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CARE AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS IN PŁOCK FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

OPIEKUŃ CZO-WYCHOWAWCZA DZIAŁALNOŚĆ
ZGROMADZEŃ ZAKONNYCH W PŁOCKU OD CZASÓW
NAJDAWNIEJSZYCH DO POŁOWY XX W.

Abstrakt

Kościół od samego swego początku opiekował się najuboższymi. Organizował i prowadził dla nich szpitale i szkoły. Oprócz okazywania pomocy dorosłym zajmował się także osieroconymi dziećmi. Dzieci te były wprawdzie pod opieką zgromadzeń zakonnych, ponieważ często porzucano je w kościołach. W Polsce pierwsze szpitale opiekowały się porzucenymi dziećmi już w XIII w. Pierwszy

Abstract

From the very beginning of its existence, the Church took care of the poorest. It organized and ran hospitals and schools for them. In addition to helping adult people, it took care of orphaned children. The children were looked after by religious congregations because they were often abandoned in the churches. In Poland, the first hospitals that looked after abandoned children appeared in

tego typu szpital powstał w Sandomierzu w 1222 r.

W Polsce przez kilka stuleci opieką nad biednymi dziećmi i młodzieżą zajmowały się zgromadzenia zakonne oraz księży z diecezji płockiej: Norbertanki, Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia Ojca a'Paulo (Szarytki), Zgromadzenie Sióstr matki Bożej Miłosierdzia, Zgromadzenie Sióstr Pasjonistek z księdzem Adamem Pęskim, Stowarzyszenie Charytatywne z księdzem Ignacym Lasockim, Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Najświętszej Maryi Panny i Starokatolicki Kościół Mariawicki.

Dzięki zaangażowanej działalności płockich zgromadzeń zakonnych i księży diecezjalnych, wiele dzieci miało szansę na normalne i godne życie.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

opieka, edukacja, zgromadzenia zakonne.

the 13th century. The first hospital of this type was established in Sandomierz in 1222.

In Płock, for several centuries, the care of poor children and youth was provided by religious congregations and priests of the Płock diocese: Norbertines, the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Father Paulo (Szarytki), the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, the Congregation of the Passionate Sisters of priest Adam Pęski, the Charity Society with priest Ignacy Lasocki, the Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Old Catholic Mariavite Church.

Thanks to the dedicated activity of Płock assemblies and diocesan priests, many children had a chance for a normal and dignified life.

KEYWORDS

care, education, religious congregations

1. The beginnings of charity care in Poland

In the age of the ancient world, the quality of *liberalitas*, or *generosity* was celebrated. There was no interest in terms such as *charitas* or *miser cordia* - mercy. This changed only with the advent of Christianity, which made it necessary to take care of those who needed help the most (Geremek, 1989,22).

The issue of poor children is one of the most important in the research on the history of social care. One of the great works of the Church was organizing and running schools and hospitals. In Western Europe, schools were established at bishoprics and monasteries to educate young people in connection with their preparation for the clergy. Similarly, over time, and in Poland, such centers also emerged (Surdacki, 1998,26).

Even before the great councils, Christians founded other places where everyone in need was looked after, and these were deacons and hospitals. These places were situated near the temples. There were many children in need and separate shelters were established for them: *brechotropies* were assumed for infants and *orphanotropies* for orphaned children (Surdacki, 1998,27; Michalik, 1994,22,34). Unwanted children were increasingly looked after by religious congregations, as children were often abandoned in churches. In the Middle Ages, the Religious Congregation that dealt with charity were Regular Canons of St. Duch de Saxia, also known as *duchacy*. This order was fo-

unded in France by Guidon of Montpellier and approved in 1198 by Pope Innocent III. The order developed its activities very quickly. In the 13th century, around 300 hospitals were operating under its patronage, and in the 16th century there were as many as 1,200 of them (Kępski, 2003,12,15; Markiewiczowa, 2006,35). It became a shining example for other charities.

In Poland, the first hospitals caring for abandoned children appeared as early as in the 13th century. The first one was established In Sandomierz in 1222, the others in Kraków, Poznań, Grudziądz, Tarnów, Drohobycz and Biała Radziwiłłowska (Giedroyc, 1908,24,57). *In Poland, at that time, the number of hospitals was very large: almost every parochial church had a shelter where the poor found shelter and support. (...) Babies, children, foundlings, and homeless orphans had separate shelters. Their task was to raise the younger ones and educate the older ones*" (Giedroyc, 1908,124).

The Church never left young people unattended. Religious congregations, especially female ones, responding to the teaching of the Church, always offered their help in caring for children and young people.

2. Care and educational activity of the Norbertine Sisters

In Płock, several religious congregations throughout history can pride themselves on their care, educational and teaching activities.

The Norbertine Sisters were the first Płock congregation to run a school for girls. The full name of the congregation is: Norbertine Sisters, regular canonesses of the Premonstratensian Order, white canons of St. Norbert, Ordo Premonstratensis. This order appeared in Poland in the 12th century. At the end of the 14th century, there were already eight female provosts in Poland, namely: in Strzelno, Zwierzyniec, Imbramowice, Czarnowąsy, Żukowo, Krzyżanowice, Busko and Płock. It was customary in this monastery that nuns were subordinate to the male abbot of an abbey (Knapiński,1885, 558).

The Płock convent was first the subject to the abbots from Hebdów, and from 1477 to the abbots from Witów (Borkowska, 1995,49). The right of care of the abbots from Witów was confirmed by the document of Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) issued in Rome on April 22, 1774 for Stanisław, the provost from Płock (ADPł., KDNPł.). And of January 1, 1477 for the abbey in Witów, the Płock convent, the abbey in Busko and the provost in Krzyżanowice in the diocese of Krakow (ADPł., KDNPł.).

This monastery was located in the suburbs, on the Vistula embankment with the church of St. Mary Magdalene. As early as in the 12th and 13th centuries, the place where the monastery building complex was located turned out to be dangerous due to the progressing collapse of the embankment. The danger reappeared at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, and the Premonstratensian Sisters received a new place from the king to build a monastery building. They functioned there until 1819, and after that time they were moved by the invaders to Czerwińsk (Mąkowski, 1931,593).

The Norbertine sisters are among those orders that dealt with the teaching and education of girls. Unfortunately, no specific information is available about this activity. The first information about the convent school of these sisters in Płock comes from 1649. At that time, Dorota Brodzińska was the teacher, and her assistant was Teresa Kadziłowska (Borkowska, 1995,54).

The inspector of the monastery wrote about the teaching of girls by the Norbertine sisters. In the past, up to 60 girls studied there, and in 1593 he mentioned 24 students (ADPŁ.KDNPŁ.). They were noble daughters. Until the afternoon hours, they learned to write and read in Polish, French and German, as well as how to manage bills; in the afternoon the sisters taught them to sew various dresses, making stockings, embroidery. The prioress and her deputy looked after them. The sisters charged the girls' parents in money or in emoluments for the care of the girls (Mąkowski, 1931,588).

For girls, the sisters allocated a separate room, which was located among the newly erected monastery buildings that had been finished in 1633. In 1631, when Bishop Stanisław Lubiński was in charge, there was a visitation during which it was noted that there was a separate place where the girls lived and studied (ADPŁ. KDNPŁ.).

More information about the upbringing and education of girls is known only from December 24, 1819. This year, the Norbertine sisters were transferred from Płock to Czerwińsk. The inspector stated that there were 11 girls back then. He wrote down their names and origin:

1. Józefa Popławska - 11 years old. Daughter of Józef and Katarzyna Popławski, heirs of the village of Sarnów.
2. Józefa Majewska - 8 years. Daughter of Mateusz and Józefa Majewski. The girl was looked after by Paweł Jarczewski, the heir of the village of Siejkowo.
3. Marianna Łempicka - 11 years old. Daughter of Mikołaj and Wiktoria Łempicki, tenants of the village of Szczawin.
4. Rozalia Pęgowska - 18 years old. Daughter of Tomasz and Maria Pęgowski from Wyszogród.
5. Barbara Pilaszewska - 12 years old. Daughter of Sylwester and Teresa Pilaszewski from Płock.
6. Marianna Pilaszewska - 8 years old. Barbara's sister.
7. Olimpia Błońska - 13 years old. Orphan. Daughter of deceased parents Jan and Marianna Błoński, a maid in Dulsk.
8. Joanna Białomieńska - 11 years old. Orphan. Daughter of the late father Joachim and the living mother Marianna Białomieńscy from Chrzanów.
9. Zofia Koralin (Borkowska, 1995) - 6 years. Orphan. Daughter of a deceased French soldier and mother Zofia, who left for France.
10. Elżbieta Dąbrowska, a Jewish woman who received the sacrament of baptism. - 15 years. Daughter of deceased orthodox parents.
11. Agata Barczyńska - 14 years old. Daughter of Franciszka and Zuzanna Barczyński from Czerwińsk.

The annual fees charged by the Norbertine sisters were also given:

1. Józefa Popławska - 360 Polish zloty
2. Józefa Majewska - 360 Polish zloty
3. Marianna Łempicka - 216 Polish zloty
4. Rozalia Pęgowska - 260 Polish zloty
5. Barbara and Marianna Pilaszewskie - 288 Polish zloty
6. Agata Barczyńska - 72 Polish zloty

This money was paid by the abbess' sister for an annual salary of 360 zlotys. The rest of the money was spent by the sister for other purposes related to supporting the girls (ADPł. KDNPł.).

The number of students was not large; hence, only one teacher, called the governess, was engaged in teaching. It was 20-year-old Klara Grabska, who worked under the supervision and watchful eye of Sister Augustyna Zembrzuska, a secular mistress. Klara Grabska, the teacher, came from the village of Szejków. She was the daughter of the Paweł and Katarzyna Grabski. In the monastery, she was recognized by the prioress.

During the above-mentioned visit, according to the bishop's inspector, only a larger room for pupils was missing, because there were many parents willing to enrol their daughters here, the inspector suggested that such places ought to be prepared in the building of the former monastery of regular Lateran canons, where the Norbertine nuns had settled (ADPł. KDNPł.).

3. Care and educational activity of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity of Father a' Paulo

Another order that took care of the poor, sick and orphans in Płock was the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity of Father a' Paulo, also called the Sisters of Charity (Scheltz, 1960,59,67). They arrived in 1784. They were sent here at the invitation of Bishop Andrzej Stanisław Kostka Załuski. They started their work at St. Trinity thanks to Bishop Michał Jerzy Poniatowski (Gretkowski, 2002,70).

The Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul was established in France and founded by St. Vincent de Paul and Ludwik Le Gras. They came to Poland thanks to the efforts of wife of Jan Kazimierz - Maria Ludwika Gonzaga, who knew the founding saints personally (b.a. 1980).

The Daughters of Charity, apart from working at the St. Trinity Church, ran a school for girls of all states at the will of Fr. K. Żurawski and for the maintenance of a boarding house for noble maidens. The convent school admitted not only young ladies from good homes who could pay for their daughters' education, but also poor girls (Bar, 1959,324). There was no fixed number of pupils admitted, although according to the record of Fr. Żurawski, places in the guesthouse and maintenance were intended for 6 girls. However, according to the document of Fr. Bishop Krzysztof Szembek of April 21, 1788, the possibility of free education was provided for all girls from Płock and for

those who came from its vicinity, provided that the ones from more distant places were charged certain costs for their stay in the sisters' guesthouse.

The sisters taught their students reading and writing, arithmetic, various housework and piety. This is evidenced by the record of Fr. Bishop Szembek, *that the Sisters should teach and put on devotion and morals of the whole, reading, writing and arithmetic, at least simple, and other decent and life-long work*. It was the duty of the sisters to give all their pupils a dowry in the form of good education. This is evidenced by the words of Bishop Szembek, who stated that *“three poor girls of noble condition and of the Plock Province, and if there were no such ones in this province, also from another province were to eat, i.e. a table and clothes for poverty, appropriate for this and decent education, as long as they stay in the hospital, they will be refused or have no dowry”*(APP). And the Sisters of Charity themselves were asked *“not to be too difficult for them, but gladly undertake the teaching of noble ladies to whom they would be placed a just reward”* (APP).

After the transfer of the St. Trinity from Jezuicka 70 street to Warszawska 272 street, the working conditions improved for the Sisters of Charity, who were involved in raising and educating local girls, and in the first place orphans, *“mainly girls coming to school were admitted [...] who lived in family houses, few only in the convent. The monastery, in accordance with the provisions of the founding act, educated and brought up a dozen orphans at its own expense [...], they were taught to read, write in Polish, count, religion by teaching articles of faith. Moreover [...] girls were taught to sew and embroider* (APP; Skoczeń, 1994,34,45). Thus, the girls learned the profession of an embroiderer, seamstress, cook, the skills of running a house and garden, taking care of children, and the patriotic accent, cultivating Polish customs, traditions and history were also included here (Skoczeń, 1994,34,45). The pupils of the Daughters of Charity were to be a shining example and an example worth following. In this institution, as in all those run by the Sisters of Charity, character was shaped by instilling modesty, humility, diligence and honesty in children.

In the school of the Daughters of Charity of O. a' Paulo, in the 1860s, 14 to 20 girls attended school. However, the sisters' care for the girls came to an end because of the partitioning administrations. The place where, for over a quarter of a century, more than half a thousand poor Polish girls received help was liquidated in 1865 (Skoczeń 1994,36,42).

The Sisters of Charity also worked at the Institution for Children of St. Stanisław Kostka, founded by Fr. Ignacy Lasocki. The institution had 3 departments. The first department, i.e. the nursery, was intended for children from 2 to 5 years of age, i.e. the second department was a Freble school, the equivalent of today's kindergarten, intended for boys and girls aged 5 to 7. The third department was called a Freble sewing room for boys and girls from 8 years old. aged to 14, at the beginning of the Department's operations only one sister who took care of 30 children worked here (Gretkowski, 2002,74; Kuźniewska, 2013,24,36). Later, More Daughters of Charity were hired in the hospital of St. Trinity (Gretkowski, 2002, 104,109).

For the first 12 years, 4 Sisters of Charity worked in the Department: the superior and the manager s. Rosalia.

Żakowska, Sr. Zenobia Szeronos, Sr. Apolonia Linke and Sr. Leopolda Iwańska (Lasocki, 1919-1921,12; Kuźniewska, 2013,37). The next religious Congregation that took care of children and youth in Płock was called the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. It came to Płock in the 1890s thanks to Fr. Bishop of Płock, Antoni Julian Nowowiejski and Jakobina Łapanowska, known at that time as S. Magdalena from the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus. On the other hand, Sr. Magdalena came to Płock from Warsaw at the behest of Father Honorat Koźmiński in the fall of 1889 with the intention of establishing the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus, the Institute of "Divine Love", which was to take care of the servants. Having researched the Płock community, Sister Magdalena decided to take care of fallen women. Her intentions were supported by a young priest, the vicar general of the Płock diocese, Antoni Julian Nowowiejski. In 1891, he organized the religious life of the new sisters. Together with S. Magdalena, he founded a correctional and educational institution dedicated to the Guardian Angel at the Old Market Square. The statute of the plant was approved by the then bishop of Płock, Michał Nowodworski (Grzybowski, 2002,36,42; Bar, 1966,76,77). Here, moral and material help was provided to women and abandoned girls.

Until 1899, the Institute employed 18 sisters. Back then, it was still a habitless assembly. Initially, the sisters lived in Kressel's house, near the Theological Seminary, and the Guardian Angel Institute was located at ul. Dobrzycka. In 1893, the Institute of God's Love and the Guardian Angel Institute were moved to a newly purchased building from Zofia Westphal at the Old Market Square. The sisters and their pupils worked in the kitchen, laundry, bakery, learned sewing and embroidery (they made quilts and sewed underwear). The pupils could also get education because the sisters ran the school. The sisters were still operating as an enterprise, hence, they could not have their own chapel; therefore, together with their pupils, they attended Holy Masses at a nearby church of St. Bartholomew. There was a chapel in the sisters' department, but the first Holy Mass was celebrated there in the spring of 1905 (AD Biala, Nowowiejski, 1930,635)

The pupils and their sisters earned their living by working with their own hands. The building in which they lived was rebuilt thanks to the generous help of the inhabitants of Płock. In 1894, the sisters added an outbuilding to one of the buildings, which they used as a bakery and their own living quarters. Despite their self-sacrificing activities, the sisters did not have sufficient experience or instructions on how to conduct their activities. In this situation, Fr. Antoni Julian Nowowiejski offered his help. He knew the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy from Warsaw. With the consent of the church authorities, the Institute of Divine Love was connected with the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Thanks to the merger of two congregations, the activity of the shelter developed. Sister Magdalena sent her sisters to Warsaw for a few months, where they could have an apprenticeship in the "madeleine" facility of the Daughters of Charity (Bar, 1966,70).

April 13, 1899 was the beginning of the activity of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Płock. Since then, the Guardian Angel Institute developed quickly and successfully. Many girls used help there, but, unfortunately, there is no information about it. There is one piece of information from 1900, informing that the Guardian Angel House had 23 sisters, 46 pupils, 3 novices and 4 postulants. In the 1930s, the facility hosted about 100 pupils (Kowalski, 1999,179).

After the reorganization and implementation of the constitution and regulations of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, the Guardian Angel Institute expanded its activity due to the acceptance of larger orders and the sale of its products. Despite not very suitable rooms and the lack of a garden, the Department had a well-organized work, and the pupils and sisters had sufficient material conditions.

The Guardian Angel Institute and the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy existed in Płock only until 1950. Polish pro-Soviet policy in the 1940s caused serious changes in the Catholic life of Płock. On June 21, 1950, by the decision of the Presidium of the Warsaw Provincial National Council with its headquarters in Pruszków, letter No. SP O: I - 1/17/50 of June 21, 1950, issued a decision to liquidate this facility and transfer it to school authorities for administration, explaining the reason for his reaction that "The Guardian Angel Institute does not correspond to the reasons of social benefit ...". The sisters were deprived of the opportunity to further raise neglected and abandoned girls. Very quickly, on June 22, the sisters were also deprived of three houses located in the Old Market Square. 32 sisters were removed within an hour and a half. They went to the branch of their Congregation in Biała near Płock (Grzybowski, 2002,634,645; Gretkowski, 2002,53). Soon, on July 1, 1950, a new educational institution was opened in the place where the Sisters' Convent and the Institution was located: the State Educational Institution in Płock. The newly established facility included a Special Primary School for disabled girls and boys. The classrooms and rooms for practical vocational training were organised.

On June 23rd 1990, the sisters regained their former convent building, but it was badly damaged and uninhabitable for a long time (Grzybowski, 2002,637). The re-opening of Care and Educational Center for children from poor families in Płock's Old Town took place. In the years 2000-2006, a Youth Center was opened here for girls and women who reported themselves to the facility in order to finish their interrupted education or get a profession. The activities of this Center ended in 2006. Since September 2006, for a period of three years, the sisters also ran a Community Center for girls and boys (milosierdzieplock 2015).

A new Congregation of the Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, known as the Passionists, appeared in Płock. It was created thanks to the efforts of Sr. Katarzyna Hałacińska, who changed her name to Józefa. Bishop Antoni Julian Nowowiejski agreed to accept the new congregation to the Płock diocese. In 1919, the Sisters of Charity resigned from the management of the boys' orphanage, known in Płock as the St. Józefa Orphanage, located in Teatralna street (Gretkowski, 2002,65,66). At the time, there was an opportunity to entrust this Institute to Sr. Józefa Hałacińska. The sisters

also ran a nursery for orphaned infants. Sister Józefa, as the head of the Department and the nursery of Sr. Józef, entrusted to Sister Teresa Szostek the position of a supervisor (Jesusek, 1972,241). There were 40 to 60 boys in the institution. The sisters, through their own efforts, gained financial resources by collecting money every Sunday and holidays at churches in Płock. They also went to the countryside for this purpose. In order to provide the children with food, the sisters leased a field they farmed themselves, from the Płock municipality (Gretkowski, 2002,67).

The Institute was also looked after by the president of the Charity Society, Fr. Adam Pęski. St. Józefa created a material base for the plans of the establishment, provided accommodation and support for the emerging congregation and for new candidates, who, together with the manager Sr. Teresa, had already started to create auxiliary educational staff for the orphanage. The Passionist sisters took over the Department in 1923 (MPP, 1920, 1925,104). Thus, the congregation began to arise. The aim of the future activity of the congregation was charity, educational and care work (MPP, 1920, 1925,104,105).

During the short absence of Sr. Józefa Hałacińska, who left for Strzemieszyce, the institution was looked after by Fr. Pęski, who should be mentioned here as much as possible. Orphaned boys trusted Father Pęski. He organized a choir for them and a group of altar boys. He celebrated Holy Masses in the chapel every single day (MPP, 1920, 1925,236,237). To support the boys from the Department, Fr. Pęski, together with sisters, collected Money from people who, very often, offended them. (MPP, 1920, 1925,104,105). The passionate sisters, together with the Daughters of Charity, who ran a facility for girls, traveled together to the countryside to collect alms to maintain their businesses (Jesusek, 1972,241,242).

The sisters often worked at night watching over sick children, preparing meals for the next day or repairing children's clothing (ASP). Passionist sisters also organized a kindergarten for the poorest children, who were divided into two groups due to the large number of 70 to 80 people (Gretkowski, 2002,68). In the St. Józefa Orphanage, the sisters fulfilled their ministry in every situation of the child's life, so they helped them with their homework, conducted frequent educational talks, organized trips, games, summer camps, plays on the occasion of various celebrations and many other attractions. This facility was under the care of passionate sisters until 1928, then it was transferred to the Department of Salesians (Gretkowski, 2002,69).

The existing Guardian Angel Institute that was run by the Charity Society of Fr. Ignacy Lasocki was joined by St. Stanisław Kostka. This facility was established thanks to the persuasion of the Superior, Sr. Stanisława Mroczkowska from the SS Congregation. Mercy of St. Vincent a'Paulo. In this way, the Charitable Society "Under the care of St. Stanisław Kostka" was established Its task was to help poor children and youth (Kuźniewska, 2013,32; Wnukowski, 1906,59,61).

In 1907, on February 1, Fr. Lasocki rented three Rosom i Płock. There were a kitchen and a small garden. In March, this house was visited by Apolinary Wnukowski, the Bishop of Płock, who donated 100 rubles for poor children. Encouraged by the bishop,

Fr. Lasocki purchased a building from the Bogucki townspeople of Płock for 15,600 rubles, located in Missionary street. The purchase costs were spread over a period of 5 years. Part of the purchase costs was covered by the Płock clergy. The renovation of the building amounted to 6,000 rubles. The orphanage had 12 rooms. A sewing room for which machines for sewing and making stockings were purchased. The equipment cost was 1,019 rubles (Głos Płocki, 1908,2).

Soon, the house became too small to accommodate the increasing number of orphans. Hence, in 1907, Fr. Lasocki acquired the barracks at Aleje Jachowicza, abandoned by the Russian army. These buildings were donated to Fr. Lasocki by the Charity Society (Papierowski, Stefański, 2002,335,336; MPP, 1913,291; Kuźniewska, 2013,32). The acquired buildings included: 3 residential buildings, a chapel converted from a barracks stable, farm buildings, 50 morga of land and 12 morga of an orchard (Nowowiejski, 1913,635). To the new, renovated buildings, Fr. Lasocki moved his Institution in the fall of 1913. In 1909, two professions for young people were established there: hosiery and wickery. Over time, this department was enlarged by a button shop and a weaving workshop. An elementary school was also established, attended by 120 children in 1916. Many children here received remuneration for their work, and their products were also sent abroad (Kuźniewska, 2013,37).

The institution functioned on its own consistory's salary until 1917 and on voluntary donations. After regaining independence in 1918, some educational and care facilities began to be transferred to the care of the state. However, government subsidies were not always sufficient to run them by those who founded and ran them. This also applied to the Department of Rev. Lasocki, who for this reason had to hand over his work to the Diocese of Płock in 1928 (Kuźniewska, 2013,37).

The Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary also dealt with the care and educational activity. In the years 1919-1921 they worked in security (Gretkowski, 2002,26), in 1921-1940 in a kindergarten belonging to the parish of St. Bartłomieja - Fary in Płock, in the years 1929-1935 in the kindergarten in Misjonarska 14 street, in 1932-1939 in a kindergarten in Misjonarska 10 street and in the years 1933-1940 in a kindergarten in Sienkiewicz Street (Kaliścińska 1976,187). The sisters tried to support parents as much as possible in bringing up their children (Gretkowski, 2002,34). There was a family atmosphere in the kindergartens where Służka sisters worked. Children were brought up in Catholic values, games, trips and cooperation with each other were organized for them, thanks to which the children learned organizational work and obedience. At that time, all nurseries were subordinate to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare and school inspectors (Gretkowski, 2002,34).

In the years 1919-1939, many vocational schools began to appear in Poland, with emphasis on the Catholic education of youth. Such a school was also established in Płock for girls, it was the Private Female Gymnasium of Tailoring Bolesława Jarząbek (Bączek, 1971,32). The school was located in Kościuszki 6 street. The Sisters Servants worked there together with lay people. Girls were provided with a high level of education at school (Geremek, 1989,43).

The last religious congregation in Płock that dealt with care and educational activities was the Mariawici. The community was founded by Sr. Maria Franciszka Kozłowska in 1907. The sisters established a free boarding house for post-war orphans and poor children; there were a hundred of them at the very beginning of the care activities of the congregation (Gretkowski, 2002,87). The sisters also ran a nursery for unwanted and abandoned children (Gretkowski, 2002,86,87).

The merits of the religious communities in Płock are undeniable. For many years they have been providing sacrificial help for those who needed help. The consecration of nuns and priests from Płock contributed to saving many abandoned and poor children.

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