to recall here the main stages of his life. Born on January 22, 1921 at Imielin in Upper Silesia, he completed his secondary studies at the juniorate in Lubliniec and went on from there to the

noviciate in Markowice. Arrested by the Gestapo on October 5, 1939, he was deported successively to the concentration camps of Szczeglin, Dachau and Mauthausen-Gusen (May 4, 1940 to May 5, 1945). Freed by the American army, he made his way to Italy where he finished his noviciate at Ripalimosani and made his first vows, January 25, 1946. After completing his philosophical studies at San Giorgio Canavese near Turin, he was sent to Rome to pursue theological studies at the Gregorian University. There he obtained a doctorate in theology in 1955 and from 1971-1973 a degree in archival work and library science at the Vatican.

After his ordination to the priesthood, July 2, 1950, his first assignment was to work at the postulation for the cause of beatification of Bishop de Mazenod. Then, he ministered to the Polish immigrants in Toronto (Canada) from 1962 to 1966. Recalled to Rome in 1967, he was given the responsibility of being the *chargé d'affaires* of the Polish-speaking provinces and in December of 1972 he assumed the position of head librarian for the pontifical university, the Urbanianum. In September of 1976, he received an obedience to Belgium where he acted as secretary to the provincial. Subsequently, he took on and continues to be active in pastoral ministry to the Polish people of the Liège-Amay region. From 1988 to 1992, he fulfilled the role of Rector of the Polish Catholic mission in the Benelux countries.

Father Pielorz is especially known for his work as a historian. He has authored numerous articles in Polish and French language publications, *Vie Oblate Life* among others, not to mention his articles in Italian. He has some fifteen works to his credit, in particular: *The Spiritual Life of Bishop de Mazenod, 1782-1812* (1998 English translation of the original 1956 French edition); *Les chapitres généraux au temps du fondateur, 1818-1861* (2 volumes, Ottawa 1968); *Les Oblats polonais dans le monde 1920-1970*, Rome (in Polish, 1970 and in French, 1971); *Mgr de Mazenod et les Polonais*, Rome, 1970; *Sw. Eugeniusz de Mazenod*, Poznań, 1966, etc.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of a morning Mass celebrated June 13, 1999 in Warsaw, John Paul II raised to the honor of the altars 108 martyrs who gave their lives for the faith during the Second World War. One of the names on this long list was Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, shot to death in the concentration camp of Mauthausen.

A few days before, on June 7, in his speech at Bydgoszcz, the Pope had exhorted the Bishops of Poland to do all they can to complete the list of Polish martyrs from 1939 to 1945.

“Our century boasts its own particular martyrology which has as yet not been fully recorded,” he said. “We must study this martyrology in depth and make it public, recording it just like the Church of the first centuries wrote its martyrology.”

It is with this in mind that I prepared Father Józef Cebula’s biography, a great youth educator and a holy priest. In his efforts to obey God rather than men, he preferred to die rather than give up exercising his priestly ministry.

Everyone who knew him considered Father Cebula to be a man of God, an exemplary priest and a model religious. He spent all of his active priestly life in the formation of candidates for the priesthood or the religious life, either at the Oblate juniorate at Lubliniec, or at the noviciate at Markowice, near Inowrocław. His death as a martyr in 1941 at the concentration camp of Mauthausen was nothing other than the crowning glory of his holy life.

I had Father Cebula as my superior from 1933 to 1937 at Lubliniec. From 1939 to 1940, he was my master of novices at Markowice. Consequently, it was to me that they turned, asking me to write his biography in due and proper form, especially since I myself had spent five years (from 1940 to 1945) in Mauthausen-Gusen, a concentration camp very near Mauthausen.

So I set to work, researching the Oblate General Archives in Rome, the provincial archives at Poznań and at the International Research Service at Bad Arolsen in Germany. In the course of this work, I was able to examine some hundred dossiers of Oblates who had had direct or indirect contacts with Father Cebula, especially his superiors and his confreres; and some six hundred letters in Polish, French, German, English and Italian. I also read the chronicles of the houses where Father Cebula had lived as well as Oblate periodicals from 1926 to 1950. Finally, I read attentively the main works on the German concentration camps, especially Mauthausen which I visited several times.

Armed with this documentation, I initially wrote a biography in Polish, published in Poznań in 1999. I then translated it into French, correcting and completing the original text. My thanks to Father Maurice Lesage, o.m.i., who read and revised my French text.

May the life of Blessed Cebula, educator of youth and martyr for the sake of his priesthood, stir up in the heart of young people the desire to follow him in his religious and priestly vocation.

Liège, February 17, 2000

Józef Pielorz, o.m.i.

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF BLESSED JOZEF CEBULA'S LIFE

1902	March 23	- born in Malnia.
	March 24	- baptized in his parish church of Ottmuth.
1908-1916		- grade school years.
1914	May 24	- First Holy Communion in his parish church of Ottmuth.
1916	April	- inscribed as a student at the training school for teachers.
1918	December	- ill with lung ailment.
1919	January	- undergoes an operation in the Krapkowice hospital.
	April	- returns to Malnia.
1920	April	- begins to attend the Polish school at Lubliniec.
	September	- makes a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Piekary where, upon the advice of Father Pawołek, o.m.i., he decides to go to the Oblate juniorate at Krotoszyn.
1921	June 30	- obtains his certificate of matriculation at Krotoszyn.
	August 14	- begins his noviciate at Markowice.
1922	August 15	- first vows at Markowice.
	September	- leaves for the Oblate scholasticate at Liège, Belgium.
1923	September	- returns to Poland; assigned to the juniorate at Lubliniec.
1925	August 15	- perpetual vows at Krobia.
	October 3-5	- tonsure and minor orders at Warsaw.
1926	December 18	- subdiaconate at Katowice.
1927	January 23	- diaconate at the juniorate of Lubliniec.
	June 5	- priesthood at Katowice.
	June 13	- First Mass at his parish of Ottmuth.

1929-1931		- preaches the Lenten series at St. Nicholas church in Lubliniec.
1930	April 9	- death of his mother.
1931	July 25	- appointed superior of the juniorate at Lubliniec.
1936	February-April	- takes initiatives to avoid being appointed provincial.
	April 27	- appointed third provincial councillor and a little later second provincial councillor.
1937	August 1	- installed at Markowice as superior and master of novices.
1938	May 4	- chosen as delegate for the General Chapter.
	May 13	- death of his father.
1939	September 1	- German troops invade Poland.
	September 4	- the Oblates from the scholastics in Obra and Krobia, having taken refuge at Markowice, continue their flight toward the East.
	September 6	- 25 Oblates from Markowice take flight in turn for our house at Kodeń.
	September 8	- a squad of German paratroopers is decimated at Markowice by a detachment of Polish troops dispatched from Strzelno. The civilians of Markowice, both Polish and German, take part in the fighting.
	September 29	- Security police from Strzelno pay a visit to the monastery at Markowice.
	October 5	- Gestapo from Inowrocław inspect the monastery, put all the Oblates under house arrest and conscript them to work on the farms of German people of the region.
	October 7	- the novices make their first vows.

- | | | |
|------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | October 10 | - the students begin their novitiate. |
| | October 25 | - the priests are forbidden to leave the monastery, even to go to work. |
| | November 9 | - Fathers Cebula, Nawrat, Wróbel and Wyduba are taken to Strzelno as hostages. |
| | November 17 | - the first three of the above-mentioned return to Markowice; Father Marian Wyduba is executed by firing squad December 18 at Strzelno. |
| | December 8 | - Father Cebula advises those under orders to destroy the statues of the Virgin Mary not to obey. Miracle of the Immaculate Mother: not only is refusal on the part of the Oblates not punished, but they are even rewarded with a day's holiday. |
| 1940 | May 4 | - sixteen scholastic brothers are deported to the camp at Szczeglin. |
| | May 7 | - Father Cebula is appointed first consultor of the vice-provincial, Father Jan Nawrat. |
| | August 26 | - along with three other priests, Father Cebula is deported to Szczeglin. |
| | August 28 | - Father Cebula is set free and brought back to the monastery in Markowice. |
| | September 8 | - in spite of an interdiction by the S.S., Father Cebula blesses behind closed doors the Kasprzak-Siedliński marriage in the church at Markowice. |
| | October 1 | - the Agency for the Resettlement of German Farmers occupies one part |

- of the monastery.
- November 1 - Hitler Youth take over the entire monastery. The Oblates are compelled to seek shelter among the townspeople.
- December - Father Cebula receives permission to return to the monastery. Along with two brothers, he takes up residence in a tiny room.
- 1941 January-February - in spite of the interdiction, Father Cebula exercises his priestly ministry in the region of Markowice.
- 1941 February 10 - the formal interdict forbidding him to exercise his priestly ministry is repeated. At the risk of his life, Father Cebula continues to exercise his ministry.
- April 2 - betrayed by an informer, he is arrested and deported to the concentration camp of Inowrocław.
- April 18 - he arrives at the concentration camp of Mauthausen.
- May 9 - he is killed at Mauthausen.
- 1992 January 26 - at Włocławek, the process for his beatification opens.
- 1999 June 13 - beatified by John Paul II along with 107 other martyrs of the faith.

Frequently used abbreviations designating archives.

AGR: Oblate General Archives, Rome

APP: Oblate Provincial Archives, Poznań, Poland

BIOGRAPHY

I

YEARS OF HIS YOUTH -- 1902-1920

Upper Silesia, which at the time was German territory, is the homeland of Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate. He was born March 23, 1902 in a village whose German name was Mallnie and called Malnia in Polish. It was situated on the right bank of the Oder River (Odra in Polish), 25 kilometers south of the city of Opole. Malnia was part of the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in Ottmuth (Otmęt in Polish). March 24, the day after his birth, the child was baptized in this parish; he made his First Holy Communion in the same parish May 24, 1914.¹

His father, Adrian (or Hadrian), was born September 6, 1868 and died May 13, 1938. He owned his own house and farmed a field of two hectares. To balance the family budget, he also worked as a boatman on the Odra river. His mother Rozalia, née Buhl (also written Bul) was born June 29, 1863 and died April 9, 1930 at 67 years of age. She came from Stara Kuźnia near Pruszków (Proskau in German).

Józef also had a brother and a sister. Born March 30, 1904, Paweł died August 15, 1996. His sister, Maria, saw the light of day August 23, 1906 and died April 11, 1966. Presently, the only surviving member of the Cebula family is his niece, Róża (Rose) Bekierz.

¹ Baptismal and First Holy Communion register of Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Otmęt (Ottmuth).

As a child, Józef, enjoyed setting up chapels and reciting prayers in a devout manner. In 1908, in accordance with the law, at six years old, he began elementary school. He finished these school studies in 1916. His brother relates that he had no close companions and led a rather solitary existence. In his spare time, he helped his parents with household chores.

In 1916, after Easter, which fell on April 23 of that year, Józef began attending the Institute for Teacher Training (*Königliche Katholische Präparanden Anstalt*) in Opole. This indicates he intended to become a grade school teacher. The First World War was raging unabated.

In 1916, the school year began toward the end of April. It was made up of two semesters. The first term ended with Michaelmas, September 29, and the second semester ended just before Easter. The German schools were known for their rigorous discipline and for their stinginess in giving good marks. It comes as no surprise, then, that "very good" (*sehr gut*) never appeared and "good" (*gut*) rarely appeared on Józef's report card. He had to be content with "satisfactory" (*genügend*) and even with grades marked "unsatisfactory" (*nicht genügend*). But slowly he made progress. If, at the beginning of the school year, he stood in sixteenth place among 34 students, in March of 1918, he stood in tenth place among 30 students.²

It was perhaps this intellectual effort that proved his downfall. In December of 1918, Józef fell gravely ill and had to interrupt his studies. The doctor's diagnosis was pleurisy (*Rippenfellentzündung*), probably tubercular. He was hospitalized at Krapkowice near Malnia and underwent an operation

² Königliche Katholische Präparanden Anstalt zu, Oppeln, Zeugnis; III Klasse, 29 September, 1916; II Klasse, 29 September, 1917, 27 März, 1918; I Klasse, 28 September, 1918. APP. Cebula.

January 6, 1919.³ Post-operative complications made recovery improbable; after a month at the hospital, he was sent home to his family in Malnia.

His mother, however, could not resign herself to seeing her beloved child die. She consulted a doctor in Proskau (Pruszków in Polish) whom she knew well and begged him to do everything in his power to heal the sick boy. The earnest prayer of the mother and the skill of the doctor won the day. Józef began to feel better and after a few months had sufficiently regained his health to enable him to take up his studies again.

We have now reached the beginning of 1920. Following the defeat of the Germans in November of 1918, the Silesians who were Polish in origin took up arms to reclaim as part of Poland, Upper Silesia which had become a free and sovereign state. The three uprisings of 1919, 1920 and 1921 reawakened their national consciousness and succeeded in obtaining from the Allied forces the reintegration to Poland of a good portion of Upper Silesia.

At the beginning of 1920, carried along by this patriotic spirit, Father Paweł Rogowski announced in the magazine, *Gazeta Opolska*, the imminent opening of a Polish school in Lubliniec. It was to take place after Easter which fell on the 4th of April that year.

Young Józef who came from a family where Polish was spoken and who bore a genuine Polish name — Cebula means “onion” — planned to take advantage of this opportunity to finish his studies and to become more proficient in the Polish language.

³ We have two documents that mention this illness. The first is an April 5, 1936 letter from Father Cebula to the Superior General: “My health was always delicate, especially in the wake of an inflammation of the lungs and even of the pleura in 1918-1919. I had to undergo an operation and remain in bed in the hospital for one month.” AGR, Cebula. The second is the biography written by his brother in 1991 at 91 years of age. “In his third year, he fell ill, struck down by a *Rippenfellentzündung* (pleurisy). Transferred to the hospital in Krapkowitz, he underwent an operation January 6, 1920. Since the illness was judged to be incurable, Józef was sent home to Malnia.” APP, Cebula.

He went to Lubliniec and took up lodging in a little house across the street from the von Grottowski Institute, the Oblates' future juniorate. The old couple who received him had only two rooms in their home. The larger room served as sleeping quarters and the wheelwright's shop, this poor family's source of revenue. The smaller room, an ante-room, served as a kitchen. For the newcomer, a bed was set up in the large room. Even though they lived at close quarters, everyone was happy. The old people looked upon Józef as their own son and he, in turn, repaid their regard with affection and gratitude.

To avoid skirmishes between patriotic Poles and militant Germans, the Allies stationed troops in Upper Silesia. As a result, a detachment of French troops was stationed in Lubliniec. Its task was to ensure public order until the plebiscite set for March 21, 1921, but to little avail. Violence reigned in the city. On one occasion, militant Germans burst into the house of the parish organist. They reviled the members of his family because they refused to sing the German national anthem, "*Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*" (Germany Above All Else). To be sure, they saw Father Rogowski as one of the enemies they had to destroy.

Among the student body, there was as well the 14-year-old Jerzy Jonienc. In later years, in 1959, when he had become an Oblate, he would write memoirs of his stay in Lubliniec and of his contacts with Józef Cebula. Here are the main passages:

"The first time I saw him, was at the train station. He took charge of my luggage. Pulling it on a handcart, he brought it to the parish house, residence of Mr. Małecki, the organist, at whose home I had rented lodgings."

"He had taken up residence near Father Rogowski's with an old couple in a house which had a rather large room and an ante-room that served as a kitchen. They lived there at close quarters since the room housed three beds as well as the wheelwright's shop. I was astounded at the the simple joy and peace that reigned there. Even today, I seem to see there the Holy Family of

Nazareth. The windows were at street level at a height of about two metres.

“Józef Cebula was eighteen years of age, four years older than I was. As to his physical constitution, he was sickly and pale of face, but with a slight smile on his lips and in his eyes. He did not talk much. In our conversations, we avoided the subject of girls and other things of that nature, the kind of things young people of our age usually talked about. We never went to any evening dances. Two or three times only we went for a walk in a park, and once in the month of July, we went with our director to visit a family.

“In our conversations, we talked especially about our school work and current political events that touched our lives for we were constantly being exposed to conflicts because of the fact that the school was being directed by a patriotic Polish priest. We found the situation very upsetting.

“We never broached the subject of a calling to the priesthood, nor spiritual subjects of that nature. But I am convinced that Cebula was already thinking of this. Each day on his way to church, Father Rogowski would knock on the window of the Cebula house. Józef would accompany him to serve his Mass, either at the hospital, or at the parish where Father Sobek was parish priest, or at Sadów.

“Towards the end, political conflicts became increasingly violent. During the May 3 demonstration organized by the Poles,⁴ militant Germans blocked the route of the march as it advanced towards the city centre. Father Rogowski and Cebula were part of the crowd. They just missed being subjected to violence in the ensuing scuffle.

“One day we arrived at school to find our director extremely agitated and fulminating threats. While he was strolling in the

⁴ May 3, 1791, the Polish Diet voted to adopt the first democratic constitution in continental Europe. Consequently, May 3 became the national feast.

region of Grünwald, on the bridge in front of the Institute, he was set upon by a pack of militant Germans. They beat him bloody. His neck was stained with blood and his head was swollen. This occurrence was extremely unsettling for us. At the home of the organist, another shock awaited us. A mob of Germans from Lubliniec had forced their way into the organist's home; they manhandled the family and wreaked havoc in the dwelling. They ordered the organist to stand at his window and sing "*Deutschland über alles.*"⁵ For a few days, the nights were filled with unrest. To instill terror into us, they used to beat us until we were bloody. The organist would find safety by donning the uniform of a French officer who was lodging with the organist and his family. At the time, Silesia was occupied by French, English and Italian troops.

"From this time on, more and more on the street, the people in general began to revile us, calling us "Polaki." We could not take it anymore. Consequently, Cebula and I decided to break off our studies in Lubliniec and we informed our director of our decision. He agreed all the more willing because he also had decided to leave for Poland in order to avoid the worst. He told us that he would give us a good report card with regard to the studies we had already accomplished and that he would issue us a recommendation which we could use for any secondary school. As well, if that was our wish, he would provide us with a recommendation which we could present to any order or religious congregation. With this in view, he told us to contact the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Piekary and ask about admission requirements. In 1920, the Oblates had just recently established themselves in Poland.

"I prayed fervently to the Virgin Mary to give me a sign indicating whether I should join a congregation because, to tell the truth, I was not much inclined that way.

⁵ "Germany Above All Else," the German national anthem.

"We arrived at Piekary and Cebula contacted Father Pawołek, o.m.i. He decided to join the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the juniorate at Krotoszyn where the first juniors made their secondary studies.

"After having waited in vain for a sign, I decided to register at the secondary school at Ostrów Wielkopolski. Father Rogowski gave us our report cards and the letter of recommendation. Together, we went to Krotoszyn beyond the Polish border. I then went home and later went to Ostrów Wielkopolski."⁶

At the end of the semester, that is, toward the end of September, Father Rogowski closed the school and left for Wągrowiec in Poland. He would serve as professor of religion at the local secondary school and died there January 26, 1922.⁷

Before leaving, Father Rogowski wrote his students some highly commendatory report cards and added to them letters of recommendation for any secondary school or seminary whatever. He especially advised Jonienc and Cebula to make a pilgrimage to Piekary Śląskie and there to contact Father Jan Pawołek, o.m.i.

⁶ Biographical notes on Józef Cebula covering the period April to July 1920 as written by Father Jerzy Jonienc, o.m.i. at the request of his superior, Father Stefan Całujek, o.m.i., in Markowice in October of 1959. Written in his own hand in Polish. APP, Cebula. Father Jonienc wrote: "to July 1920." He should have written: "to September 1920." Indeed, the juniorate in Krotoszyn opened its doors only in September of 1920. In addition to that, the notice of admission to first vows of Brother Cebula records: "in a classical private school in Lubliniec: six months." AGR, Cebula. Six months means from April to September.

⁷ Father Paweł Rogowski was born March 11, 1871 near Opole and was ordained to the priesthood March 11, 1898. After a probationary period in Beuthen (Bytom), he became the pastor of Jędrysek near Kalety. Not only was he a zealous pastor, he was also an ardent Polish patriot. Because of this, he incurred difficulties with the German authorities and had to take refuge in Lubliniec where he contributed to the building of a Polish house. It was in April in 1920 in this city that he opened a Polish school. See *Słownik Biograficzny Katolickiego Duchowieństwa śląskiego XIX i XX wieku* (Biographical Dictionary of the Polish Catholic Clergy in Silesia in the XIX and XX Centuries), Katowice, św Jacek, 1996.

As a result, Cebula and Jonienc went to Piekary Śląskie, the most famous marian shrine in Upper Silesia. The Polish Oblates Jan Kulawy and Jan Pawolek were already there, preaching missions in the area. After having prayed with all his heart before the miraculous statue of Virgin, the young Cebula confided to Father Pawolek his attraction to the priesthood.

Father Pawolek did not for a moment hesitate to point him toward the juniorate at Krotoszyn which had recently (September 17, 1920) opened its doors. Since at this time, Jonienc did not as yet feel himself called by the Lord, he left his friend travel alone to the juniorate in Krotoszyn. It was only later that he would follow his friend. He would later admit, "It was Cebula's example which led me to the decision of joining the Oblates."⁸

The first Poles to enter the Oblates toward the end of the XIX century came especially from Upper Silesia. They attended the juniorate in Valkenburg and the noviciate in Saint-Gerlach in Holland. Afterward, they made their theological studies either in Canada or at the scholasticate in Hünfeld in Germany. In 1905, the first Polish priests formed a missionary team at Saint Nicholas of Kapellen near Neuss. From 1904 on, especially in Westphalia, they preached parish missions among the Polish immigrants who were rather numerous at the time. In May of 1919, they opened their own house at Höntrop near Bochum while continuing to have the German provincial as their superior.

In the meantime, Poland became a free and independent state. It was an opportune moment to found a new Oblate province. To investigate this possibility, in August of 1919, Father Jan Kulawy went to Piekary Śląskie. In December of that same year, Father Jan Pawolek joined him there. While providing

⁸ Biographical notes, o.c., "In spite of my prayers, I received no sign from the Blessed Virgin; but through Cebula, she also called me to her congregation." Born February 12, 1906, Jerzy Jonienc entered the juniorate of Lubliniec in 1923. Ordained to the priesthood June 21, 1931, he would spend almost his entire life as professor either at Lubliniec or Markowice where he died April 9, 1964 at the age of 58.

pastoral care for the marian shrine and preaching parish missions, these priests investigated the possibility of a suitable house in Poland. Finally, the choice fell upon the former German college of Krotoszyn, a small town situated quite near Upper Silesia. April 16, 1920, a two-year lease was signed with Mr. Maksymilian Bąkowski, the owner. The following June 6, the General Administration established the future juniorate of Krotoszyn as an autonomous house and appointed Father Paweł Czakaj⁹ as its superior. So it was that a former German college became the cradle of the Oblate province of Poland, today one of the most important provinces in the Congregation.

In conformity with the agreements made, the Oblates only took possession of the college on July 1, 1920. Consequently, hurried preparations had to be made to open its doors for the 1920-1921 school year. After closing the house in Höntrop, Fathers Paweł Czakaj, Jan Nawrat and Franciszek Kosian traveled to Poland. All the furniture as well as the library had to be transported to Krotoszyn. For their part, Fathers Kulawy and Pawełek took it upon themselves to find the beds and the school equipment. Because of difficulties at the border, transport vehicles arrived late with the result that the school year was able to begin only September 17. There were 28 juniorists. Arriving toward the end of September, Józef Cebula was the 29th juniorist. Three classes were formed. Józef Cebula, Feliks Adamski and Paweł Grzesiak were assigned to the finishing year.

Until the end of 1920, Father Paweł Czakaj, the superior, Father Jan Nawrat, the treasurer and Father Franciszek Kosian made up the teaching staff. Father Jan Kulawy arrived at Krotoszyn only on January 2, 1921. He taught Greek and was tutor to Józef Cebula's class. Father Jan Pawełek was assigned to

⁹ On the beginnings of the juniorate of Krotoszyn, see the *Memoires* of Father Nawrat "Mój życiortys i wspomnienia," p. 45-46, typewritten, Odra, 1959-1960; also the correspondence between Fathers Czakaj and Jan Kulawy and the General Administration, AGR, Jan Kulawy and Paweł Czakaj.

preaching parish missions. They proved to be a source of many Oblate vocations and a source of revenue for the juniorate which was much in need of money.

Indeed, Father Nawrat, the treasurer, had to show a great deal of ingenuity to provide food for a community of 39 people which included five priests and five brothers. Meat and meat products were rationed and insufficient in supply, so recourse had to be made to the black market. On the other hand, beds were lacking and, at the beginning, juniors had to content themselves with sleeping on straw mattresses. Classroom chairs were supplied by borrowing each day the benches from the chapel. During the winter, heating was almost non-existent. Consequently, water in the washbasins froze. These spartan conditions in no way dampened the joyful atmosphere at the juniorate. The lifestyle was poor as a preparation to living the hard life of a missionary to the poor. It was only later on that conditions would gradually improve and that the juniorists would enjoy normal juniorate life.

At the end of the school year, Józef Cebula passed his final exams with the general notation "good" (*dobry*) and on June 30 received his graduation certificate. He presented himself as ready to begin his novitiate.¹⁰

¹⁰ See the school certificates of Józef Cebula in the boarding school of Krotoszyn: the first for the first semester (September 1920-February, 1921) and the second, his graduation certificate, signed, June 30, 1921, by Father Czajak, director, Jan Kulawy, class tutor and Adrian Cebulla (sic), the Blessed one's father. APP. Cebula.

II

ON THE ROAD TO RELIGIOUS
AND PRIESTLY PERFECTION
1921-1930

After spending his vacations at home in Malnia, in August Józef made his way to the novitiate in Markowice near Inowrocław. August 14, along with Feliks Adamski, Paweł Grzesiak and Julian Górecki, he took the habit and began his novitiate under the direction of Father Czakaj,¹¹ formerly his superior in Krotoszyn.

In spite of his strictness, Father Czakaj gave his novice Cebula a very good report: "Exceptional as to application, very good results. Very fervent, open, mortified, detached, submissive, filled with fraternal charity, humble. A model novice."¹² It should come as no surprise, then, that the vicarial council admitted him to first vows by unanimous vote; he made his vows on

¹¹ Born June 2, 1877, in Silesia, Father Czakaj entered the juniorate at Valkenburg in Holland in 1891 and took his first vows at Saint Gerlach August 15, 1899. He made his theological studies at the scholasticate in Hünfeld, Germany, where he was ordained to the priesthood May 12, 1904. From the beginning, he was a member of the Polish missionary team. In 1919, he was appointed the first superior of the new Polish house of Höntrop and in 1920 became the first superior of the Polish community of Krotoszyn. In July of 1921, he became the first master of novices at the novitiate of Markowice (1921-1928). In 1928, he fell ill and died January 20, 1932.

¹² AGR, Cebula. Since the novitiate of Markowice had not been set up in due and proper canonical form, it had to be revalidated by an apostolic indult. The indult was obtained on February 17 and each novice was obliged to declare in writing that he accepted it. So it was that on March 21, 1922, Brother Cebula declared: "Me libere cum plena deliberatione eodem Indulto uti velle." AGR, Cebula.

the feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1922.

During his novitiate, on February 22, 1922, the Oblate community in Poland was established as an independent vicariate and Father Franciszek Kowalski was appointed as the first vicar provincial.¹³

When Józef Cebula finished his novitiate in August of 1922, there was not yet any scholasticate in Poland. Consequently, the four scholastic brothers had to be sent abroad for their studies. Since the international scholasticate in Rome could not receive them, Father Kowalski, the first vicar provincial, decided to send them to the scholasticate in Liège in Belgium. From the letters of Father Pierre Richard (1880-1966), the superior at the scholasticate of Liège from 1915 to 1928, to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, we learn a number of details about the school year 1922-1923. The number of scholastics varied during that year because some of the young men were called up for military service; others, on the other hand, were returning after having fulfilled their military service. In his October 7, 1922 letter, the superior wrote that classes had begun that very day, but that the Polish scholastics had not yet arrived, probably because they were having problems obtaining entry visas to Belgium. He then wrote that the number of scholastics, the four Poles included, was 53: twenty from the province of France Nord, four from France Midi, fourteen from Alsace-Lorraine, six from Belgium and five from Spain. The first year of philosophy (the four Polish scholastics included) numbered twenty. In another letter, this one dated January 19, 1923, Father Richard gave his assessment of the dif-

¹³ Father François Boniface Kowalski was born September 15, 1878 in Pomerania. While still a child, he emigrated with his parents to Charlottenburg near Berlin. He attended juniorate and novitiate in Holland and made his theological studies in Hünfeld, Germany where he was ordained to the priesthood, March 28, 1903. Sent to Canada, he especially ministered to the Poles. In 1922, he was appointed vicar provincial of the Oblate vicariate of Poland and in 1925, was appointed the first provincial of the province of Poland (1925-1931). Subsequently, he dedicated himself to ministering especially at the shrine of Our Lady of Kodeń. He died at Katowice, March 1, 1954.

ferent national groups: "The Polish and Spanish brothers have had considerable difficulty with the languages; this contributes to their formation. Morale remains high and well under way in general. The Spaniards are very immature... the Poles, on the other hand, are seasoned young men, matured. They have seen enough of life, in this respect, excellent from all points of view."¹⁴

Concerning Józef Cebula's fervor at the scholasticate in Liège, we have a number of testimonies. November 5, 1922, he was made a member of the *Archconfraternity of Prayer and Penance in Honor of the Sacred Heart* and chose Saturday as his day of reparation. The same day, he joined the *Association of Reparative Communions of Montmartre*. He chose Saturday as his day for communion. Finally, November 6, he was admitted to the *Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the Freedom of the Pope and the Salvation of Society*. He was also admitted to the *Daily Adorers of the Sacred Heart* with the commitment of monthly adoration.

Józef Cebula would keep the sheets recording inscription in and the rules of these different associations because he intended to introduce them in Poland; we still have them today.¹⁵

At the end of the school year, the board of directors headed by Father Richard, the superior, could give nothing but a good report on Józef Cebula: "Excellent religious, perfect scholastic, except for a shyness that is perhaps excessive. Good intelligence, slow and sure. Perfect worker. Good results. He will do very well in his studies. Good judgment, goodhearted. Board of directors unanimously call him [to second year vows], Liège, July 8, 1923."¹⁶

Alas!! He was not able to continue to study peacefully in Belgium. Recalled to Poland along with Julian Górecki, they

¹⁴ AGR, Pierre Richard.

¹⁵ APP, Cebula.

¹⁶ AGR, Cebula.

arrived at Lubliniec, September 8. They were obliged to continue their studies at the juniorate while at the same time teaching courses to the juniorists. Józef Cebula was assigned six classes of Polish language, four of mathematics, four of French, one Bible course and one in geography; sixteen classes a week in all.

The second year, the juniorate at Krotoszyn was too small and could not be expanded. After a great deal of searching, Father Teofil Nandzik succeeded in buying in Lubliniec the former Von Grottowski Institute.¹⁷ The sales transaction for 300,000 Marks was signed February 23, 1922. The Institute had a capacity of 100 boarders and could be expanded at will. The house in Krotoszyn was definitively closed and transferred back to its owner September 14, 1922.

On March 24, 1922 a group of twenty-four juniorists left Krotoszyn and arrived at Lubliniec at midnight. The next day, March 25, feast of the Annunciation, the Oblates took possession of their new juniorate. The following June 26, Polish troops entered Lubliniec and the school year was launched in peace.

After the clean-up, the carrying out of the most pressing repairs and the ejection of some illegal squatters, the school year was opened September 2, with a student body of 115 juniorists. In order to invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the whole community went on pilgrimage 11 and 12 of September to Our Lady of Częstochowa, 35 kilometres from Lubliniec. Father

¹⁷ Franz von Grott-Grottowski, XE "Grottowski, Franz von", a judge by profession, was very rich, but childless. In his will, he left three-quarters of his wealth for the establishment of a boarding school for poor children from 9 to 16. The boarding school opened its doors only 34 years after the death of its founder, a death that occurred on July 11, 1814. In the course of the 1914-1918 war, the Institute was the home for certain associations dedicated to the public good, and after the war, certain families moved into it and appropriated everything of any value.

Jan Kulawy, former superior of Krotoszyn, was confirmed as superior in Lubliniec.¹⁸

At the beginning, the superior had a staff of only three priests: Fathers Teofil Nandzik, treasurer, Stanisław Baderski and Franciszek Kosian. Since the local psychiatric institute was across the street from the juniorate, the Oblates committed themselves to be chaplains there. In August, the sisters, Servants of the Holy Virgin of the province of Leśnica took charge of the kitchen and the general housework. Obtaining more teachers for the professorial staff was a pressing need. In 1922, there arrived from Hünfeld the scholastic brothers: Jan Cyrus, Kazimierz Józefowicz and Jan Hadryan; in September 1923, scholastic brothers Cebula and Górecki joined them from Liège.

The 1923-1924 school year began with 140 juniorists. Like his confreres, Józef Cebula was required to teach courses at the juniorate while at the same time take his second year of philosophy under the direction of Father Kosian. This system continued for the following years....

At the beginning of their theological studies, they had Fathers Jan Kulawy, Teofil Nandzik and Stanisław Baderski as professors. After Father Kulawy's departure, Father Joseph Thiel came from France to replace him.

¹⁸ Father Jan-Wilhelm Kulawy, o.m.i., "patriarch" among the Oblates in Poland, was born May 19, 1872 in Leschnitz (Leśnica), near Oppeln (Opole), attended the juniorate at Valkenburg, made his novitiate at Saint-Gerlach where he made his first vows August 15, 1893. He studied theology in Ottawa where he was ordained to the priesthood June 4, 1898. In November of 1899, he established the first Polish centre with a chapel in Winnipeg. In 1904, he returned to Germany where he preached parish missions to the Polish immigrants, especially in Westphalia. In September 1919, he left for the land of his birth and established himself at the shrine of Our Lady at Piekary Śląskie. In January 1921, he moved to the juniorate in Krotoszyn where he taught and was tutor for Józef Cebula's class. After Father Czakaj's departure for Markowice, he replaced him as superior, a position he maintained at the juniorate at Lubliniec from 1922 to 1925. Then, he preached parish missions all over. Arrested by the Gestapo in July of 1941, he was killed at the concentration camp of Auschwitz (Oświęcim), September 10, 1941, at 69 years of age.

The student-professor system did not respond to the needs of the juniorists or the scholastics. It was not surprising, then, that Rome, even though it had no concrete solution to offer, protested strongly against this system. However, Rome had to grin and bear it while at the same time it demanded that the scholastic brothers be allotted adequate time for their theological studies.

After three years of temporary vows, Józef Cebula made his perpetual vows ("perpetual oblation"), August 15, 1925 and was given oblation number 3769. In September of that same year, Father Teofil Nandzik¹⁹ stepped into Father Kulawy's shoes and added the task of superior of the juniorate (1925-1931) to his task as treasurer.

Both Father Kulawy and Father Nandzik expressed their great satisfaction with the conduct of Józef Cebula, first as a scholastic brother and then as a priest. They held him up to others as an example to imitate. Father Kowalski, the provincial, shared this favorable opinion. In a December 22, 1926 letter to Father Blanc, he did not hesitate to say that "Brother Cebula is the best."²⁰

Consequently, the road to priestly ordination lay wide open before Józef Cebula. Bishop Stanisław Gall, auxiliary bishop of Warsaw and chaplain general of the Polish army, conferred upon

¹⁹ Born in Silesia, March 2, 1878, Father Teofil Nandzik also went the Valkenburg, Saint-Gerlach route for his formation. He made his first vows at Saint-Gerlach August 15, 1897. He made his theological studies in Rome where he was ordained to the priesthood March 29, 1902. His first obedience was to South Africa. From there he went on to Canada to end up in September of 1921 at the juniorate of Krotoszyn in Poland. Following his term as superior at Lubliniec (1925-1931), he went back to Canada where he suffered a speedy disillusionment. As a result, he returned to Poland. He died at Heydebreck (Kędzierzyn) March 31, 1943 at 65 years of age.

²⁰ Kowalski to Blanc, December 20, 1926: Among those admitted to the diaconate (Adamski, Górecki, Grzesiak), "the best one, Cebula was overlooked." Consequently, this oversight had to be corrected. AGR, Franciszek Kowalski.

him the tonsure and four minor orders on October 3rd, and 5th, 1925 in his private chapel in Warsaw. Bishop Arkadiusz Lisiecki conferred upon him the subdiaconate in the cathedral at Katowice December 18, 1926 and Bishop Alfred Guyomard, o.m.i., of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) ordained him to the diaconate January 23, 1927. After attending the General Chapter which closed October 18, 1926, Bishop Guyomard made a visit to Poland in view of obtaining a few Oblates for his mission. Finally, Bishop Lisiecki ordained him to the priesthood in his private chapel at Katowice June 5, 1927 on the feast of Pentecost.²¹

The following day, Father Cebula and his three confreres, Feliks Adamski, Julian Górecki and Paweł Grzesiak celebrated their first Mass at the juniorate. The choir supported by the band enhanced the splendor of these first Masses. Then, the four new priests went to their families to celebrate their "First Mass."

Father Cebula celebrated his First Mass in his home parish of Ottmuth (Otmęt), Monday, June 13. On the holy card he distributed to the people in attendance we read these words full of meaning which we translate from the German:

"I will sing forever of the goodness of the Lord. Psalm 88: 1. In memory of my First Mass. Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Ottmuth, June 13, 1927. The Lord has sent me to evangelize the poor (Oblate motto)."

The photos taken on this occasion, one with his family and the other with his acquaintances and friends, have been carefully preserved by his family. They are presently found at the home of

²¹ These certificates of ordination, with the exception of ordination to the priesthood, have been preserved. APP, Cebula. It must be pointed out, however, that the certificate for tonsure and minor orders bears the following: "die 4 et 5 mensis octobris, quae fuit dominica XVIII," while on the sheet for his first obedience dated, June 25, 1928, we read: "October 3 ... tonsure, October 4 ... first two minor orders, October 5, 1925... last minor orders. The official record is mistaken in saying the October 5 was a Sunday; it was, in fact, a Monday. Consequently, we have to say that the obedience sheet is correct and conclude the following: 3 (Saturday) tonsure; 4 (Sunday) and 5 (Monday) minor orders.

his niece, Mrs. Róża Bekierz.

After finishing his theological studies, Father Cebula, on July 25, 1928, received his first obedience for the province of Poland. As of July 6, he obtained faculties for hearing confessions, but as was the custom, "with the exception of hearing nuns' confessions."

September 21, 1929, he was appointed ordinary confessor to the Sisters of Mary Immaculate at Koszęcin. Several other congregations of sisters asked for his services. So it was that from 1929 to 1937, the year of his departure for Markowice, Father Cebula would be the ordinary or extraordinary confessor of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception at Koszęcin, of the Servants of Our Lady at Lubliniec and Lubecko, as well as the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth in Lubliniec. As individuals, some other nuns did not hesitate to have recourse to Father Cebula to ask for guidance or to resolve questions of conscience.

From 1928 on, Father Cebula was also given the responsibility of spiritual direction of the brothers in the capacity of prefect of the brothers. Once a week, he gave a conference adapted to their particular vocation.

At the beginning of his priestly ministry, Father Cebula preached for three years running the Lenten series in the church of Saint Nicholas in Lubliniec. The church was always crammed to capacity.

III

SUPERIOR AND ANIMATOR OF THE JUNIORATE IN LUBLINIEC 1931-1937

Father Cebula was held in high esteem as professor, educator, confessor and confrere. It is not surprising, then, if Father Nandzik saw in him an ideal successor and took pains to prepare him for the position of superior. Father Kowalski, the provincial, was of the same mind. He wrote to Rome: "Although he is young, he is already very mature in spirit."²²

Appointed superior by the General Council on July 25, 1931²³, he was installed in this post the following August 4. Since Father Cebula spent in Lubliniec the golden years of his life, we need to take a look at the development of this important juniorate.

1. Brief sketch of the history of Lubliniec

At the opening of the first school year (1922-1923), Lubliniec boasted a student body of 115. In 1923-1924 that number had grown to 143 and in 1924-1925 it surpassed the critical number of 150. For lack of room, it proved necessary to send the newcomers to Krobia near Kępno. This house, opened in July of 1923, was the first Polish scholasticate. Just like at Lubliniec, the scholastic brothers taught the juniors while pursuing their own studies.

²² Kowalski to Labouré, June 16, 1930. AGR Kowalski, François.

²³ Oblate General Council, July 25, 1931, p. 461. AGR: "Since Reverend Father Nandzik has completed his second three-year term as superior at Lubliniec, Reverend Father Joseph Cebula is appointed to replace him."

This, however, was only an interim solution. To solve the basic problem what was required was either to establish a second juniorate or to expand the existing building. After much debate, the decision was made to expand the existing establishment. The first plan presented by the building contractor carried a \$25,000, i.e., 250,000 złoty, price tag. The expansion would, in fact, cost about \$100,000, i.e., about 1,000,000 złoty. The treasury of the General Administration agreed to a loan of \$50,000 dollars at 6% interest. But where was the other half to come from? It was for this reason that the superior, Father Kulawy, taking advantage of an invitation to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oblate house which he had founded in Winnipeg, left for Canada in September of 1924. Both in Canada and in the United States he preached parish missions to the immigrant Poles and collected funds for Lubliniec. When he returned to Poland in September of 1925, he brought with him \$7,000, a considerable sum at the time.

Upon his return, he was to be renamed superior for a second three-year term, but when the provincial, Father Kowalski perceived that Father Kulawy and Father Nandzik were not getting along and that, on the other hand, the province had a pressing need for a missionary of wide experience, he assigned Father Kulawy to the missionary team and, in his place, appointed Father Teofil Nandzik. A little miffed, Father Kulawy nevertheless accepted his new obedience like a good religious.

Father Nandzik, who retained his role of treasurer could now realize his dream. December 1, 1926 the provincial council made the decision to expand the building with the construction of two wings and a chapel for 300 juniors.

The new facade would measure 120 metres and the dimensions of the chapel were 16 metres by 46 metres. Under the chapel was constructed a large room for academic debates, lectures, various forms of theatre, etc. Everything was to be ready by September of 1930.

The school year began with 276 juniors. Since the construc-

tion work was not entirely completed, it was necessary, that year also, to send the new students to Krobia. In 1930, the school year in Poland officially began September 2, but in Lubliniec, it began only on September 8, a Monday and feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

September 29, 1930, the expansion of the house and the new chapel were solemnly blessed by Bishop Gall, auxiliary bishop of Warsaw and Chaplain General of the Polish army. He arrived the night before and was greeted by the Oblate community, numerous guests and an honor guard of the regiment stationed in Lubliniec under the command of Colonel Marszałek. The next day, at nine in the morning, Bishop Gall blessed the premises and then celebrated a pontifical high Mass in the course of which he preached an outstanding homily and ordained eight deacons. The juniorate's orchestra performed at the gala dinner attended by the ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries of the region. In the afternoon, the bishop confirmed 40 juniorists. An academic session in the great hall brought this memorable day to a close.²⁴

During Father Cebula's term as superior, the chapel was enriched by two side altars and, in the spring of 1936, the construction of a large Lourdes Grotto was undertaken. Father Aleksander Dzierżykraj-Morawski drew up the plans and supervised its construction. The local farmers gladly brought their contributions, hauling to the site the necessary blocks of stone and gravel. After 18 months of work, one could view with admiration a grotto 33 metres in length and 12 metres high. The statue of the Blessed Virgin was carved by Mr. Konarzewski d'Istebna, an artist of renown in Poland.

November 16, 1937, after Father Cebula had left for the novitiate in Markowice, the solemn blessing of the grotto took place. Many faithful and a number of invited guests of note attended the

²⁴ *Oblat Niepokalanej*, 1930.

ceremony. The singing of *Ave Maria* by the juniorate choir was followed by a speech composed for the occasion by Father Karol Brzezina, the new superior of Lubliniec. Then, Father Dwucet, dean of Lubliniec, flanked by two priests, proceeded solemnly to bless the Grotto and the statue of the Virgin Mary. The *Magnificat* was sung, followed by benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. A banquet, served in the refectory for the community and the many guests, brought this memorable occasion to a close. Dr. Reiss, the staroste (sub-prefect) of Lubliniec, took this opportunity to warmly thank the Oblates for all the good they were doing for the youth, the future of the Church and the state of Poland.²⁵

The extraordinary flourishing of the juniorate in Lubliniec impressed the General Administration of the Oblates as much as it did the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the country. As a result, the juniorate received many visitors.

September 23, 1922, right after the opening of the house, Father Maximilian Kassiepe, assistant general, arrived for a canonical visit. In June of 1923, it was the turn of Bishop Augustin Dontenwill, the Superior General. His successor, Father Théodore Labouré made a canonical visit in 1934. December 8 to 14 of 1936, it was Father Johannes Pietsch, assistant general, who carried out the canonical visit. A number of Oblate bishops such as Bishop Gotthardt of Southwest Africa, Bishop Guyomard of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Bishop Grouard, Bishop Turquetil and Bishop Breynat from the Canadian far North, never forgot to make a detour to go to Lubliniec when they visited Poland. The visit that caused the greatest stir, however, was that of Cardinal Rodrigue Villeneuve, o.m.i., in March of 1938. Though less frequent, the visit of other dignitaries, both ecclesiastical and civil, were also much appreciated. Bishop August Hlond, bishop of Katowice and Bishop Kubina, bishop of Częstochowa took part in the centenary celebrations of the appro-

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 1937, p. 367.

bation of the Congregation by Pope Leo XII, February 17, 1826, which celebrations took place May 31 and June 1, 1926. Several other Polish bishops also favored by their visits this choice Oblate flower of the church of Poland.

Among the civil authorities, we have to highlight the 1923 visit of Mr. Stanisław Wojciechowski, president of the Republic of Poland (1922-1926) and Mr. Grażyński, voivode (high civil dignitary) of Upper Silesia (1926-1939). All of them were delighted with this model house of religious and civil education.

2. The great growth of the juniorate of Lubliniec

- 1931- 1937

As superior of Lubliniec, Father Cebula contributed to the juniorate's growth by his efforts to see that harmony and fraternal charity reigned among all, by his reforms in teaching and a judicious choice of professors, by setting up a rule of life adapted to the needs of the youth, by developing leisure time activities and sports, by improving the food and especially by the spiritual formation of the juniors.

a) Teaching and choice of professors.

During Father Cebula's term of office as superior, the expanded house could accomodate up to 300 juniorists. The number varied from 220 to 280. Lubliniec could accommodate them all.²⁶ There was no longer any need to sent some of them to Krobia. It was a trump card in improving consistency in direction and to reinforce discipline to everyone's advantage. According to Oblate tradition, the juniorists were divided into six forms. Their latin names were: *Sexta* (the lowest form), *quinta*, *quarta*, *tertia*, *secunda* and *prima* (the graduating class). At the end of the

²⁶ Teofil Nandzik to Langlois, provincial of Alberta Province, October 18, 1932: "I was simultaneously superior, treasurer and teacher at the juniorate of Lubliniec which I founded and expanded to the degree that the juniorate of Lubliniec became the largest one in the Congregation and can easily accommodate 300 students." AGR, Théophile Nandzik. Idem, Nandzik to Dontenwill, December 27, 1929. AGR, T. Nandzik.

school year there were no special exams. Each report card was issued with the average of the marks which were obtained on oral questions or written work during the school year. It was only to obtain their graduation diploma that they had to pass special exams, both oral and written, on selected subjects.

After the academic reforms of 1932, the juniorate had to adapt itself to new specifications. As a result, the first four forms would make up the gymnasium and the two final forms the classical lyceum.

To ensure that the education would meet the required standards, Father Cebula did not hesitate to ask the provincial for at least ten priests as professors. From personal experience, he knew that the system of student-professors could not be countenanced. He asked for young priests, priests he could easily get along with and who would cooperate with him in his reform. With the older priests, bound up in their old ways of doing things, it would be much more difficult.

At the beginning, he had to have patience. But little by little, he obtained everything — or almost everything — he desired.

Two years later, at the beginning of the 1933-1934 school year, Lubliniec boasted eleven priests and one scholastic brother. Eleven of them worked as teachers. Here is the list:

- Józef Cebula, superior;
- Stefan Smigielski, treasurer and professor;
- Franciszek Blandzi, Kazimierz Buchwald, Jerzy Jonienc, Maciej Krawczyk, Ernest Krystek, Augustyn Michalik, Stanisław Przybyła, Marian Wyduba and Alojzy Zdebel, full-time professors. The scholastic brother Józef Kocot, come from Rome on sick leave, completed the list of professors.

The minor seminary was a secondary school of classical education with emphasis on languages. One began with Latin in first form (sexta); French was added in quinta, German in quarta and Greek in the last two years. So, counting Polish, five languages

were taught — a real tour de force.

If foreign languages were given pride of place, the same could not be said of the sciences, mathematics and physics. Equipment in the physics and chemistry labs was inadequate and the young professors were lacking in adequate training and experience. They did their very best!

All the professors, each in his own area, sought to build enthusiasm among their students for the material they were teaching and were vigilant that they should do their homework. At the outset, the professors did not have any university degrees to teach in secondary schools. Nevertheless, with a good deal of time at their disposal, they were able to prepare their classes and compare favorably with teachers with university degrees. It was only after the 1932 academic reform that, in order to obtain legal recognition of the seminary as a secondary school, some priests would go to university to receive specialized training in their respective academic areas and obtain the required degrees.

The school year began at the beginning of September and ended about June 20. The juniors spent their summer vacations at home, but during the Easter and Christmas breaks, they generally stayed in Lubliniec.

b) Daily program and spiritual life.

If Father Nandzik could take credit for expanding the juniorate of Lubliniec, everyone should acknowledge their indebtedness to Father Cebula for its spiritual development. Freed from concerns about material things and from teaching, he was able to devote his available time to the spiritual formation of those aspiring to the religious and priestly life. He did everything in his power to make the *Juniorate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate* live up to its name, and in his efforts to carry through his reforms, he did not shrink back in the face of opposition from a small minority. He would, however, carry his reforms forward gently, step by step, keeping in view the possibilities of the moment.

First of all, he set the conditions for admission to the junio-

rate. The candidates had to submit the following documents:

1. A certificate of Baptism and Confirmation.
2. An affidavit of good conduct in a sealed letter from their parish priest.
3. A report card from the last year of the school they attended.
4. A medical certificate of sound health.
5. A brief biography written in their own hand.
6. A declaration expressing their desire to become a priest, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate.
7. A declaration from the part of the individual's parents committing themselves to pay the boarding fees regularly.
8. 0.50 zł stamp for the letter of reply.

During my stay at Lubliniec from 1933 to 1937, the daily program, if my memory serves me well, was as follows:

Rising at 5:20 a.m. during the week and 6:20 a.m. on Sunday and feast days. We used to sleep in large dormitories; our beds were separated only by a small bedside table. After the wake-up bell, the priest in charge for that week would walk into the dormitory and say in a loud voice: "*Benedicamus Domino*" (Let us bless the Lord), and everyone would reply: "*Deo gratias*" (Thanks be to God). We had to wash up very quickly and get dressed to be in time for morning prayer recited in the oratory. After the prayer, one of the priests would give a brief exhortation or a spiritual lesson. From there, we went to the chapel for Mass; almost everyone went to communion. After thanksgiving, we made our beds and went to the dining room for a very simple breakfast. Classes began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at noon with a brief break between courses; the classes lasted 40 minutes. In mid-forenoon we could take a cup of tea or some soup with a slice of bread. At noon, we went to the oratory for a brief prayer which ended with the Angelus. At the noonday meal, each one could eat to his heart's content since the food, though plain, was plentiful. An hour of recreation followed during which most of the boys burned off their excess energy playing different games

among which soccer was far and away the most popular. The students who preferred more peaceful activities would go for a stroll in the park and the music lovers would play various instruments, especially the organ. At 2:00 p.m., the clock would strike the end of recreation and everyone would retire in silence to their classrooms to do the homework demanded by the professors. To maintain the necessary silence, at the head of each class an admonitor sat watchfully at a table. Admonitors were always chosen from students of the graduating class. If his warnings were not heeded, he would not hesitate to send the trouble maker out for a more or less long period according to the gravity of the fault.

At 4:00 p.m., a break for lunch and a 30 minute recreation. Evening oraison or benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 7:00 p.m. preceded supper. A half-hour recreation and night prayer closed the day. At 9:00 p.m., everyone was supposed to be in bed. We had a good eight hours sleep, but for the young people that we were that seemed insufficient.

Sundays and feast days, the monotony of the program was suspended and required activities were limited to the minimum. In the morning, we had a solemn high Mass and in the afternoon we held sports matches, academic sessions, stage performances where our musicians and budding comedians could show off their talent.

From 1936 on, during Lent, our actors staged the passion and death of Jesus with significant impact. The hall which seated two hundred was always packed and a number of the spectators were moved to tears as they contemplated the cruel sufferings of the Lord Jesus.

Weekly confession every Friday was the rule. Each one could choose his confessor and the frequency of confession that suited him. The annual retreat lasted five days and was always preached by an Oblate from another house. Father Paweł Koppe who preached our retreat from Saturday September 5 to Wednesday, September 9, 1935 recorded in his notes the subjects

he treated:

- Saturday evening: Opening - One's final end;
- Sunday: The goal of the juniorist; love of neighbor, sin;
- Monday: Chastity, death, hell;
- Tuesday: Penance, frequent communion, the Blessed Virgin Mary;
- Wednesday morning: Perseverance, closing.²⁷

c) *Leisure time, sports and food.*

Leisure time, sports and artistic activity were well integrated in the juniorate program. Applying the principle, *mens sana in corpore sano* (A sound mind in a healthy body.), the seminarians were given adequate time to entertain themselves, burn off their excess energy and to participate in different sports competitions. The sports field which measured 100 metres by 180 metres boasted two soccer fields, volleyball courts, etc. The juniors and even some of the priests burned up their energies there to their heart's content. Our soccer teams at times won stunning victories over neighboring teams. So it was that May 21, 1933, the juniorists routed the Polonia club of Lubliniec by a score of 9 to 1 and on October 2 of the same year, beat the Polish gymnasium of Bytom by a score of 3 to 0.²⁸

Athletics also had its devotees: running, long jump and the hurling of various objects were held in high esteem. A number of juniorists achieved the athletic distinction of State Recognition in Sports after having displayed their athletic prowess before the State commission.

From 1936 on, the two last forms took their training in the pre-military service. At the conclusion of their military training,

²⁷ Paweł Koppe, o.m.i., *Pamiętniki* (Memoires), 1930-1940, APP, Koppe.

²⁸ *Oblat Niepokalanej*, 1933, p. 254-255.

they spent a month living in tents in order to get a real taste of the life of a soldier. If there was need, this military training could substitute for one year of the compulsory military service in Poland.

Once a week, we used to go for walks in the countryside surrounding the village. We walked through the town together in tight formation wearing our distinctive school headgear. It was only when we had reached the goal of our walk that we could scatter, run and leap about at will.

Towards the end of the school year we had a grand one-day outing. We usually went to some lakes or forests on the German border. Even when precautions were taken, swimming was dangerous and there were cases of cardiac arrest and death. But the main difficulty was the suffering incurred from sun-bathing. As a result, our return home was more subdued than our departure had been.

The juniorists could learn to play various musical instruments, sing in the choir, play in the orchestra — the band, that is. As a result, they could exhibit their talent in the course of public celebrations and especially during solemn Masses.

For the sake of being complete, we cannot pass over in silence the quality of the food. It was good, but plain and sometimes insufficient — at least for those of a heartier appetite. The loan for the expansion of the juniorate had to be paid back; that made a hole in the budget and it was the food that suffered in consequence.

Father Cebula did everything in his power to remedy this deficiency, but with only partial success. The packages received from our parents allowed us to supplement our ordinary fare and to assist those who, because their parents were poor, could not supplement their diet. Unfortunately, there were cases of theft in the refectory and in the store. Father Cebula was forgiving, but in the case of repeat offenders, he did not hesitate to expel the guilty individuals from the juniorate.

d) Chronicle of Father Cebula's superiorship at Lubliniec.

Composed only after the war, the "Chronicle of the juniorate at Lubliniec" leaves great gaps in the period of Father Cebula's superiorship. For his part, he never kept a diary. In order to know more about it, we have to have recourse to the monthly *Oblat Neipokalaney* and to some other contemporary documents.

1932

The provincial, Father Jan Nawrat (1931-1936) visited the juniorate in April. He was struck by the progress achieved in the time of the eight months of Father Cebula's superiorship. In a letter to Father Blanc, assistant general, dated April 30, 1932, he wrote: "The canonical visit of the juniorate at Lubliniec was most gratifying. I visited the classrooms; I had personal interviews with priests, the brothers and the students in the final year. One and all, they have seen an enormous amount of progress on all fronts. Under the worthy Father Cebula's direction, things are working very well. It is clear that he has not yet been able to achieve everything he has wanted to. The staff is not yet adequate... I believe I can assure you that the new reorganization will produce good results and will lead this outstanding house of formation to the heights to which it is called."²⁹

But since one or the other of the priests was not in agreement with the reforms brought in by the superior, the latter "since he is a sensitive individual, feels it all the more deeply."

In a subsequent letter dated July 19, he added: "Father Cebula himself asked me for the changes such as we had decided they should be. I offered him personnel who were more along in years. He did not dare accept them lest the difficulties involved should be compounded. Consequently, I decided to offer to provide him with young priests.... Father Cebula is right where he belongs."³⁰

²⁹ Nawrat to Blanc, April 30, 1932, AGR, Nawrat.

³⁰ Nawrat to Blanc, July 19, 1932, AGR, Nawrat.

That year they had to mourn the death of a juniorist. During the night of June 23rd to the 24th, just before the students left for summer vacation, Stanisław Stawski suffered cardiac arrest and it was impossible to reanimate him.

1933

Each Sunday during Lent (March 5-April 2), Father Cebula preached at Szarlej, near Piekary, and during Holy Week, he preached a retreat to the families of military personnel to prepare them for Easter (April 9). It was a year of great success in the area of sports. I was an eye-witness to this since I entered the juniorate precisely in September of 1933.

Father Antoni Grzesik asked Father Cebula to preach at his First Mass. On April 14, Father Cebula sent him this reply: "Thank you for your invitation to preach. Perhaps you will be able to find a more able preacher. The excuse I am offering is not lack of time; it has to do with the quality of my preaching which is rather lifeless and dull: monotonous delivery and a defective memory. I am totally tired. As a result, I cannot promise you any good results. Sometimes things go alright; at other times, it does not come out as a sermon, but rather as babbling distressing to the ear."³¹

After some gentle prodding, Father Cebula set aside his humility and modesty in order to be of service to his young confrere. He did subsequently preach at Father Grzesik's First Mass celebrated in the church of St. Nicholas in Lubliniec, June 13, 1933.

That year as well, to Father Cebula's great satisfaction, the last of the scholastic brothers assigned to teach at Lubliniec left.

1934

Father Theodore Labouré, the new Superior General, came to visit. Father Cebula travelled to Germany and accompanied

³¹ Cebula to Grzesik, April 14, 1933, APP. Cebula.

Father Labouré from Heydebreck (Kędzierzyn) to Lubliniec. They arrived March 3 and were greeted by the entire community. The juniorate spent several days in preparing for this event. Everything had to be spit and polish. That evening, the eminent visitor was treated to the play *Upiór Wenecji* (The Vampire of Venice) in the course of which the choir executed pieces drawn from its extensive repertoire. Alas! The Superior General granted no holiday. What a disappointment for the juniorists!

In July, Father Cebula preached the retreat to the Association of Polish Youth (S.M.P). That same month, on the 24th, the provincial, Father Nawrat, organized for the very first time a meeting of the religious missionaries of the diocese of Katowice. All were represented there except the Jesuits. At the closing of the meeting, the participants expressed to Father Cebula their gratitude for "his genuinely warmhearted hospitality."³²

That same year the chapel bell tower was removed from the chapel because it was beginning to collapse.

1935

The 1935-1936 school year began with 260 juniors. The newcomers were so numerous they had to be divided into two classes of *sexta* (the first year).

The chronicler of the *Oblat Niepokalaniej* wrote: "Joy and contentment reign in the juniorate. With great dedication the superior and the professors are imparting formation to these youth from whose ranks will emerge future missionaries to the pagans.

"All of those who have had the opportunity to visit Lubliniec were delighted with Father Cebula's warmhearted welcome."³³

³² *Oblat Niepokalaniej*, 1934, p. 265, Jan Nawrat, *Mój życiorys i Wspomnienia* (Memoires), Odra, 1959-1960, p. 66.

³³ *Oblat Niepokalaniej*, 1935, p. 303.

That same year, the chapel was enhanced by the addition of two side altars and some new benches.

1936

From a February 14 letter written by Father Cebula to Father Blanc, we learn that Father Cebula was seriously ill from the beginning of January on and was confined to bed rest³⁴ for a lengthy period of time. But in February already he was preaching some retreats in nuns' convents. It was also in the month of February that he was informed of his appointment as provincial. We will treat of this in the next chapter.

In March, construction was begun on the Lourdes grotto.

Military service (referred to as PW) was introduced into the juniorate. Students in the two final years were obliged to participate. The following reasons are given for this military training:

"The knowledge of the art of handling fire arms is very useful for missionaries and those who will not have persevered in the juniorate will benefit by having one year stricken from their military service."³⁵

Military training took place once a week for two hours in the afternoon.

In April, Father Cebula was appointed first extraordinary consultor for the provincial council under the new provincial Father Bronisław Wilkowski (1936-1947).

May 13, a storm with hailstones as big as hens' eggs caused considerable damage: holes in the stained glass windows, broken window panes, the roof of the house damaged and the garden in large part destroyed.

³⁴ Cebula to Blanc, February 14, 1936: "In these last days, I was ill and your January 29 letter found me sick in bed." AGR, Cebula.

³⁵ *Oblat Niepokalanej*, 1936, p. 93.

From December 8 to the 14th, Father Pietsch, Assistant General, made a canonical visit of Lubliniec. He was very pleased with his visit. And still during this year, Father Stefan Smigielski was appointed superior of Katowice. Father Jan Twardoch replaced him in the role of house treasurer.

1937

In spite of the fact that he was tired after six years as superior at Lubliniec and his respectful protestations to that effect, in July of 1937 Father Cebula was appointed superior and master of novices at Markowice. His last endeavor at Lubliniec, the Lourdes Grotto, was opened November 16, after his departure for the novitiate at Markowice.

3. The success and importance of initiatives taken by Father Cebula as superior

Father Cebula worked hard at remodeling the juniorate at Lubliniec on the spiritual, social and intellectual levels. He led and directed this important community with astuteness, prudence and gentleness. It was the exception when he felt obliged in conscience to punish troublemakers, or even, to order them to leave the juniorate.

Let us give a few examples of his way of going about it and especially of addressing awkward situations. First of all, my own personal recollections.

On one occasion — I no longer remember the exact date — when the juniorists came down the stairs to the refectory for their second breakfast, they found that their customary soup was sour. From first to last, in unison without previous consultation, they put their spoons down on the table and all stood up in protest. Father Cebula, apprised of the problem, went down to the refectory. When he perceived the blunder made by the cooks, he told the juniorists gently, "Come back later and you will have some fresh soup." At the sound of the bell, they returned to find a very tasty soup awaiting them.

In 1999, Father Kazimierz Łabiński, a juniorist of Father Cebula's time, gave another example of the way Father Cebula operated to soothe spirits and resolve conflicts:

"In 1933, Father Cebula appointed a certain Szkatuła (who did become a priest, but later left the Congregation) as valedictorian for our class. However, the students' choice fell upon me. Father Cebula felt rejected. What could be done? In order not to lose face and still respect the students' choice, he used the following strategem. Choose, he said, two from among you for an oratory contest. They chose myself and Szkatuła. Father Cebula chose a passage from Wyspiański and gave us time to prepare ourselves. At the designated time, we recited our text, one after the other before the entire class and I was chosen as victor." "Well, then," said Father Cebula, "he will be your valedictorian as well."³⁶

Father Kazimierz Szymurski, a juniorist from 1928 to 1934, told me in July of 1999 of another example of Father Cebula's "gentle approach."

"On one occasion, one of the juniorists, after burning up all his energy playing soccer, felt hungry as a wolf. Without giving it much thought, he went down into the cellar where the brother in charge of the baking had made some buns. Since the brother was not around, he grabbed some buns, still piping hot, and tucked them carefully into his jacket. What rotten luck! As he emerged from the cellar, he ran right into Father Cebula. The latter, pretending to notice nothing, exchanged a few words with this "budding thief" when all the while the buns in his jacket were issuing the good odor of freshly baked bread. Father Cebula made no mention of any "theft," but his gimlet-eyed mischievous

³⁶ See this testimony in *Mosaika Obrzańska* (Obra Mosaic), the scholasticate of Obra's magazine, April-June 1999, p. 33. Father Łabiński related this incident April 24, 1999. He died two months later on June 27, 1999.

look spoke volumes. After his experience, this juniorist swore never to do such a thing again. So, in his ordinary gentle way, Father Cebula succeeded in teaching the guilty party a lesson without heaping reproaches upon him or threatening him with expulsion.”

Lets end these testimonies by the deposition of Mrs. Fanciszka Koloch given in 1993 during the evidence gathering process for Father Cebula’s beatification process.³⁷

“Once while working in the garden, I noticed Father Cebula who was walking nearby saying his breviary. He was immersed in prayer and seemed to see nothing of what was going on around him. Consequently, I was surprised when he stopped near me, a young girl who was only fifteen years old. Giving me a gentle smile, he spoke a few kind words. He asked me about my work and my family since we lived next door to the monastery. He told he how sorry he was that I could not continue my studies in spite of my deep desire to do so and that I was compelled to dig for a living. Not even my father had ever been able to show me such kindness and compassion. Through his personality and his simplicity, he was able to find the exact words to give me encouragement and to reconcile me to my fate.

“I remember well Father Cebula’s face. He was pale, thin, but so gracious that I could never forget him. In Father Cebula, I found a soulmate.

“Along with others, I was delighted to see Father Cebula in the pulpit. When I heard him, my heart seemed transported into another world where only God could speak in such a way through the mouth of Father Cebula. His words were simple, but pene-

³⁷ Franciszka Koloch, née Dikła, residing in Lubliniec sent this deposition to Father Kazimierz Lubowicki, o.m.i., in January of 1993. Father Lubowicki published it in Father Cebula’s biography, *Po prostu kapłan* (Simply a priest), Poznań, O.M.I., 1999, p. 30-32. We extract here the most important passages.

trated to the very depths of one's heart. They would lead us to reflect on the meaning of life. Father Cebula used to preach the Lenten series and a retreat in the church of St. Nicholas in Lubliniec. The church was packed to capacity. People came well ahead of time to make sure they found a place. No one wanted to miss one word that came from the preacher's mouth.

"Father Cebula was also a much sought after confessor. Long lines would form up outside his confessional. People preferred to wait to hear his words of instruction rather than to go to another confessor beleaguered by fewer penitents.

"I often saw Father Cebula walking with his students. He seemed to be one of them. He smiled, joked and was good humored like they were. When he walked alone, his face reflected a certain pensive sadness. But in the company of others, he knew how to smile, be affable and easy to approach. He had a gift of reconciling people who had fallen out with each other.

"I am sure that this servant of God, this knight of the Immaculate, our unforgettable preacher and confessor will receive his reward in heaven."

Father Cebula's own experience taught him that as superior he should teach no courses. He wanted to be free to devote himself entirely to his task of always being available. Freed from the demands of a teaching load, he could dedicate himself to the spiritual formation of the juniorists. He often gave them spiritual conferences and held regular meetings concerning matters of discipline.

In spite of his rather monotonous delivery, we listened to him attentively because he spoke from the bottom of his heart like a man of God. Today, we would consider him a *charismatic* individual.

That is how he shaped us to become future missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. To exercise his priesthood to the fullest and to give free rein to his apostolic zeal, he was willing accept to preach Lenten series or retreats from time to time, or

even a sermon for a special occasion, and he continued being ordinary or extraordinary confessor for different communities of sisters.

When people came to the juniorate to ask for a priest, either for confession or to visit the sick, the brother at the door would send them first of all to contact Father Cebula. Father Cebula, in point of fact, was always available, while as other priests often found reason to beg off....

Lets us conclude with the deposition of Father Wilkowski who, before being named superior of the scholasticate of Obra in 1932, was professor of theology and treasurer at Lubliniec. In a September 19, 1932 letter to Father Blanc, he wrote: "Upon my return from Rome, I visited Lubliniec. I found there an excellent spirit of concord, fraternal charity and regularity."³⁸

This testimony is all the more important because Father Wilkowski was an eye-witness of some discord among the priests and a certain relaxing of discipline at the juniorate at Lubliniec during the superiorship of Father Teofil Nandzik. In one year, Father Cebula succeeded in soothing ruffled spirits, to come to an understanding with the priests, establish a regular rhythm of life and fraternal charity at the juniorate of Lubliniec. The credit attributed to him is richly deserved!

³⁸ Wilkowski to Blanc, September 19, 1932. AGR, Wilkowski. On his way back to Obra after having attended the General Chapter as the delegate from Poland, Father Wilkowski stopped in Lubliniec.

IV

THE WORRISOME APPOINTMENT AS PROVINCIAL
February-April 1936

June 13, 1931 Father Jan Nawrat, known as the “brain” of the province, was appointed provincial of the Polish province.³⁹ This appointment caused a great deal of agitation in the Kulawy camp. The followers of this camp became Father Nawrat’s avowed foes. After four years in office, exhausted by the work and the opposition of his adversaries, he fell seriously ill in June of 1935. Two months of convalescence enabled him to regain his health and to go back to work. Unfortunately, two months later, he suffered a stroke which left him paralyzed in the right side of his body. In December of 1935, he felt better, but the medical doctors prescribed a long convalescence for him. Given his situation, he felt obliged to submit his resignation. On January 5 of 1936, he wrote a letter in this vein to the Vicar General, Father Blanc, suggesting as candidates for his replacement Fathers Wilkowski, Cebula and Adamski. In a following letter, he specified that his first

³⁹ Father Jan Nawrat, born April 26, 1883, studied at the juniorate in Valkenburg (1897-1903) and went to the novitiate in St. Gerlach where he made his first vows September 17, 1904. Sent to the scholasticate in Hünfeld (1904-1910), he was ordained to the priesthood there April 25, 1909. He teamed up with Fathers Czakaj and Jan Kulawy to preach parish missions to the Poles in Westphalia. After the founding of the Polish house in Höntrop, he acted as treasurer there, a position he would hold as well at the juniorate in Krotoszyn in 1920. In July 1921, he was appointed pastor and treasurer at the novitiate in Markowice and, in 1929, superior of the scholasticate at Obra. After his term as provincial (1931-1936), he went back to Obra as a professor and died there December 18, 1960.

choice was Father Cebula because he was more gifted than the others and that he was generally well accepted in the province.⁴⁰

Father Franciszek Kowalski, who was replacing the provincial who was ill at the time, had already written to Rome on December 17, 1935, presenting the same list of candidates with the additional comment that Father Cebula was delicate of health.

For his part, Father Wilkowski was of the opinion that Father Cebula would be the better candidate because he would be acceptable to everyone because of his good naturedness.⁴¹ As for Father Cebula, he felt that Father Adamski would be the best candidate and sent in his name to the General Administration in Rome. Other priests either presented Father Cebula as the best candidate or as one of the best candidates for the position of provincial.

The result was that Father Blanc went along with the majority and chose Father Cebula. But before making his appointment official, he wanted to consult the candidate himself as to his own feelings on the matter as well as get a reading on what the state of the Polish province was. That is why he called him to Rome to consult with him.

The news of this appointment struck Father Cebula like a bolt from the blue. He felt he had neither the physical nor the moral stamina to take on a such a difficult task, given the climate in the

⁴⁰ Nawrat to Blanc, April 22, 1936: "It is unfortunate that Father Cebula is no longer included on the list. As I explained in my last letter, he is the one who, not only is endowed for the job, but who enjoys the widest acceptance and faces the least dislike among us." AGR, Nawrat.

⁴¹ Wilkowski to Blanc, January 16, 1937: "The best replacement, I would say almost the only replacement, is assuredly Father Cebula. His health has improved these last years. He is very unobtrusive, but when the occasion demands it, he knows full well how to make his authority respected among us and to maintain that same authority outside of Oblate circles. In addition to that, he is a very good religious, serious, steady, kind and well beloved of everyone." AGR, Wilkowski.

province. As a religious, he declared his willingness to obey, but he felt it was his duty to enlighten his superiors on the state of his health and his lack of the qualities required to function effectively as provincial.

Since the Superior General was conducting a canonical visit in Canada at the time, February 14, 1936, he wrote to the Vicar General, Father Blanc, to briefly outline "his inadequacies." Judging that this letter would not fully communicate his thinking, he wrote a long letter in Polish to Father Karol Brzezina who, at the time, was studying in Rome to obtain a doctorate in philosophy, asking him to translate the letter into French and pass it on to the Vicar General. In order to make doubly sure, even though he did not write French very well, on April 5, he wrote a letter to the Superior General who had returned to Rome on March 6.

These are the reason he set forth for not being appointed provincial. The first was his failing health. He was still suffering the after effects of the grave illness that had afflicted him in his youth. Add to this longstanding illness a ventral hernia which is very painful. Some times he feels so ill that he is forced to become confined to bed or at least to take some rest. Often, rather than walk ... he drags himself along on wobbly legs. When he is in confined to bed, he uses a certain ploy to avoid alarming the community: he removes his door key, giving the impression that he is out of the house."

He adds, "Lately, I have experienced loss of memory during celebration of holy Mass and while I was speaking. And again at the beginning of this year I was seriously ill for a long period of time."⁴²

After his first three years as superior at Lubliniec, on the grounds of ill health he asked not to be reappointed, but his protests were ignored. When he came to the end of his second

⁴² Cebula to the General Administration. The letter translated from Polish to French by Father Karol Brzezina bears no date and is probably from April 1, 1936. AGR, Cebula.

three years as superior, not only did they not grant him any period of rest but they once again gave him a task that was too onerous. The provincial is obliged to do a lot of traveling. Traveling so exhausts him that he hardly stirs from Lubliniec.

He bases his second reason on the fact of his general ignorance of the affairs of the province, especially the finances of the province, and in the difficulty in handling the men, especially the older men, arrayed in opposing camps. As a result, this ignorance and this difficulty diminish substantially his capability of being an effective provincial.

His third reason is rooted in his native shyness in conjunction with his softheartedness. A number of those who would like to see him appointed provincial see this as an opportunity to exploit this weakness in him. He will leave us alone.⁴³ Now a provincial must act vigorously to maintain discipline and to recall the disobedient to order, or even to expel from the Congregation those who prove incorrigible.

To make it easier for Father Cebula to come to Rome, the Superior General contacted the Polish embassy in Rome on March 24th to ask them to intervene with the proper authorities in Poland to grant Father Cebula a passport, if possible, without charge. Abbé Meysztowicz, the secretary, responded on April 25, saying that the voivode (high civil dignitary) of Katowice had been authorized to act upon this request. Consequently, April 1, 1936, Father Cebula was able to write to Father Euloge Blanc that he would be ready to leave for Rome "next Monday," that is, April 6, and that he could arrive in Rome "Wednesday or Thursday (Holy Thursday)."

⁴³ "Because of my shyness, I am unable to reprimand people.... Numerous are the individuals in our province who would be pleased to have me as provincial so that they could exploit this weakness on my part." *Ibidem*.

In the meantime, the Superior General in council, after having read attentively Father Cebula's letters of protest, concluded that the reasons adduced for his failing health were sufficient to justify cancelling the candidature of Father Cebula for provincial.⁴⁴ April 27, Father Bronisław Wilkowski was appointed provincial (1936-1947). Father Wilkowski was known at Rome. Part of his studies for the priesthood were spent at the international scholasticate in Rome. He was the province's delegate at the last General Chapter in 1932 and was, at the time, superior of the scholasticate in Odra.

His council was made up as follows: Jan Nawrat, first ordinary consultor and admonitor; Franciszek Kowalski, second ordinary consultor, Józef Cebula first extraordinary consultor and Feliks Adamski, second extraordinary consultor. Upon the advice of Father Cebula, Father Kazimierz Józefowicz was appointed provincial treasurer. In October 1937, Father Kowalski who could not get along too well with the provincial and, as a result, would not take part in council meetings, was replaced as second ordinary consultor by Father Cebula and Father Karol Brzezina was chosen as a member of the council.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Correspondance relative to Father Cebula's appointment is abundant. We quote only Father Cebula's six letters: to Father Blanc, February 14, 1936; to the General Administration, April 1 (?), 1936; to Father Blanc, April 1, 1936; to Father Kowalski, April 1, 1936, an excerpt of which is quoted in the April 8, 1936 letter to Father Blanc; to Father Labouré, April 5, 1936; to Father Blanc, April 23, 1936. AGR, Cebula.

⁴⁵ General Council of April 27-28, 1936. General Council of October 20, 1937: Father Kowalski is replaced by Father Brzezina and Father Cebula is appointed second ordinary consultor. Correspondence exchanged between Father Wilkowski, provincial, and Father Euloge Blanc, Assistant General, 1936-1937. AGR, Blanc, Wilkowski.

V

SUPERIOR AND MASTER OF NOVICES
AT MARKOWICE
1937-1940

After his second three-year term as superior at Lubliniec, Father Cebula hoped to be given some respite. On the contrary, July 27, 1937, he was appointed not only superior, but also master of novices at Markowice. At Lubliniec, he was replaced by Father Karol Brzezina who had returned from Rome bearing the laurels of doctor in philosophy.

August 1st, Father Cebula was officially installed at Markowice as superior of a community of sixty Oblates.

Markowice is a village situated between Inowrocław and Strzelno. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it became famous because of a miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. Father Michał Widzyński had brought this statue from Strzelno to Markowice. The people began to pray before this statue and obtained all sorts of graces and favors. There was even talk of genuine miracles occurring. In 1643, the Discalced Carmelites established themselves in Markowice and built a fine shrine for the Virgin Mary there. The statue, carved from wood, stood 50 cm high. In 1716, the Carmelites replaced the old convent with a new thirty room structure. Joined to the church, it formed an enclosed rectangle. Subsequent to the confiscation of their goods and property in 1825, the shrine was attached to the parish of Ludzisko and the convent was occupied by some of the people.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Father Jan Nawrat in the 1926 *Oblat Niepokalanej* relates the history of the shrine of Our Lady of Markowice in a series of four articles entitled: "Z dziejów klasztoru markowickiego" (History of the Convent of Markowice), p. 225-230, 252-258, 283-291 and 322-327.

In 1921, an new era dawned for this place of worship. At the time, Fathers Jan Kulawy and Jan Nawrat were searching for a house to serve as a novitiate. On the advice of Cardinal Dalbor, archbishop of Poznań and with the consent of Bishop Laubnitz, bishop of Gniezno of which Markowice was a suffragan, they were able to take possession of the former convent and the shrine of the Blessed Virgin. Terms were agreed upon July 16, 1921 and already on August 14 of the following year, Father Kassiepe, the assistant general, presided over the taking of the habit of five scholastic novices. The group was made up of Józef Cebula and four fellow novices. Father Czakaj was the superior and master of novices with Father Jan Nawrat as local treasurer and pastor. The number of novices grew from year to year to attain a peak number of 52 in 1934, 40 of whom were brothers. Entries to the novitiate, then, dropped off slowly to hold steady at an average of 20 per year during Father Cebula's time as novice master.

In 1928, Father Czakaj, the superior, whose health was undermined by kidney ailments (nephritis), was compelled to withdraw to Italy to seek treatment.⁴⁷ Father Feliks Adamski stepped in to replace him on a temporary basis and later took over as his permanent replacement.

The convent at Markowice owned a garden area of 30 hectares with an additional 40 hectares of arable land. The farm supplied everything needed to feed some 60 people. At the beginning of 1939, the community at Markowice was made up of 5 priests, 4 scholastic brothers, 24 brothers, 12 scholastic novices, 10 brother novices and 6 postulants to the brotherhood. (*OMI Personnel April 1939*) for a total of 61 people. In August, 1939, Father Skrzyniecki, the pastor, was replaced by Father Marian

⁴⁷ In his biographical jottings concerning Father Czakaj (*Oblat Niepokalanej*, 1932, p. 270), Father Jan Nawrat recorded that he suffered from a chronic inflammation of the kidneys. In a December 13, 1928 letter to Father Blanc, Father Czakaj stated that he had gravel and too much albumine in his kidneys. We conclude his was a case of albuminous nephritis.

Wyduba and Father Ludwik Wrodarczyk was replaced in the treasurer's position by Father Aleksy Wittek. Father Edward Wróbel retained his position as spiritual director.

In the wake of the severe discipline imposed by Father Czakaj and Father Adamski's military style training, Father Cebula wanted to make the novices' life "more human" and better adapted to each one's fitness.

According to Father Adamski, Father Cebula surpassed him as an educator: "I adopted the military model of training, while Father Cebula stuck to his novices like their shadow. He was a man of a profound spiritual life.... His spiritual life was based on the Rule and on the daily program."⁴⁸

The General Chapter was scheduled for the month of September of 1938. Since Father Wilkowski, the provincial, was an ex officio member of the Chapter, one had to proceed to the election of a second representative. In a May 9 letter to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, Father Wilkowski informed him that "Father Cebula was elected as delegate... With 18 people voting, he received 10 votes on the second ballot. Father Adamski was elected as replacement delegate by 10 votes on the second ballot."⁴⁹

In the meantime, Father Cebula fell sick and did not feel up to making the long trip to Rome. August 16, Father Wilkowski wrote immediately to the Superior General, Father Theodore Labouré to the effect that: "Father Cebula had been ill recently and for that reason he did not feel disposed to making the trip to Rome. *Nevertheless, I do hope that he will be able to attend the General Chapter.*"⁵⁰ The following August 25, he communicated

⁴⁸ Testimony of Father Adamski written up by Father Lubowicki, October 25, 1991. See K. Lubowicki, *Po prostu kapłan*, Poznań, O.M.I., 1999, p. 58.

⁴⁹ AGR, Wilkowski.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

to Father Blanc that Father Cebula would not be attending the Chapter; his replacement would be Father Feliks Adamski: "The first news I must pass on to you is not the best; it is that Father Cebula will not be able to attend the General Chapter. A few days ago, he experienced a rather serious stomach ailment and he does not feel up to making such a long trip. In addition to that, there was some problem among the lay brothers at Markowice. This has been of great concern to him and had quite an impact on the state of his health. It is indeed unfortunate that he cannot come *because he above all is the one who is the best liked and in whom the members of the province have most confidence*. Father Adamski will attend in his place."⁵¹

Father Cyrys gave a different version of Father Cebula's withdrawal. In a May 22, 1939 letter written in German to Father Pietsch, the assistant general, he decries the intrigues of Father Wilkowski, the provincial. In short, he claims: The reason Father Cebula is not attending the Chapter has nothing to do with illness, but is due, rather, to certain incidents "*in casu sexto*" discovered at the novitiate. Consequently, it would have been unpleasant for Father Cebula to appear in Rome in his role as novice master. On the other hand, the provincial, Father Wilkowski, wants to reestablish the credit of Father Adamski who has been strongly criticized by Father Pietsch.⁵² What can one say? Father Wilkowski deposed Father Cyrys from his position of superior of the house of Poznań because of unauthorized spending. Father

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² Jan Cyrys to Father Pietsch, May 22, 1939. AGR, Jan Cyrys. "P. Cebula... Novizenmeister und superior... ist so krank, dass er nicht zum Kapitel nach Rom fahren konnte wie uns P. Provinzial vertäuschte, also belogen hat. Ihn hat P. Adamski berichtigt indem er den wahren Grund angab, er konnte nicht zum Kapitel fahren, weil er unangenehme Fälle in casu sexto im Kloster im Markowice gehabt hätte, und es für P. Cebula unangenehm wäre, in Rom zu erscheinen. Aber der letzte Hintergrund war die Rehabilitation Adamskis contre P. Pietsch. Liegt denn darin nicht ein Widerspruch, unfähig zur Reise zu sein, und dann Ämter bei falschem Gesundheitszustand zu bekleiden und das noch im Widerspruch mit dem kannonischen Recht."

Cyrus seized this opportunity for revenge by calumniating Father Wilkowski to the General Administration. The General Administration certainly took no notice of this malicious accusation.

Father Cebula was motivated by a spirit of faith and was always ready to submit to God's will. Here are a few excerpts from a letter he wrote Good Friday, April 15, 1938 on the occasion of his father's terminal illness:

"Dear Sister, dear beloved Wilhelm!

"The feast of Easter is upon us and season's wishes of "Happy Easter" are being exchanged. For you, what will these be? It is difficult to rejoice when our father is ill with no hope of recovery. During Holy Week, the Church reminds us that Our Lord had to suffer as well and how painful his sufferings were for his Mother! Nevertheless, all of those things came to an end. Our sorrows as well are short-lived. The most important thing is to benefit from this experience. We have to submit to the will of God and be convinced that it is He who permits sickness and death. He is Lord. He does what he wills, and as he wills.

"One day, Our Lord said: "What you have done for one of these my little ones, you have done it for me." The longer a sick man is bedridden, the more does he require appropriate care. But those who care for him gain more merit; they will receive that much greater a reward in Heaven and the blessing of God already here below...

"As for myself, I am in good health. I have already adapted to living in this area. There are 56 members in our community. Each one has his assigned tasks; we help each other out and everything is running smoothly...."⁵³

⁵³ This letter was kept by Father Cebula's family in Malnia. At my request, Father Kazimierz Tyc, o.m.i., went to their home and obtained from Mrs. Róża Bekierz, the daughter of Father Cebula's sister, a photocopy of this letter along with some engaging photographs.

At the outset, Father Cebula's life was not an easy one. He, first of all, had the responsibility of making the decision of admitting to first vows or refusing to admit someone to first vows. He must set in motion the procedures to expel incorrigible candidates from the Congregation. His tender heart bled when he was obliged to adopt stringent but necessary measures for the maintenance of discipline. In these cases, he consulted the provincial by phone or by letter and even, sometimes, in the most difficult cases, he went in person to the provincial house for a more indepth discussion.

In general, all of those who had Father Cebula as superior and master of novices in the years 1937 through 1940 retain good memories of him.

1. The Second World War and the German occupation of 1939

At the beginning of his third year as superior, Father Cebula experienced a total upheaval in his personal life and that of his community. September 1, 1939, German troops invaded Poland, and in two weeks time, occupied a large part of the country. Foreseeing this eventuality, the Oblates of the scholasticate communities of Obra and Krobia, situated near the German border, came to Markowice to make their annual retreat and to renew their vows. Father Cebula welcomed them with open arms, but it was a difficult task to find lodging and food for seventy additional mouths.

The annual retreat preached by Father Edward Wróbel, began August 31. September 7, sixteen postulants were to begin their novitiate and, September 8, feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, twelve novices were to pronounce their first vows. The same day, some scholastic brothers were to renew their vows or make their perpetual vows.

September 1, at 10 a.m., Mr. Mościcki, President of the Republic of Poland, announced over the radio that Hitler, without

declaring war, had ordered his troops to invade Poland. But, he added, in virtue of a mutual defense treaty, France and England would come to Poland's aid to inflict upon the enemy a crushing defeat. It was with a certain confidence but also with a certain amount of concern for our immediate future that we heard these fine words.

In the afternoon, the first German planes passed overhead on their way to the industrial area of Inowrocław. After a few minutes, we heard the rumble of explosions and could see the swirling smoke mixed with the flashing of flames. It was war, indisputably war!

Everyone was afraid. People began to flee eastward, taking with them only the basic necessities. The Germans siezed the opportunity to strafe, even to bomb these unfortunate people.... first casualties, first cries of distress, first dead, first shredded corpses ... what a ghastly sight! In view of the rapid advance of the German troops, the retreat could not continue. Safety had to be sought in our houses situated in the inner reaches of the country. Late in the evening of September 4, as a precautionary measure, the scholastic brothers who were to pronounce their perpetual vows on September 8, simply renewed their temporary vows. Too overcome by emotion to express what he felt, Father Cebula could only say: "Dear brothers, the situation is most serious.... " And tears flowed from his blue eyes.... After the ceremony, thirty-five Oblates left Markowice to seek refuge in the eastern part of the country.

Our turn came two days later on September 6. In our group, there were twelve novices and sixteen postulants. Each one carefully packed a small bag and was given 13 złoti for pocket money. A cart drawn by a team of horses carried our food and luggage. But after the first day, the horses were so exhausted that they could go no further. Each individual had to take his own luggage and see to his own food needs as best he could. To avoid attacks from the German Stukas, we divided up into small groups of two or three — sometimes four. And we avoided the main roads.

In the course of this flight, four scholastic brothers were shot to death by the Germans on September 12 in the village of Michałów, near Warsaw. Two were killed during the bombing at Warsaw.⁵⁴ Brother Józef Kotliński would die October 31 as he was proceeding on his way to Lwów. These were the first victims of the war. Some managed to reach Kodeń 600 kilometres from Markowice.

As for myself, on September 10, with my companions I arrived at Kutno. It was a Sunday, so we went to church for Mass. Hardly had we stepped out of the church when we were subjected to a terrible bombardment. My first reaction was to seek refuge in a thatched cottage crammed with people; then, I dashed into a potatoe field. Since I could not escape the planes, I lay down on the ground, said my act of contrition and commended myself to God. Suddenly, I saw a plane drop an incendiary bomb directly above me. Lucky for me, the wind carried it off course to fall some twenty meters away. You can imagine what heartfelt thanks went up from my soul to God and the Blessed Virgin for having saved me from almost certain death.

After two days of rest at the farm, where we worked for the farmer in exchange for food and a place to sleep in the barn, we continued our march toward Warsaw. But once arrived in the region of Gostynin-Sochaczew, the guards warned us to go back because the Germans had already surrounded Warsaw.

What could we do? After a brief discussion, we decided to return to Markowice. At a certain point in time, on the horizon we spied some soldiers in a foreign uniform. Were these allies come to help us? When we drew near, we were soon disillusioned on

⁵⁴ September 12, 1939, at Michałów, a village near Warsaw, scholastic brothers Józef Rogosz, Franciszek Glados, Franciszek Munko and Józef Gembiak were shot to death. They were probably taken for soldiers in civilian clothing or as members of the "Fifth Column." Such people were executed on the spot. Scholastic brothers Jan Langer and Józef Opiela were killed in the bombing of Warsaw on September 26.

that score! Brrr! It was the Germans! After crossing the first line of their camp, an officer signaled us to halt. Ludwik Jański, who spoke German very well, explained that we were students returning to our college in Markowice after a period of vacation. When he asked our ages, each one said either 16 or 17. We well knew that if we said 18 or older that he could consider us soldiers in civilian dress or take us for Fifth Columnists. This "white" lie saved us from being executed on the spot, or at the very least from forced labor. After a forced march, we arrived back at Markowice Saturday, September 23. For us, this was an unforgettable experience.

While we were gone, an event took place at Markowice which would cast an ominous pall over the future of our convent. September 8, a commando of German paratroopers landed in the Markowice area. The Polish troops who still occupied Strzelno were informed. A detachment of calvary was immediately dispatched to Markowice. Some civilians took part in the skirmish as well. The ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) of Markowice fought in support of the paratroopers and the local Polish patriots supported the Polish soldiers. After having destroyed the group of paratroopers, the Polish contingent returned to Strzelno.

At Markowice, everyone lived in fear. Without doubt the Germans would exact revenge for their dead and wounded. Village people and even some Oblates sought refuge in Strzelno. They even took with them the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin. The only person left to guard the convent was Brother Mrugała. But since the German troops delayed in occupying Markowice, little by little people set out to return to the village. It was not until September 13 that the Germans occupied Markowice.

Mr. von Egan, the Lord of Markowice who had fled to Germany before the outbreak of war, made his triumphal return as a German officer. He was appointed mayor (*Ortsbürgermeister*) of Markowice. In virtue of being mayor, he immediately made a thorough search of the convent but found

nothing which enabled him to lay any charges against the religious. On the contrary, the convent had an ace in the hole in its defense. The priests had welcomed a German soldier who was gravely wounded and had administered first aid. Father Nawrat even assisted him in preparing for death. He testified to the fact that, not only had the Oblates not participated in the battle, they even treated him with kindness. For the moment, we were left in peace.

In the village, reprisals were carried out. All the men, 16 years old and up, were rounded up and marked for execution. Here again a goodhearted German man saved their lives by declaring that these people had not taken part in the skirmish.⁵⁵

After our return, life returned to normal. Each individual nursed his sores and wounds received in the course of our forced march. Each one was issued an identity card that he was to produce every time the German authorities requested it. We worked in the garden and on the convent farm. Since making our novitiate was out of the question, we made plans to rejoin our families to await better times. A sudden turn of events upset any plans we might have had in this regard.

On September 29, the Security Police of Strzelno appeared at the convent and ordered that all the religious should be assigned

⁵⁵ In the Oblate provincial archives in Poznań we find three versions of what happened in Markowice. They are essentially in agreement. On the other hand, they differ in certain details to the point of even contradicting each other. As for myself, I am basing myself on *Chronique de la maison de Markowice du 1er août 1939 à 1972*, supplementing it with the "Recollections" of Mr. Leon Matulski, written June 6, 1983 and a third anonymous version. I am also taking into account what I heard about these events upon my return to Markowice at the end of September, 1939.

to working on the farms administered by Mr. Egan. The same day, all the priests were ordered to go to Strzelno on September 30 to be interrogated.⁵⁶ Fortunately, all of them returned safe and sound.

2. House arrest and forced labor: October 5, 1939

The following October 5,⁵⁷ the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*), that is, the state secret police, came in turn to the convent. They confirmed the order for compulsory forced labor and put everyone under house arrest. If it happened that any one of us was tempted to flee, the superior, Father Cebula, would be executed as a reprisal. We held our superior in a much too high regard for us to expose him to certain death. Our community consisted of eight priests, seventeen scholastics and thirty-five brothers, sixty persons in all. From this group, forty-six were assigned to work for Mr. Egan and fourteen, among whom was Father Cebula, were assigned to work on the garden and the farm.

At first, we proceeded to work under guard. But little by little, we gained the confidence of our “masters” to the point when they allowed us to go to work without the presence of our “guardian angels.”

The hours for work varied according to the seasons. In wintertime, we would leave at 7:30 a.m. and return at 3:00 in the

⁵⁶ Von Egan to Cebula, September 29, 1939: “Der Amtsvorsteher Strzelno Nord hat angeordnet, dass alle Geistlichen beider Konfessionen sich am Sonnabend den 30 September 39, vormittags um 10 Uhr 30 Minuten einzufinden haben. Heil Hitler! Der Ortsbürgermeister JP von Egan.” (The commander of Strzelno North has ordered that all ecclesiastics of both denominations should present themselves on Saturday forenoon, September 30, 1939 at 10:30 a.m. Mayor, JP von Egan.) APP, Cebula.

⁵⁷ Some people such as Father Lubowicki, affirm that this date was October 25 (*Po Prostu Kapłan*, Poznań, OMI, 1999, p. 27), but the testimony of all the novices and of Father Krawczyk, whom he quotes on page 90, give the date October 5, 1939 as the date of house arrest. That date is so strongly engraved on my own memory that I will never be able to forget it.

afternoon. In the springtime, we worked from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a break of two hours for meals. We usually ate our meals at the convent. Since the work at home had to be done as well, we willingly offered our help to the brothers on the convent farm.

As students, we were not used to manual labor. That is why it was very hard in the beginning. At first, they put us to harvesting sugar beets. To pull them up by hand we had to be bent over continually. After one hour's work, pain invaded our backs ... we could not straighten up. We could hardly drag ourselves back to the convent when evening came. However, after a few days of training, most of us were able to reach the "norm of production" set by other workers on the farm.

For seven months (October 5 to May 4, 1940), we carried out all the farm work. During the winter, when the temperature went down to 30 minus Celsius, work outside alongside the wheat threshers was particularly hard.... Providence provided us with this kind of rigorous training to make us more able to resist the inhuman conditions of the future concentration camps.

At the convent, the food was simple, but ample. At breakfast, we had grey or white bread with butter or lard and café au lait. At the noon meal, there was soup, potatoes with cabbage or carrots or some other vegetables and a piece of meat. For the evening meal, there was pea or string bean soup, etc., well supplied with pieces of meat, or again potato pancakes. On Sunday or feast-days, the courses were more varied. On Christmas eve, our chef outdid himself by serving the twelve traditional courses of food, most of which are made with potatoes.

We were obliged to do forced labor without anything like a regular salary. The total remuneration received by the convent consisted in coupons to buy coal, firewood and synthetic fertilizer. Consequently, we had to resort to selling our produce on the "black market" to enable us to buy staples like sugar, salt and pepper.

From time to time, the Gestapo put in an appearance to check on the personnel. On those occasions, our "masters" were not shy about loading themselves up with supplies of fresh meat from our pigs, chickens and with eggs. In the course of their October 25 visit, they made the house arrest for all the priests more stringent by ordering them to no longer leave the convent. As a result, they were exempt from forced labor.⁵⁸

In spite of the interdiction to leave the convent and to receive no visitors, some among them, under the cover of night, made their way into the village in search of news, while in the greatest secrecy we received visits from priests of other houses.

Since we could not leave Markowice, Father Cebula suggested that we should use this time to begin our noviciate. So it was that, on October 10, the vigil of the feast of the Motherhood of Mary which currently is no longer listed on our liturgical calendar, we began our noviciate with the ceremony of the taking of the habit. In his exhortation to us, Father Cebula reminded us that, in spite of our difficult circumstances, we should bravely travel the road of religious and priestly perfection. The novices who were unable to pronounce their first vows on September 8 because they were forced to flee, would make them on October 7, feast of our Lady of the Rosary.

Sundays and feastdays were free time. Sometimes as well because there was no work to do, we remained in the convent. We made good use of this time by doing our exercises under the

⁵⁸ "Von Egan an das Kloster Markowitz, October 26, 1939: "Die gestrige Verfügung ist vom Kloster falsch aufgefasst worden. Nach Information, bei der Gendarmerie haben morgen früh wieder alle Klosterbrüder zur Arbeit zu erscheinen. Stubenarrest ist nur für Geistliche und Vikäre verfügt." (Von Egan to the convent of Markowice, October 26, 1939: "The order given yesterday was misinterpreted by the convent. According to information obtained from the "Gendarmerie," all the brothers must be present at work tomorrow. The order of confinement to quarters applies only to the priests and the vicars." APP, Cebula.

direction of Father Cebula and the scholastic brothers studied philosophy under the direction of Fathers Nawrat and Krawczyk.

Work on the farm dictated the daily program. In wintertime, we rose at 5:30 a.m. and in springtime at 4:30 a.m. After attending Mass in the oratory and breakfast, we went to work in a group.⁵⁹

Mr. von Egan, a rabid Hitlerite, sought and found one excuse after another to make our lives difficult. October 27, he sent us a form in which we were to declare in writing our whereabouts from September 1 to September 15, 1939. November 9, he chose Fathers Cebula, Nawrat, Wróbel and Wyduba to send them as hostages to Strzelno. Fortunately, on November 11, Independence Day, nothing happened and the first three priests were released. But Father Wyduba was kept in custody. December 18, he would be executed by firing squad in the woods near Strzelno. They accused him of having acted as a lookout from the church steeple and, when he spotted the German parachute drop, of having warned the Polish troops in Strzelno.

3. The miracle of the Immaculate Conception:

December 8, 1939

Mr. von Heydebreck, Lord of Markowice before the war, even though he was a German and a Protestant, had maintained good relations with the convent. He had even offered 500 zł. for the restoration of the miraculous statue of Markowice. His heir, von Egan-Krieger, not only did not imitate his uncle, but even became the sworn enemy of the Oblates.

⁵⁹ Through letters of November 25, 1939, December 30, 1939, March 17, and April 14, 1940, written to my parents and conserved by them, I have been able to recall and record the life at Markowice from September 1939 to April 1940. APP, Pielorz.

December 7, he issued the order to assign the “monks” to the demolition of the statues of the Blessed Virgin that popular devotion had placed at crossroads at Ludzisko and Wymysłowice.

Father Cebula gathered the priests to discuss this matter. Five of them felt that what was called for was an outright refusal. One priest, Father Nawrat, offered the opinion that to avoid worse things they would be obliged to carry out the order issued by the authority. Finally, it was suggested that Father Cebula should simply state that an Oblate simply could not destroy the effigies of his Patroness on the very feast of the Immaculate Conception.⁶⁰

December 8 dawned as a rainy day. As a result, a brother was sent to ask whether they should report for work. The answer was “yes.”

At breakfast, Father Cebula said only: “Anyone who wishes to remain an Oblate will not go to destroy the statues.” These words remained graven in my memory. Consequently, I can guarantee their authenticity.

December 8, we went off to the farm. After the assignment of work to other groups, the work foreman (włodarz), Mr. Wolf, came to our group made up of twelve novices, five scholastic brothers and one Oblate brother and gave the order: “And you, off to destroy the statues.”

Nobody moved. So he repeated his order — with the same results. We explained to him that for us, who were religious and Oblates, it would be a sacrilege for us to destroy the statues of our heavenly Patroness, but that we were ready to take on any other kind of work. Poor man, he was completely non-plussed. As a Pole and a Catholic, he understood our reaction, but he felt obliged to inform his immediate superior, Mr. Wedel.

⁶⁰ Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i., *Dzieje klasztoru... Markowickiego...1939-1945* (History of the convent of Markowice 1939-1945). APP, Krawczyk.

Mr. Wedel, a German and manager of the farm, then came to us and in a firm voice gave the same order. We sought to explain to him the reasons for our refusal, but he did not want to accept them. Completely upset and red with rage, he delivered a resounding slap to the face of Brother Beblo, our spokesman.⁶¹ The slap carried the full force of his arm behind it. To his great surprise, Brother Beblo did not stir... Mr. Wedel was at his wits end. After having made threats of the most dire punishments against us, he hurried off to Mr. Egan to apprise him of the situation.⁶²

What were we to do? After a brief consultation, we decided to go to our usual tasks to avoid being accused of malignering or laziness.

My group went to a farm to carry out the usual work, that is, manuring the barns. About 11:00 a.m. we espied Mr. Wedel on horseback. He ordered us back to Markowice immediately. On the road, Brother Kowalkowski took advantage of a little farm train which was passing nearby. He leaped into one of the cars to arrive more quickly and to warn Father Cebula of the new developments in the situation.

⁶¹ At the beginning of 1940, Brother Herbert Beblo was set free due to the intervention of his family. As a result, he escaped deportation to the concentration camps which took place May 4, 1940.

⁶² In his memoirs, *Preżyłem obóz zagłady Mauthausen-Gusen*, (p. 16), Father Maksymiuk, who was with us that day, gives a bit of a different version of this incident. He writes: "It was Mr. Wedel and not the work foreman (*włodarz*) who coordinated the work to be done. We were standing in a double file. Wedel took six pairs and said: This dozen will go destroy the statue at Pakość... Then he ordered other brothers to do the same at Krusza Zamkowa. Those who remained were to spread manure on the fields."

Father Krawczyk gives yet another version in his *History of the convent of Markowice*. But he was not with us that day. However, he does affirm, as I do, that 18 Oblates were assigned to the demolition of the statues of the Blessed Virgin.

In the courtyard at Markowice, we stood in our usual formation and we waited... Our hearts beat faster and our cheeks turned pale... We were nervous and worried... My thoughts turned to my family... At eighteen years old, I could be tortured, sent to a concentration camp or shot out of hand without ever seeing my mother, my father, my two brothers and little sister. Abruptly, a friend said to me: Come on, let's escape while no one is guarding us. As Silesians, we could enroll in the German army... I did not answer. After a brief prayer to Mary Immaculate, I made my decision: Better to die as a defender of the Virgin than to run off like a coward. I already could visualize the martyr's halo encircling my head

Awakening from my musings, I glanced around the yard. A fine drizzle was gently falling. At the back of the yard, soldiers were shoeing their horses and not paying any attention to us.

Time passed slowly... A limousine arrived. An officer stepped out and without casting a glance in our direction, went directly to Mr. Egan's quarters. A routine visit. We remained waiting, always worried, but resolute as well.....

Finally, a second vehicle arrived in some splendor and braked to a stop in front of us. It was the police from Strzelno. Three powerfully built men sprang out of it. They threatened us with their crops (*Spitzruten*) while they shouted: "Where are the monks who do not want to work?" (*Wo sind di Brüder die nicht arbeiten wollen?*)

At that very moment, another vehicle arrived. It was the Gestapo from Inowrocław. The all-powerful S.S. made a hand signal to indicate that the punitive action was to cease. They all went in a body to Mr. Egan's quarters. We were still waiting.⁶³ A faint hope was already dawning in our hearts.

⁶³ In his memoirs, Father Maksymiuk relates that the police from Strzelno arrived at Markowice before our return and were waiting for us there. Upon seeing us, they assailed us verbally, ready to assault us physically. At that very moment, the Gestapo vehicle arrived (p. 18). That is not accurate.

After a long wait, at about 2:00 p.m., Mr. Wedel appeared on the stairs of the house and simply stated: "Today you are free; you can return home." You can imagine our joy mixed with amazement. Back at the convent, we gave thanks to God before the Blessed Sacrament exposed and before the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin.⁶⁴ "It is a genuine miracle!" we exclaimed.

How can one explain this? After having put the Oblates under house arrest, the S.S. used to drop by from time to time to check on how their orders were being carried out and to lay in supplies of meat, chickens and eggs. On that very day, they had come to get five chickens and a little pig, supplies that were rationed at that time in Germany. While he was helping to supply them, Father Cebula told them of our situation and asked them to intervene on our behalf. Incensed because another police force had dared to interfere in something they considered their business, they determined to teach them a lesson once and for all. The miracle consisted precisely in the fact that the S.S.⁶⁵ arrived precisely at the moment when the police of Strzelno were on the point of assaulting us.... One moment later and our fate was sealed. The Blessed Virgin used the rivalry between the two police forces to save us at exactly the right moment.

4. Deportation to the concentration camps:

May-August 1940

The German occupation made its presence felt more and more. People were arrested without any reason and thrown into

⁶⁴ In short, the versions of Fathers Maksymiuk and Krawczyk differ from mine only in certain details. As far as "Mary Immaculate's miracle," we are in agreement with regard to its authenticity.

⁶⁵ S.S., *Schutz-Staffel*, means protective squadron because its members made up Hitler's personal guard. It was the cutting edge for the NSDAP, that is, the national socialist party of the workers of Germany founded by Hitler. Later on, they became a terrorist police organization. They are the ones who made up the state secret police, the infamous Gestapo, responsible for the mistreatment of concentration camp inmates.

prison or deported to concentration camps. There were also summary executions. Farmers were forcibly removed from their lands to be deported to the central region of Poland which was destined to be a reservoir of manpower for the Great Reich. They were replaced by ethnic Germans. The regime proceeded to close churches and convents, ultimately sending their occupants to concentration camps.

Even though we were confined behind our convent walls, we felt the terror that reigned in our village. There was nothing we could do. When spring came, our participating in the work program was reduced so that only sixteen scholastics and five brothers would go to work outside.

Saturday, May 4, about 4:00 p.m., the S.S. came to the convent and ordered that the entire community be assembled in the refectory. They chose sixteen Oblates, twelve novices and four scholastic brothers and made them board a truck with a tarp over the back. They were allowed to take a small suitcase with them containing only that which was strictly necessary. We were to go and work in Germany. Here is the list of names of those so deported:

Novices

1. Adamczyk, Józef
2. Jański, Ludwik
3. Kotłęga, Edmund
4. Kowalkowski, Stanisław
5. Kubsz, Józef
6. Maksymiuk, Józef
7. Mroczyk, Henryk
8. Pielorz, Józef
9. Rozynek, Józef
10. Siwczyk, Konrad
11. Spalek, Karol
12. Szamocki, Jan

Scholastic brothers

13. Frala, Mieczysław
14. Kaczmarczyk, Alfons
15. Kurda, Paweł
16. Mańka, Alfons⁶⁶.

Father Cebula's face was extremely pale, but he maintained his usual calm demeanor. He felt like a father whose children were being taken away from him and there was nothing he could do to save them.

After about an hour's travel, the truck came to a halt in the wide open country near the village of Szczgelin where there was a farm transformed into a concentration camp. After three days of brutal prison "training," we were put into cattle cars to be transported by train to Dachau concentration camp. We arrived there May 9. From there, the following August 2, they sent us to our final destination: the extermination camp, Mauthausen-Gusen.

We were arrested and deported as theological students (*Theologiestudenten*) and in virtue of this designation "a danger to German youth." In point of fact, the Catholic faith we espouse is diametrically opposed to the Hitlerian teaching of the superiority of the German race. It was therefore deemed necessary to exterminate us as well as all priests and religious in Poland. The martyrdom inflicted on the Polish clergy in the cruel treatment of its victims as well as for the number of victims involved surpassed that inflicted on the Christians of the first centuries.

In June of 1940, von Egan was called up to the war front. Mr. Schulz was appointed as his successor as administrator of the public properties of Markowice and Mr. Hoffmann was appointed mayor of the village. The situation grew ever more tense. Since singing in Polish was forbidden in church and since no one

⁶⁶ From this group of 16, four died in the concentration camp of Gusen (Jański, Szamocki, Frala and Mańka); four were set at liberty some months later (Kotłęga, Kubsz, Spalek and Kaczmarczyk) and eight were liberated by the American army, May 5, 1945.

wanted to sing in German, everything was done in Latin. Father Wittek, the treasurer, was released after signing on to the list of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans). Pressure was brought to bear on other priests to force them to give up exercising their priestly ministry, but it was in vain.⁶⁷ That is why, August 26, the feast of our Lady of Częstochowa, they were arrested and deported to the concentration camp of Szczeglin.

The *Chronicles of Markowice* give a detailed description of this arrest.⁶⁸ At noon, Father Feliks Adamski was arrested in the village of Ludzisko, brought to the convent and confined to his room. That evening, they arrested and likewise confined to their rooms Fathers Krawczyk, Wróbel and Dudziak. Before deporting them, the S.S. had to attend to certain formalities with Father Cebula. Father Dudziak used this opportunity to escape through a window. He sought refuge and hid in the area where he was born, but he was captured again March 7, 1943 and deported, first to Leszno and subsequently to the concentration camp of Dachau.

After a fruitless search for the escaped priest, in order to complete the required number, the S.S. took Father Cebula in Father Dudziak's stead with the promise that Father Cebula would be released when Father Dudziak was recaptured. Upon hearing of Father Cebula's arrest, the Gestapo of Inowrocław reacted by declaring this action illegal and issuing the order for Father Cebula's immediate release. Indeed, after two days at Szczeglin, Father Cebula, escorted by two policemen, was brought back to the convent at Markowice.

⁶⁷ Krawczyk to Sobik, a letter bearing no date, but probably written at the beginning of August, 1940: "They even allow us to marry, as a result, the gates of earthly paradise open wide before us.... If in the period of one week we do not sign the designated declaration, they will deport us... Perhaps to where Kurda and his companions are (at Dachau)." APP, Sobik.

⁶⁸ *Kronika Domu Markowickiego*, p. 6. But it is mistaken in saying that the arrest took place August 29, 1940.

Since there is some discrepancy between the testimony of Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik and that of Father Józef Krawczyk on Father Cebula's stay at the camp of Szczeglin, an explanation is in order.

At the request of Father Dudziak, o.m.i., Henryk Rzeźnik, on January 14, 1967, told us what he knew of Father Cebula's stay at the concentration camp of Szczeglin. He stated (as translated from the Polish):

"After the departure of the priests, only two of them remained at the camp: Father Cebula and another priest in civilian dress. One day, through the cracks in the stable wall, we were able to see him walking in the park with the commandant and the S.S. and conversing with them. The Abbé Kulczyński who was with us, recognized Father Cebula. The story in the camp was that these two priests were *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans). They were freed the following day."⁶⁹

This account, recorded 26 years after the fact, is a mixture of truth and misinformation. That is why, Father Józef Krawczyk, who was in the same stable as Father Cebula, felt obliged to set things right. September 3, 1968, he wrote to Father Dudziak: "Father Cebula was arrested and deported with us August 26, 1940 to Szczeglin and he stayed with us in the stable until the arrival of the S.S. from Inowrocław who took him to Markowice in their vehicle. That was August 28."⁷⁰

First off, we have to lay to rest the rumor that Father Cebula was a *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic German). He remained a Polish citizen right up to the time of his death in the concentration camp of Mauthausen.⁷¹

⁶⁹ January 14, 1967, deposition of Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik, given in Belgium before Father Franciszek Dudziak, o.m.i. APP, Cebula.

⁷⁰ Krawczyk to Dudziak, September 3, 1968. APP, Krawczyk.

⁷¹ The *International Service for Research* of Bad-Arolsen, Germany, has microfilms of many of the original documents of Mauthausen. Subsequent to a request on my part concerning Father Cebula, they sent me the following affidavit: "Cebula, Józef... Polish by nationality, was incarcerated in the concentration camp of Mauthausen.. detention number 70... Category: preventative detention."

Then, too, the barns where the detainees were held were set around a central courtyard and not around a park. In as much as I can recall, there was no park at the farm of Szczeglin, the farm transformed into a concentration camp.

We could perhaps explain this "stroll" Father Cebula took in company with the commandant and the S.S. as one of the formalities to be fulfilled before the release of a detainee. He had to be presentable. Consequently, Father Cebula had to wash, shave his beard and his attire needed be clean. When the S.S. from Inowrocław arrived, the commandant wanted to make a gesture of amendment. He escorted Father Cebula personally to the vehicle. He was naturally obliged to walk through the courtyard and, as a result, be seen by the detainees. This simple fact along with others which are similar may well have been misinterpreted later on and thus have skewed Mr. Rzeźnik's account.

In the meantime, the provincial, Father Wilkowski, confined on January 8, 1940 in the Salesian convent at Łąd, was released, and in July of 1940, sought refuge in the region of Św. Krzyż (Holy Cross). When they had been apprised of the situation, on the 7 of May 1940, the General Administration proceeded to appoint Father Nawrat as vice-provincial and gave him as councillors Fathers Cebula and Leon Spychalski, parish priest at Poznań.

Father Nawrat in turn found that he was unable to administer province affairs from Markowice. Consequently, with the permission of the German authorities, he left Markowice to take up residence with his brother in Upper Silesia. Even there, the official censureship would not permit him to communicate freely with his subjects scattered more or less throughout Europe.

5. Father Cebula remains alone with the brothers: October-December, 1940

After Father Nawrat's departure which took place towards the end of September or the beginning of October, Father Cebula

remained there alone with 30 Oblate brothers.⁷² In September 1940, Mr. Schulz, the administrator of the public properties of Markowice, was called to active military service and replaced by Mr. Kopper, a bureaucrat from the neighboring village of Zerniki. At the beginning of October, a section of the convent was occupied by the Agency for the Settlement of German Farmers (*Bauersiedlung*). On October 31, the sub-prefect (*Landrath*) of Mogilno arrived at the convent. He ordered Father Cebula to leave the convent immediately and take all the brothers with him. Fortunately, the generous people of the neighboring villages welcomed them with the hope of better days to come. Some of the brothers were assigned to work in factories near Inowrocław. Others were assigned to work at the convent.

At the beginning of November, the Agency for the Settlement of German Farmers was transferred to Inowrocław and the entire convent was taken over by the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*) from Berlin. Their commander, S.S. Kless was known for his hatred of anything that smacked of being Polish.

The *Markowice Chronicle* informs us that Father Cebula was authorized, at an undetermined date, to return to live at the convent. He lived in a room with one of the brothers. During the day, he worked with the brother in the convent's greenhouse. At midnight, he celebrated Mass in great secrecy. The only time he was permitted to celebrate was on Sunday, one Mass at Ludzisko and another at Rzadkwin. Any administration of the sacraments not associated with these Masses was strictly forbidden.

Since Father Cebula was the only priest in the region, he felt

⁷² There are disagreements with regard to Father Nawrat's date of departure. The *Markowice Chronicle* states that Father Nawrat left Markowice in November, whereas according to Father Wilkowski's October 7, 1939 letter to Father Pietsch, Assistant General, at the novitiate "there remains only Father Cebula with a few brothers" (*ist nur noch der P. Cebula mit einigen Brüdern*), which seems to indicate that Father Nawrat must have gone to Silesia before October 7. On the other hand, an anonymous letter sent to Father Sobik, September 11, informs him that at Markowice there remain only Fathers Cebula and Nawrat. Father Nawrat probably left Markowice at the end of September or beginning of October, 1939.

he could not leave the children deprived of Baptism, the dying without the Last Rites, fiancés without the Church's blessing of their union and so many others without the comforts of their religion. As a result, disguised in lay attire, late at night or early in the morning, he administered the sacraments to those who needed them. At Christmas in 1940, he wanted to celebrate his third Christmas Mass in the convent chapel, but the chapel had been profaned by the godless Hitler youth.

6. Father Cebula continues to exercise his priestly ministry: January-April 1941

At the beginning of 1941, the German army was victorious on all fronts. This only intensified the terrorizing and the extermination of the Polish clergy. January 1, 1941, the S.S. Seel was appointed administrator of the farms of Markowice. He took up residence in the convent to keep an eye on the people who still remained there. The villagers trembled in terror and feared for their lives.

On February 10, Father Cebula was ordered to cease exercising any priestly ministry. Since this was the case, he judged his presence at Markowice was meaningless and asked permission to go to Upper Silesia to be closer to Father Nawrat.

In the meantime, under cover of the greatest secrecy, he continued to administer the sacraments to the faithful of Markowice and the surrounding villages because he was the only priest still at liberty in that area. We have a number of testimonies concerning this priestly ministry exercised often and at the peril of his life from November of 1940 to March of 1941. We give only two here: that of Mr. Czesław Lewandowski from Wymysłowice and that of Mrs. Bronisława Kasprzak from Ludzisko.

On July 30, 1992, Mr. Lewandowski who lived in Wymysłowice gave the following deposition before Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i., parish priest of Markowice:

“Father Józef Cebula lived in Markowice from 1937 on. He

was superior and master of novices. I had the opportunity of getting to know him well because he came to Wymysłowice often dressed in workman's clothes to avoid being recognized by the Germans. He wore an old cap. When he came to Wymysłowice, he used to stop at Mrs. Zofia Pamfil's house. There, he would hear confessions, distribute communion and teach catechism. He was a very pious priest....

"I also know that he often went to Rzadkwin to say Mass because the church at Markowice had been closed. Once at Rzadkwin, my sister attended the marriage ceremony of Maria and Sylwester Rosiński presided by Father Józef Cebula.

"Father Cebula used to come to our village of Wymysłowice right up until the time when the Gestapo became aware of it. The policemen came to the village at dawn while everyone was still asleep and searched all the houses looking for Father Cebula. They knocked at our door at five o'clock in the morning. We were still in bed. Only my sister was already up.

"Father Józef Cebula had found refuge at Markowice in the residence of Aniela Specjał and the Kurzydłowski family. He was sleeping in the attic."⁷³

The testimony of Mrs. Bronisława Kasprzak completes the foregoing deposition:

"Since I wanted to marry Leon Kasprzak (born in 1914), I went to Father Adamski, the parish priest of Ludzisko. The bans were published, but in the meantime, the parish priest and his sister were deported to Dachau. Consequently, we went to Markowice to see Father Cebula. He was very simple in appearance, sickly and rather bald. I have a clear recollection of that memorable day, September 8, 1940. On that day, the Germans were all attending a popular beer-fest. Father Cebula took advantage of the occasion to bring us

⁷³ On July 30, 1992, Mr. Czesław Lewandowski from Wymysłowice made this deposition before Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i., parish priest of Markowice. This testimony was subsequently published in the *Gazeta Parafialna* (Parish Gazette), 1992, no. 5.

into church and blessed our marriage before the main altar and the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Markowice. Present at the ceremony were only the witnesses: Stanisława Kasprzak and Jan Siedliński, both of whom are now deceased.

“Upon learning of this fact, some women came into the church to warn us of the danger. Quick! Quick! If the Germans come upon you here, they will kill you!

“The marriage was marvelous. Father Józef Cebula was a holy, pious priest. He was also very courageous because he brought us to church knowing full well that at any moment the Germans could have caught and killed him... He was our priest!”⁷⁴

Unfortunately for the faithful and for Father Cebula, his clandestine ministry came to an end April 2, 1941. A certain woman became aware of Father Cebula visiting the sick at Wymysłowice and betrayed him to the police.⁷⁵ Father Cebula, having some premonition of his imminent arrest, told the brother who served his last Mass on April 2, 1941: “Brother, I have celebrated my offering to God for the last time. I advise you to confess your sins to me for the last time.”⁷⁶

His presentiment became a reality. On April 2, at the noon meal, Father Cebula was arrested and deported to the concentration camp of Inowrocław.

⁷⁴ Mrs. Bronisława Kasprzak from Ludzisko gave this deposition on March 17, 1993 before Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i., parish priest of Markowice. He then published it in the *Gazeta Parafialna*, 1993, number 4.

⁷⁵ Concerning these facts, we have two testimonies, that of Fathers Kazimierz Łabiński and Feliks Adamski. We give you a translation from the Polish: “When I was parish priest of Markowice, I heard tell that Father Cebula was betrayed by a woman. She betrayed Father Cebula by declaring that, in spite of the interdiction to do so, he continued to exercise his priestly ministry by visiting the sick and by administering the sacraments.” Kazimierz Łabiński in *Mozaika Obrazajska*, kwiecień-czerwiec, 1999, p. 35

“The immediate reason for Father Cebula’s arrest was the fact that, in spite of the interdiction to exercise his ministry, he went to visit the sick at Wymysłowice to bring them the Eucharist and give them the Last Rites.” Felix Adamski, deposition of October 25, 1991. APP, Cebula.

⁷⁶ Nawrat to Paweł Cebula, December 29, 1948. APP, Cebula.

VI

FATHER CEBULA'S DEPORTATION TO THE
CONCENTRATION CAMPS

April 1941

The arrest and deportation of Father Cebula to the concentration camp of Inowrocław marked the beginning of a road to Calvary which ended at Mauthausen.

1. The gathering camp of Inowrocław: April 2-7, 1941

The camp of Inowrocław became operative at the end of 1939 and served as a staging station for other concentration camps. It was there, in fact, that persons under arrest were gathered. After some brief "training," they were transferred into other concentration camps. The "training" consisted in a process of dehumanization to make them slaves obedient to the orders of the S.S.

April 3, the day after Father Cebula's arrest, Bishop Michał Kozal (1893-1943), auxiliary bishop of Włocławek, seven priests and one deacon from that same diocese were deported to Inowrocław. Here are their names:

1. Jerzy Becker
2. Henryk Brzuski
3. Sływan Dębski
4. Henryk Kaczorowski
5. Franciszek Korszyński
6. Józef Straszewski

7. Andrzej Urbański

8. Leon Dankowski, deacon.⁷⁷

April 7, they were transported via Poznań to the concentration camp of Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen near Berlin. From there April 25 they were sent to their final destination of deportation, the concentration camp of Dachau. It is there that, on January 26, 1943, Bishop Kozal would obtain the crown of martyr for the faith. He would be beatified June 14, 1987 by Pope John-Paul II on the occasion of his visit to Warsaw.

As for Father Cebula, he was sent to the concentration camp of Mauthausen. Why was he treated differently?

January 1, 1941, concentration camps were divided into three categories. The first group was made up of the camps of Dachau, Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz (Oświęcim in Polish) and was designated for "detainees guilty of light offenses and able to be rehabilitated." The second group made up of the camps of Buchenwald, Flossenbug, Neuengamme and Auschwitz II was designated for "those guilty of serious offenses, but with possibility of rehabilitation." The concentration camp of Mauthausen with all its satellites, the closest one being Gusen, belonged to the third category. Here, all were to be purely and simply exterminated as "detainees guilty of serious offenses and with no hope of rehabilitation."

We can see why Father Teofil Nandzik, o.m.i., was fully justified when he wrote to Mrs. Julianna Adamska on May 21, 1941:

"I had thought that he, like all the other priests, had been deported to Dachau where the living conditions were a little better, but I was mistaken. He was deported to Mauthausen, a real hell on earth."⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ks. Wiktor Jacewicz, S.D.B., *Martyrologium Polskiego Duchowieństwa Rzymsko-Katolickiego, 1939-1945*, Warsaw, ATK, 1978 Cahier IV. See also: Ks. Tomasz Kaczmarek, *Sługa Boży... Michał Kozal, Włocławek*, 1987, p. 39: "Along with the bishop, there arrived seven priests and a deacon."

⁷⁸ Teofil Nandzik to Julianna Adamska, May 21, 1941. APP, Cebula.

How did it happen that Father Cebula was judged as being guilty of a serious offense with no hope of rehabilitation?

We know that he was arrested for the reason that, in spite of the order not to do so, he continued to exercise his priestly ministry in the area of Markowice because no other priests were available. Therefore, he was arrested for religious reasons. And yet, the followers of Hitler did not want to make a martyr of him. That is why they strove to accuse him of crimes against the German nation – a thing detestable, but such is the real reason.

As a confirmation of the above statement, I could cite my own example. According to the official record, I was arrested as a preventative measure because I was a student of theology (*Theologiestudent*) and therefore a menace to the German youth. But later on, they tried to paint me as being guilty of murdering Germans. I was twice summoned to appear before the commandant of the camp at Gusen and on both occasions he made the same accusation: “How many Germans have you murdered?” (*Vieviel Deutsche hast du ermordet.*) When I answered: “None,” (Keinen) he flew into a rage and struck me with his riding-crop and kicked me so hard that I crashed out through the door of his office to land in the hall. It was absurd to accuse me of murdering Germans during the September 8 skirmish at Markowice because I arrived several days after that event actually took place. But Voltaire’s maxim: “Lie, lie, some of it is bound to stick” was standard procedure for the S.S.

From October 22, 1939 on, Hitler issued this order to all his prefects or heads of districts (*Gauleiters*): “Without mercy, the entire Polish intelligensia is to be destroyed. That is a hard saying, you might say, but it is our rule.”

The clergy and religious are part of this intelligensia. They must, therefore, be set upon the road to their eternal homeland.

According to the testimony given by Mr. Wróbel as it appears in writing in the memoirs of Father Maksymiuk, the accusation lodged by the S.S. against Father Cebula consisted in “the betrayal and death of several German soldiers.” Mr. Rzeźnik adds that they stigmatized

him as a "traitor." To these accusations Father Cebula answered simply: "I know nothing of this." (Ich weiss nicht.) Father Cebula's brother gave testimony in the same vein. Upon hearing of the death of his brother, he travelled to Mauthausen to receive confirmation of the news of his death. They told him that, based on the documents found in Lubliniec, Father Cebula expressed his opposition to the German government.⁷⁹ Father Cebula felt deeply the injustice of these accusations and, according to the testimony of Mr. Wróbel, he made this avowal: "I had no idea men could be so evil."

Let us subject these accusations to a thorough scrutiny. First of all the "betrayal."

Father Cebula's family spoke Polish at home, but the young Cebula took his primary and secondary education in German. It was only in April of 1920 that he began to attend a Polish school in Lubliniec. It is true that this school was founded and directed by a priest, an ardent Polish patriot. The young student often accompanied him to serve his Mass and sometimes went for walks with him. Only on one occasion did he take part in a Polish demonstration. The occasion was May 3, the anniversary of the first Polish democratic constitution. To base such an accusation on an isolated incident like this, one perfectly justifiable for a student from a Polish family, is truly odious.

Also, as a teacher at Lubliniec (1923-1931), Father Cebula taught German and, in his position of superior (1931-1937), he maintained good relations with the German minority.

The second accusation has to do with the death of Germans during the September 8 skirmish at Markowice. No account whatever is taken of the testimony of the German soldier wounded and treated at the convent. This man formally declared that the religious in no way took part in the skirmish. They strove

⁷⁹ Paweł Cebula was informed that they had found documents hostile to the German government ("naprzeciw rządowi niemieckiemu") signed by Father Cebula. Paweł Cebula to Nawrat, February 27, 1949. APP, Cebula. We have no idea whether we are dealing here with authentic documents or forgeries.

to wring from the religious an admission of guilt. To these treacherous questions Father Cebula could only state that "I know nothing of this" (Ich weiss nicht.).

In this mixture of falsehood and hatred, lay the condemnation to death of an innocent man. Indeed, Paweł Cebula declared that his brother was condemned to death by a German tribunal.⁸⁰

2. Deportation to the Mauthausen concentration camp, April 18, 1941

The stay at the Inowrocław camp lasted only a few days. Bishop Michał Kozal and his priests were transferred to the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen near Berlin where they arrived April 7. As for Father Cebula? Father Spinek states that he arrived at Mauthausen April 7: "Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, arrived at the concentration camp of Mauthausen on April 7, 1941."⁸¹ But he is the only one who says so. The contemporary documents we possess report this date as being April 18. Why is that so?

A few days after their arrival, detainees at the Mauthausen concentration camp would receive a postcard to be addressed to their families. On the back of the card there would be a printed message to be completed. It read: "As of this date, I am at the Mauthausen concentration camp Oberdonau. My address is the following..."⁸²

⁸⁰ Paweł Cebula, *Notes biographiques sur le père Cebula*, written in 1991: "he was condemned to death" (*był na śmierć skazany*). APP, Cebula.

⁸¹ Deposition of deacon Wiktor Spinek given before Father Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i., May 6, 1945 at Dachau. APP, Cebula.

⁸² Hans Marsalek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslager Mauthausen*, Vienna-Linz, 1995, p. 49: "Befinde mich ab im Konzentrationslager Mauthausen.... Meine Adresse lautet... KL Mauthausen, Block.... Stube..."

Father Cebula did, in fact, write to his family. As a result, he must have informed them that as of April 18 he was in Mauthausen. His family passed this news on to the Oblates with the result that Father Wilkowski, the provincial, was able to pass it on to the General Administration in Rome on May 21, 1941.⁸³

In the face of these contemporary documents, Father Spinek's testimony does not hold water. At Mauthausen, he was known for passing on consoling news that were, in fact, entirely groundless.

In the ordinary course of events, Father Cebula should have left Inowrocław April 5 and, after a two-day trip by train, arrived at Mauthausen April 7. And yet, he arrived there only April 18. What did he do during these 13 days? If we take into account the serious accusations made against Father Cebula and the testimony of his brother, one must conclude that he had been condemned to death. But by what tribunal? Probably it was the tribunal of the local Gestapo. Now, for such a judgment to be carried out, it had to be confirmed by the Supreme Court for State Security in Berlin and such a response took several days, if not several weeks. In the meantime, the person who was condemned to death had to remain in prison or be transferred to a concentration camp.⁸⁴

⁸³ Wilkowski to Pietsch, Assistant General, o.m.i., May 21, 1941: "Am 2.4. wurde er [Cebula] vom Noviziat abgeholt... am 18. war er in den Steinbrüchen von Mauthausen und am 9.5 ist er da gestorben" (Cebula) was arrested at the novitiate April 2... On the 18, he was at the stone quarry at Mauthausen. He died there May 9.) AGR, Wilkowski.

T. Nandzik to Julianna Adamska, May 21, 1941: "He arrived at Mauthausen only April 18" (*i to 18. 4. dopiero się tam dostał*). APP, Cebula.

⁸⁴ Stefan Krukowski, *Mauthausen, 1940-1945*, o.c. p. 277-278. In short, he says this: Some people came to camp under a condemnation to death issued by the local Gestapo. But that body was obliged to send its acts to the Central Office of State Security (Reichssicherheitshauptamt). It was only after the confirmation of the verdict of the local body that the condemned person was to be executed.

The *Chronique de Markowice* states that Father Cebula passed through Breslaw and Vienna. It is therefore probable that the occasion was taken to transfer him from Inowrocław to prison in Breslaw, then to prison in Vienna, and finally to the concentration camp of Mauthausen. Thus we can see why, after an odyssey of 13 days, he arrived in a state of physical exhaustion and moral fragility.

3. Mauthausen concentration camp in the spring of 1941

The concentration camp of Mauthausen, located 130 km west of Vienna, opened its doors in August 1938, after the annexation of Austria to the Great Reich. Classified as an extermination camp, the detainees were sent there to be reduced to smoke billowing from the crematoria. Towards the end of the war, it boasted forty-eight satellite camps, the most crowded of which was that of Gusen. About 200,000 prisoners passed through this network of camps. Half of them would die there. Living conditions were very hard there: vermin, workloads beyond human strength, hunger and mistreatment allowed only the strongest and the luckiest to survive. The stamina of ordinary detainees usually lasted only a few weeks, for some only a few days.

The camp at Mauthausen was built in the form of a rectangle made up of twenty barracks, called blocks, each of which measured 52 meters long and 18 meters wide. The block was divided into two barrack rooms, A and B (*Stuben*). These were divided into two areas. The first, measuring 13 meters by 8 meters, served as a dormitory. Rough three-tiered beds were lined up in rows. In the second area, there was the common room and the small rooms for the dignitaries. Between the two barrack-rooms there was a space dedicated to sinks and toilets. Initially, Mauthausen was planned for only 5,000 prisoners. However, this number quickly doubled. For each block as for the entire camp for that matter, there was a double administration, that of the S.S. and that of the detainees. The head of each block was an S.S. called a *Blockführer*. But the ordinary administration of things was left to

a detainee, usually chosen from among the “greens,” that is, the common criminals, under the title of deans of the block (*Blockältester*). At the head of the barrack-rooms were the deans of barrack-rooms (*Stubenältester*). Along with the secretary (*Schreiber*), they made up the elite of the block and held power of life and death over the others. The deans of the blocks were responsible to the dean of the camp (*Lagerältester*), who was responsible to the S.S. for everything that went on in the camp.

In Father Cebula's time, the commandant of Mauthausen was the S.S. colonel (*Standartenführer*) Franz Ziereis. Born February 17, 1905, he was appointed commandant February 17, 1939 and held this post to the end. He was seriously wounded escaping from the camp and died May 25, 1945. His righthand man was captain (*Hauptsturmführer*) Georg Bachmayer. Born August 17, 1913, he was appointed camp administrator in March of 1940 and would reveal himself to be a most detestable sadist. Following the liberation, he was pursued by the police. He committed suicide May 28, 1945, after murdering his wife and children.⁸⁵

When Father Cebula arrived at Mauthausen, the camp was in full transformation to becoming a ghastly fortress. That is why all detainees who worked at the quarry, upon returning to the camp had to carry a large stone block. On their way, they had to climb a stairs with 144 crude steps. It was only in 1942 that they were replaced by 166 other steps of better construction. Those who had the misfortune of being assigned to this disciplinary or punitive detail (*Strafkompanie*) were bound to perform this task all day long. Most people could stand this for only a few hours a day. Either they were killed by the capos or they committed suicide by leaping from the top of the stairs into the stone quarry below.

⁸⁵ Concerning the personnel of camp Mauthausen, see Hans Marsalek, o.c., p. 185, footnote 15: Franz Ziereis; footnote 20: Georg Bachmayer.

VII

FATHER CEBULA'S CALVARY AT MAUTHAUSEN

April 18-May 9, 1941

Concerning Father Cebula's stay in Mauthausen, we have the testimony of four witnesses: Wiktor Spinek, Bronisław Kamiński, Władysław Wróbel and Henryk Rzeźnik. If their testimonies agree with regard to essentials, they vary and sometimes even contradict each other in details.

Wiktor Spinek, a Salesian, was only a deacon at the time. Born November 23, 1900, he was arrested in Łódź, November 24, 1939 and was deported to Mauthausen concentration camp February 12, 1941, that is, two months before the arrival of Father Cebula. May 30, 1942, he was transferred to the concentration camp of Dachau. That is where he met some Oblates and told them what he knew of the life and death of Father Cebula at Mauthausen. As a result, August 27, 1943, Father Adamski could write to his mother: "At Mauthausen, they ordered Father Cebula to run away, then they shot him down as if he were a rabbit."⁸⁶

Following his liberation from Dachau, April 29, 1945, Father Józef Krawczyk asked the deacon to make a deposition in due and proper form. This deposition, written May 8, 1945, by Father

⁸⁶ Feliks Adamski to his mother August 27, 1943, APP, Feliks Adamski. This letter was written in Polish and sent secretly. In it, Father Adamski describes the living conditions and gives news of the deceased Oblates: Kasalka, Kocot, Cal and Cebula. "*O. Cebuli kazano w Mauthausen uciekać i zastrzelono go jak zająca*" (At Mauthausen, they ordered Father Cebula to run away and they shot him down as if he were a rabbit.)"

Krawczyk and signed by Wiktor Spinek, was then published in the Polish journal of the YMCA *Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele* (Young Friends Together), Paris, 1-15 July, 1945. Wiktor Spinek was ordained to the priesthood July 8, 1945, at Dachau at the hands of Bishop Józef Gawlina, Chaplain General for the Polish army. He then returned to Poland. He died December 5, 1978.

Mr. Bronisław Kamiński published his testimony in the same journal *Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele*, Paris, July 1-15, 1945, p. 9. We know nothing more about this testimony.

Originally from Częstochowa, Mr. Władysław Wróbel, spent time at Mauthausen at the same time as Father Cebula. Shortly after the latter's death, he was transferred to the camp of Gusen. His account of these events was likewise published in the same issue of the same journal. At the concentration camp of Gusen, he met Józef Maksymiuk, o.m.i., who was ordained to the priesthood in 1950 and he related to him everything he knew about Father Cebula's time at Mauthausen. Father Maksymiuk made a written record of his narrative in his memoirs *Przeżyłem Obóz zagłady Mauthausen Gusen* (I Survived the Extermination Camp Mauthausen-Gusen), completed in 1984. There are, however, some discrepancies in details between the 1945 narration and Father Maksymiuk's account.

Finally, the last witness, Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik, originally from Łódź, a baker by profession, was an eye witness of Father Cebula's last moments. At the request of Father Franciszek Dudziak, o.m.i., January 14, 1967, he recorded in writing everything he could recall about Father Cebula.

Father Joseph Thiel, o.m.i., editor of AROMI (Roman Information Bureau of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate) was the first to attempt making the synthesis of the witness borne by Fathers Spinek and Mr. Kamiński. He published it in the November 1, 1945 issue. At the end, he added this *post scriptum*: "In our necrology, Father Cebula's death is recorded to have taken place May 9. That is the date the camp administration gave to his parents in a letter which read: "If you send us four marks,

we will send you the urn with his ashes.”⁸⁷

As much as possible, we will try to make a synthesis of these five different testimonies. To supplement or clarify them, we will use memoirs written by several Mauthausen detainees and especially the documented history of Mauthausen written by Mr. Hans Marsalek.

1. Administrative procedures for admission to Mauthausen concentration camp

In the still extant admissions register, under April 1941, we note the arrival of 1057 detainees, all of them Spaniards; no Pole is mentioned.⁸⁸ There is no mention of Father Cebula. How can one explain this oversight?

At the camp of Mauthausen, there were two registers. In the first register, the arrivals were recorded day by day. In the second register, at a later date, the official list of arrivals was drawn up. Since Father Cebula was killed hardly 21 days after his arrival, it was not judged necessary to include him on the official list which escaped being destroyed.

Once Father Cebula stepped through the camp gates, he began to walk his way of the cross. First of all, he had to be processed at the registration office where he was to state his name, any particular marks of identification and his profession. In exchange, he received his registration number. His number was 70, the number of a detainee who had died or had been lib-

⁸⁷ A.R.O.M.I., November 1, 1945.

⁸⁸ Hans Marsalek, Mauthausen, o.c., p. 112 in April, 1941, 1057 arrivals.

3. 4. 358 Republikanische Spanier.

7. 4. 200 Republikanische Spanier.

18.4. 1 Republikan. Spanier, von Treves.

18. 4.1 Republikan. Spanier, von Stettin.

26.4. 469 Republikan. Spanier.

29.4. 28 Republikan. Spanier.

erated. It was only from February 20, 1942 on that the numbers were assigned strictly according to the order of arrival at camp. On this occasion, the S.S. interrogated him on the reason for his deportation. When he responded, "I know nothing of this," they derided him and struck him on whatever part of his body was available to them.

Next, he was photographed: a headshot, front, left and right. Then, came the most humiliating part. He had to strip down completely, removing every vestige of his clothes. His clothes were put in a bag to be sent to the camp store (*Effektenkammer*). Stark naked, Father Cebula went on to a barber. The barber's task was to shave every hair on his body, even the hair of his most intimate parts. Since the barber's clippers were very worn out, sometimes instead of cutting the hair, it pulled them out by the roots. This was a source of intense pain for the poor unfortunate soul being shorn. To each cry of pain or every groan the guards responded with jeers and blows from their billy clubs.

From there, he went on to a brutal disinfection process and to shower in a room equipped with shower nozzles. They were sent from the hot shower — sometimes too hot — to the cold shower. Every protest on their part was greeted by curses from the goons who acted as guards. Father Cebula was finally able to don the camp uniform, a kind of white and blue striped pyjama, a striped cloth cap also of the same colors, a shirt, shorts, socks and clogs. He was also given two red inverted triangles with the letter P (Polish) and his registration number 70. These were to be sown on his shirt at the level of his heart and on the right pant leg. Red triangles were given to prisoners in preventive detention (*Shutzhafthäftlinge*). The greens were common criminals; the pinks were homosexuals; the Jews were given the star of David, etc. Father Cebula, then, was classified as a political prisoner in preventive detention. From now on, any time an S.S. challenged him he was obliged to stand at attention and give his identity in the following fashion: "Detainee no. 70 stands ready for your orders" (*Shutzhafthäftling no. 70 meldet sich gehorsam zur Stelle*).

According to the testimonies of capo Wost from Vienna and of capo Janca of Ratibor, quoted by Father Spinek, the S.S. and their cohorts focused their rage particularly on Father Cebula. The "reception" committee was made up of a squad of four S.S. commanded by captain (*Hauptsturmführer*) Karl Schulz who held this post from September 1, 1939 to the end. When the war was over, he was convicted for his cruelty and the numerous murders for which he was responsible in his 15 years working in the strict prison.⁸⁹

Here is the testimony given by the two capos:

"While the camp uniforms were being put on, in the shower room and in the reception room, the S.S. kicked him black and blue. In addition to this, they ordered the dozen detainees who worked in the reception room to beat Father Cebula. They struck him especially in the face."

According to the testimonies given by Spinek and Rzeźnik, Father Cebula arrived at barrack no. 7 dejected and hardly able to stand. In his eyes could be seen suffering mixed with anxiety. Father Spinek adds that he was assigned to block no. 7/1, that is, to barrack-room no. 1. That is incorrect; at Mauthausen, the block was divided into barrack-rooms A and B.

March 9, 1940, there took place the transportation of the first group of 448 Poles from Buchenwald to Mauthausen. After that, new contingents arrived on a regular basis to replace the dead and those who had left. Poles made up the largest national group, about 30% of the total. A number of them held important positions in the administration of the camp. Some of them were even secretaries, heads of barrack-rooms and capos.

Barrack no. 7 was known as the "Polish" barracks because the great majority of its members were Poles. It was only in barrack-room B that one found Germans, coming especially from Upper Silesia. These latter held important posts in the quarry

⁸⁹ Hans Marsalek, Mauthausen, o.c., p. 186, footnote 27.

since they spoke some Polish and maintained good relationships with the ethnic Poles. The head man, a man named Unek, an Austrian, even though he was a "green," was also well disposed toward the Poles. One of the deans of the barrack-rooms, a man named Jurek Kupiecki, was a Pole. In this barrack, there lived as well Roman Chodziński, who worked in the reception room (*Aufnahmekommando*) where the list of new arrivals was drawn up (*Zugang*). Stefan Krukowski, in his memoirs, "Mauthausen," and Hans Marsalek, in his *Documented History of Mauthausen Concentration Camp*,⁹⁰ have given precise and vivid descriptions of life in this extermination camp. We have relied heavily on these works to write this biography.

As for the clergy, in virtue of an agreement between the Vatican and the Third Reich, all priests who were in the different camps were to be transferred to Dachau.⁹⁰ As a result, December 7, 1940, all Polish priests or other priests in Mauthausen were transported from Mauthausen to the concentration camp at Dachau. Only the priest, Dr. Gruber, an Austrian, remained. At the time, Wiktor Spinek was only a deacon; he would be ordained to the priesthood only in 1945.

So it was no surprise that the arrival of a Polish priest at the "Polish" barracks caused a stir. Considered a martyr of the Nazis, his compatriots saw to all his needs. As one condemned to death, he was denied the right to avail himself of care at the camp infirmary (*Revier*). Father Cebula felt so ill that he could not even eat his daily ration. Food at Mauthausen was bad and insufficient in quantity for a normal person. In the morning, individuals received a small pot of a black liquid dubbed "coffee" or some soup. At noon, the ration was three quarters of a litre of vegetable soup, where sometimes one could discover a few fragments of

⁹⁰ Jean Kammerer, *La baraque des prêtres à Dachau*, Paris, Brépols, 1995, p. 149-166. Archival dossier on the negotiations between the Holy See and the Third Reich concerning priests in concentration camps. Initially, the Holy See asked that Polish priests be transferred to a neutral country, but finally, it was agreed to gather them all into the concentration camp of Dachau.

potatoes, and even some meat. Sometimes all kinds of vermin was floating in it. In the evening, each one received about 400 grams of black rye bread, 30 grams of margarine, of sausage or of marmalade. The daily ration could have supplied about 1500 calories whereas a detainee needed at least 3,000.

Upon my arrival at the concentration camp of Dachau, May 9, 1940, I was given a mess-tin of soup, and even though I was starving, I only ate half of it, it was so repulsive. So one can easily understand that Father Cebula, who already suffered from stomach problems, could not eat his prison ration, at least on his first day at the concentration camp. Mr. Wróbel gives this testimony: "I slept beside him. At evening time, they used to beat and mistreat him to such an extent that he could eat nothing. As a result, he passed his evening ration on to me."⁹¹

But as the days wore on, the stomach asserted its needs and a starving Father Cebula had to gradually eat what he received.

2. Tortures endured at barrack no. 7

Mr. Kamiński testifies that Father Cebula arrived at the barrack in such terrible shape and so exhausted that he could not even put himself to bed. But hardly had he stretched out on his bed when two S.S. stormed into his barrack-room, screaming and raining blows left and right. Mr. Rzeźnik states that one of them was Georg Bachmayer, the camp commander's right hand man. They especially concentrated their attention on poor Father Cebula forcing him to get out of bed and brought him to the washroom where they beat him unconscious. To revive him, they poured a bucket of water over his face and the ghastly spectacle began all over again. According to Mr. Wróbel, they ordered him to sing the Mass while they ridiculed him. Finally, they gave him a rope to hang himself. When they left, we brought him back into the barrack-room and attempted with the means at our disposal to care for his wounds.

⁹¹ Deposition of Mr. Władysław Wróbel, Maksymiuk version.

Why did the S.S. not dare finish off Father Cebula themselves? The reason is that political detainees condemned to death by a law court could not be executed before this sentence was ratified by the Supreme Court of State Security in Berlin (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*).

How many times was Father Cebula subjected to this kind of torture in barrack no. 7? Mr. Rzeźnik says "several times a day"; Fathers Spinek and Wróbel say "several times during his stay" in the barracks. Mr. Kamiński does not mention it. Where does the truth lie?

In the course of the five years I spent at camp Mauthausen-Gusen, from August 2, 1940 to May 5, 1945, on a number of occasions, I witnessed the S.S.'s forays into the barracks. But on the average, a barracks became the victim of these sadistic "exploits" of the S.S. only a few times a year. Consequently, it is my belief that the witnesses, who made their depositions a number of years after the fact have unconsciously exaggerated the events they remembered that could have happened once or twice a month. Moreover, since Father Cebula was already sickly and had already been beaten bloody, he would not have been able to withstand such brutality repeated several times.

3. How can one determine the length of his stay at Mauthausen?

How much time did he spend at Mauthausen? Father Spinek states that it was from the 7th to the 28th of April, that is, 21 days. Mr. Wróbel, in the Maksymiuk version, says that his martyrdom lasted about two weeks. Mr. Kamiński speaks of "a few days" and Mr. Rzeźnik says nothing about how long it lasted. In short, from 9 to 21 days.

From contemporary documents, we learn that Father Cebula arrived April 18 and died May 9. On May 21, 1941, Father Teofil Nandzik, o.m.i., wrote to Mrs. Julianna Adamska and Father Wilkowski, the provincial, wrote to the General Administration

in Rome that Father Cebula died May 9, 1941. This is the date Paweł Cebula gives in his February 27, 1949 letter to Father Nawrat:

“After having received a letter from Józef at Mauthausen, I answered him without delay. This letter was returned with the note: Józef died May 9, 1941.”⁹²

Finally, the same fact was confirmed by the International Service of Research of Bad Arolsen in Germany. This service has on microfilm many of the original documents of Mauthausen. When I requested information on Father Cebula, August 18, 1988, I received the following response: “Cebula, Józef [...] was incarcerated at the concentration camp of Mauthausen (date unknown), detention number 70, where he died May 9, 1941, at noon; cause of death: shot while trying to escape. Classification: Preventive detention (*Schutzhaft*).”

Consequently, it is adequately proven that Father Cebula died May 9, 1941, after three weeks or 21 days of residence in the Mauthausen concentration camp.

Some people pose the objection that, sometimes, the official dates communicated to the families do not correspond to the real dates. That could have happened toward the end (1944-1945), when discipline began to be more lax. The same cannot be said for the time of Father Cebula (1940-1942), when the well known German discipline was in full force and deaths were recorded day by day.⁹³

⁹² APP, Cebula.

⁹³ Hans Marsalek, *Mauthausen*, o.c., tells us that in Gusen, in May of 1941, 240 detainees died, at Mauthausen there were only 11 deaths. Among these eleven, there were six violent deaths. Here is the list:

May 9: 1 Pole “auf der Flucht erschossen” (One Pole, shot while trying to escape) [Father Cebula]

May 10: 1 DR-Sch. “auf der Flucht erschossen” (One German, shot while trying to escape).

May 14: 1 holl. Jude Freitod durch Elektrozaun (One Dutch Jew committed suicide on the high tension barbed wire).

May 26: 3 holl. Juden “auf der Flucht erschossen” (Three Dutch Jews shot while trying to escape).

4. The work done by Father Cebula in the quarry of Wiener Graben

What did Father Cebula do during those twenty-one days? Father Spinek says he worked in the quarry. Mr. Kamiński states that he was assigned to the disciplinary squad (*Strafkompagnie*). As for Mr. Wróbel in his 1945 testimony he states that Father Cebula was assigned to the disciplinary squad after only one week's stay in barracks no. 7. But in Father Maksymiuk's version, no mention is made of this squad. He only affirms that he was assigned to the most arduous labor and that, the day of his death, he was carrying on his shoulders stone blocks that were so heavy that he could only carry them with the help of two other detainees. Mr. Rzeźnik speaks only of the circumstances of Father Cebula's death in the quarry.

The quarry of Mauthausen, called "Wiener Graben" because it was formerly owned by the city of Vienna, employed about 1,550 detainees.

They used to work in different sectors, directed and supervised by bosses called capos. The head capo (*Oberkapo*) in Father Cebula's time was a man named Zaremba, a "green" from Lower Silesia. He was not a bad man, but when the S.S. appeared on the scene, to save his own skin, he would scream and even urged the prisoners on to work harder with a few blows of his billy club. His two lieutenants were the capos Stein and Bertl. The latter was fairly "good," but Stein, an ethnic gypsy, sowed terror in his wake. The capo Emil Kozioł, originally from Silesia and classified as a German political detainee, was responsible for the stone cutting section. He was good hearted and would often welcome into this small hut unfortunate detainees such as priests and professors, especially those of Polish extraction. Some of them used to work in his barracks; others hauled stone blocks required for that barracks on a kind of stretcher (*Tragen*). If people of influence in block 7 had been able to get Father Cebula assigned to the Kozioł section, he would have been able to work there in peace, resting from time to time in his barracks and

slowly be recuperating his strength. Since soup was brought to the quarry at noon, he was forced to carry stone blocks on his shoulders only when he returned to camp at night. One or the other individual Pole could have come to his aid as well with a piece of bread or an extra mess-tin of soup. It was a common practice among the most important (*Prominenten*) detainees of the camp to help those most in need of assistance.

5. Father Cebula condemned to the punishment detail

Father Spinek tells us nothing about the punishment detail. Mr. Wróbel makes mention of it, stating that “after one week, he was assigned to the punishment detail.” Father Maksymiuk’s version makes only an oblique reference to it: “He was compelled to carry stone blocks so heavy that he could not even lift them.” Mr. Kamiński affirms that Father Cebula “was working in the punishment detail.” Mr. Rzeźnik says nothing about the punishment detail and only speaks of the circumstances of Father Cebula’s death.

The disciplinary or punishment detail was the ante-room to death and included the detainees who had committed in the camp certain aggravated crimes such as trading in gold or currency, pedophilia, felonies, etc. But others ended up there as well such as Jews and people they wanted to get rid of definitively.

In Father Cebula’s time, the members of the punishment detail were required to carry on their shoulders heavy stone blocks weighing from 40 to 60 kilograms. On the way to camp, these unfortunate individuals had to climb 144 rude steps of the stairs of death (*Todesstiege*), then run for a few hundred meters and set the blocks down within the camp under full construction. They were always flanked by a capo and often by an S.S. who used to revile and mistreat them all the way. A number of them were not able to withstand these terrible sufferings and, when the occasion presented itself, they would cast themselves from the top of the stairs to the quarry floor below, a drop of some fifty

meters, or yet again would move toward the sentinels who would immediately open fire. The report would then read: "Shot while attempting to escape" (*Auf der Flucht erschossen*). Krukowski, in his book *Mauthausen*, tells how in one day, from a group of 65 unfortunate souls, only seven returned to camp. For lack of numbers, the squad was disbanded.⁹⁴

All things considered, we can conclude that, if Father Cebula was assigned to the punishment detail, it must have been only on the last day of his life. Since he was physically weak, he could have withstood this kind of murderous work for a few hours only. It is in this sense that we must interpret Mr. Wróbel's testimony as narrated for us by Father Maksymiuk: "The final day of his life, he was obliged to carry stone blocks he could not even lift." We can suppose that it was captain (*Schutzhaftlagerführer*) Georg Bachmayer, commander Ziereis' righthand man, who, upon discovering that Father Cebula was still alive, decided to put an end to him by giving the order to assign him to the punishment detail, a company doomed to death.

6. Father Cebula's martyrdom

The five versions given by the four authors agree only on the fact that Father Cebula was shot down by the guards near the barbed wire. As for the details and the circumstances, the testimonies are sometimes very different, even contradictory. Let's examine them one at a time.

Father Spinek states that Father Cebula was a victim of Spatz, that is, the sergeant (*Oberscharführer*) Johann Spatzenegger, boss of the works at the Wiener Graben quarry. After the war, he was condemned for the atrocities he committed

⁹⁴ Krukowski, *Mauthausen*, o.c., p. 135-136.

at camp Mauthausen and executed May 27, 1947.⁹⁵ Spatz is supposed to have forced Father Cebula to run toward the sentinels' fence (*Postenkette*), and when he arrived there, they ordered him to "go back" (*zurück*). After a few runs, instead of giving him the order to go back, they ordered him to continue his course. At that very moment, the guards opened fire and eight bullets ripped into his body.

But at the time Wiktor Spinek was working in the garden from where it was impossible for him to see what was going on below in the quarry. Also, considering the fact that he was known in the camp as one who spread about bogus news, we can be doubtful of his testimony.

The only one who claims to have been an eye witness of Father Cebula's death was Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik, originally from Łódź, a baker by profession and involved with the Polish activities at camp Mauthausen. Consequently, we give his testimony in full:

"One day about 9 o'clock in the morning, while working with other detainees in the *Steinbruch Wiener Graben*, I was able to see a group of capos forcing Father Cebula to run in the direction of the barbed wire which enclosed the quarry. A few steps away from the wire, Father Cebula fell. At the same moment, the sentinels in the two guard towers opened fire with their submachine guns. After a few salvos, those responsible for carrying out the dead placed Father Cebula's body on their stretcher and, taking the quarry road, they carried him to the camp. When they passed near me, I heard Father Cebula beg them: "Gently! I am in terrible agony!"

Mr. Rzeźnik specifies that this event took place about 9 o'clock in the morning, that is, more or less the time for the second trip for those who carried the stone blocks.

⁹⁵ Hans Marsalek, *Mauthausen*, o.c., p. 329: "Spatzenegger und Trumm wurden von einem amerikanischen Militärgericht im Jahre 1946 in Dachau zum Tode verurteilt und am 27.5.1947 hingerichtet."

To cast some light on this event, I offer here my own testimony. August 13, 1940, all the detainees transferred from Dachau to Gusen on August 2 were forced to make the run, there and back, from the quarry of Kastenhofen situated above to Gusen camp below. Above, each one was compelled to take a stone block of at least 20 kilograms, place it on his shoulder and then, on the run, set it down in a designated place in the camp. All along the way, capos and S.S. reviled us and mistreated us pitilessly. During my second trip, I received such a violent blow from a billy club that I felt an agonizing pain in my back. I said to myself: That is enough! After having set down my stone block, I took advantage of a momentary distraction on the part of a supervisor to withdraw discreetly and hid under a hut that was under construction. Thank God, no one noticed me and I preserved my life. That night, the bodies of 16 detainees lay on the parade ground and some 400 others more or less of the gravely wounded were waiting for someone to help them.⁹⁶

Father Cebula was a calm and well balanced man. But, after the second trip, he was so physically ravaged that he could not continue. So summoning up the last of his strength, he took his stand before his torturers like the ancient prophets did before the kings of Israel. He rebuked these goons for their cruelty and threatened them with the judgment of God and of men. These are the events that Mr. Kamiński and Mr. Wróbel relate, even though the version of each is a little different.

Mr. Wróbel is very brief:

“He berated them in these words: “You are murdering us and killing us; but the time is not far off when you will have to answer for your crimes.”

⁹⁶ After the liberation, some survivors who have participated in this murderous run would write articles on this subject. For example, Father Bernard Woltman in *Biuletyn dla Księży byłych więźniów* (Newsletter for priests, former prisoners, 1986, p. 53)

On the other hand, Mr. Kamiński puts into Father Cebula's mouth a speech which adds drama to the event:

"One day, it was as if he was infused with new strength. He took his stand before the S.S. who was screaming at him and striking him. His face shone with such dignity that the S.S. remained unnerved and speechless. Father Cebula then told him: "You clown! If you only knew how laughable you are in your raging and your screaming. What can you really do? Kill, nothing more! Any idiot can do that! But up there, there is someone who judges human actions. There is someone there who has a thorough knowledge of justice. All of you, you are nothing but murderers pure and simple, people without any strength of character and without judgment. Your rage and your wickedness are the weapons of the weak who know no logic nor fundamental laws of ethics. You are murdering us, but what will you say when, in turn, you will be murdered?"

Some expressions in this speech do not seem to be in harmony with Father Cebula's natural disposition which was always calm and gentle, even when rebuking someone. And in addition, how could Mr. Kamiński remember the words of a speech this long and delivered in 1941. From heaven, Father Cebula seems to ratify this opinion.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ In a final scrutiny of the text of this speech, I noticed two black bands; they were wavy and had split ends. They were more or less in the shape of an S and encroached somewhat on the text. The bands were from 2 millimeters to 1 centimeter wide and about 4 centimeters long. At first, I thought the fault lay in my photocopier which sometimes smudges the paper. But the photocopier makes rectilinear marks whereas these were wavy. Since it was impossible to erase them without damaging the text, I recopied the text and placed it on the original sticking it in place on one side with some scotch tape. When the new photocopy was made, I noticed to my astonishment that there were no smudges on the former text. How could one explain all that? Is it because, by means of those black bands, Father Cebula wanted me to know that the text was not authentic? This event took place Friday, November 27, 1998, from 18:09 to 18:15 hours at Liège, rue des Anglais 33 in my room where I have a Canon photocopier.

The executioners did not expect such a reaction from a despised "priestling" (*Pfaffe*). For a moment, they stood open-mouthed. But recovering quickly, they swore vengeance. With kicks and blows from their billy clubs, they forced Father Cebula to run toward the barbed wire. Since Father Spinek makes mention of Spatz, he is probably referring to chief sergeant (*Hauptscharführer*) Spatzenegger, director of work at the Wiener Graben quarry, infamous for his cruelty; he was among those who were raining blows on Father Cebula. It is possible that the terrible capo, Stein and an unknown capo, assisted in this task. Consequently, we can better understand the testimony of Mr. Rzeźnik: "A group of capos forced Father Cebula to run towards the barb wire fence."

Did he do this burdened with a quarry stone? In Father Maksymiuk's version, Mr. Wróbel states that only on the last day of his life, that is, May 9, 1941, he was compelled to carry "stones so heavy that he could not even lift them." He continues: "Two detainees were then constrained to place a large stone block on his shoulders, support him and lead him just like the executioners formerly led Jesus to Calvary."

This would seem to confirm the fact that on May 9, 1941, Father Cebula was assigned to the punishment detail specifically designated to carry stone blocks to the camp.

But, after Father Cebula's speech, he has nothing more to say about it. He only says: "Then, one of the S.S. ordered him to move toward the sentinels."

In spite of this silence, one can reasonably suppose that if, that day, Father Cebula was carrying quarry stones to the camp, it is logical that the goons who guarded him set a stone block on his shoulders and forced him to rejoin the members of the punishment detail.

After a few dozen meters, Father Cebula, completely exhausted, fell near the stairs of death, at the boundary of the restricted zone. In these particular circumstances, the sentinels

already knew what to do. They opened fire and eight bullets tore into his body. The official version was that he was shot while trying to escape.

Upon receiving news of Father Cebula's death, Father Teofil Nandzik wrote to Mrs. Julianna Adamska on May 21, 1941: "Father Cebula's brother went to Mauthausen and there they told him: "He was shot while attempting to escape (*Er is auf der Flucht erschossen worden*). For anyone who knew the saintly Father Cebula this is evidently a hideous lie. He is our genuine martyr and will be considered as such for all time."

Father Cebula is a genuine martyr for the reason that, because of hatred of the Catholic faith, he was murdered for being a priest.

7. Father Cebula's miracle at the crematorium

According to Mr. Rzeźnik's testimony, Father Cebula did not die instantly; he was only mortally wounded: "When they passed near me, I heard Father Cebula beg them: "Gently! I am in terrible agony." I recognized two of his four stretcher bearers (*Leichenträger*); they were Poles from Silesia."

Through Mr. Kurkowski's work, *Mauthausen*, we know that the two individuals involved were Marian Lewicki and Ignacy Bukowski, the only workers in the crematorium who escaped death. All the others were executed one after the other.⁹⁸

On their way, the stretcher bearers passed near the garden where Wiktor Spinek worked. One of them told him: "Father Cebula is still alive."

⁹⁸ One is inclined to believe that this is a miracle attributable to Father Cebula. It would have been his way of showing his gratitude to the stretcher bearers for their kindness towards him.

According to Mr. Kamiński, Father Cebula died instantly. But even after his death "a certain nobility shone from his person. Even in death, his face commanded veneration. The workers in the crematorium were simply too afraid to lay hands on the corpse and cast it into the oven. They felt that he was still speaking, that he was making a gesture as if he wished to bestow his blessing on people. In the end, he was cremated like everyone else."

Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik also speaks of this "miracle," but as occurring during the cremation of the body:

"The following day, after work, when we were all gathered in the block, there arrived my friend from the camp store where he used to collect all the clothes of those who were cremated. He told me that today at the crematorium they had a terrible day. When Father Cebula was being cremated, a miracle occurred. Hardly had he been cast into the oven, he raised himself up and made the sign of the cross. We all fled the crematorium.

"When the S.S. informed the camp commander, Mr. Bachmayer came personally to the crematorium with a group of heavily armed S.S. and saw that Father Cebula's body had been cremated. Under pain of death, he forbade us to repeat what we had witnessed."

In the Maksymiuk version, Mr. Wróbel makes only an oblique reference to this miracle. He says:

"After his death, we talked a lot about him in the camp."

It was upon my arrival in Rome in July of 1945 that I learned of this "miracle." The majority of my confreres freed from Gusen concentration camp thought that it was a case of a normal phenomenon of cramps of a hand being burned and that the workers had taken this to be a sign of the cross.

In the same vein, Father Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i., expressed his doubts about the authenticity of this miracle. In a letter to Father Dudziak, he stated:

"The crematorium happening seems a bit strange. But there could be a grain of truth in it because I had already heard speak of it. However, I do have my doubts, because they tell more or less the same story about Father Jan Kulawy."⁹⁹

Even if we can entertain some doubts about the genuineness of this "miracle," we cannot simply sweep it under the rug. In this case, it would be the second miracle attributed to Father Cebula, one subsequent to having saved his stretcher bearers from certain death.

Father Cebula's body was burned, but where are his ashes. The ashes of the crematorium were stowed in a place designated for fertilizer for the cultivated land of the area. When a request for the ashes of a dead person were received from members of that person's family, they simply filled the urn with fresh ashes. Unbelievable, but true.¹⁰⁰

Father Cebula's family was notified that if they sent 4 marks, they could recover Father Cebula's ashes. Immediately following Father Cebula's death, his brother travelled to Mauthausen, but we do not know if he brought the urn containing the ashes to Malnia. In any case, in all probability, they would not be relics of Father Cebula.

⁹⁹ Krawczyk to Dudziak, September 3, 1968. APP, Krawczyk.

Sister Maria Joannita, in her January 29, 1948 letter to Father Stefan Smiglielski, provincial, wrote that three attempts were made to burn the body of Father Jan Kulawy, but it was all in vain. Father Polak, who worked in the crematorium at the time, while he was burying the priest's body told him: "If you really are a saint, help me escape from this camp." In point of fact, nine days later Father Polak was set free. APP, Jan Kulawy. Father Jan Kulawy was deported to the concentration camp of Auschwitz (Oświęcim) at the end of July 1941 and ended his days there September 10, 1941, that is, four months after Father Cebula's death.

¹⁰⁰ See Stefan Krukowski, *Mauthausen*, o.c., p. 122.

VIII

TOWARDS BEATIFICATION 1989-1999

All of those who had the opportunity of meeting Father Cebula and especially to live with him considered him a holy priest and a model religious. Consequently, for them, his martyrdom was not summed up in one single heroic act, it was rather the culmination and crowning feature of his whole life.

1. The process of beatification

It comes as no surprise that, right after the war, they began to gather testimonies with regard to the circumstances of his death and to gather documents related to his entire life. The tense relations between the Communist regime and the Church in Poland hardly fostered the initiation of a process for canonization.

The June 14, 1987, beatification of Bishop Michał Kozal, auxiliary archbishop of the diocese of Włocławek by Pope John Paul II at Warsaw would open the way. Since the bishop was one of the Polish martyrs killed for the faith between 1939 and 1945, the idea of going on to include in opening the process of canonization these Poles as companions (*socii*) of their leader and bishop was proposed. The situation at the time did not allow for the inclusion of the martyrs of the soviet zone.

By a May 11, 1989 rescript, the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints approved this project. Consequently, the Episcopal Conference of Poland decided on December 1, 1989 to initiate the opening of the process for the companions (*socii*) of Blessed Kozal. Dioceses and religious congregations were asked to pre-

sent their candidates. The Polish province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate presented only one candidate, Father Józef Cebula. On February 28, 1991, the Episcopal Conference gave the bishop of Włocławek the mandate to set up the diocesan process for all of these candidates. This decision would receive approbation from Rome on January 16, 1992. Father Tomasz Kaczmarek was appointed postulator to coordinate these causes. He was given 37 vice-postulators to assist him in this mega-project, unique in the history of the Catholic Church in Poland. Father Kazimierz Lubowicki was then appointed vice-postulator for Father Cebula's cause.

Everything was prepared for a process in due and proper form. So it was that on January 26, 1992, Bishop Muszyński, ordinary for Włocławek, launched the diocesan process for some hundred martyrs of the faith. After two years of sustained labor, Bishop Dembowski, Bishop Muszyński's successor, brought the process to a close on January 26, 1994 in the presence of the bishops with Cardinal Józef Glemp, Primate of Poland, presiding. One month later, the acts of the process, duly signed, were sent on to Rome. Everything moved rapidly forward. November 20, 1998, the theologian consultants gave a favorable verdict on the martyrdom of the companions of Bishop Michał Kozal. On February 16, 1999, the congregation of cardinals approved this decision, giving the green light for this beatification.

2. Father Cebula's beatification, June 13, 1999 in Warsaw

The beatification of these 108 martyrs, among whom was Father Cebula, took place on the occasion of a papal visit to Poland. On the morning of Sunday, June 13, 1999, in Józef Piłsudski square in Warsaw, John Paul II presided at a Mass during the course of which he raised to the honor of the altars Sister Regina Protman, foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Catherine, Edmund Bojanowski, founder of the Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Immaculate and 108 martyrs from the Second World War.

In his homily, the Pope spoke of the martyrdom of these men and women, who, by giving their lives for the faith, gave a splendid witness to Christ. Here are some excerpts that concern the martyrs directly:

“Specifically today, we are celebrating the victory of those of our era who gave up their earthly life for Christ in order to possess life for endless ages in his glory. This is a special kind of victory because it is shared by representatives from among the clergy and the laity, the young and the old, people from different social status and conditions. Among them we find Archbishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski, bishop of the diocese of Płock, tortured to death in Działdowo; bishop Władysław Góral of Lublin, tortured with special hatred... There are diocesan and religious priests who died because they did not want to relinquish carrying out their ministry and those who died while caring for their fellow prisoners sick with typhus. There are also those who were tortured to death for having defended the Jews. In the group of the blessed, there are religious brothers and sisters who persevered in their service of charity and in offering their suffering for their neighbors. Among these blessed martyrs are found as well lay people... These blessed martyrs are today inscribed in the history of the holiness of God’s people on pilgrimage for more than a thousand years through the land of Poland.

“If we are rejoicing today for the beatification of one hundred and eight martyrs, both clergy and laity, we do this first of all because they are witnesses to the victory of Christ, the gift which restores hope.

“While we are engaged in this solemn act, in a certain sense there is revived in us the certitude that, independently of the circumstances, we can achieve complete victory over everything through the power of him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

“Rejoice, Poland, for the new blessed: Regina Protman, Edmund Bojanowski and the one hundred and eight martyrs.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ *Osservatore Romano*, French edition, July 13, 1999, p. 5 and 8.

Among the 108 martyrs beatified by John Paul II, there were 3 bishops, 78 priests (26 of whom were religious), 2 seminarians, 8 brothers, 8 religious sisters and 9 laity (2 of whom were women).

Among the priests "who died because they would not relinquish their ministry" is found Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate. He was ready to sacrifice everything to obey God rather than men. By his holy life, through his fearless priestly ministry, in spite of the threats of death and finally by his martyrdom in the concentration camp of Mauthausen, he gave a splendid witness to Christ and the entire Catholic Church.

Father Teofil Nandzik, o.m.i., already had a presentiment of this beatification when he wrote to Mrs. Julianna Adamska on May 21, 1941, twelve days after Father Cebula's martyrdom:

"He is our true martyr, and as such, he will be venerated throughout the ages... we have a genuine martyr in heaven; he will help us."

ARCHIVES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

1. Oblate General Archives, 290 via Aurelia, Rome. Dossiers of various Oblates involved in Father Cebula's life.
2. Provincial Archives of the Oblates, ul. Ostatnia 14, Poznań. Oblate dossiers having to do with Father Cebula.
3. International Research Service of Bad Arolsen (Germany). Information concerning Oblates in the concentration camps.
4. Auschwitz (Oświęcim) Museum. Data on certain Oblates, prisoners in German concentration camps.
5. Otmęt, quarter of Krapkowice. The registers of the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, 1902-1927.

Bibliography

- Grzesiuk, Stanisław, *Pięć lat kacetu* (Five Years of Concentration Camp), Warsaw, Książka i Wiedza, 1968, 440 p. With stark realism, the author tells of the arduous life in the concentration camps of Dachau, Mauthausen and, especially, Gusen.
- Jacewicz, Wiktor, S.D.B., *Martyrologium Duchowieństwa Rzymsko-Katolickiego pod okupacją hitlerowską w latach 1939-1945* (Martyrology of the Roman Catholic clergy under hitlerian occupation, 1939-1945), Warsaw, ATK 1977, vol. I and II and Warsaw, ATK 1978, vol. III and IV.

- Koppe, Paweł, o.m.i., *Pamiętniki* (Memoires), 2 vols., 1930-1940, 229 and 125 p., manuscript Oblate Archives of Poznań. These are the notes of Father Koppe, preacher of parish missions in Poland.
- Krukowski, Stefan, *Mauthausen, Nad pięknym modrym Dunajem* (Mauthausen. On the Blue Danube), Warsaw, Książka i Wiedza, 1966, 360 p. The author reproduces with exceptional accuracy life at Mauthausen concentration camp and gives valuable information on the main protagonists there.
- Le Caër, Paul, K.L. *Mauthausen. Les cicatrices de la mémoire* (Mauthausen. Scars that live on in memory), Heimdal Editions, 1996, 240 p. Even though the author arrived at the Mauthausen concentration camp only in 1943, we do nevertheless find in his book a number of photos of the camp from 1939-1942.
- Lubowicki, Kazimierz, o.m.i., *Po Prostu Kapłan. Szkic do portretu O. Józefa Cebuli, o.m.i.* (A Priest and Nothing More. A Sketch of Father Józef Cebula, o.m.i.), Poznań, O.M.I., 1999.
- Maksymiuk, Józef, o.m.i., *Przeżyłem obóz zagłady Mauthausen-Gusen* (I survived the concentration camp Mauthausen-Gusen), Łeba, 1984, 65 pages, typewritten. Oblate Archives O.M.I., Poznań. The author relates his experiences at the concentration camps of Szczeglin, Dachau and Gusen.
- Marsalek, Hans, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslager Mauthausen* (History of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp), third edition, Vienna-Linz, 376 p. The best documented work on Mauthausen.
- Nawrat, Jan, o.m.i., *Mój życiorys i Wspomnienia* (My Biography and Memories), Obra, 1959-1960. 70 pages, typewritten. Oblate Archives, Poznań. An autobiography from his birth to the end of his term as provincial, 1936.
- Pielorz, Józef, o.m.i., *Męczennik za wiarę. Bł. Józef Cebula*

O.M.I. (Martyr for the Faith. Blessed Joseph Cebula O.M.I.), Poznań, OMI, 1999. This was the first biography of Father Cebula, published in May, 1999.

Pielorz, Józef, o.m.i., *Martyr de son sacerdoce. Bx. Joseph Cebula O.M.I. (1902-1941)* (Martyr for his Priesthood. Blessed Joseph Cebula, O.M.I. (1902-1941)) An abridged biography with no annotations. Vaudricourt, OMI 1999.

Włazowski, Zbigniew, *Przez kamieniołomy i kolczasty drut* (Passing Through the Quarries and the Barbed Wire), Krakow, Wydaw. Literackie, 1974, 162 p. In the section from pages 158 to 170, we find the official text of the deposition of Mauthausen's commander, Franz Ziereis, given the night of May 23 to 24, 1945.

Collective works

Akcje okupanta hitlerowskiego wobec Kościoła Katolickiego w Kraju Warty (Activity of the occupying Hitler force in the country of Warta). Collective work under the direction of Galiński Antoni and Marek Bednarek. Łódź, Museum of History, 1997, 140 p. The articles of Szyling, p. 13-24 and of Father Kazimierz Śmigiel, p. 25-37, expose the political extermination of the Polish clergy in the area of Poznań, renamed the country of Warta.

Auschwitz 1940-1945. Collective work under the direction of Waław Długoborski and Franciszek Piper, 5. vols. Oświęcim-Brzezinka, Muzeum Państwowe, 1995.

Męczennicy za wiarę. (Martyrs for the Faith), Warsaw, Michalineum 1996, 488 p. Accounts of the martyrs of the German concentration camps whose process of beatification is ongoing. Father Cebula's biography written by Father Kazimierz Lubowicki, o.m.i., can be found on pages 378 to 382.

Chronicles

Kronika Małego Seminarium w Lublińcu (Chronicle of the Minor Seminary of Lubliniec) vol. I, 1922-1993. Written after 1945 and based on previously written notes, it gives us information on the Minor Seminary from 1922 to 1963. In it, we find many original very valuable photographs from the years 1922 to 1939.

75-lecie Misionarzy Oblatów M. N. w Lublińcu, Lubliniec wrzesień 1997. Typewritten account written by Father Józef Niesłony, o.m.i., about the main events at Lubliniec from 1922 to 1997. In it, we find statistics about the personnel of the juniorists and the bill of purchase of the Grottowski Institute in 1922. Oblate Archives, Lubliniec.

Kronika klaszotru Markowickiego od 1-go sierpnia 1939 do 1972 roku (Chronicle of the Convent of Markowice from August 1, 1939 to 1972). Written after 1945 based on previously written notes. The history from 1939 to February 17, 1946 is handwritten by Father Edmund Porankiewicz, o.m.i. Oblate Archives, Poznań.

Dzieje klastztoru i komunitetu Markowickiego w czasie wojny 1939-1945 (History of the convent and the community of Markowice during the 1939-1945 war). Father Krawczyk, o.m.i., relates the history of Markowice. Written after the war, it is not always accurate. Oblate Archives, Poznań.

Kronika Sw. Krzyża za lata 1937-1939 (Chronicle of the Holy Cross House, 1937-1939), vol. II, typewritten, Sw. Krzyż, 1969, 160 p.

Periodical publications

AROMI (Roman Information Bureau of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate), monthly newsletter of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1945-1950.

Biuletyn Informacyjny dla księży byłych więźniów obozu koncentracyjnego w Dachau (Information newsletter of the former prisoners of Dachau). Annual from 1974 on. The former prisoners relate their memories.

Gość Wojenny (Visitors in Wartime). Manuscript newsletter, edited in eight copies by Father Józef Pakuła, o.m.i., at Rome-Cineto in 1940. Only two issues appeared. In it, we find accounts of what happened at Markowice from August to December 1939.

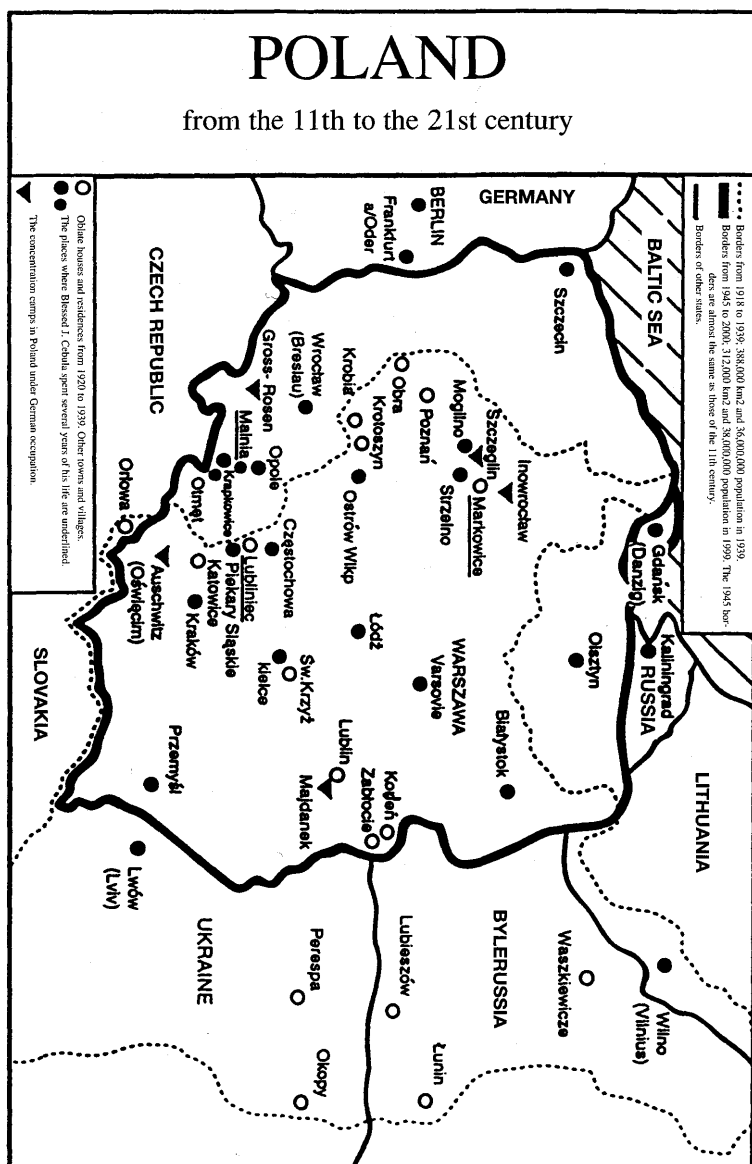
Gość z Obry (Visitor from Obra). Written by Father Konrad Stolarek, o.m.i., as a continuation of the preceding publication from 1945 on. Polycopied.

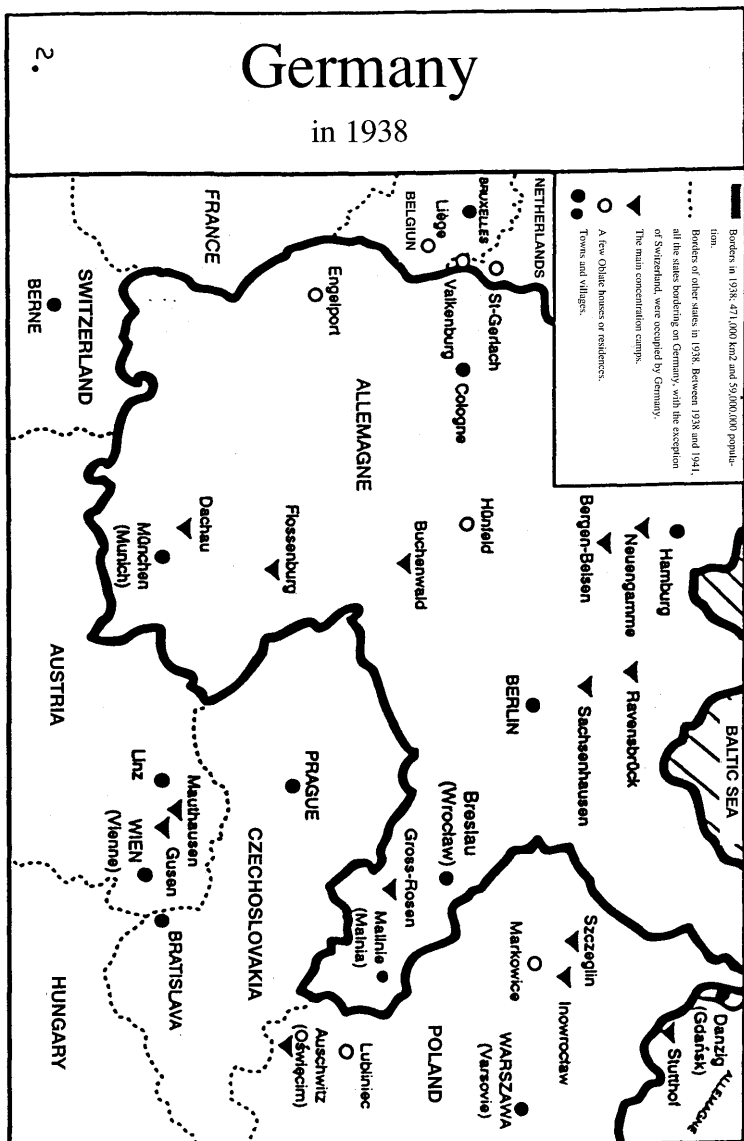
Missions des Oblats de Marie Immaculée. Trimestrial review, 1945-1950.

Oblat Niepokalanej (Oblate of the Immaculate). Monthly publication of the Oblate province of Poland, published from 1926 to 1939.

Pokłosie Oblackie (Oblate Gleanings). Newsletter published at the minor seminary of Lubliniec during the years 1946-1947. In it, we find articles on the Oblates in the German concentration camps.

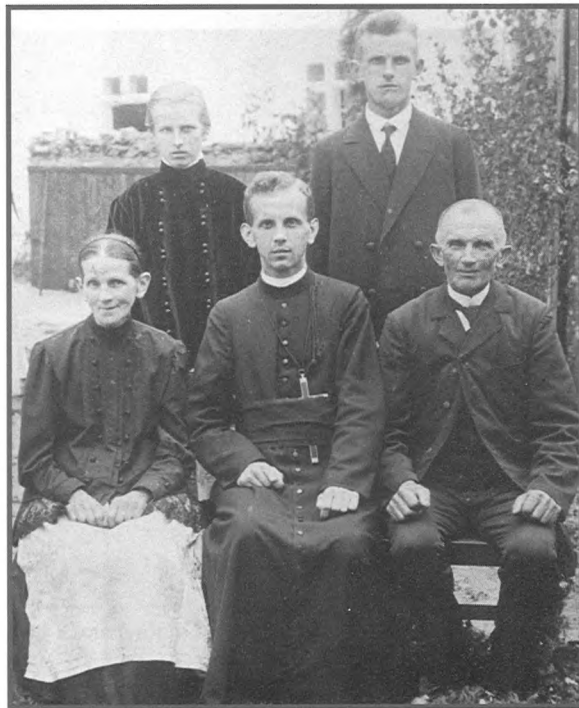
Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele (Young Friends Together). Published twice a month from 1945 on in Paris by the Polish YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). In it, one can find accounts about the atrocities in German concentration camps, especially the martyrdom of Father Cebula.







The family home at Malnia



Father Józef Cebula's family. The photo was taken on the occasion of his First Mass, June 13, 1927. Seated: his mother and his father; standing behind them, his sister Marie and his brother Paul.

ZUR ERINNERUNG
an mein
erstes hl. Messopfer

P. József Cebula

Oblate der Unbefl. Jungfrau Maria

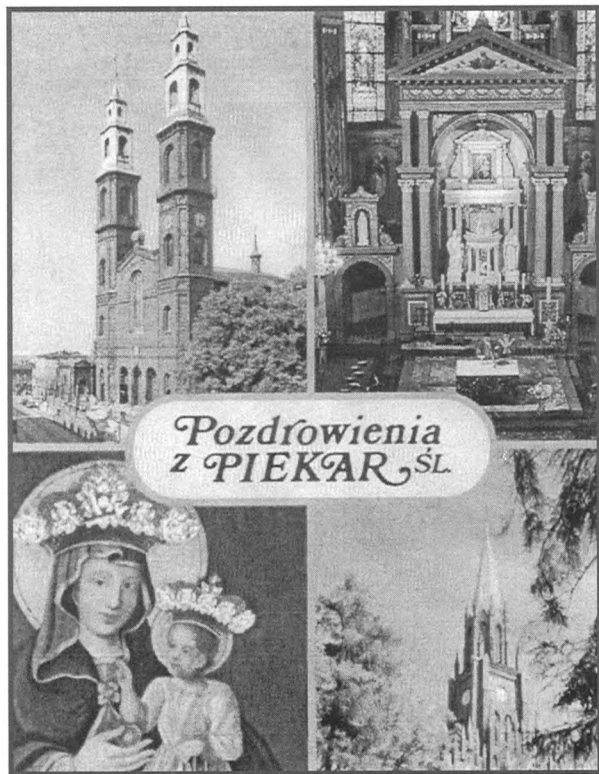
Ottmuth, 13. Juni 1927.

Den Armen das Evangelium zu verkünden
hat mich der Herr gesandt.
(Wahlspruch der PP. Oblaten.)

Father Józef
Cebula after his
ordination.

Holy card souvenir of
his First Mass at
Ottmuth (Otmęt),
June 13, 1927.



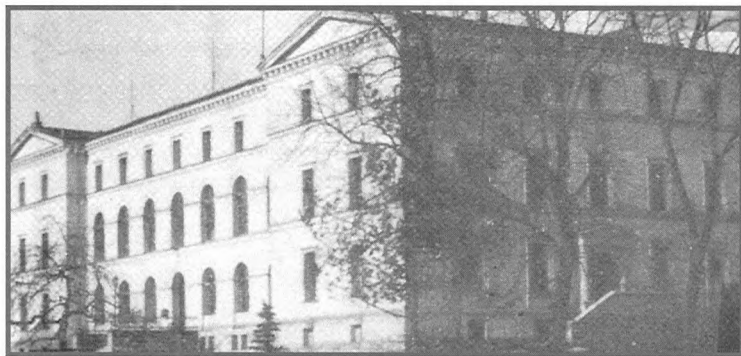


The juniorate at Krotoszyn, the first Oblate house in Poland. Photo taken in 1970.

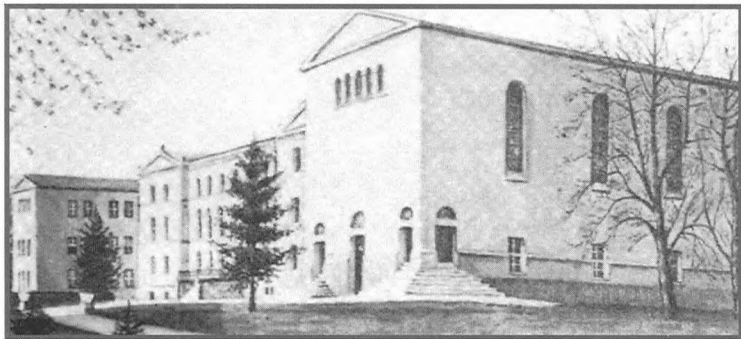
The shrine of Our Lady of Piekary Śląkie where, upon the advice of Father Jan Pawołek, the young Józef Cebula decided to join the Oblates.



The 29 juniorists of Krotoszyn in 1920-1921. The arrow points out Józef Cebula. Seated from left to right: Fathers Jan Pawołek, Jan Kulawy, Paweł Czakaj, superior, Jan Nawrat, treasurer, and Franciszek Kosian.



Minor seminary of Lubliniec, founded in 1922. From 1923 to 1930, Father Józef Cebula was a professor here and from 1931 to 1937 he was house superior.



The sixth form (sexta) [1st year] of the Lubliniec juniorate out for a walk with their distinctive caps. Second from the left, Józef Pielorz, author of this biography.

Minor seminary of Lubliniec after the expansion added from 1926 to 1931.



Father Józef Cebula, professor and director with his class.



Priests of the Lubliniec community in 1931. Seated from left to right: J. Skrzyniecki, J. Cebula, B. Wilkowski, T. Nandzik, superior, J. Górecki, F. Koppe, P. Purgoł. Standing: A Michalik, F. Kosakiewicz, A. Zdebel, I. Świderski, F. Blandzi, J. Śuga, A. Golus, E. Krystek.



1935 visit to Lubliniec of Bishop Gotthardt, vicar apostolic of Windhoek. At the bishop's left, Father Cebula, superior.

The novitiate at Markowice where Father Cebula was master of novices from 1937 to 1941. It was founded in 1921.



Our Lady of Markowice.



The community at Markowice in 1937. Seated fourth from the left, Father F. Adamski, master of novices from 1930 1937; fourth from the right, Father Cebula, master of novices from 1937 to 1941.

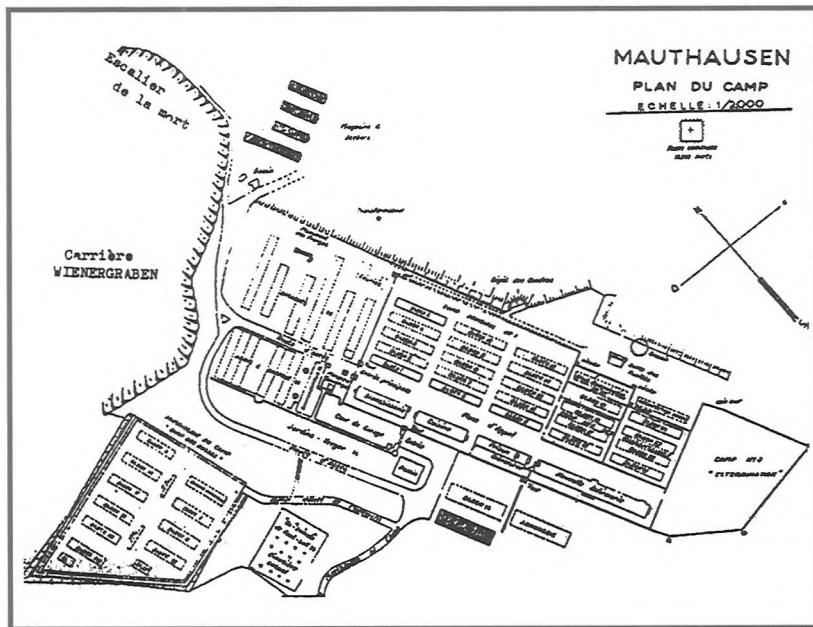


Provincials during Father Cebula's time, from left to right:

Father François-Boniface Kowalski (1878-1954), first vicar of Poland (1922-1925) and first provincial of Poland from 1925 to 1931.

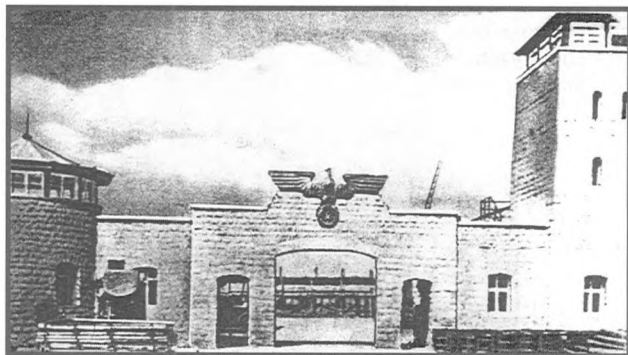
Father Jan Nawrat (1883-1960), second provincial from 1931 to 1936.

Father Bronislas Wilkowski (1901-1976), third provincial: April 1936-1947.

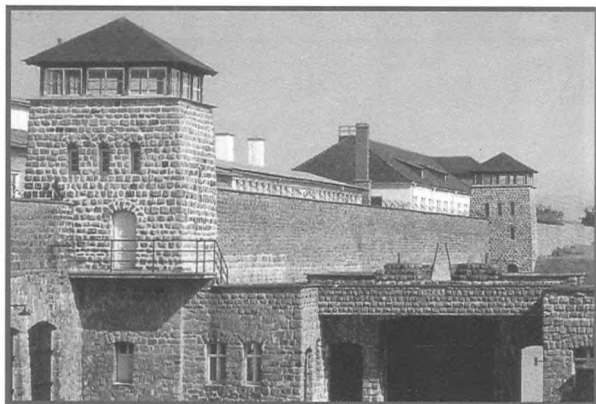


Sketch of the Mauthausen concentration camp redrawn in 1952. As found in Father Le Caër's work, *Les cicatrices de la mémoire*, Heimdal, p. 145.

Father Józef Cebula towards the end of 1940.



Main gate to the Mauthausen concentration camp, September 1941.



A view of the Mauthausen camp from the south.



Father Józef Cebula's executioners: Georg Bachmayer, director of the camp and Karl Schulz, head of the reception bureau.



The barracks in 1941. The arrow indicates barracks no. 7 where Father Cebula stayed.



Very frequent punishment: 25 blows administered on the buttocks.



Two-tiered bunks. A detainee with his soup bowl. Photo taken after liberation in May of 1945.

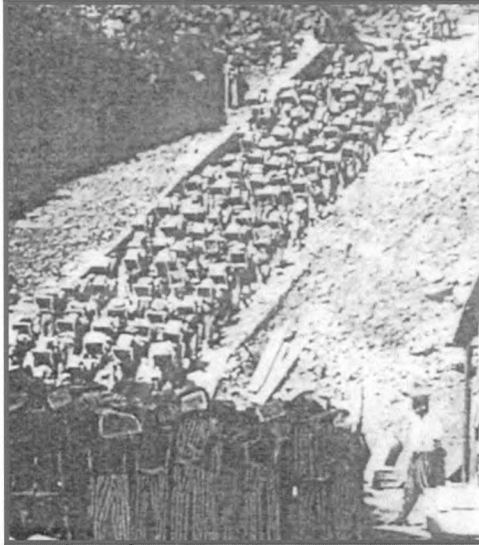


*Wiener
Graben
quarry
in 1941.*



The
Stairs of
Death.
Photo
taken in
1998.





Stairs of Death. In 1941, the steps consisted of stone blocks of varying sizes and shapes. It was only with great exertion that one was able to climb these stairs. In 1942 they were replaced by 166 steps that were more uniform. It is here that Father Cebula walked his way of the cross and where he was killed, May 9, 1941.

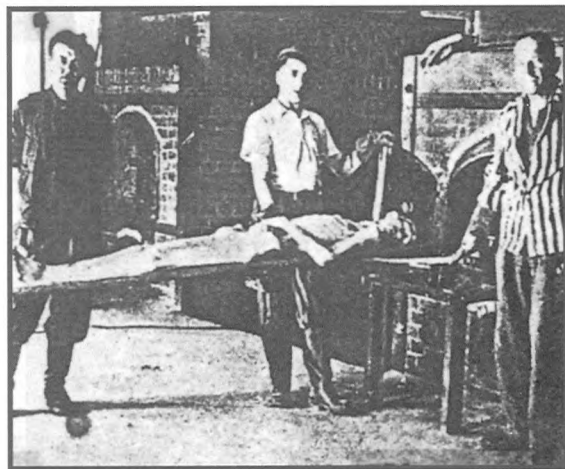
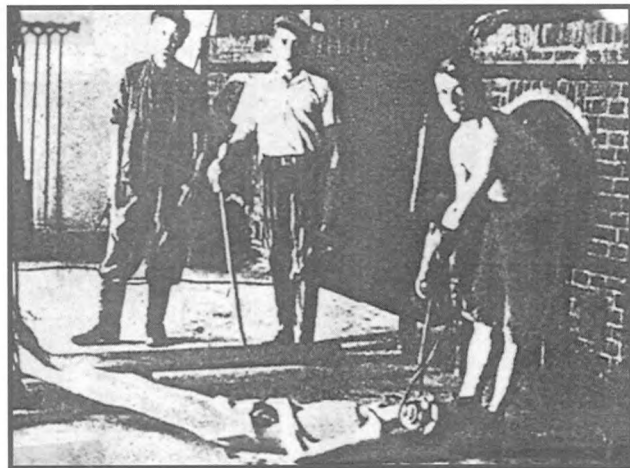


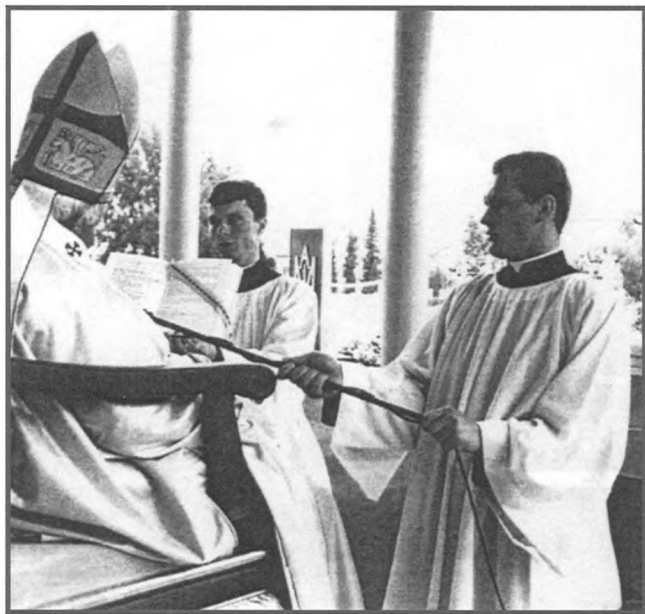
On the left, Reichsführer S.S. Himmler with commandant Franz Ziereis on the right, on an inspection tour of the *Wiener Graben* quarry in April 1941.



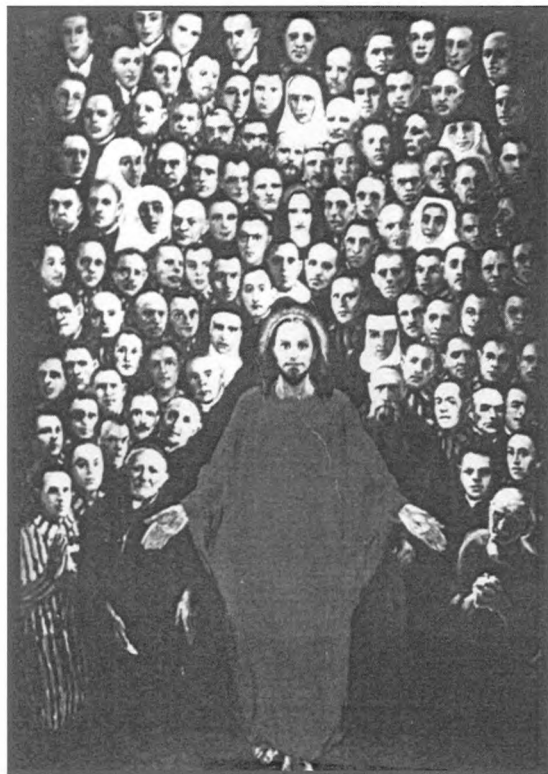
Two Polish detainees killed on the quarry road in 1942 for "attempted escape." Father Cebula had been shot to death for the same reason, May 9, 1941.

The Mauthausen crematorium where the body of Father Cebula was burned.





June 13, 1999, in Warsaw, John Paul II raised to the honors of the altar 108 martyrs who died for the faith during the Second World War (1939-1945). Among these martyrs was Father Józef Cebula, o.m.i. Picture of the blessed as painted by Stanisław BAJ.



PART TWO

PERSONAL WRITINGS AND TESTIMONIES

As an appendix to the biography, we reproduce here the personal writings of Blessed Józef Cebula and the testimonies concerning his holiness of life given by those who lived with him. These writings and testimonies shed some light on certain episodes of the biography and make it more authentic.

Abbreviations often quoted:

AGR: Oblate General Archives. The archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Rome.

APP: Oblate provincial archives, Poznań.

A. Personal writings of Blessed Józef Cebula, o.m.i.

In spite of very intensive and extensive research, we have only been able to uncover a dozen of Father Cebula's personal writings. We do not include here his oblation formulas, written in his own hand, because they are only transcriptions of official formulae. Consequently, they contain nothing personal.

Here is a list of those writings:

1. Declaration of willingness to accept the indult of validation of the novitiate, written in his own hand in Latin and bearing the date March 21, 1922.

2. A souvenir holy card of his First Mass, printed in German and bearing the date June 13, 1927.

3. A typewritten letter in Polish from Father Cebula to deacon Antoni Grzesik bearing the date April 14, 1933. At the bottom of the letter are a few words handwritten.

4. Letter handwritten in French from Father Cebula to Father Goulven-Marie Trébaol, o.m.i., bearing the date May 14, 1935.

5. Typewritten letter in French from Father Cebula to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, bearing the date November 10, 1935.

6. Typewritten letter in French from Father Cebula to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, bearing the date February 4, 1936.

7. Typewritten letter in French from Father Cebula to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, bearing the date April 1, 1936.

8. French translation of a letter from Father Cebula written in Polish to Father Franciszek Kowalksi dated April 1; at the present time, the Polish original can no longer be found.

9. French translation of a letter from Father Cebula written in Polish; at the present time, the Polish original can no longer be found. It probably bore the date of April 1, 1936. This letter was written to the Oblate General Administration.

10. Typewritten letter in French from Father Cebula to the Superior General, bearing the date April 5, 1936.

11. Letter handwritten in French to Father Euloge Blanc, assistant general, bearing the date April 23, 1936.

12. Typewritten letter in Polish from Father Cebula to his family, bearing the date April 15, 1938.

As regards the six letters written in French, they contain "mistakes and phrases that are less correct." Father Cebula himself was the one who humbly pointed this out. The only corrections we have made were typographical errors or errors due to obvious distraction and errors in punctuation. This expediency has not changed the meaning of the original text and has made it

easier to read.

We adopted the same method for the letters written in Polish and translated into French by other priests, sometimes in incorrect French.

1. March 19, 1922

By this formula written in his own hand, Józef Cebula declares that he wants to have applied to his case the apostolic indult of validation of the novitiate granted February 17, 1922. AGR, Cebula. We present the original text in Latin followed by a French translation.

Ego infrascriptus frater Josephus Cebula, novitius Congregationis Missionariorum Oblatorum Mariae Immaculatae in Markowice, Vicariatus Provincialis Polonici, per magistrum novitiorum huius domus certior factus, in erectione huius novitiatus errorem irrepsisse et inde ad stabiliendam validitatem temporis probationis quam incepi die XIV Augusti a.D. MCMXXI Indulto Apostolico me indigere illudque Indultum a Superiore Generali iusdem Congregationis petitum ac die XVII Februarii a. D. MCMXXII a S. Congregatione Negotiis Religiosorum Sodalium praeposita, concessum fuisse, hisce testificor me libere cum plena deliberatione eodem Indulto uti velle.

Markowice, die XIX Martii MCMXXII
Frater Josephus Cebula

N.B. We do have as well in the General Archives in Rome Józef Cebula's formula for temporary and perpetual vows. These handwritten formulas are merely transcriptions of the formula found in the Rule at the time. Consequently, no purpose is served in reproducing them here.

Translation from the French translation

I, Józef Cebula, the undersigned, novice of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Markowice, vice-province of Poland, having been informed by the master of novices of this house that the erection of this novitiate was vitiated when an error slipped in, and in consequence, to confirm the validity of the time of probation which I began August 14 the year of Our Lord 1921 that I was in need of an apostolic indult which, upon the request of the Superior General of that same Congregation was obtained from the Congregation of Religious on February 17, the year of Our Lord, 1922, by these presents I declare that with full knowledge and freedom I wish to apply it to my case.

Markowice, March 19, 1922

Frater Josephus Cebula

2. June 13, 1927

Text on the souvenir holy card for the First Mass celebrated at Ottmuth (Otmęt) June 13, 1927, APP, Cebula. The original text was in German. We give it here in an English translation also.

Die Erbarmungen des Herrn
will ich ewig besingen. Ps. 88:1.

I will sing of the mercies
of the Lord forever.
Ps. 88:1.

ZUR ERINNERUNG
an mein
erstes hl. Messopfer

P. Joseph Cebula,

In memory of my First
Holy Mass
Father Józef Cebula

Oblate der Unbefl. Jungfrau
Maria

Ottmuth, 13 Juni 1927.

Den Armen das Evangelium
zu verkünden hat mich der Herr
gesandt.

(Wahlspruch der PP. Oblaten)

Oblate of Mary
Immaculate

Ottmuth, June 13, 1927

The Lord has sent me to
evangelize the poor.
(Motto of the Oblate
Fathers)

3. April 14, 1933

Typewritten letter in Polish from Father Cebula to deacon Antoni Grzesik, o.m.i., bearing the date April 14, 1933. At the bottom of the letter, he added a few words handwritten. APP, Cebula

Father Cebula would prefer not to accept the invitation to preach at Father Grzesik's First Mass, but if he can find no one else, he would accept to do it.

Lubliniec April 14, 1933

Carissime,

It is only today that I am answering the letter which Father Wyduba brought me. I am overloaded with work and I cannot manage to get ahead of it. Every Sunday in Lent I preached at Szarlej,¹⁰² and last week, I preached a retreat for the families of the military personnel. At every turn, there is always something which prevents me from doing my ordinary work.

Thank you for the invitation with regard to the sermon. Perhaps you will find a preacher who is more competent. My reason for begging off is not for lack of time, but rather because of the quality of my sermons which are rather lackluster: my voice

¹⁰² In 1933, the Sundays of Lent fell on the 5, 12, 19 and 26 of March and the 2 and 9 of April.

is monotonous, my memory is unreliable; I am completely worn out. As a result, I can promise you nothing good. Sometimes it works, sometimes it is not a sermon at all, but rather babbling painful to the ear.

I am perhaps too well known here since for the last three years I preached the Lenten series in our parish church and, in Father Nandzik's¹⁰³ time, I often replaced someone else. It would perhaps be better if, for such a solemn occasion, you would invite a special preacher, one who is less well known.

Nevertheless, if no seasoned missionary — and they are many — wanted to take it on, we could perhaps find someone among the priests at Lubliniec. Consequently, I am classifying myself as a last resort. [Addition handwritten] If you find no one to do it, I will then take it on.¹⁰⁴

In any case, the parish priest has not yet mentioned anything to me about this First Mass.

Father J. Cebula, o.m.i

4. May 14, 1935

Handwritten letter in French to Father Gouleven-Marie Trébaol, o.m.i., (1875-1955), bearing the date of May 14, 1935. AGR, Cebula.

¹⁰³ Since Father Cebula was ordained to the priesthood June 5, 1927 and Father Nandzik finished his term as superior in July 1931, the Lenten series preached must have been from 1928 to 1931. Father Bolesław Glados, o.m.i., who as a young boy attended these Lenten series told me in May 1999 that the church of Saint Nicholas in Lubliniec was crammed to the rafters. When for health reasons Father Cebula had to temporarily break off his preaching, his successor preached to a half empty church.

¹⁰⁴ In point of fact, Father Cebula did accept the invitation and preached the sermon at Father Antoni Grzesik, o.m.i.'s First Mass, June 13, 1933 in the parish church of Saint Nicholas in Lubliniec.

Father Cebula asks Father Trébaol who is working at the O.M.I. Procure in Paris to send him some books on spirituality.

L.J. Chr. et M.I.
Lubliniec, May 14, 1935

Dear and Reverend Father,

You might still remember the four Polish brothers at Liège. It is one of those who is writing to you. A fortnight ago, I wrote a letter to Crusade of the Mass, 11 Dupin Street, Paris VI (address as found in the book: I am a Priest). At the time, I was requesting: 1 catalogue of works treating of the Restoration of Christian Living; 1 the Secret of Making all Apostolate Fruitful; 1 subscription to the Master's Call. But the letter was returned to me with a note from the postman indicating: Moved.

I then began searching for the address of Rev. Father Buffier¹⁰⁵ in our Personnel and since I came upon your name in Paris, I prefer to write to you. So you understand the objective of this letter. I would like to order some books from France. In the past, I used to do it once in a while at the Téqui bookstore in Paris. But the only thing I had available to me was a small catalogue and it is a little difficult to choose good books from a catalogue.

You, no doubt, have a good idea of the ascetic literature in France. I would like to take advantage of that. You certainly know the French authors who have written some fine things about the interior life of religious. You would do me a great favor if you would send me a few books which, in your opinion would be of use to me.

As for the cost, you could buy books for me up to the sum of about 100 Francs. As for payment, I want to pay the bill via an international postal money order.

¹⁰⁵ Father Louis Buffier, o.m.i., (1869-1946) was director of the Procure of the Oblate missions in Paris.

If you find mistakes and expressions that are less than correct in this letter, please excuse me. You are no doubt aware that it is easier to speak and read a language than it is to write it.

Hoping to hear that you can fulfill my request, I send you, Reverend and Dear Father, my greetings in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

Father J. Cebula, O.M.I.,
Małe Seminarium Ojców Obl.,
Lubliniec Śląski, Polska.

5. November 10, 1935

A typewritten letter in French to Father Euloge Blanc, Vicar General, bearing the date November 10, 1935, AGR, Cebula.

For lack of a passport, Father Franciszek Śmigielski cannot travel to Germany; he is resigned to remaining in Poland.

Małe Seminarium Duchowne,
Ojców Oblatów, Lubliniec

Lubliniec November 10, 1935

Very Reverend Father Vicar General,

Father Śmigielski received his obedience for Germany three months ago. To go to Germany, he must have a German passport. Father Śmigielski has already taken many initiatives to obtain this passport but all his efforts have been in vain. In October, one of our priest professors at the juniorate fell ill. The doctor forbade him to teach because of his sore throat. Father Śmigielski¹⁰⁶ who was free at the time and ready to remain in Poland is now replacing the sick priest.

¹⁰⁶ Franciszek Śmigielski (1906-1990) was a missionary in Ceylon. He became ill and had to go back to Poland for medical treatment. While he was in Poland, he received an obedience for the German province. But he remained in Poland until the end of his life.

The object of this letter is not meant to exert pressure for a change of obedience. I do not want to interfere in that matter. These few lines are merely a little report. Father Śmigielski would go to Germany as his obedience requires if he had the passport he needs, but he is also resigned to remain in Poland if his efforts to obtain that passport remain fruitless.

Please accept, Very Reverend Father, the assurance of my total dedication in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

Father J. Cebula
O.M.I., Sup.

6. February 14, 1936

Typewritten letter in French to Father Euloge Blanc, Vicar General, bearing the date of February 14, 1936. AGR, Cebula. In this letter, Father Cebula sets forth the reasons why he could not be a good provincial.

Seminarium Duchowne,
Ojców Oblatów, Lubliniec

Lubliniec, February 14, 1936

Reverend Father,

This is in answer to your letter of January 13. Please excuse me for not having answered sooner. The questions you asked me were of such great importance that I hesitated a rather long time before making a decision. Then, too, not long ago, I was not feeling well and your January 29 letter found me sick in bed.

The question of the next provincial for Poland is a thorny one. You inquire about my person as well. I am aware of article 236 of the Holy Rule and I set great store by it: *Nullum postuletur munus nullumque recusetur*. And without false modesty, I am telling you that I am convinced that it would be a fiasco on my

part, if I was chosen as the one, since I do not deem myself competent for this task. Here are the reasons:

1. Failing health. Even at the juniorate where life is very regular because of the house rule, I am often obliged to keep to my bed. All my problems come from my stomach which in my case has descended. I am a sickly man.

2. Lack of training and knowledge necessary for the task of provincial. During your first visit to Poland in 1925/26 you had the opportunity of seeing for yourself that the studies of the scholastic brothers at Lubliniec were not systematically pursued. I am not complaining; on the contrary, I am happy that already as a scholastic brother I could be of some use at the juniorate by teaching and I am very grateful to the General Administration who admitted me to vows and especially to the priesthood after five years of studies in spite of these problems.

Through private studies, I finished my courses, but some gaps still remain. I was always at the juniorate and I limited myself to questions of pedagogy and the classical sciences and I neglected theology and especially Canon Law.

3. "They tell us many good things about Father Cebula." That may be true. I always sought to do what is right, but this right dates rather from the time when I was a simple subject. As a superior, I was always shy and perplexed. The impression of goodness is often due to a misreading of the facts. Do you consider someone good because he is shy, because he can never say no to anyone, because he tolerates abuses. And that is my fault. I become aware of the evil of abuses and I cannot open my mouth to forbid them or to demand that something be done. Lack of vigor and courage to take things in hand, not only *suaviter*, but also *fortiter*.

If this was possible, I would cast my vote for one of the older men, but appointing Father Kowalski or Father Kulawy would stir up quarrels (from the past).¹⁰⁷

Among the young men, I would suggest Father Adamski. In as much as I know him, he is a man of the Rule. That is the view held of him by all the Oblates of Poland (with the exception of those of the Kulawy party). Father Adamski also has other required qualities: prudence, experience, knowledge, health and vigor.

There you have my letter. Unfortunately, difficulty of expressing myself in French does not permit me to speak to you more at length of our priests and our affairs, but I think that you are well informed as to what is going on in Poland. All that remains is for me to entrust the choice to your good judgment and to pray the Good Lord and the Blessed Virgin to indicate to us by order from Rome the man who is the most worthy to be provincial.

Happy February 17th feast day!

Please accept, Reverend Father, the expression of my respectful regard and believe that I am

Your devoted servant in J.C. and M.I.,
Father J. Cebula, O.M.I.

¹⁰⁷ D'autrefois: [from the past] this word was handwritten in parentheses by Father Cebula and added to the typewritten text.

7. April 1, 1936

Typewritten letter in French to Father Euloge Blanc bearing the date April 1, 1936. AGR, Cebula. He will obey orders and will go to Rome "Wednesday or Thursday" (8 or 9 April). He has already written a long letter to Father Karol Brzezina asking him to translate it into French and pass it on either to Father Blanc or to Father General.

Małe Seminarium Duchowne,
Ojców Oblatów, Lubliniec

Lubliniec, April 1, 1936

Reverend Father Assistant General,

The day before yesterday, I received your letter and I thank you for it.

Initially, I thought that it was an ordinary letter but when I read the news about the choice of a provincial for Poland, I was totally taken aback. I do not know what to say or do. Since your letter is indeed an obedience, it is my desire to obey and already yesterday I was taking measures to obtain the free passport. It will take me a few days because the civil authority [starostie] does not have the competency to grant a free passport. He must receive authorization for this from the palatinate of Katowice.¹⁰⁸ Tomorrow I am off to Katowice to deal with this matter. If all goes well, I will be ready next Monday and I will arrive in Rome Wednesday or Thursday.

¹⁰⁸ Palatinate (voïvodie in Polish) corresponds more or less to a French prefecture. The starostie (in Polish starostwo) corresponds to a sub-prefecture. Here we are dealing with the starostwo of Lubliniec.

Please excuse me, Reverend Father, if I dare yet again to express my doubts as to my own person. This is not a gesture of opposition. It is difficult for me to speak French and explain to you all my difficulties. In your last letter, you mentioned Father Brzezina.¹⁰⁹ I do indeed think he knows about my case. I am writing him a long letter in Polish, requesting him to go to see yourself or the Very Reverend Father General in order to be my spokesman.

Asking your kind prayers, I remain

Your devoted servant in J.C. and M.I.,
Father J. Cebula, O.M.I.

8. Letter from Father Cebula to Father Kowalski, April 1, 1936

This letter, written in Polish April 1, 1936, has never been found. All we have is a French translation done by Father Franciszek Kowalski. It is found in a letter from Father Kowalski to Father Euloge Blanc bearing the date of April 8, 1936. AGR, Franciszek Kowalski.

Kodeń, April 8, 1936

Very Reverend Father,

Upon my return to Kodeń after having preached a few retreats, I found a letter from Father Cebula a translation of which is enclosed.

It contains more than what I had told you about him, but anyone who knows him must admit he is only telling the unvarnished truth. April 1, he writes:

¹⁰⁹ Karol Brzezina (1905-1976) was engaged in doctoral studies in philosophy in Rome. In 1937, he was appointed superior at Lubliniec, replacing Father Cebula.

"The day before yesterday, I received from Father Blanc a letter giving me the news that the choice for provincial has fallen upon myself. The appointment has not yet been made, but he writes: "Very Reverend Father General is calling you to Rome. He wants to see you and talk to you." Rome even took the initiative of contacting the Polish embassy to obtain a free passport. That is why Father Blanc ends his letter saying, "In any case, see to it that you come to Rome.

"Let me tell you, Father, I would have expected anything other than that. It was Monday when I received the letter,¹¹⁰ but even today I still cannot get over it. I do not know what I should do now. I cannot mount a formal opposition and say: "I do not accept," because that would be to refuse to obey. But if I accept, the province of Poland will not gain much by it because at the outset I am sure that this year again my health will fail and once again we will have the situation we have now: the provincial will be ill and another must undergo torment. Then, too, with regard to some of our affairs I would be totally at a loss as to what to do, whether it had to do with the building project at Katowice, whether it was for some of the obediences, or for other more important affairs such as Holy Cross, Lublin, etc. I could, it is true, take the risk simply to show that I would not be able to muddle through and that I am not qualified for the job, but the worst of it is that the province or some of its members would suffer from it. If it was a question of finances, I do not have the slightest idea of such matters; if it was a case of my shyness, even then, I would never be able to master it and as a result, some people would do what they pleased all the same.

"Yesterday, I was at the office of the sub-prefecture [starostie] and tomorrow I will go to the prefecture and will probably get my free passport. But what will be my objective if I go to Rome? But I know absolutely nothing on a number of things

¹¹⁰ Monday, that is March 30.

concerning the province and I will not be able to serve any purpose with regard to the appointment of the provincial and the provincial council because I am incapable of giving any firm opinion, and afterwards people will say: He went to Rome; he told them a heap of things and just look at what the results were for us! The responsibility for the whole thing will fall upon my shoulders.

“Consequently, I urgently beg you to be so kind as to immediately write to Rome that you know me well and you will present in an objective manner the difficulties I have enumerated above. You have nothing to fear since what I have written about myself is not the product of an overheated imagination, but rather the simple truth. And Rome may yet allow itself to be persuaded. I refuse no task, but I know that the province has need of an independent, vigorous provincial. Perhaps you could still write to me at Lubliniec to tell me what I must do and what I am to believe because, to tell the truth, I am going out of my mind.”

“I commend myself to your prayers....

(signed) J. Cebula, o.m.i.”

[And Father Kowalski continues his letter.]

Since I was absent from Kodeń I was no longer able to write to him. I would not have written to Rome either because I had already given my opinion on that question,¹¹¹ I would not have thought I had any right to insist.

Father B. Kowalski, o.m.i.

¹¹¹ Father Kowalski to Father Blanc, December 17, 1935. AGR, Kowalski. “I believe that we have in the province three men who would be capable of taking on this task: Fathers Wilkowski, Adamski and Cebula. But I do not believe that Father Cebula can at all be considered. Although he is eminently worthy, a perfect Oblate, he has neither the health, nor the necessary courage, absolutely necessary especially in the present situation, difficult from every point of view, in which our province finds itself.”

9. April 1 (?), 1936

Letter from Father Cebula to Father Karol Brzezina, o.m.i., probably bearing the date April 1 with a request to translate it into French and then pass on the translation to the General Administration. The original in Polish has probably been destroyed while the handwritten translation made by Father Brzezina has been conserved in the General Archives in Rome, dossier Cebula. In it, Father Cebula sets forth all the reasons that make him incapable of being a competent provincial.

Since Rev. Father Cebula has been so overwhelmed by his appointment as provincial that he feels unable to express himself the difficulties involved, difficulties rooted in his person with regard to the office of provincial, he humbly begs the General Administration to kindly give careful consideration to the following points the translation of which I have given here.

“I do not refuse to accept any task asked of me, nor any duty and even less the toilsome tasks inherent to the position that has been entrusted to me. But, if I must accept the responsibility, I make bold to request that I be allowed to set forth the reasons *pro* and *contra* with regard to my candidature for provincial.

“For several years now, the notion that Father Cebula is good hearted has become widespread. I cannot deny it because I would strive to be good hearted towards everyone and I would work to the fullness of my capacity. I have not been visiting the houses of the province and have had almost no correspondence with them which creates the impression of neutrality because I did not take sides with any one party.

“I also state that I have no overt and perhaps no covert enemies in our province either. Those are the *pros* that I know of and cannot deny. It seems to me that some priests have compiled these *pros* and sent them to the General House, suggesting my candidacy and that is the basis of the opinion about me. When the Very Reverend Father General was visiting Poland, the priests of my community gave a good impression concerning regularity in

carrying out spiritual exercises. And that is the entire basis for the opinion about me in Rome.

“But here are the various *contras* that I must list as being against my candidacy.

“1. Failing health. I did not want to make an issue of my health. For some years now, I have escaped the attention of the medical doctors and when asked about my health, I merely gave the stock answer, “he is doing well,” (sic!) because I did not want to hear commiseration expressed in my regard. But if we are considering my real state of health, I do not know what to say. On occasion, I could no longer walk, but I would drag myself down the corridors. Some internal organs are not in proper working order. Because of my physical weakness, I requested to be allowed to resign¹¹² at the end of my third year as superior. My resignation was not accepted, that is why I took up my task again and now, having arrived at the end of my second *three-year* stint, they have given me a new task.

“In my position of superior, I was able to live a life of regularity. I was not obliged to take on long tiring journeys, traveling that would exacerbate my already existing problems. Other communities would notice my state of weakness, that is why I always stayed in Lubliniec over the vacation period, even though there was need for change. How often have I hidden my illness from the other priests, secretly retiring to my bed.

¹¹² Here one would have to read: “*démission* [resignation]” instead of “*dimission*.” In general, Father Brzezina’s French is as defective as Father Cebula’s.

“Recently, it has happened that my memory failed me during the celebration of Holy Mass or while I was speaking. Once again at the beginning of this year I fell gravely ill for an extended period of time.

“Given the fact that, as provincial, I would be obliged to relinquish my life of regularity that I have enjoyed until now to make trips, my impression is that I would be worn out in one year’s time and the situation of the province would be the same as it is at present.

“It is not out of bitterness or in order to beg off from a task that I write these words, but rather to avoid giving grounds to rebuke me later on for not having spoken up and not having warned the authorities in the Congregation about this.

“2. Lack of native ability and genius for organization. To assign the personnel of the province so that each one is in his proper place, I have no notion of that and that could be a cause of a great deal of dissatisfaction in the province. Then, to organize anything, I am unable and yet it is the provincials task to direct everything and not allow himself to be pushed around by others. We are building a house at Katowice. No one wants to be involved in it because this is the provincial’s concern, even if he could find someone to replace him in that role, he would still bear the responsibility for it.

“As for finances, it is the same thing. Fortunately, I have always had good treasurers such as Father Wilkowski and Father Śmigielski to help me, but at times they were astounded at my ignorance with regard to financial affairs.

“3. My shyness. Whoever acts in the role of provincial must represent the Congregation before ecclesiastical and civil authority; he must participate in meetings, deliver speeches on certain occasions and for me that is a weak point.

“Because of my shyness, I cannot rebuke individuals, even if I made the effort to do so. And that is why I would find myself at war with my conscience because there will always be occasions

when rebukes are required. There are so many people in our province who would be happy to have me for provincial in order to exploit this weakness on my part.¹¹³

“I regret that I have had so little time to think this through and to set forth my fears — of which I have presented only a few — and I ask your pardon for having presented them in this manner. I do not want to oppose Very Reverend Father General’s invitation, so I will be coming.

“I make bold to propose again the candidacy of Rev. Father Adamski. He has a strong health, is energetic and an organizer. He is a man of wide experience and all the priests are favorable to him with the exception of two or three. If any complaints have been lodged against him, I am sure they are not justified.”

10. April 5, 1936

Typewritten letter in French to the Superior General bearing the date April 5, 1936, AGR, Cebula. Not satisfied with having asked Father Blanc not to be appointed provincial and having begged Fathers Kowalski and Brzezina to intervene with the General Administration in the same vein, Father Cebula seized

¹¹³ Those who knew Father Cebula well were quite aware of this tendency in his character to avoid rebuking individuals. But, if it was required, he could make the decision, even though reluctantly, not only to offer the rebuke, but even to expel from the Congregation those who showed themselves to be incorrigible or to ask that they be transferred to other houses.

In his January 16, 1936 letter to Father Euloge Blanc, Father Wilkowski gives an accurate description of Father Cebula when he writes: “He is very unassuming, but when the situation calls for it, he knows how to compel respect for authority in the interior life of the community and to represent it outside the community.” As a former juniorist, I can testify to the fact that, during Father Cebula’s time as superior (1931-1937), a number of juniorists and even some brothers were sent away and some Fathers transferred to other houses.

the occasion of Father General's return from a trip to Canada to lay before him his fears with regard to his eventual appointment as provincial.

Małe Seminarium Duchowne,
Ojców Oblatów, Lubliniec

L.J.Chr. et M.I.

Lubliniec, April 5, 1936

Very Reverend Father General,

I received First Assistant General Reverend Father Blanc's letter Monday, March 29¹¹⁴ in which you are calling me to Rome. When in the month of January, Reverend Father Blanc asked me to report about myself and the candidacy for the provincialate, I sent him an answer in the negative and gave him my reasons. My letter was brief because I find it difficult to express myself in French. I was certain that I would never be considered in the choice of provincial. Reverend Father Blanc's letter totally put my head in a spin. I did not spend a lot of time thinking about it and I set about immediately doing everything you asked me to do to get ready to travel to Rome. I took steps to obtain the free passport. The letter from the Polish embassy in Rome had not yet arrived at the sub-prefecture [starostie] of Lubliniec; but that did not matter. The sub-prefect was most kind. He could not issue a free passport without being authorized by the prefecture [palatinat] to do so, but he did write for me a letter of recommendation to the prefecture [palatinat]. Consequently, I thought that everything would run smoothly and I would soon be in possession of a passport. That is also what I wrote in my last letter to Reverend Father Blanc.

¹¹⁴ In 1936, March 29 fell on a Sunday; the 30th on a Monday. Moreover, April 1, 1936, Father Cebula wrote to Father Kowalski that "the day before yesterday, I received a letter from Father Blanc...." Now the day before yesterday was March 30. Consequently, Father Cebula made a mistake with regard to the date.

Thursday [April 2], I was at Katowice at the prefecture [palatinat]. The employee who was dealing with my affairs was kind as well, but he could give me nothing. He told me that my petition needed the approval of the Minister of the Interior. Since it is too far to travel to Warsaw, the petition was mailed to the Ministry and we will have to wait a few days for the answer.

It seems to me that the good Lord has arranged things this way to provide me with this delay/postponement for the occasion to write to you and to give you a report on my state of affairs. In conscience, I feel obliged to tell you that I would not be able to carry out the functions of provincial. Please believe me, Very Reverend Father General, this is not an exaggeration on my part, nor a figment of my imagination or false modesty. My difficulties are real and serious.

The state of my health: I have always had a delicate constitution, especially following an inflammation of the lungs and even pleurisy in 1918/19. I had to undergo an operation and was confined to bed for a month¹¹⁵ in the hospital. As a result, I lost a year of studies. Then, I was able to take up my studies again, but I always remained a sickly individual. My great fear was the possibility of being sent away from the juniorate or from the novitiate. Later on, when I had already been ordained, I had a growing awareness that a stomach ailment was developing. I consulted different medical doctors who prescribed various medications. That did not bring healing. An X-ray showed that my stomach has fallen too far down, that it does not digest well and that it does not empty itself because it is badly¹¹⁶ positioned.

At the end of my first three-year term as superior, I begged Father Provincial and the provincial council to relieve me of my position of superior, but I was compelled to stay on. On the occasion of your visit to Poland, you were surprised that I never leave

¹¹⁵ One month: handwritten in the margin of the letter.

¹¹⁶ "Male" instead of "mauvais [bad]."

Lubliniec. I have not yet seen Kodeń and the other houses. Nor do I go there, not even during vacation time. I do not travel because traveling just kills me. You advised me to visit the juniorates in Germany and Father Nawrat has advised me to at least visit the juniorates of other congregations that are nearer to us in Poland in order to better organize our own house, but I never went any place because for me it is too difficult. Thursday¹¹⁷ I went to Katowice. It is a trip of 70 kilometers, two hours by train. The next day, I had to keep to my bed and I celebrated my Mass after 10:00 a.m.

How many times am I obliged to lie down during the day. Since I am unable to reveal my illness, I usually shut myself in my room and lock the door without mentioning anything to anyone. As a result, they think I have gone down town. No one is surprised that the superior is absent. It is a trick you perhaps might find reprehensible but if I revealed my illness and physical weakness to my fellow priests, the brothers and the juniorists, I would cause them grief and annoyance (and that leads to discouragement). For those who are lacking in honesty it would be a temptation to given in to different abuses and excesses (lack of conscience).

Because I was always in the house and in the same house, I arranged things so that I could lie down whenever it was required. The matters a superior has to deal with are such that they can be postponed much more easily than those of a provincial. In some cases, I let the prefect of the juniorists replace me. In this way, it could be said: In Lubliniec, everything is running smoothly.

If I was to become provincial, it would soon change. It would be impossible for me to lead the kind of life I lead here as superior of the juniorate. The trips, the visits, the different affairs of the province, the feasts, the meetings, the change of food, that would kill me. In a short time, in Poland, we will see ourselves in the same situation as last year and now. The provincial will be ill

¹¹⁷ Thursday, that is, April 2, 1936.

and the affairs of the province will not be ordered the way they should. Then, a new candidate would have to be sought and another provincial chosen. Very Reverend Father, you might perhaps say: He is exaggerating. I could send you a report from the medical doctor. I am only including here an X-ray of my stomach. An operation is in order, but since my constitution is too weak, I do not want to take the risk.

I beg you, therefore, Very Reverend Father General, in as much as I know and am able, not only to dispense me from the obligation of making the trip to Rome and to choose another candidate for provincial, but also not to be angry with me. I know that the matter of finding a provincial for Poland has already taken up a great deal of your time and that it caused you so much worry. It is not my intention to cause problems through this letter, but rather to prevent difficulties from arising in the future. On several occasions I have been chided because I do not often speak up (that I keep everything bottled up inside) and that I raise issues when it is already too late.

Another difficulty that I still would like to mention is the fact that I can never demand anything from my subjects. If you still have your notes from your visit to Lubliniec, you can see that what I am saying is true. You told me that I need not always ask the priests to do things, as superior, I must also demand and exact that the priest do this or that thing. I know, but it is not in me to order people about or be exacting. I used to try to do it, but at the last moment I would change the order into a form of a request or a wish on my part. Lucky for me that here at Lubliniec, because it is a formation house, they have given me fine priests and through my good natured ways and my example I was able to do much good and all has been working well.

You have a good grasp of the state of our province. Do you think that by gentleness and good heartedness I would obtain everything that I wished and what was required. I am not a pessimist; I do not see everything from the dark side. There is a lot of good there but there is a lot that is not right among us. Through

your visit to our province, through the letters you receive from Poland, you know better than I do our weaknesses. Because I am too tenderhearted, I cannot say no to anyone. There will be abuses about which I will be unable to say anything. I will worry, harass myself but to no benefit for the province. Father Nawrat was on in years; his health was very sound; he was a man of wide experience and was considered a learned, neutral person. And later on, when he was appointed provincial, when he encountered difficulties? Believe me, if Father Nawrat fell gravely ill, it is because they caused too many problems for him. What can I hope for or expect? There are at least fifteen fathers older than myself. And even among the good ones, there are some endowed with more courage and whose health is good.

In order not to be too lengthy, I am concluding my letter, Very Reverend Father General, and I beg you once again to relieve me of this so difficult duty. I have not forgotten anything from Reverend Father Blanc's letter. I have only brought it to the attention of Father Kowalski.

Please accept, Very Reverend Father General, the assurances of my complete dedication in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

Father J. Cebula, o.m.i.

11. April 23, 1936

Handwritten letter in French from Father Cebula bearing the date of April 23, 1936 and addressed to Father Euloge Blanc, Assistant General. AGR, Cebula. In it, Father Cebula gives his opinion about Father Kazimierz Józefowicz (1900-1966). He is fit to be a parish priest or a treasurer, but as a religious, he does not measure up to the standards of everyone. Indeed, Father Józefowicz was appointed treasurer of the province at the general council of April 27 and 28, 1936 and Father Cebula was appointed first extraordinary consultor of the province of Poland.

L.J.Chr. et M.I.

Lubliniec, April 23, 1936

Very Reverend Father Assistant General,

Many thanks for your last letter.

Father Nawrat is not in Lubliniec. I sent the letter addressed to him on to Poznań where he is at present.

You ask me about Father Józefowicz. Here at Lubliniec when different candidates were discussed, his name was never mentioned. I noticed that the young priests have neither sympathy for, nor confidence in him. They consider him arrogant.

In my opinion, if it is a question of administration (parish priest, treasurer), Father Józefowicz is a good enough fellow, but as a religious, he does not measure up to the standards of everyone.

Please accept, Very Reverend Father Assistant General, the assurance of my complete dedication in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

Father J. Cebula, O.M.I.

Since this is the only letter signed by Father Cebula and entirely written by his own hand, we reproduce it here, but in a reduced form.

L. J. chr
M. H. F.



Lublin, le 23 avril 1986



Mon Frère Révérend Père Aristide Jérial,

Euloge Blanc

Merci bien de votre dernière lettre.

Le P. Nawrot n'est pas à Lublin. J'ai envoyé la lettre adressée à lui à Popaui, où il se trouve.

Vous me demandez du P. Jędrzejewski. Quand on a parlé ici à Lublin de différents scandales, on ne l'a jamais mentionné. J'ai remarqué que les jeunes Pères n'ont pas ni sympathie ni confiance pour lui. Ils le considèrent comme orgueilleux.

À mon avis: S'il agit de l'administration (c'est-à-dire, comme) le P. Jędrzejewski, ^{est un bon sujet} mais comme religieux il ne convient pas.

Veillez agréer, Mon Frère Révérend Père Aristide Jérial, l'assurance de mon entier dévouement en Jésus Christ et Marie Immaculée.

J. Cebula
O. H. F.

12. Good Friday, April 15, 1938

A typewritten letter from Father Cebula in Polish to his family bearing the date of Good Friday, April 15, 1938. His father Adrian is seriously ill. Father Cebula exhorts his family to submit to the will of God. The following May 13, Father Cebula would mourn the death of his father. The original letter is kept in Father Cebula's family at Malnia in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bekierz.

Markowice, April 15, 1938

Dear sister and very dear Wilhelm,

The Easter celebrations are approaching and wishes of "Happy Easter" are being exchanged. For you, what are these celebrations? It is a difficult thing to rejoice when our father is terminally ill. During Holy Week, the Church reminds us that Our Lord also had to suffer. How painful it was for his mother to see him suffer! And yet all that came to an end. Our sorrows also are short-lived. The important thing is to make sure we benefit from them. We have to submit to the will of God and have the conviction that it is God who allows both sickness and death. He is Lord and he does what he wants and in the way he wants.

One day, our Lord said: "What you have done to the least of these my brothers, you have done to me." The longer a sick person remains abed, the more has he need of appropriate care. But those who take care of him gain all the more merit; they will enjoy a greater reward in heaven and the blessings of God already here on earth.

How are you? What is little Różła up to? And you, Mary, are you feeling better?

As for myself, I am in good health. I have already adjusted to living in this part of the country. Our community boasts 56 members. Each one has his work to do and we help each other out and everything is running smoothly.

Please greet on my behalf the aunts, uncles, Paula, Gertrude

and especially my dad.

I wish you many graces and blessings from the risen Christ.

I send you heartfelt greetings.

Józef

B. Testimonies

Testimonies about the life of Father Cebula are very numerous. We have chosen from among them only the most important and the most representative. In as much as possible, we reproduce them according to the different periods of Blessed Cebula's life. Here is the list:

- 1-2. - childhood and adolescence: 1902-1919.
- 3. - attendance at the Polish school at Lubliniec: 1920.
- 4-7. - admission to religious vows and to orders: 1922-1928.
- 8-16 - professor and superior in Lubliniec: 1923-1937.
- 17-19 - appointment as provincial.
- 20. - election as delegate to the 1938 General Chapter.
- 21-23. - master of novices and courageous priest at Markowice: 1937-1941.
- 24-26. - arrest and deportation to the concentration camps:
April 1941
- 27-31. - martyrdom at Mauthausen concentration camp:
April 18 - May 9, 1941.

1. TESTIMONY OFFERED BY THE CEBULA FAMILY

Testimony 1: Paweł Cebula concerning his brother, Józef

Handwritten letter in Polish by Paweł Cebula to Father Jan

Nawrat, o.m.i., dated February 27, 1949, APP, Cebula. We translate only those excerpts that deal with Father Cebula. His letter speaks of Father Cebula's childhood and especially of his death at Mauthausen concentration camp.

Malnie, February 27, 1949

[...] As his brother who spent my early years with him, I can state that he led a quiet, humble life. He had no friends. He was a good student and used to help our parents with the housework.

As it is stated in Reverend Father Nawrat's letter to us, Józef died as a man of God. Immediately after his death, he entered directly into God's kingdom and from there he prays for us.

Józef Cebula was the child of Adrian Cebula and his wife Rozalia. The father, Adrian Cebula, owned a house and two hectares of arable land. Józef had one brother and one sister; he was the oldest.

As to the matter of his liberation from the camp, I had had a letter of request written on my behalf by the head of the local section (*Ortsgruppenleiter*)¹¹⁸ of the commune and our parish priest, Father Dembczak added a statement testifying that Józef used to teach German at Lubliniec and stood by the ethnic Germans.

One day the Gestapo from Opole came to our house and told us that we could no longer take any initiatives to free him because Józef was at the camp at Mauthausen.

After receiving a letter from Józef at Mauthausen, I answered him without delay. That letter was returned to me marked: "Józef died May 9, 1941."

As a result, I left for Mauthausen. When I arrived at the camp, I had to wait a day before being admitted. Two S.S. guards accompanied me to the office where they read me a form stating that Józef had been shot while trying to escape, that he had been

¹¹⁸ The individual involved was perhaps the *Ortsbürgermeister*, that is, the mayor of Malnie or of Ottmuth.

deported to the camp because, at Lubliniec, documents signed by his own hand had been found stating that he was opposed to the German government. They gave me his death certificate and that was all [...]

Testimony 2: Paweł Cebula concerning his brother Józef.

Życiorys, brief biography of his brother Józef, written in 1991, when the author was 87 years of age. These biographical notes are a bit confused and sometimes inaccurate. At this age, one's memory may falter and the events do not always follow in strict chronological order. This testimony was to be used in the beatification process. APP, Cebula.

Biography of Father Józef Cebula, o.m.i., Malnie.

Born March 23, 1902 at Malnie, he attended primary school in Malnie. In 1916, he registered at the Präparandenschule¹¹⁹ of Opole. These were German schools. During the third year, he fell seriously ill, struck down by pleurisy.¹²⁰ Transferred to the hospital of Krapkowice, he underwent an operation January 6, 1920.¹²¹ Since the disease was judged to be incurable, Józef was sent home to Malnie. The medical doctor (Heilkundiger Szursickel?) from Proskau,¹²² near Opole came to visit Józef Cebula because the doctor knew his mother who also came from Proskau. After a successful convalescence, Józef read in a newspaper that the priest, professor Rogowski was accepting young men, more advanced in years, who wanted to become missionaries.¹²³

¹¹⁹ The official title was: *Königliche katholische Präparanden-Anstalt zu Oppeln* (Royal Catholic School for Teachers of Opole).

¹²⁰ *Rippenfellentzündung*. In his April 5, 1936 letter to the Superior General, Father Cebula spoke of an inflammation of the lungs and even the pleura in 1918-1919.

¹²¹ The operation took place in 1919. See the preceding footnote.

¹²² Proskau, in Polish, Pruszków.

¹²³ It was not a school for "missionaries," but simply a Polish high school.

Consequently, accompanied by his father, Adrian Cebula, Józef went to visit the priest, professor Rogowski, who accepted him because at the Präparandenschule of Opole, Józef had been a good student. In Father Rogowski's institution as well he was a good student and was that also under Father Rogowski; he succeeded in making up for the years of lost education due to illness. Subsequently, he was able to pursue his studies at Lubliniec, following the construction of the Oblate house there in 1922.¹²⁴ Before being ordained to the priesthood, he spent one year at the novitiate in Belgium.¹²⁵ After his return to Lubliniec, he finished his studies and was ordained to the priesthood in June of 1927. He celebrated his First Mass June 13, 1927 at the parish of Otmęt; the commemorative photograph and the family photo on this occasion give proof of this. Then, Józef taught courses to the young students at the Oblate convent at Lubliniec. We have a photo of him and his students. Later on, he was transferred to the convent of Markowice near Poznań.

At the beginning of the war, he was doing replacement work for a sick priest in a parish near Inowrocław.¹²⁶ When, near the convent in Markowice, many were killed, the convent was closed and the Oblates were deported to the camp of Inowrocław.¹²⁷ Upon his return to Markowice, Józef was arrested at the convent where, along with one of the Oblate brothers, he worked on the convent farm as one of the laborers. All exercise of his priestly ministry was forbidden to him. When everyone was asleep, Father Józef who shared a room with a brother, would go down into the cellar with him to celebrate Mass. When people asked for

¹²⁴ At this juncture, Paweł Cebula gets the opening of the juniorate in 1922 mixed up with its expansion in the years 1925-1930.

¹²⁵ He should have written: "a year of study of philosophy in Belgium."

¹²⁶ Father Cebula was replacing Father Adamski, parish priest of Ludzisko, deported to the concentration camp of Dachau and used to say Sunday Mass at Rządkwino. He also exercised his priestly ministry in Wymysłowice.

¹²⁷ They were deported to the camp of Szczeglin near Mogilno.

it, he would leave during the night to administer the sacrament of the sick. When the Hitlerites were informed of this, he was condemned to death and deported to Mauthausen. The prisoners who were witnesses of what went on in Mauthausen, once they regained their freedom, related everything they knew about the death and murder of Father Józef Cebula, o.m.i.

My thanks to Father Jan Nawrat, o.m.i. of Obra whose letter of December 29, 1948 I have duly received. I am enclosing it here along with all the photos of Father Józef Cebula with his family on the occasion of his First Mass.

The parents of Father Józef Cebula, o.m.i., had three children: Józef, born March 23, 1902, murdered May 10, 1941,¹²⁸ his brother, Paweł, born March 30, 1904, still living at 87 years of age¹²⁹ and his sister Maria, born June 29, 1906, died April 12, 1966.

His parents:

Adrian Cebula, born September 6, 1868 at Malnie.

Rozalia Cebula, born in Buhl, June 29, 1863 at Stara Kuźnia near Pruszków.

Adrian Cebula was a boatman on the Odra river and died February 12, 1938.¹³⁰

Rozalia Cebula died April 9, 1930.

All of them were buried in the parish of Otmęt.

¹²⁸ He is mistaken because Father Cebula was shot May 9, 1941 and not on the 10th. Paweł Cebula no longer remembered what he had written to Father Nawrat, o.m.i., February 27, 1949: "Józef died May 9, 1941."

¹²⁹ Paweł Cebula died August 15, 1992 at the age of 88 years.

¹³⁰ Adrian Cebula died May 13, 1938 and not February 12, 1938.

II. TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIS STAY AT THE POLISH SCHOOL IN LUBLINIEC IN 1920.

Testimony 3: Jerzy Jonienc, o.m.i., concerning the young Cebula at the Polish school in Lubliniec in 1920

Biographical notes on Józef Cebula from April to July of 1920 written by Father Jerzy Jonienc, o.m.i., at the request of Father Stefan Całujek, o.m.i., superior at Markowice, in October of 1959. Written in his own hand in Polish. APP, Cebula.

I was fourteen years old when I met Józef Cebula in Lubliniec. Father Rogowski, former parish priest of Jędrysek near Kalety, was an ardent and active Polish patriot. Because of skirmishes with the native Germans, he was compelled to relinquish his position and live like one in retirement. He settled in Lubliniec in the house located across the street from the present convent which, in its day, was an orphanage founded by Mr. Grotowski. In the *Gazeta Opolska*, he announced that he was preparing young people for Polish high school.

I seized the opportunity because I had just returned from Wielkopolska¹³¹ in 1919 after the re-establishment of Poland because I was separated from my parents by the Silesian border.¹³²

¹³¹ Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) is an extensive region which has Poznań as its capital.

¹³² Initially, Silesia was part of the kingdom of Poland. In 1348, Casimir, the Great, handed it over to Czech princes. It then became part of Austria and finally of Germany. Following the 1921 plebiscite, a large portion of Silesia was given to Poland which took possession of it in 1922.

Józef Cebula, like his parents before him, had a Polish mentality. For a few years, he had attended the school for teachers. However, he had had to break off his studies because of an inflammation of the lungs and of a ventral hernia.¹³³ I no longer recall how he learned about Father Rogowski and his initiative. I think it was also through the gazette that the Poles of Opole liked to read.

The first time I saw him, it was at the train station. He took charge of my luggage. Pulling it on a handcart, he brought it to the parish house, residence of Mr. Małecki, the organist, at whose home I had rented lodgings.

He had taken up residence near Father Rogowski's with an old couple in a house which had a rather large room and an antechamber that served as a kitchen. They lived there at close quarters since the room housed three beds as well as the wheelwright's shop. I was astounded at the simple joy and peace that reigned there. Even today, I seem to see there the Holy Family of Nazareth. The windows were at street level at the height of about two meters.

Józef Cebula was eighteen years of age, four years older than I was. As to his physical constitution, he was sickly and pale of face, but with a slight smile on his lips and in his eyes. He did not talk much. In our conversations, we avoided the subject of girls and other things of that nature, the kind of things young people of our age usually talked about. We never went to any evening dances. Two or three times only we went for a walk in a park and once in the month of July, we went with our director to visit a family.

¹³³ In an April 5, 1936 letter to the Superior General, Father Cebula mentions only "an inflammation of the lung and even of the pleura in 1919-1921. It was only at Lubliniec that he began to suffer from an abdominal hernia.

In our conversations, we talked especially about our school work and current political events that touched our lives.¹³⁴ We were for ever being exposed to conflicts because of the fact that the school was directed by a patriotic Polish priest. We found the situation very upsetting.

We never broached the subject of a calling to the priesthood, nor spiritual subjects of that nature. But I am convinced that Cebula was already thinking of this. Each day on his way to church, Father Rogowski would knock on the window of the Cebula house. Józef would accompany him to serve his Mass, either at the hospital, or at the parish where Father Sobek was parish priest, or at Sadów.

Towards the end, political conflicts became increasingly violent. During the May 3 demonstration organized by the Poles,¹³⁵ militant Germans blocked the route of the march as it advanced towards the city centre. Father Rogowski and Cebula were part of the crowd. They just missed being subjected to violence in the ensuing scuffle.

One day we arrived at school to find our director extremely agitated and fulminating threats. While he was strolling in the region of Grünwald, on the bridge near the institute, he was set upon by a pack of militant Germans. They beat him bloody. He shirt collar was stained with blood and his head was swollen. This occurrence was extremely unsettling for us. At the home of the organist, another shock awaited us. A mob of Germans from Lubliniec had forced their way into the organist's home. They manhandled family members and ransacked the residence. They ordered the organist to stand at his window and sing "*Deutschland über alles*." ¹³⁶ For a few days, the nights were

¹³⁴ The burning question for the Silesians of Polish origin was the return of their land to Poland. They even took up arms against the Germans in 1919, 1920 and 1921 in order to achieve this.

¹³⁵ Anniversary of the first democratic constitution for Poland voted by the diet May 3, 1791, a day which became the national feast.

¹³⁶ *Germany above all else*, German national anthem.

filled with unrest. To instill terror into us, they used to beat us until we were bloody. The organist would find safety by donning the uniform of a French officer who was lodging with him and his family. At the time, Silesia was occupied by French, English and Italian troops.

From this time on, more and more on the street, the people in general began to revile us as "Polaki." We could not take it any more. Consequently, Cebula and I decided to break off our studies in Lubliniec and we informed our director of our decision. He agreed — all the more willingly because he also had decided to leave for Poland in order to avoid the worst. He told us that he would give us a good report card for the studies we had done and that he would issue us a recommendation which we could use for any secondary school. As well, if that was our wish, he would provide us with a recommendation which we could present to any order or religious congregation. With this in view, he told us to contact the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Piekary and ask about admission requirements. In 1920, the Oblates had just established themselves in Poland. I prayed fervently to the Virgin Mary to give me a sign indicating whether I should join a congregation because, to tell the truth, I was not much inclined that way.

We arrived at Piekary and Cebula contacted Father Pawolek, o.m.i. He decided to join the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the juniorate at Krotoszyn where the first juniorists made their secondary studies.

After having waited in vain for a sign, I decided to register at the secondary school at Ostrów Wielkopolski.

Father Rogowski gave us our report cards and his letter of recommendation. We went together to Krotoszyn beyond the Polish border. As for myself, I went home for the holidays, and later on, to Ostrów Wielkopolski. Father Rogowski immigrated to Poland and settled down in Wągrowiec, where he taught catechism and eventually died. When, after the plebiscite, Silesia was handed over to Poland, he would be interred with honors at Jędrysek. A street (formerly known as Koszarowa Street) bears

his name to perpetuate his memory.

I spent two years at Ostrów. A number of my classmates (Buchwald, Alfons and Leon Spychalski, Porankiewicz) had left the school. At Christmas time of 1922, I met them in town and I asked where they were presently living. They answered: In Lubliniec, with the Oblates. Immediately, Cebula came to mind and I asked if he was still with them. They answered that of course he was and that he was even studying for the priesthood at Liège. Touched to the quick, I was seized with a desire to join the Oblates like they had. I immediately wrote out my request January 1, 1923 and was admitted.

The Virgin Mary did not give me any clear sign, the kind I had asked her to give, but through Cebula, she called me as well to her Congregation.

Markowice, October 15, 1959

P.J. Jonienc, o.m.i.

III. TESTIMONY FOR ADMISSION TO VOWS AND ORDERS

Testimony 4: Notes for admission to first vows

These handwritten notes of Father Paweł Czajak, o.m.i., master of novices at Markowice, dated May 31, 1922, were in view of admitting Józef Cebula to first vows.

Date when vows are to be made: August 15, 1922.

Date this statement was drawn up: June 6, 1922.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Novitiate of: Markowice.

Province to which this subject belongs: Polish.

Brother: Cebula, Józef, born at Malnie, diocese of Breslau.

March 23, 1902.

Father's first name: Adrian.

First name and family name of the mother: Rozalia (Rosalie) Buhl.

Questions and answers

1. Health:

Physical constitution a bit delicate because of studies, but not weak, for the remainder in good health.

2. Physical temperament

Quiet and serious

3. External appearance and conduct

Modest and polite

4. Character

Conscientious, calm, gentle, upright and energetic. He was the one who was the least often called to order.

5. Intellectual qualities

Good practical and speculative judgment, tactful.

6. Studies to date

He began his studies as a candidate for teaching elementary school (two years and a half), then, he studied in a private classical school at Lubliniec (six months), at the juniorate of Krotošzyn for one year.

7. Moral qualities and supernatural virtues

Exceptional application, good results. Very fervent, open, mortified, detached, submissive, filled with fraternal charity, humble.

8. Overall view

Model novice (underlining by Father Czakaj).

Markowice, May 31, 1922

Father Czakaj, o.m.i.

Master of Novices

9. Observations, remarks... vote of the council

Admitted unanimously to first temporary vows during a session of the extraordinary council held at our juniorate of Krotoszyn, June 6, 1922.

Fr. B. Kowalski, o.m.i., Vic.

Provincial,

J. Kulawy, o.m.i.

P. T. Nandzik, o.m.i.

J. Pawolek, o.m.i.

P. Czakaj, o.m.i.

Testimony 5: Notes for admission to second temporary vows

Typewritten notes in French, written up by Father Richard, superior of the scholasticate in Liège, July 8, 1922, in view of admission of scholastic brother Cebula to second temporary vows. AGR, Cebula.

Brother Cebula. Call to temporary vows (for the second time).

The observations made during his novitiate are quite accurate and the brother has not belied them. His health has undergone a few transitory periods of weakness, his temperament is beginning to gel. Always the noble young man: phlegmatic, dyspeptic, quiet, serious, not very polished, walks with short steps.

Very modest and polite.

Excellent religious, perfect scholastic, except for his reserve and shyness which is a bit too pronounced.

Good intelligence, slow, sure. Perfect worker. Good results; he will do very well in his studies. Good judgment. Goodhearted.

Unanimous call from the board of directors.

Liège, July 8, 1923
Father Richard, o.m.i.

Testimony 6: Notes for admission to the diaconate and the priesthood

These notes are handwritten in French by the provincial, Father Kowalski, November 30, 1926, in view of admitting Józef Cebula to the diaconate and the priesthood. AGR, Cebula.

1. Health

Adequate

2. Physical temperament

Very quiet, slow.

3. External appearance and conduct

Very polite, shy, quiet.

4. Character

Very serious, very reserved, modest, gentle, calm, upright.

Never gives rise to complaints or reprimands in his regard.

Firm will.

5. Intellectual qualities

Endowed with speculative intelligence and good application of the same. Has done very well in his studies. Capable of being a teacher. Future superior of a juniorate. Knows Polish, German and French.

6. Studies

Clear methodical thinker. Very diligent.

7. Moral qualities and virtues

Excellent religious; solid piety. Model with regard to regularity.

Very humble, charitable. Very attached to the Congregation.

8. Overall view

Excellent subject.

Admitted to diaconate and priesthood by unanimous vote in extraordinary council held at Obra, December 1, 1926.

F. B. Kowalski, o.m.i., Provincial

Testimony 7: Notes for the first obedience

Handwritten notes, written in French, June 25, 1928, by an unknown hand, but signed by Father Kowalski, Provincial, in view of the first obedience. AGR, Cebula.

Date of the end of courses: June 23, 1928

Date these notes drawn up: June 25, 1928

Notes for the first obedience

Scholasticate: Poland

Province to which this subject belongs: Poland.

Father: Cebula, Joseph, born at Malnie, diocese of Breslau, March 23, 1902.

Place and dates of ordinations:

Tonsure: October 3, 1925 at Warsaw.

Minor orders 1: October 4, 1925 at Warsaw.

Minor orders 2: October 5, 1925 at Warsaw.

Subdiaconate: December 18, 1926, at Katowice.

Diaconate: January 23, 1927 at Lubliniec.

Priesthood: June 5, 1927 at Katowice.

(Printed questionnaire which we omit here.)

Numbered answers (written in another hand):

A. Delicate of health now and during his studies without being subject to a pronounced illness.

B. Quiet and serious modest and very polite.

C. Conscientious, calm, upright, energetic, never reprimanded.

D. Good practical and theoretical judgment; great success in speculative studies and in the sciences; a worried [*soucieux*] style¹³⁷ in his delivery; accurate judgment of individuals and of things.

E. Spirit of faith, docile, held in high esteem by his confreres, exercises an exemplary influence on those who surround him; has made considerable progress.

F. *Preaching ability*: Not great; a little awkward¹³⁸ in his gestures.

Good professor at the juniorate.

G. As above.

H. Good for teaching.

F. B. Kowalski, o.m.i., Provincial

¹³⁷ The original French has "*soucieux*," i.e., worried. They should have written "*soigné*," i.e., studied, careful.

¹³⁸ The word used "*gaucheux*" does not exist in French. The word is "*gauches*," i.e., awkward.

N.B. We still have (AGR, Cebula) the notes for admission to perpetual vows, tonsure and the four minor orders, dated June 24, 1925, as well as those for the subdiaconate and the diaconate, dated April 6, 1926. All these notes are written in the hand of Father Franciszek Kowalski, the provincial. Since they add nothing new, we do not see any need to transcribe them here.

Therefore, in all, we have six different reports on Blessed Cebula:

1. May 31, 1922.
2. July 8, 1923.
3. June 24, 1925.
4. April 6, 1926.
5. November 30, 1926.
6. June 25, 1928.

IV. TESTIMONIES ON THE LIFE OF FATHER CEBULA AT THE JUNIORATE OF LUBLINIEC: 1923-1937

Testimony 8: Father Jan Nawrat, o.m.i., Provincial, (1883-1960) concerning Father Cebula

Father Jan Nawrat held the office of provincial of the province of Poland from 1931 to 1936. He held Father Cebula in high esteem. His testimonies are contained in his April 30, 1932 and July 19, 1932 letters to Father Blanc, Assistant General. AGR, Nawrat.

Excerpt from Father Nawrat's April 30, 1932 letter to Father Blanc:

"The canonical visit of the juniorate at Lubliniec was most gratifying. I visited the classrooms; I had personal interviews with priests, the brothers and the students of the final year. One and all, they have seen an enormous amount of progress on all fronts. Under the worthy Father Cebula's leadership, things are functioning very well. It is clear that he has not yet been able to achieve everything he has wanted to. The staff is not yet adequate.... I believe I can assure you that the new reorganization will produce good results and will lead this outstanding house of formation to the heights to which it is called. [There are problems with some of the priests.] Since Father Cebula is a sensitive individual, he feels it all the more deeply."

To the same correspondent, on July 19, 1932, he writes: "Father Cebula himself asked me for the changes such as we had decided they should be. I offered him personnel who were more along in years. He did not dare accept them lest the difficulties involved should be compounded. Consequently, I decided to offer to provide him with young priests... Father Cebula is right where he belongs."

Testimony 9: Father Bronisław Wilkowski, o.m.i. (1901-1977)

Father Wilkowski spent several years in Lubliniec with Father Cebula. In 1936, he was appointed provincial of Poland. In 1932, he was a capitulant at the General Chapter in Rome. When he returned to Poland, he stopped at Lubliniec, where he wrote a September 19, 1932 letter to Father Blanc, Assistant General. AGR, Wilkowski. We quote here the passage that deals with Father Cebula.

“Upon my return from Rome, I visited Lubliniec. I found there an excellent spirit of concord, fraternal charity and regularity. Your advice and your kind words on the occasion of your visit¹³⁹ produced good fruits...”

Testimony 10: Oblat Niepokalanej, monthly magazine of the province of Poland

The chronicler of Oblat Niepokalanej does not conceal his admiration for Father Cebula. In this magazine (1935, p. 303), we read this testimony which we translate from Polish to French.

“Joy and contentment reign in the juniorate. With great dedication, the superior and professors are imparting formation to these youth from whose ranks will emerge future missionaries to the pagans. All of those who had the opportunity to visit Lubliniec were delighted with Father Cebula’s warmhearted welcome.”

¹³⁹ Father Blanc’s canonical visit took place May 2 to 8, 1931. After this visit, Father Cebula was appointed superior of the minor seminary of Lubliniec in July, 1931.

Testimony 11: Personal statement of Father Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i., on Father Cebula

Father Józef Krawczyk (1910-1987) was a juniorist at Lubliniec from 1924 to 1930, the time period which corresponded to Father Cebula's term as professor there. APP, Krawczyk. The text is in Polish which we translated into French.

Father Józef Cebula was a good educator and an exceptional psychologist. These qualities made him even more suited to fulfill his duties. He was a model priest and religious. Even though his voice was weak and unpleasant,¹⁴⁰ he had the reputation of being a good preacher. People came in droves to listen to his Lenten sermons at Lubliniec. They would continue talking about them for a long time to come. As confessor, he was held in high esteem and sought after. He was a genuine priest of Jesus Christ. Both his juniors and his confreres considered him a saint."

Testimony 12: Deposition of Father Jan Geneja, o.m.i., made May 29, 1992

Born September 21, 1913, Father Jan Geneja was a juniorist at Lubliniec from 1925 to 1931, the time period which corresponded to Father Cebula's term as professor there. This deposition was made before the diocesan tribunal of Włocławek as part of the beatification process. Transcript of the information process of the Servant of God, the Venerable Joseph Cebula. This text, translated into Polish, appears in Po Prostu kapłan. Szkic do portretu o. Józefa Cebuli, o.m.i., (Simply a Priest... J. Cebula, o.m.i.) by Father Kazimierz Lubowicki, o.m.i., Poznań, 1999, p. 29. We have translated the Polish text into French.

¹⁴⁰ In Polish, *nieprzyemny*. All the other witnesses speak rather of a "monotonous" voice. That is my opinion as well.

Father Cebula was in no way a worldly man. He was not brilliant. He led a simple, ordinary life, but in a spirit of faith. Even in the courses he taught, he insisted more on God and on the supernatural than on class matter. The announcement of his appointment as novice master came as no surprise to me. In the good sense of the word, he was different from the other teachers. He lived his priestly and religious life in a profound way. He got along well with others even though he did not have a winning manner nor was he outgoing. He was a faithful observer of the Rule. He lived his supernatural life with great simplicity. In a word, he drew his life from God.

He would follow up discreetly on his students. When he became superior, in spite of the fact that material conditions were very difficult, he increased the daily ration of food.

I heard tell that as master of novices, he would gently rebuke people. He improvised surprises to make life more pleasant for the novices. He was a just and impartial man and treated everyone equally. A very humble man, he accepted criticism, even from his students.

Testimony 13: Personal statement of Father Kazimierz Łabiński, o.m.i. (1914-1999)

Father Kazimierz Łabiński finished his juniorate studies in 1933. Consequently, he had the opportunity of getting to know Father Cebula both as teacher and superior. His testimony was published in the Obra scholasticate review Mozaika Obrzańska, April 1999, p. 32-35. We translate into French only the most typically distinctive texts.

One example to illustrate Father Cebula's spiritual conduct. People often came to the door of the minor seminary to ask for a priest to come and visit the sick. In preference to the other priests, the brother porter called upon Father Cebula since he made it known that he was always available, whereas some of the other priests often begged off in order to avoid being disturbed in their

work as teachers.

In 1933, Father Cebula appointed a certain Szkatuła (who did become a priest, but later left the Congregation) as valedictorian for our class. However, the students' choice fell upon me. Father Cebula felt rejected. What could be done? In order not to lose face and still respect the students' choice, he used the following stratagem. "Choose two among you for an oratory contest," he said. They chose myself and Szkatuła. Father Cebula chose a passage from Wyspiański¹⁴¹ and gave us time to prepare ourselves. At the designated time, we recited our text, one after the other before the entire class and I was chosen as victor. "Well, then," said Father Cebula, "he will be your valedictorian as well."

Testimony 14: Personal statement of Father Kazimierz Szymurski, o.m.i.

Father Szymurski was a juniorist at Lubliniec from 1928 to 1934. July 30 of 1999, he told me this story about Father Cebula. Translated from Polish to French.

On one occasion, one of the juniorists, after burning up all his energy playing soccer, felt hungry as a wolf. Without giving it much thought, he went down into the cellar where the brother in charge of the baking had made some buns. Since the brother was not around, he grabbed some buns, still piping hot, and tucked them carefully under his jacket. What rotten luck! As he emerged from the cellar, he ran right into Father Cebula. The latter, pretending to notice nothing, exchanged a few words with this "budding thief" when all the while the buns in his jacket were issuing the good odor of freshly baked bread. Father Cebula made no mention of any "theft," but his gimlet-eyed mischievous look spoke volumes. After his experience, this juniorist swore never to

¹⁴¹ Wyspiański, Stanisław (1869-1907), playwright and painter who had a profound impact on the Polish national spirit and literature.

do such a thing again. So it was that, in his ordinary gentle way, Father Cebula succeeded in teaching the guilty party a lesson without heaping reproaches upon him or threatening him with expulsion.

Testimony 15: Personal statement of Father Marian Mróz, o.m.i.

Father Mróz was a contemporary of Father Szymurski at the juniorate from 1928-1934. In an August 4, 1999 letter to Father Pielorz, he gave this testimony about Father Cebula. Translated from the Polish.

I am grateful for you sending me your work¹⁴² because I have Father Cebula's profile profoundly engraved in my memory. I especially valued his attitude toward his students. He did not scold them, but he journeyed with them in kindly fashion, like a father.

Testimony 16: Deposition of Mrs. Franciszka Koloch in 1993

Mrs. Franciszka Koloch, nee Dikła, with residence at 63 Kochanowskiego Street, gave this testimony in 1993. APP, Cebula. Translation from Polish of the most important passages.

I worked in the garden of the juniorate in Lubliniec. Father Cebula was not only a teacher, but also a friend, especially in times of serious crisis. He was good, kindly and compassionate, not only for the Oblates, but for the hired help as well.

Once while working in the garden, I noticed Father Cebula who was walking nearby saying his breviary. He was immersed in prayer and seemed to see nothing of what was going on around him. Consequently, I was surprised when he stopped near me, a

¹⁴² The work in question is *Męczennik za wiarę. Bł. Józef Cebula* (Martyr for the Faith, Blessed Józef Cebula) Poznań, OMI, 1999.

young girl who was only fifteen years old. Giving me a gentle smile, he spoke a few kind words. He asked me about my work and my family since we lived next door to the monastery. He told me how sorry he was that I could not continue my studies in spite of my deep desire to do so and that I was compelled to dig for a living. Not even my father had ever been able to show me such kindness and compassion. Through his personality and his simplicity, he was able to find the exact words to give me encouragement and to reconcile me to my fate.

I remember well Father Cebula's face. He was pale, thin, but so gracious that I could never forget him. In Father Cebula, I found a soulmate.

Along with others, I was delighted to see Father Cebula in the pulpit. When I heard him, my heart seemed transported into another world where only God could speak in such a way through the mouth of Father Cebula. His words were simple, but penetrated to the very depths of one's heart. They would lead us to reflect on the meaning of life. Father Cebula used to preach the Lenten series and a retreat in the church of St. Nicholas in Lubliniec.¹⁴³ The church was packed to capacity. People came well ahead of time to make sure they found a place. No one wanted to miss one word that came from the preacher's mouth.

Father Cebula was also a much sought after confessor. Long lines would form up outside his confessional. People preferred to wait to hear his words of instruction rather than to go to another confessor beleaguered with fewer penitents.

¹⁴³ Father Cebula preached the Lenten series in the church of Saint Nicholas in Lubliniec probably from 1928 to 1931. See his April 14, 1933 letter to Father Antoni Grzesik: "For three years, I preached the Lenten series in the parish church, and in Father Nandzik's time, I often went to replace someone." APP, Cebula.

I often saw Father Cebula walking with his students. He seemed to be one of them. He smiled, joked and was good humored like they were.¹⁴⁴ When he walked alone, his face reflected a certain pensive sadness. But in the company of others, he knew how to smile, be affable and easy to approach. He had a gift of reconciling people who had fallen out with each other.

I am sure that this servant of God, this knight of the Immaculate, our unforgettable preacher and confessor will receive his reward in heaven.

Franciszka Koloch

¹⁴⁴ According to general opinion and my own recollections, Father Cebula was rather a loner. He rarely took part in recreation with his students. So when Mrs. Koloch says, "often," she is exaggerating a little.

V. TESTIMONIES ON THE OCCASION OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS PROVINCIAL: 1935-1936

Testimony 17: Personal statement of Father Franciszek Kowalski, o.m.i. (1878-1954)

Father Kowalski put forward Fathers Wilkowski, Adamski and Cebula as candidates for provincial. On this occasion, he praised Father Cebula. The testimony can be found in Father Kowalski's letter to Father Blanc, vicar general, dated December 17, 1935. AGR, Cebula. Here is the passage which deals with Father Cebula.

I believe that we have in the province three men who would be suited for the job [of provincial]: Fathers Wilkowski, Adamski and Cebula. But I believe that Father Cebula cannot be considered as a candidate. He is a most worthy man, a perfect Oblate; he has neither the health nor the courage necessary, absolutely necessary, especially in the present situation, difficult from every point of view, in which our province finds itself at the present moment. On several occasions, he has urgently requested to be released from his duties as superior at the juniorate since he felt unable to fulfill this task. Father Provincial had a difficult time convincing him to remain at this post....

Testimony 18: The personal statement of Father Nawrat, o.m.i., provincial (1883-1960)

Father Nawrat suggested as candidates for provincial: Fathers Wilkowski, Adamski and Cebula, but he put Father Cebula at the head of the list. AGR, Nawrat.

a) Excerpt from a letter to Father Blanc, January 5, 1936:

"I take the liberty of giving my opinion as to who should be my successor. In my opinion, the candidates are especially Rev. Fathers Wilkowski, Adamski and Cebula."

b) Excerpt from a letter to Father Blanc, April 22, 1936: "The question of who will be provincial comes up. It is unfortunate that Father Cebula is no longer included on the list. As I explained in my last letter, he is the one who is, not only endowed for the job, but is the one who enjoys the widest acceptance and faces the least dislike among us. I acknowledge the seriousness of the reasons he gives if he does not feel capable of this task. It would be less lethal if we succeeded in ridding ourselves of those who have stood and will always stand in opposition to us.

Testimony 19: Personal statement of Father Bronisław Wilkowski, o.m.i. (1901-1977)

In Father Wilkowski's estimation, Father Cebula is the best candidate for the office of provincial. AGR, Wilkowski.

a) Excerpt from a letter from Father Wilkowski to Father Blanc, January 16, 1936: "The best replacement, I would say almost the only replacement, is assuredly Father Cebula. His health has improved a lot these last years. He is very unobtrusive, but when the occasion demands it, he knows full well how to make his authority respected among us and to maintain that same authority outside of Oblate circles. In addition to that, he is a very good religious, serious, steady, kind and well beloved of everyone. He is the one who would be most widely accepted. The second in line is Reverend Father Adamski."

b) Excerpt from Father Wilkowski's letter to Father Blanc, February 12, 1936: "I am always still in favor of Reverend Father Cebula as provincial. It is true, his health is not strong, as I was able to ascertain at Lubliniec, even frailer than I had previously believed, but then again, as provincial, he will have less work than now. Only, we should beforehand settle the Father Kulawy affair. Reverend Father Kowalski, I believe, would not be looked upon favorably as provincial."

VI. TESTIMONIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELECTION OF A DELEGATE TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER

Testimony 20: Father Wilkowski, provincial, praises Father Cebula.

Father Cebula was elected as the delegate from Poland to the General Chapter of 1938. On this occasion, Father Wilkowski, the provincial, expressed his appreciation of Father Cebula in his letters to Father Blanc, Assistant General. AGR, Wilkowski.

a) Excerpt from a May 9, 1938 letter:

“First off, good news: Father Cebula has been elected delegate for the General Chapter. With 18 people voting, he received 10 votes on the second ballot. Father Adamski was elected as replacement delegate by 10 votes on the second ballot.”

b) Excerpt from an August 25, 1938 letter: Father Cebula is ill and will not be able to attend the Chapter.

“The first news I must pass on to you is not the best; it is that Father Cebula will not be able to attend the General Chapter. A few days ago, he experienced a rather serious stomach ailment and he does not feel up to making such a long trip. In addition to that, there was some problem among the lay brothers at Markowice. This has been of great concern to him and had quite an impact on the state of his health. It is indeed unfortunate that he cannot come because he above all is the one who is the best liked and in whom the members of the province have most confidence. Father Adamski will attend in place of him, if he succeeds in getting a passport, something that is not easy to do.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Father Adamski would obtain his passport on time and would participate in the 1938 General Chapter.

VII. TESTIMONIES CONCERNING FATHER CEBULA'S LIFE AT MARKOWICE: 1937-1941

Testimony 21: Deposition of Father Feliks Adamski at the process of beatification

Father Adamski was Father Cebula's companion from 1920 on. He was master of novices at Markowice from 1930 to 1937. During the war, he stayed in Markowice until the time of his deportation to the concentration camp of Szczeglin, August 26, 1940. After the war, he spent the last years of his life at Markowice where he died in 1992. As a result, he knew Father Cebula very well and had the opportunity of learning a lot about him. A copy of this deposition is found in the provincial archives in Poznań in the Cebula dossier.

He did a better job of forming the novices than I did. I adopted the military model of training, while Father Cebula stuck to his novices like their shadow. He was a man of profound spiritual life... He was happy with the task given to him by his superiors; that is a rare thing among people nowadays. I do not think he ever committed a mortal sin. His life was well regulated and he lived it deeply and fully consciously. I am certain of this even though I never ever heard his confession.

He was a man of piety, but he never flaunted his deep piety and special devotions. His spiritual life was based on the Rule and on the daily program. Daily practices of piety such as the Mass, prayers, the rosary were entirely sacred to him. He was a practical man as well. Not only did he exhort his students to read the Scriptures and the lives of saints, but he also knew how to sound the alarm for everyone to take cover at the approach of German planes. I believe him to be a just man; something I cannot say of myself even though I have held the position of superior for thirty years.

He never failed to be present at oraison in common. Since, as superior, he occupied the last place in the back row, I cannot tell you how he prayed.

Nor do I know whether he had a special devotion to Our Lady of Markowice, since he never flaunted his special devotion.

The immediate cause of Father Józef Cebula's arrest was the fact that, in contravention of the edict not to do so, he visited the sick at Wymysłowice to give them the Viaticum and administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction....

Testimony 22: Deposition of Mr. Czesław Lewandowski

Mr. Czesław Lewandowski, a resident of Wymysłowice, made this deposition July 30, 1992 before Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i., pastor of Markowice. This deposition was subsequently published in the Gazeta parafialna (Parish Gazette), 1992, number 5. The witness tells how, in spite of the interdiction to carry out his priestly ministry, he continued to do so in the region of Markowice. We quote here from this deposition, originally given in Polish, the passages that dealt directly with Father Cebula.

Father Józef Cebula lived in Markowice from 1937 on. He was superior and master of novices. I had the opportunity of getting to know him well because he came to Wymysłowice often dressed in workman's clothes to avoid being recognized by the Germans. He wore an old cap. When he came to Wymysłowice, he used to stop at Mrs. Zofia Pamfil's house. There, he would hear confessions, distribute communion and teach catechism. He was a very pious priest....

I also know that he often went to Rządkwini to say Mass because the church at Markowice had been closed. Once at Rządkwini, my sister attended the marriage ceremony of Maria and Sylwester Rosiński presided by Father Józef Cebula.

Father Cebula used to come to our village of Wymysłowice right up until the time when the Gestapo became aware of it. The policemen came to the village at dawn while everyone was still asleep and searched all the houses looking for Father Cebula.

They knocked at our door at five o'clock in the morning. We were still in bed. Only my sister was already up.

Father Józef Cebula had found refuge at Markowice in the residence of Aniela Specjał and the Kurzydłowski family. He slept there in the attic.

Czesław Lewandowski,
Wymysłowice, July 30, 1992

Testimony 23: Deposition of Mrs. Bronisław Kasprzak

Mrs. Bronisław Kasprzak gave this testimony March 17, 1993 before Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i., pastor of Markowice. Father Doniec then published it in the Gazeta parafialna, 1933, 4/10. Mrs. Kasprzak tells how Father Cebula blessed her marriage in spite of death threats if he ever did such a thing. At the time, she resided in Ludzisko.

I am Bronisława Kasprzak, nee Siedlińska. I was born in 1920. Since I wanted to marry Leon Kasprzak (born in 1914), I went to Father Adamski, the parish priest of Ludzisko. The bans were published, but in the meantime, the parish priest and his sister were deported to Dachau. Consequently, we went to Markowice to see Father Cebula. He was very simple in appearance, sickly and rather bald. I have a clear recollection of that memorable day, September 8, 1940. On that day, the Germans were all attending a popular beer-fest.¹⁴⁶ Father Cebula took advantage of the occasion to bring us into church and blessed our marriage before the main altar and the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Markowice. Present at the ceremony were only the witnesses: Stanisława Kasprzak and Jan Siedliński both of whom are now deceased.

¹⁴⁶ September 8, 1940 was a Sunday; it was, therefore, a favorable occasion to celebrate the victories of the German army.

Upon learning of this fact, some women came into the church to warn us of the danger. Quick! Quick! If the Germans come upon you here, they will kill you!

The wedding was marvelous. Father Józef Cebula was a holy, pious priest. He was also very courageous because he brought us to church knowing full well that at any moment the Germans could have burst in upon us and killed him.... He was our priest.

Bronisława Kasprzak

I made this deposition before my family at Ludzisko, March 17, 1993 in the presence of Father Aleksander Doniec, o.m.i. pastor,

VIII. TESTIMONIES CONCERNING HIS ARREST AND DEPORTATION TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Testimony 24: Statement of Father Kazimierz Łabiński, o.m.i. (1914-1999)

This statement was published in Mosaika Obrzańska (Obra Mosaic), the quarterly review of the scholasticate of Obra, April-June 1997, p. 35. We translate from Polish the passages that deal with the arrest of Father Cebula.

As parish priest of Markowice, I had contact with the people who were eye-witnesses of Father Cebula's arrest. One of these witnesses had brought to the town hall in his horse drawn vehicle a German man and was able to witness what followed. Two policemen made Father Cebula get into their vehicle and left.... We have no other information on his fate...

People say that he was betrayed by a woman. She informed the police that, in spite of the interdiction not to do this, Father

Cebula continued to exercise his priestly ministry by visiting the sick and administering the sacraments to them. That was the reason for his arrest. I met people who knew him well; they told me that, in spite of the ever-present threat of death, he continued to exercise his priestly ministry.

Testimony 25: Account of Father Jan Nawrat, o.m.i. (1883-1960)

Father Nawrat left Markowice at the beginning of the month of October 1940. He was, therefore, a partial eye-witness. But since his testimony dates back to 1948, it is useful to quote it here. This testimony is found in a letter written at Obra, December 29, 1948 and addressed to Paweł Cebula, Blessed Cebula's brother. APP, Cebula. In his account, Father Nawrat tells of the ministry Father Cebula exercised in secret and the circumstances of his arrest as well as his deportation to the concentration camp of Inowrocław and then to Mauthausen.

During the days of his house arrest, Father Cebula's life was difficult. It became even more difficult after the deportation of the priests to the concentration camps.¹⁴⁷ With two Oblate brothers, he occupied one room and in their company endured their bad lot. What precautions did he not have to take, what care did he not have to take to avoid putting himself or the others in jeopardy when he fulfilled his priestly ministry! During the day, he worked as a simple laborer; in the course of the night he celebrated Mass; in secrecy and in disguise, he brought consolation to the dying, blessed marriages and baptized the newly born. In February of 1941, they categorically forbade him to do any priestly ministry whatever. In spite of that he celebrated the Holy

¹⁴⁷ The deportation of the priests took place August 26, 1940.

Sacrifice of the Mass every day at midnight in the outbuildings of the farm or often even in the cellar, attended by only one brother.

He had a presentiment that the time he had to bring Jesus down to the martyred land of Kujawy would not last long. April 2, after celebrating Mass at midnight he told the brother who had always remained faithful to him: "Brother, today I have celebrated my offering to God for the last time. I advise you to confess your sins to me for the last time."

Everything happened as he had foretold. During the noon meal, the police burst in and took Father Cebula away to the camp of Inowrocław. There, he found other priests and underwent severe torture at the same time as Bishop Kozal, future martyr of Dachau. They were separated at Poznań and, April 7,¹⁴⁸ he arrived at the concentration camp of Mauthausen.

Testimony 26: Account of Father Teofil Nandzik (1878-1943)

Excerpt from a letter to Father Nandzik to Mrs. Julianna Adamska written from Kędzierzyn, May 21, 1941. APP, Cebula. We translate from the Polish the passages dealing with Father Cebula. They speak of his deportation and death.

I have some sad news to tell you. They have arrested Father Cebula as well; he was a confrere of Feliks [Mrs. Adamski's son]. They were ordained to the priesthood when I was superior at Lubliniec. Along with other priests from Inowrocław (and Bishop Kozal, uncle of our Father Kozal, he, too, at Dachau), he was deported to Mauthausen, near Linz in Austria. Though they were arrested already April 2, they arrived at Mauthausen on

¹⁴⁸ Here, Father Nawrat is relying on the account of the deacon Spinek, but authentic contemporary documents point to April 18 as Father Cebula's date of arrival at Mauthausen.

April 18.¹⁴⁹ Father Józef Cebula (superior of Markowice) was killed May 9. Father Cebula's brother went to Mauthausen and there they told him: "er is auf der Flucht erschossen worden," he was shot while attempting to escape.

For anyone who knew the saintly Father Cebula, this is evidently a hideous lie. He is our genuine martyr and will be considered as such for all time.

I knew that he had been deported from Markowice, but I thought that, like all the other priests, he had only been sent to Dachau where living conditions are somewhat better. But, no, he was deported to Mauthausen, a real Hell on earth, and there, I suppose, all of them have been murdered. This is a source of terrible suffering for me.

But from another point of view, we have a martyr in Heaven who will help us in our wretched condition. We want to obtain his ashes to keep them as relics.

Let us pray fervently that the situation improve. As Oblates, we should be proud of our martyrs. I greet you all and I pray for you as well as for all our unfortunate confreres.

T.N.

¹⁴⁹ Father Nandzik is mistaken when he affirms that other priests "arrived at Mauthausen." They were deported to the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen; only Father Cebula was interned at Mauthausen.

IX. TESTIMONY ABOUT THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH AT MAUTHAUSEN DEATH CAMP

Testimony 27: Deposition of Wiktor Spinek, given May 8, 1945

Deacon Wiktor Spinek (1900-1978), Salesian, was deported to the Mauthausen death camp February 12, 1941, more or less two months before Father Cebula's arrival. Transferred to Dachau May 30, 1942, after Father Cebula's death, he met some Oblates and informed them about what he knew about the death of this martyr. After liberation, April 29, 1945, at Father Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i.'s, request, on May 8, 1945, he made his deposition which was recorded in writing by Father Krawczyk. This deposition was subsequently published by the Polish branch of the Young Men's Christian Association in the review Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele (Young Friends Together), Paris, 1-15 of July, 1945. This account was reprinted by the Oblate review Gość z Obry (Obra Visitor), under the direction of Father Konrad Stolarek, o.m.i. in London, July 15, 1945, number 2, p. 5. We have to point out, however, that this last text differs a little from the first text, but it is a case of details of little importance.

Born November 23, 1900, Father Spinek was ordained a priest July 8, 1945 at Dachau by Bishop Józef Gawlina, ordinary for the Polish army. He died December 5, 1978 at the age of 78.

We translate here from Polish the version as published in Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele.

Father Józef Cebula, Oblate of Mary Immaculate arrived at the concentration camp at Mauthausen April 7, 1941.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ According to contemporary documents, he arrived April 18, 1941.

Before being sent to block 7/1, they made him undergo severe torture. During the process of being dressed in camp attire, in the shower rooms and in the reception room, several S.S. kicked him black and blue. In addition to that, they ordered the dozen detainees who worked in the reception area to beat Father Cebula. They struck him especially in the face. This fact was told to me by the capo¹⁵¹ Wost from Vienna and Janca from Racibórz.

A few moments after Father Cebula's arrival at the block, two S.S. burst in armed with big billy clubs. They dragged Father Cebula to the washroom area and beat him for more than an hour, to the point that he lost consciousness several times. Then they gave him a rope to hang himself since he was destined to die in any case.

During the night, they hauled him out of bed and dragged him once again to the washroom area where they beat him for a long time. This was repeated more than ten times right up until the day of his death.

Finally, April 28, 1941, he was dragged off to the quarry, his usual place of work. There, Sergeant Spatz¹⁵² and capo N. N. ordered him to run toward the forbidden zone. Each time he would approach the forbidden zone, they ordered him to turn back. Then, at a given moment, when he arrived at the forbidden zone, they did not order him to turn back, but to advance. At the same time, a burst of machine gun fire was heard. Eight bullets struck him in the chest, the head and the neck, but they did not succeed in killing him. He would still live for a few hours.

When the stretcher bearers were carrying the body of Father Cebula to the crematorium, one of them told me (at the time, I was working in the garden beside the road): "Father Cebula is still alive."

¹⁵¹ The word "capo" means a person in charge or boss of a work section.

¹⁵² The person in question here is Johann Spatzenegger, work boss of the quarry.

Wiktor Spinek, Salesian¹⁵³

Testimony 28: Account of Mr. Bronisław Kamiński, July 1945

The testimony of Bronisław Kamiński appeared in the Polish review of the Young Men's Christian Association, Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele (Young Friends Together), Paris, 1-15 July, 1945, p. 9, entitled In the Land of Crime and Death.

It was also published with a few discrepancies in the review Gość z Obry (Obra Visitor) directed by Father Konrad Stolarek, o.m.i. London, number 3, August 15, 1945, p. 10.

We translate here from the Polish text of the Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele version while indicating the variants as they appear in Father Stolarek's review.

¹⁵³ In his book on Father Cebula *Po Prostu kapłan* (Simply a Priest), Poznań, OMI, 1999, p. 30. Father Kazimierz Lubowicki, o.m.i., adds to this testimony lines written by the hand of Father Józef Krawczyk, o.m.i.: "So it was that Father Cebula arrived at the camp of Mauthausen, the first Friday of the month and died there April 28, the last Friday of the month. In the death certificate, they indicated: "Detainee Cebula, killed while attempting to escape." Signed by the camp doctor, a non-commissioned officer and another S.S."

"I used to talk to Father Cebula almost every day. He used to tell me that he would never get out of this camp alive; he would be murdered."

Putting this remark in context, this is evidently a personal comment made by Father Krawczyk and written much later in Poland. Indeed, the text begins "So it was...." and gives the 7 and the 28 as Fridays whereas they were Mondays. Father Krawczyk's first great error.

He then speaks of a death certificate. This certificate was given to Father Cebula's brother when he visited Mauthausen in May of 1941.

Consequently, Father Krawczyk would not have been able to see it before his return to Poland which only happened in 1946.

The last phrase: "I used to talk to Father Cebula almost every day..." would be nothing other than Father Krawczyk's personal reflection added to the deposition made by Wiktor Spinek, May 8, 1945.

It is, therefore, following the canons of critical history to reprint here only the deposition signed by Father Spinek, May 8, 1945 and published in the review *Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele*.

In the Land of Crime and Death

One day there arrived at our block a strange *zugang*.¹⁵⁴ A tall man pale, with a spiritual cast to his face and the prosaic surname of Cebula.¹⁵⁵ He was so terrified that for the few days of his presence among us, we did not hear from his mouth even one coherent phrase. In spite of all that, in everything that he did, in his attitude and his conduct, one could see a certain dignity and, I would say, a mystery. He was so ill that he no longer ate anything. He was so weak that he could not even put himself to bed. His pitiable state notwithstanding, he had to go to work and he worked in the punishment corps. In reality, he did not work at all; all they did was beat him; he was simply condemned to death. Ceaselessly beaten, his whole body became discolored.

One day, it was as if he was infused with new strength. He took his stand before the S.S. who was screaming and striking him. His face shone with such dignity that the S.S. remained speechless and unnerved. Father Cebula then addressed him in these words: "You clown! If you only knew how laughable you are in your raging and your screaming. What can you really do? Kill, nothing more! Any idiot can do that! But up there, there is someone who judges human actions. There is someone there who has a thorough knowledge of justice. All of you, you are nothing but murderers pure and simple, people without any strength of character and without judgment. Your rage and your wickedness are the weapons of the weak who know no logic or fundamental laws of ethics. You are murdering us, but what will you say when, in turn, you will be murdered?"

Father Cebula ceased speaking.¹⁵⁶ When he left the neutral

¹⁵⁴ Newcomer.

¹⁵⁵ "Cebula" means onion.

¹⁵⁶ *Gość z Obry* adds here: "and with staggering steps advanced toward the sentinel." This statement is in contradiction to the testimony given by Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik, an eye-witness, who says that Father Cebula was compelled to run toward the forbidden zone.

area, the sentinel fired a few shots. His body contracted in a mortal spasm. He was dead.

Even after his death, a certain aura of dignity shone from his person. Even after his death, his face commanded respect. The workers in the crematorium were seized with a fear which prevented them from picking him up and throwing him into the oven. They have the impression that he is still speaking, that he is making gestures as if he wished to give his blessing to people. But finally, he is burned like all the others.

One year later,¹⁵⁷ I was speaking about Father Cebula to one of his confreres, that is a young seminarian of the Congregation of the Oblates, he told me: "Ah, Father Cebula, he was our superior; we thought that he was a saint."

Testimony 29: Account of Mr. Władysław Wróbel concerning Father Cebula's death as a martyr

We have two versions of Mr. Wróbel's account; the first was published in 1945 and the second in 1984 by Father Józef Maksymiuk, o.m.i. Since these versions differ in many details, we publish them as distinct testimonies.

Mr. Władysław Wróbel who came from Częstochowa was an eyewitness of the tortures inflicted upon Father Cebula at the Mauthausen concentration camp. His account was published by the review Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele (Young Friends Together),

¹⁵⁷ "One year later," that is, in 1942. Since, in 1942, all the Oblate seminarians were in the Gusen concentration camp, we can conclude that Mr. Kamiński was transferred there after Father Cebula's death. Some people state that the seminarian in question was Stanisław Kowalkowski. But he told me himself categorically that he knew nothing about it.

I presume that the seminarian in question was brother Kurda, o.m.i., who had been a close friend of Mr. Kamiński. Indeed, Paweł Kurda, after his arrival in Rome in June of 1945 spoke a lot about Father Cebula's death as a martyr.

Paris, 1-15 July, 1945, p. 9, under the title: In the Land of Crime and Death. We give here a French translation of it.

Here is what an eye-witness, a man by the name of Wróbel tells us.¹⁵⁸

Father Cebula made a profound impression on the German criminals with the result that not only did they not abuse him (we are talking about the German detainees) but they wanted to save him by giving him more food. But he did not eat all he received; he even gave to others part of his portion which was too meager to survive on. The S.S. goons. came regularly to the barracks to mistreat him and to ridicule the hymns and prayers he was made to recite by their orders. From time to time, he told his companions in misery that he had not known that men could be so evil.

After a week, he was assigned to a punishment corps whose members carried out the most difficult work. Father Cebula of holy memory was compelled to break stones with a maul he could not even lift. The S.S. who was guarding him struck him every time he lifted the maul, ordering him to pray out loud.

Upon the occasion of the most excruciating tortures, Father Cebula took his stand on a stone block and addressed the goons berating them for their crimes. Stunned, he was pushed toward the sentinels' post where he was pierced by several bullets. But he was not dead; he still lived fully conscious for one more hour.

Testimony 30: Mr. Wróbel's account in the Father Maksymiuk version

In his typewritten memories entitled Przeżyłem obóz zagłady Mauthausen-Gusen (I Survived the Extermination Camp Mauthausen-Gusen) written in 1984, p. 10-11, Father Józef

¹⁵⁸ Another copy of this account says this: "The deposition of Mr. Wróbel, an eye-witness, was written up by the seminarian, S. Kowalkowski, Oblate of Mary Immaculate." However, he told me that he knew nothing about it.

Maksymiuk, o.m.i. tells how Mr. Wróbel related to him in Gusen everything that he knew about Father Cebula. That is the testimony that Father Maksymiuk reproduces. Here is a translation from the Polish.

The Life and Death of Father Cebula at Mauthausen

At Gusen, I worked as a stonecutter. One day a newcomer (known as a *zugang*) from Mauthausen arrived near my work station. He told me the story of a priest tortured to death by the S.S. They accused him of the betrayal and death of several German soldiers. I had a presentiment about this. I asked him what the priest's name was. I no longer remember said the narrator. He was tall, sickly and blond. Perhaps Józef Cebula? But of course, that is who it was! I heard that name used when he was summoned by the S.S. in our barracks. I slept beside him. In the evenings, they mistreated him and beat him to such an extent that he could not eat anything. As a result, he gave me his evening food ration. During the day, he was assigned to the heaviest work and beaten mercilessly. They did not even allow him to sleep. At night, the S.S. would come and haul him from his bed, dragging him to the washroom area. There they gloated over the sufferings of poor Cebula. When he lost consciousness, they would bring him to by dumping cold water on him. And the sadistic ritual would be repeated.... Then, completely drenched and only half conscious, the priest would be brought back to the dormitory by the detainees who were on duty. We were moved to pity for him and we did our best to treat his wounds because he had been forbidden access to the camp's infirmary.

His martyrdom lasted about two weeks. On the last day of his life, he was compelled to carry stones so heavy that he could not even lift them. Consequently, two detainees were assigned the task of placing a large stone on his shoulders, of keeping him on his feet and of leading him like the executioners formerly led Jesus to Calvary.

Towards the end of the day, after having put the stone down at the designated spot, seeing certain S.S. nearby he berated them

in these words: "You are murdering us and killing us, but the time is not far off when you will have to answer for your crimes." Thereupon, one of the S.S. gave him the order to proceed in the direction of the sentinels. Shots were fired and Father Cebula fell dead. That very night, his body was burned in the crematorium of Mauthausen.

After his death, there was much talk in the camp about him.

That is the story that was told to me by the detainee Władysław Wróbel from Częstochowa. After the war, I tried to find him, but it was in vain. Probably after liberation he settled down in another village. He told me this story about Father Cebula in May of 1941.

Testimony 31: Deposition of Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik: January 14, 1967

Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik was interned first of all in the staging camp of Szczeglin near Mogilno and then deported to Mauthausen. A baker by profession, he came from the city of Łódź. In his deposition made in Belgium January 14, 1967 before Father Franciszek Dudziak, o.m.i., Mr. Rzeźnik gave his impressions on Father Cebula at the camp of Szczeglin and the testimony of his death at the concentration camp of Mauthausen. Father Dudziak confirmed this deposition April 15, 1992 at Chumietki in the course of Father Cebula's beatification process.

We have two versions of this deposition. The first speaks of Szczeglin as well, whereas the second deals only with the camp at Mauthausen.

We reproduce here the first one since it seems to be the original version whereas the second is only an abridged and corrected version probably written later on by Father Dudziak. APP, Cebula. Translation from the original Polish text.

Deposition of Mr. Henryk Rzeźnik concerning the death of Father Cebula.

Towards the end of April, or perhaps at the beginning of May, 1940, in one single night, the Germans deported many priests to the camp of Szczeglin near Mogilno.

After a rigorous search and the confiscation of money and personal effects as well as after having ripped open cassocks and cinctures, the Germans burned all the breviaries and missals. The manhandled priests in torn cassocks were deported to an unknown destination. After the departure of the priests, there were only two left in camp: Father Cebula and another priest in civilian dress. One day we were able to see them through the cracks in the board walls of the stable; they were walking in the park in the company of the commandant and the S.S. and talking together. Father Kulczyński who was with us recognized Father Cebula. In the camp, the story was that these two priests were *Volksdeutsche*¹⁵⁹ (ethnic Germans). The day after, they were set free.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ *Volksdeutsche*: citizens of territory occupied by Germany from 1939 to 1945, registered on the national list of Germans, known as *Deutsche Volkliste*.

¹⁶⁰ Father Cebula was arrested April 26, 1941 along with Fathers Feliks Adamski, Edward Wróbel and Józef Krawczyk and deported to Szczeglin. After two days spent in a stable, he was freed. He never inscribed his name on the *Volkliste*; he would remain a Polish citizen right up to the time of his death.

In his September 3, 1968 letter to Father Dudziak, Father Krawczyk gave vent to a strong negative reaction to Mr. Rzeźnik's version of events: "The first part dealing with Father Cebula's stay at Szczeglin does not correspond to the truth. Father Cebula was arrested with us and transported to Szczeglin August 26, 1940. He stayed with us in the stable up until the arrival of the Gestapo from Inowrocław. These policemen drove him back to Markowice by car. It was August 28.... In our barn, they also released the prelate Czechowski from Strzelno.... Mr. Rzeźnik's version of things must be considered as being erroneous...." APP, Cebula.

It was only much later that we were deported to Mauthausen concentration camp.

In the first days of spring, 1942, or perhaps 1943,¹⁶¹ a terribly manhandled Father Cebula was assigned to our block, number 7. The few days that he spent with us were Hell for him and for us. At an interval of a few hours, day and night, the S.S. would invade our block and beat Father Cebula until he lost consciousness. On these occasions, the entire barracks was subjected to the fury of the S.S.

While manhandling Father Cebula the S.S. accused him of being a "traitor," (*Verräter*). Among them I often noticed the camp commander, Bachmayer. Father Cebula did not answer the questions they asked him while they were torturing him. The only phrase I heard him say was: "Ich weiss nicht."¹⁶²

One day, at about nine o'clock in the morning, while working with other detainees in the Steinbruch Wiener Graben quarry, I was able to see a group of capos forcing Father Cebula to run in the direction of the barbed wire which surrounded the quarry. A few steps from the barbed wire fence, Father Cebula fell. At the same moment, the sentinels from two of the guard towers opened fire with their submachine guns. After a few salvoes, the stretcher bearers loaded Father Cebula's body on their stretcher and, taking the quarry road, brought him back to camp. When they passed near me, I heard Father Cebula beg them: "Gently! I am suffering terribly!" I recognized two of the four stretcher bearers for the dead; they were Poles from Silesia.

The next day after work when we were all in the block, our buddy from the *Effektenkammer*¹⁶³ arrived. It was his task to take

¹⁶¹ Indeed, Father Cebula arrived at Mauthausen "in the first days of spring" of 1941, April 18th, to be exact.

¹⁶² I do not know anything about it.

¹⁶³ The camp store where all the personal effects of the detainees were kept.

the clothes of those burned in the crematorium and bring them back to the store. He told us that this had been a terrible day at the crematorium. During the cremation of Father Cebula, a miracle took place. Hardly had they thrown him into the oven when he raised himself and made the sign of the cross. One and all, we fled the crematorium.

The S.S. went and informed the camp commander. Mr. Bachmayer himself came to the crematorium with a group of heavily armed S.S. and confirmed that the body of Father Cebula had been burned. Under pain of death, he forbade us to tell what we had seen.

Former detainee of Mauthausen camp, no. 1893,
Belgium, January 14, 1967

Supplementary Document

When the text of this book was already at the printers, we received from Father Józef Niesłny, o.m.i., a photocopy of a very useful document to help us learn about the life of Father Cebula as superior and master of novices at Markowice. The document in question is the *Recapitulatio diei*, a kind of spiritual diary kept by the novice Alfons Mańka. In it, we find his spiritual notes for the period of September 15, 1937 to August 23, 1938. It was precisely the first year of Father Cebula's tenure as superior and master of novices at Markowice.

Since we were unable to integrate this document into the text at its proper place, we have placed it here as a supplementary document. Manuscript form is 14 by 19 cm. with 176 pages.

We translate from the Polish two excerpts that deal directly with Blessed Cebula.

Recapitulatio diei

18 July 1938

Today Father Superior brought to his conference a postcard addressed to our class and dated July 15 past. The card was written by a brother who had just left Markowice and had spent several days at home in his family. Subsequently, he was to go to Krobia. Among other things, he wrote that his family had "ordered him, or to put it more tactfully, advised him to use some diplomacy" to obtain permission to be able to spend more time at home.

Father Superior stated that that often happened to those who left the novitiate. If, at the novitiate, we did not permeate ourselves deeply with the religious spirit, once out of the novitiate, we would lose all we had gained. If, at the novitiate we do not recast our spirits, we would easily fall into a state of lukewarmness, of even indifference.

August 8, 1938

Today, it was Father Superior himself who came to give us the conference. I was greatly edified by his professional conscience and by his zeal. Indeed, while he has not yet gotten over his illness, he arose from his bed to come and give us a conference.

He spoke to us of the vows of religious life, of the vow of poverty, which is the basis for tending towards perfection.

Index

Because the names of Bl. Cebula and that of the Bl. Virgin occur often, they are not listed in this index. This holds true for the names of those who are not important in the life of Bl. Joseph Cebula.

-- A --

Adamczyk, Józef, o.m.i., 77
 Adamski, Feliks, o.m.i., 23,
 25, 30, 31, 53, 54, 57, 60,
 61, 62, 79, 84, 85, 95, 155,
 159, 163, 196, 197, 198,
 204, 214
 Adamski, Juliana, mother of
 the above, 88, 92, 95, 102,
 111, 118, 204
 Amay, town in Belgium, 8
Archconfraternity of Prayer,
 27
Archconfraternity of the
 Sacred Heart, 27
A.R.O.M.I. (Roman
 Information Bureau of the
 Oblates of Mary
 Immaculate), 97
Association for Communions,
 27
 Auschwitz (Oświęcim), 29,
 88, 113

-- B --

94, 101, 106, 112, 215,
 216
 Bad Arolsen in Germany,
 International Service of
 Research, 10, 80, 103
 Baderski, Stanisław, o.m.i., 29
 Bąkowski, Maksymilian, 23
 Beblo, Herbert, o.m.i., 74
 Becker, Jerzy, priest, 87
 Bekierz, Róża, 15, 32, 63, 171
 Berlin, city of, 26, 88, 91, 92,
 102
 Bertl, a capo at Mauthausen,
 104
 Blanc, Euloge, o.m.i.,
 Assistant General, 26, 30,
 44, 47, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57,
 60, 61, 146, 152, 153,
 155, 156, 157, 158, 159,
 163, 164, 168, 188, 189,
 196, 197, 198
 Blandzi, Franciszek, o.m.i., 38
 Bojanowski, Edmund,
 Blessed, 116, 117
 Breynat, Bishop Gabriel,
 o.m.i., 36
 Brzezina, Karol, o.m.i., 36, 55,
 57, 59, 156, 157, 160, 161,
 163

Bachmayer, Georg, camp
 director for Mauthausen,

Brzuski, Henryk, priest, 87

-- D --

Buchenwald concentration
camp, 88, 99

Buchwald, Kazimierz, o.m.i.,
38, 182

Buffier, Louis, o.m.i., 151

Bukowski, Ignacy, 111

Bydgoszcz, town, 9

Bytom (Beuthen), town, 21,
42

-- C --

Cal, Józef, o.m.i., 95

Całujek, Szczepan, o.m.i., 21,
178

Cebula, Adrian, 15, 24, 171,
172, 174, 176, 177, 183

Cebula, Maria, 15, 171, 174,
177

Cebula, Paweł, 15, 85, 90, 91,
103, 173, 174, 175, 176,
177, 203

Cebula, Rozalia, nee Buhl, 15,
174, 175, 183

Chodziński, Roman, 100

Chumiętki, village, 213

Cyrys, Jan, o.m.i., 29, 62

Czakaj, Paweł, o.m.i., 23, 24,
25, 29, 53, 60, 182, 184

Czechowski, prelate, 214

Częstochowa, Shrine of, 28,
36, 96, 210, 213

Dachau concentration camp, 8,
78, 79, 84, 88, 91, 95, 100,
107, 108, 176, 201, 205,
206

Daily Adorers of the Sacred
Heart, 27

Dalbör, Edmund, Cardinal, 60

Dankowski, Leon, deacon, 88

Dembczak, priest-pastor, 174

Dembowski, Bishop of
Włocławek, 116

Dębski, Sylwan, priest, 87

Doniec, Aleksander, o.m.i.,
84, 85, 200, 201, 202

Dontenwill, Augustin, Bishop
and Superior General,
o.m.i., 36, 37

Dudziak Franciszek, o.m.i.,
79, 80, 96, 113, 213, 214

Dwucet, priest, 36

Dzierżykraj-Morawski,
Aleksander, o.m.i., 35

-- E --

Egan, von, 67, 69, 71, 72, 74,
75, 78

-- F --

Flossenbürg concentration
camp, 88

Frala, Mieczysław, o.m.i., 78

-- G --

Gall, Bishop Stanisław, 30, 35
 Gawlina, Bishop Józef, 96, 206
Gazeta Opolska, 17, 178
Gazeta Parafialna, 84, 200, 201
 Gembiak, Józef, o.m.i., 66
 Geneja, Jan, o.m.i., 190
 Gerard, Joseph, o.m.i., Blessed 7
 Gestapo, State Secret Police, 8, 12, 29, 69, 71, 75, 76, 79, 84, 92, 174, 200, 214
 Glados, Bolesław, o.m.i., 150
 Glados, Franciszek, o.m.i., 66
 Glemp, Józef, Cardinal, 116
 Gniezno, town, 60
 Góral, Bishop, Blessed, 117
 Górecki, Julian, o.m.i., 25, 27, 29, 30
 Gostynin, town, 66
Gość z Obry, review, 206, 208, 209
 Gotthardt, Bishop Joseph, o.m.i., 36
 Grażyński, Michał, voivode from Silesia, 37
 Grottowski, Franz von, 18, 28, 178
 Grouard, Bishop Emil, o.m.i., 36
 Gruber, Johannes, priest, 100
 Grzesiak, Paweł, o.m.i., 23, 25, 30, 31
 Grzesik, Antoni, o.m.i., 45,

146, 149, 150, 194

Gusen concentration camp, 7, 8, 9, 78, 88, 89, 93, 96, 102, 103, 108, 112, 211, 212

Guyomard, Bishop Alfred, o.m.i., 31, 36

-- H --

Hadryan, Jan, o.m.i., 29
 Heydebreck (Kędzierzyn), town, 30, 46
 Heydebreck, von, Lord of Markowice, 72
 Hitler, Adolf, 64, 89
 Hlond, Bishop August, 36
 Hoffmann, mayor of Markowice, 78
 Höntrop in Westphalia, 22, 23, 25, 53
 Hünfeld, Oblate scholasticate, 22, 25, 26, 29, 53

-- I --

Imielin, town, 7
 Inowrocław, city, 9, 12, 25, 59, 65, 75, 80, 81, 82, 85, 87, 91, 92, 93, 176, 203, 204, 214

-- J --

Jacewicz, Wiktor, s.d.b., 88
 Janca, capo, 99, 207

- Jański, Ludwik, o.m.i., 67, 77, 78
- John-Paul II, pope, 9, 14, 88, 115, 116, 117, 118
- Jesus Christ, 41, 117, 118, 212
- Jędrysek, town, 21, 178, 181
- Jetté, Fernand, o.m.i., Superior General, 7
- Joniec, Jerzy, o.m.i., 18, 21, 22, 38, 178, 182
- Józefowicz, Kazimierz, o.m.i., 29, 57, 168, 169
- K --
- Kaczmarczyk, Alfons, o.m.i., 78
- Kaczmarek, Tomasz, postulator, 88, 116
- Kaczorowski, Henryk, priest, beatified June 13, 1999, 87
- Kalety, town, 21, 178
- Kamiński, Bronisław, 95, 96, 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, 109, 112, 208, 210
- Kammerer, Jean, 100
- Kasałka, Ludwik, o.m.i., 95
- Kasprzak, Bronisława, nee Siedliska, 84, 85, 201, 202
- Kasprzak, Leon, 84, 201
- Kasprzak, Stanisława, 85, 201
- Kassiepe, Maximilian, o.m.i., Assistant General, 36, 60, 156, 157
- Katowice, town, 11, 21, 31, 36, 46, 48, 56, 156, 158, 162, 165, 166, 186
- Kędzierzyn (Heydebreck), town, 30, 46, 204
- Kępno, town, 33
- Kless, S.S., 82
- Kocot, Józef, o.m.i., 38, 95
- Kodeń, Shrine of Our Lady, 12, 66, 157, 159, 166
- Koloch, Franciszka, 50, 193, 194, 195
- Konarzewski, sculptor, 35
- Koppe, Paweł, o.m.i., 41, 42
- Kopper, German bureaucrat, 82
- Korszyński, Franciszek, priest, 87
- Kosian, Franciszek, o.m.i., 23, 29
- Koszęcin, town, 32
- Kotłęga, Edmund, o.m.i., 77, 78
- Kotliński, Józef, o.m.i., 66
- Kowalkowski, Stanisław, o.m.i., 74, 77, 210, 211
- Kowalski, Franciszek, o.m.i., provincial, 26, 30, 33, 34, 54, 146, 155, 157, 159, 163, 164, 168, 184, 185, 186, 196, 197
- Kozal, Czesław, o.m.i., 204
- Kozal, Bishop Michał, Blessed, 87, 88, 91, 115, 116, 204
- Kozioł, Emil, capo, 104
- Krawczyk, Józef, o.m.i., 72, 73, 74, 76, 79, 80, 95, 112, 113, 190, 206, 208, 214
- Krawczyk, Maciej, o.m.i., 69

- Krobia, Oblate scholasticate, 11, 33, 35, 37, 64
 Krotoszyn, Oblate juniorate, 11, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 181, 184
 Krukowski, Stefan, 92, 100, 106, 111, 113
 Krusza, Zamkowa, town, 74
 Krystek, Ernest, o.m.i., 38
 Kubina, Bishop Teodor of Częstochowa, 36
 Kubsz, Józef, o.m.i., 77
 Kulawy, Jan, o.m.i., 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 34, 53, 60, 113, 155, 184, 197
 Kulczyński, priest, 80, 214
 Kupiecki, Jurek, 100
 Kurda, Paweł, o.m.i., 78, 79, 210
 Kurzydłowski, family, 84, 201
 Kutno, town, 66

 -- L --
 Labouré, Theodore, o.m.i., Superior General, 33, 36, 45, 56, 61
 Łąd, town, 81
 Langer, Jan, o.m.i., 66
 Langlois, Ubaldus, o.m.i., 37
 Laubnitz, Bishop of Gniezno, 60
 Leo XII, pope, 37
 Lesage, Maurice, o.m.i., 10
 Leśnica (Leschnitz), town, 29
 Leszno, town, 79
 Lewandowski, Czesław, 84, 200, 201
 Lewicki, Marian, 111
 Liège, city, 8, 10, 11, 26, 27, 182, 184
 Linz, city in Austria, 91, 204
 Lisiecki, Bishop Arkadiusz of Katowice, 31
L'Osservatore Romano, French edition, 117
 Lourdes Grotto at Lubliniec, 35, 36, 47
 Lubecko, town, 32
 Lubliniec, town and Oblate juniorate, 7, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 59, 90, 169, 170, 173, 175, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 197, 204
 Lubowicki, Kazimierz, 50, 61, 69, 116, 190, 208
 Ludzisko, town, 59, 73, 79, 83, 84, 85, 176, 201, 202
 Lwów, (Lviv), city, 66

 -- Ł --
 Łabiński, Kazimierz, o.m.i., 49, 191, 192, 202, 203
 Łódź, 95, 96, 107, 213

 -- M --
 Maksymiuk, Józef, o.m.i., 74,

- 75, 76, 77, 89, 96, 101,
102, 104, 105, 106, 110,
112, 210, 211, 212
- Małecki, organist at Lubliniec,
18, 179
- Malnia (Mallnie or Malnie),
town, 11, 15, 16, 25, 63,
113, 171, 174, 175, 177,
182, 186
- Mańka, Alfons, o.m.i., 78
- Maria Joannita, religious sis-
ter, 113
- Markowice, Oblate novitiate,
7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 21,
25, 32, 35, 48, 59, 60, 62,
64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73,
74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82,
83, 84, 85, 89, 90, 93, 147,
148, 176, 182, 184, 198,
199, 200, 201, 202, 203,
205, 214, 217
- Marsalek, Hans, historian, 91,
94, 97, 99, 100, 103, 107
- Matulski, Leon, 68
- Mauthausen concentration
camp, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 78,
80, 87, 88, 91, 92, 93, 94,
95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100,
101, 102, 103, 104, 105,
106, 107, 108, 109, 110,
111, 112, 113, 118, 173,
174, 177, 203, 204, 205,
206, 207, 208, 209, 210,
211, 212, 213, 215, 216
- Mazenod, Saint Eugene de, 7,
8
- Meysztowicz, Walerian, abbé,
56
- Michalik Augustine, o.m.i., 38
- Michalów, town, 66
- Mogilno, town, 82, 176, 213
- Mościcki, Ignacy, President of
the Republic of Poland, 64
- Mozaika Obrzańska*, review,
49, 85, 191, 202
- Mroczyk, Henryk, o.m.i., 77
- Mróz, Marian, o.m.i., 193
- Mrugała, Jerzy, o.m.i., 67
- Muńko, Franciszek, o.m.i., 66
- Muszyński, Bishop Henryk of
Włocławek, 116
- N --
- Nandzik, Teofil, o.m.i., 28, 29,
30, 33, 34, 37, 39, 88, 92,
102, 111, 118, 150, 184,
194, 204, 205
- Nawrat, Jan, o.m.i., 13, 23, 44,
46, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 68,
72, 73, 82, 83, 85, 90, 103,
166, 168, 169, 173, 174,
177, 188, 196, 203, 204
- Neuengamme concentration
camp, 88
- Neuss, town in Westphalia, 22
- Nowowiejski, Archbishop
Antoni, beatified June 13,
1999, 117
- O --
- Oblat Niepokalanej*, monthly
magazine, 35, 42, 44, 46,

47, 59, 60, 189
 Odra, scholasticate, 23, 52, 53,
 57, 64, 177, 186, 202, 203
 Odra (Oder) River, 15, 177
 Opiela, Józef, o.m.i., 66
 Opole (Oppeln), city, 15, 16,
 21, 29, 174, 175, 176, 179
 Ostrów Wielkopolski, city, 21,
 181
 Otmęt (Ottmuth), town, 11, 15,
 31, 148, 176, 177
 Ottawa, Canada, 8

-- P --

Pakość, town, 74
 Pamfil, Zofia, 84, 200
 Paris, city, 100, 151
 Pawolek, Jan, o.m.i., 11, 21,
 22, 23, 181, 184
 Piekary Śląskie, Shrine of Our
 Lady, 11, 20, 21, 22, 45,
 181
 Pielorz, Józef, o.m.i., 7, 8, 10,
 72, 77, 193
 Pietsch, Johann, o.m.i., assis-
 tant general 36, 48, 62, 82,
 92
 Piłsudski, Józef, Square, 116
 Płock, town, 117
 Polak, abbé, 113
 Polish Catholic Mission, 8
 Pontifical Urbanian
 University, 8
 Porankiewicz, Edmund, o.m.i.,
 182
 Poznań, city, 8, 10, 14, 50, 62,

69, 81, 88, 145, 169, 176,
 178, 190, 204, 208
 Protman, Regina, beatified
 June 13, 1999, 116
 Pruszków (Proskau), 15, 17,
 175, 177
 Przybyła, Stanisław, o.m.i., 38

-- R --

Ratibor, (Racibórz), town, 99
Razem Młodzi Przyjaciele,
 review, 96, 206, 210
 Richard, Pierre, o.m.i., 26, 27,
 184, 185
 Riess, Dr., staroste, 36
 Ripalimosani, Oblate novi-
 tiate, 8
 Rogosz, Józef, o.m.i., 66
 Rogowski, Paweł, abbé, 17,
 18, 19, 21, 175, 176, 178,
 179, 180
 Rome, Italy, 8, 10, 30, 33, 38,
 52, 55, 56, 59, 92, 103,
 112, 116, 145, 158, 159,
 167, 189
 Rosiński, Maria and Sylvester,
 84, 200
 Rozynek, Józef, o.m.i., 77
 Rządłwin, town, 82, 84, 176,
 200
 Rzeźnik, Henryk, 80, 81, 89,
 95, 96, 99, 101, 102, 104,
 105, 107, 110, 111, 112,
 209, 213, 214

-- S --

Sachsenhausen concentration camp, 88, 91, 205
 Sadów, town, 19, 180
 Saint Gerlach, Oblate novitiate, 22, 25, 29, 30, 53
 Saint Michael, feast of, 16
 San Giorgio Canavese, scholasticate, 8
 Schulz, Karl, S.S., 99
 Seel, S.S., 83
 Siedliński, Jan, 13, 85, 201
 Sisters of Mary Immaculate, 32
 Sisters of Saint Elizabeth, 32
 Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin, 32
 Siwczyk, Konrad, 77
 Skrzyniecki, Jan, o.m.i., 60
 Śmigielski, Franciszek, o.m.i., 152, 153
 Śmigielski Stefan, o.m.i., 38, 48, 113, 162
 Sobek, priest, 19, 180
 Sobik, Paweł, o.m.i., 79, 82
 Sochaczew, town, 66
 Spalek, Karol, o.m.i., 77
 Spatzenegger (Spatz), Johann, S.S., 106, 107, 110, 207
 Specjał, Aniela, 84, 201
 Spinek, Wiktor, s.d.b., 91, 95, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 110, 111, 204, 206, 208
 Spsychalski, Alfons, o.m.i., 182

Spsychalski, Leon, o.m.i., 81, 182
 Stara Kuźnia, town, 15, 177
 Stawski, Stanisław, juniorist, 45
 Stein, capo, 104, 110
 Stolarek, Konrad, o.m.i., 206, 208
 Straszewski, Józef, priest beatified June 13, 1999, 87, 118
 Strzelno (Strelno), town, 12, 13, 59, 68, 69, 72, 75, 214
 Św Krzyż (Holy Cross), Oblate house, 81, 158
 Szamocki, Jan, o.m.i., 77, 78
 Szarlej, town, 45, 149
 Szczeglin concentration camp, 7, 8, 13, 79, 176, 199, 213, 214
 Szursickel (?), medical doctor, 175
 Szkatuła, Jan, o.m.i., 49, 192
 Szymurski, Kazimierz, o.m.i., 49, 192

-- T --

Thiel, Joseph, o.m.i., 29, 96
 Toronto, Canada, 8
 Trébaol, Goulven-Marie, o.m.i., 146, 150, 151
 Turin (Torino), Italy, 8
 Turquetil, Bishop Arsenius, o.m.i., 36
 Twardoch, Jan, o.m.i., 48
 Tyc, Kazimierz, o.m.i., 63

-- U --

Unek, boss of the barracks, 99,
100
Urbański, Andrzej, priest, 88

-- V --

Valkenburg, juniorate, 22, 25,
29, 30, 53
Vatican, 8, 100
Vienna (Wien), 93, 99, 104,
207
Villeneuve, Rodrigue
Cardinal, o.m.i., 36

-- W --

Wagrowiec, town, 21, 181
Warsaw (Warszawa), 9, 11,
31, 35, 66, 88, 115, 116,
165
Wedel, farm manager at
Markowice, 73, 74, 76
Widzyński, Michał, priest, 59
Wiener Graben, quarry at
Mauthausen, 104, 105,
106, 107, 110, 215
Wilkowski, Bronisław, o.m.i.,
47, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 61,
62, 81, 92, 102, 159, 163,
189, 196, 197, 198
Winnipeg, Canada, 29, 34
Witek, Aleksy, o.m.i., 61, 79
Włocławek, town, 14, 87, 88,
115, 116, 190
Wojciechowski, Stanisław,

President of Poland, 37
Wost, capo, 99, 207
Wróbel, Edward, o.m.i., 13,
64, 72, 79, 214
Wróbel, Władisław, 89, 90,
95, 96, 101, 102, 105, 106,
108, 110, 112, 210, 211,
213, 214
Wrodarczyk, Ludwik, o.m.i.,
61
Wyduba, Marian, o.m.i., 13,
38, 60, 61, 68, 72, 149
Wymysłowice, town, 73, 84,
85, 176, 200, 201
Wyspiański, Stanisław, Polish
playwright and painter, 49,
192

-- Z --

Zago, Marcello, Superior
General, o.m.i., 7
Zaremba, capo, 104
Zdebel, Alojzy, o.m.i., 38
Żerniki, town, 82
Ziereis, Franz, Commandant
of Mauthausen, 94, 101,
106

