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12th General Meeting of the Polish Biblical Scholars Association and the 53rd Polish Biblical Scholars Symposium (Torun, September 22–24, 2015)

The 53rd Polish Biblical Scholars Symposium took place in Torun on September 22–24, 2015. It was preceded by the 12th General Meeting of the Polish Biblical Scholars Association, which took place on the evening of Tuesday September 22. The general meeting and symposium took place in the hospitable campus of the College of Social and Media Culture in Torun.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Henryk Witczyk – chairman of the Polish Biblical Scholars Association, director of the Institute of Biblical Studies at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, head of the Biblical Work of St. John Paul II, and at present the only Polish member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission – headed the general meeting. After a short prayer and welcoming of those present, he expressed the need for an even greater integration of the milieu of Polish Biblical scholars. He also appealed for the tightening of cooperation between research centers dealing with Biblical studies across Poland, which is guaranteed in principle by *genius saeculi*.

Next, the memory of Rev. Dr. Henryk Lempa, who passed away on May 12, 2015, was recalled, and a prayer was said for him. Rev. Dr. Lempa was a Biblical scholar, Greek language tutor, and lecturer at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology for many years.

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk also congratulated those members of the association who since the previous year's general meeting in Lodz have received nominations to be professors from the President of Poland. They included the following Biblical scholars: Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Dariusz Kotecki (Nicolas Copernicus University in Torun), Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Janusz Kręcidło (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Franciszek Mickiewicz (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Marek Parchem (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Zdzisław Pawłowski (Nicolas Copernicus University in Torun), Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Wojciech Pikor (Nicolas Copernicus University in Torun) as well as Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Mirosław Wróbel (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin). The chairman of the general meeting wished the newly appointed professors further success in their research as well as satisfaction in their mentorship of young academics.

Next, Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Henryk Witczyk presented a motion to award Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Antoni Tronina (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin) honorary membership in the association. His student, Rev. Dr. Mariusz Szmajdziński, gave a laudation to the nominee. A vote was held, during which the presented motion was unanimously accepted. Furthermore, awarding the aforementioned title to Rev. Prof. Antoni Tronina became the perfect opportunity to also present him a jubilee book on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Letters of congratulations were also sent to the distinguished guest from Card. Gerhard Müller, President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission; Card. Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture; Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, President of the Polish Episcopal Conference; Archbishop Wacław Depo, Archbishop of Czestochowa; and representatives of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, among others.

Next, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk informed the audience that five new members had been accepted into the Polish Biblical Scholars Association since the previous year's symposium. As of September 22, 2015, the association counts 312 members.

Another part of the general meeting was the financial report for the previous year. It was presented by Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Wojciech Pikor, Treasurer of the association. The report was accepted without any reservations.

Meanwhile, as part of the free discussion, the topic of updating the personal data of the association members in the *Zeszyty Naukowe Stowarzyszenia*

Bibliotów Polskich. It was decided that the Google Drive application, which makes it possible to comfortably read and write down data on a virtual disk, would be used for this purpose.

The joint singing of the Jasna Gora Appeal concluded the program of the 12th General Meeting of the Polish Biblical Scholars Association.

The first day of the 53rd Polish Biblical Scholars Symposium began with a shared Eucharist, which was celebrated by Bishop Andrzej Suski, shepherd of the Torun Diocese, who also gave the homily. In his words to those present, he noted that there is a growing necessity for Biblical scholars to undertake research projects together and to conduct research in teams of experts, the result of which are various types of publications about Sacred Scripture.

The first two sessions of the symposium focused on the topic of the jubilee of the fiftieth anniversary of the first edition of the Polish *Millennium Bible* (1965–2015). The first session consisted of the presentation of two papers: one by Rev. Dr. Hab. Rajmund Pietkiewicz of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław titled *Znaczenie Biblii Tysiąclecia dla kultury biblijnej w Polsce* (“The Importance of the *Millennium Bible* to Biblical Cultural in Poland”) and one by Rev. Zbigniew Rembisz SAC, director of the Pallottinum publishing house, titled *Edycja Biblii Tysiąclecia – historia i perspektywy* (“The Edition of the *Millennium Bible*: History and Perspectives”).

This session reminded those present that the *Millennium Bible*, eight million copies of which have been printed so far, which is the official liturgical text of Sacred Scripture in Polish, has unquestionably shaped the liturgy, religious life, and Biblical culture in Poland over the past fifty years, although other translations that resulted from academic research and in-depth study of the Bible were also published during this time. It was the first translation of the entire Bible into the Polish language since the publication of *Father Jakub Wujek’s Bible* 350 years before. What’s more, it was a translation from the original languages, not from the Vulgate. Work on it began in 1959, and Father Augustyn Jankowski, OSB, oversaw the realization of the project with respect to academic editing.

August 2, 1965, is considered to be the date of the publication of the *Millennium Bible*, because it was presented to Cdl. Stefan Wyszyński by Rev. Piotr Granatowicz, then the director of the Pallottinum publishing house, on that day. As Rev. Dr. Hab. Rajmund Pietkiewicz noted in his presentation, the publication of this Polish translation of Sacred Scripture was important because it was the fruit of the

Biblical movement that developed parallel to the ongoing Second Vatican Council rather than of the initiatives that appeared after it, as was the case in other countries where similar efforts at translating and editing the Bible were undertaken.

The *Millennium Bible* owes its name to Rev. Kazimierz Dynarski, SAC, the editor of that translation from the Pallottinum publishing house. Initially, this translation was called the *Tyniec Bible* as a result of the Benedictine Abbey in Tyniec, which was the source of the initiative. However, the fact that it appeared one year before the millennial anniversary of the baptism of Poland led to its being called the *Millennium Bible*.

As the aforementioned speakers noted in their presentations, the publishing of the *Millennium Bible* was certainly a providential event that led to the renewal of the Catholic Church in Poland and to the development of Biblical culture, which developed under the influence of the reception of this translation and its five editions: the first in 1965, the second in 1971, the third in 1980, the fourth in 1983, and the fifth in 2000. It should be noted that there is no major difference between the third and fourth editions. The Servant of God Rev. Franciszek Blachnicki, founder of the Life-Light Movement, thanks to whom the *Millennium Bible* was published in the 1980s in the small, so-called “oasis” format, made major contributions to this as well.

Also emphasized was the significance of group work in the development of this translation, especially with regards to the skills of translators and the weight of numerous Polish language consultations as a result of which the *Millennium Bible* became the Pallottinum publishing house’s most renowned publication. At the same time, the need to form a new academic council that would oversee the preparation of a new edition meeting the needs of the contemporary reader of the Biblical text was signaled.

During the second session, the following spoke: Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Jacek Nowak, SAC (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), who presented a paper titled *Biblia Tysiąclecia w liturgii* (“The *Millennium Bible* in the Liturgy”), as well as Dr. Hab. Grzegorz Kubski from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, who spoke about the “Tyniec Translation of the Gospels and the Situation of Religious Culture” (*Tyniecki przekład Ewangelii wobec koniunktur kultury religijnej*).

The first speaker reminded the audience that in accordance with the Primate of Poland’s decree of March 7, 1966, the *Millennium Bible* is the translation

used in the liturgy of the Catholic Church in Poland up to the present day. He described the role and reception of this translation in the liturgy. He also presented the range of and some details regarding work on the second edition of the *Lekcjonarzy mszalnych* ("Mass Lectionaries") prepared by the Pallottinum publishing house. The five-volume collection will appear by the end of this year.

The second speaker during this session, Dr. Hab. Grzegorz Kubski of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, dealt with the translation of the *Millennium Bible* from the perspective of the literary scientist, especially focusing on texts from the Gospels. He dealt with some matters strictly related to Biblical language, such as *praesens historicum*, or the postposition of qualifiers.

The third session planned for that day of the symposium was met with great interest. It featured a presentation by Rev. Dr. Adama Węgrzyna, SDB (Major Seminary of the Salesian Society in Krakow) titled *Kim jest ten, który grzechy odpuszcza? Analiza narracyjna Łk 7, 36–50* ("Who Is He Who Absolves Sins? A Narrative Analysis of Luke 7: 36–50"); *Pozycja kobiety w małżeństwie w świetle tablic domowych Nowego Testamentu, Kol 3, 18–19; Ef 5, 21–33; 1 P 3, 1–7; Tt 2, 4–5* ("The Place of Women in Marriage in Light of the New Testament Household Code, Colossians 3: 18–19, Ephesians 5: 21–33, 1 Peter 3: 1–7, Titus 2: 4–5") by Rev. Dr. Hab. Stanisław Wronka (Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow); as well as Prof. Dr. Hab. Bogdan Poniży's (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan) paper titled *Uosobiona Mądrość w Sophia Salomonos* ("Personified Wisdom in Sophia Salomonos").

The climax of this eventful day was a ceremonial dinner during which the group of Polish Biblical scholars continued their discussions from the symposium in smaller groups. This social meeting was also a perfect opportunity to congratulate Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Waldemar Chrostowski, the first Pole awarded with the prestigious Ratzinger Prize.

During the first session of the first day of the symposium, Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Waldemar Chrostowski of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw discussed the topic of "The Problem of the Historical Accuracy of the Book of Jonah: "An Imagined Composition?" (*Problem historyczności Księgi Jonasza: „kompozycja wyobrażona”?*), while Rev. Dr. Mariusz Szmajdziński presented on the topic of "The Lord's Day in the Teachings of the Twelve Prophets" (*Dzień Pański w nauczaniu Dwunastu Proroków*).

Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Waldemar Chrostowski not only noted the important of the Book of Jonah in the canon of the Sacred Scriptures to which Jesus Himself referred (Matthew 12:40, por. 16:4, Luke 11:29), but also the necessity of learning the history of the genesis and functioning of the so-called Assyrian diaspora as the background allowing for an in-depth interpretation of the theological message of this book. Naturally, such a way of looking at the Book of Jonah gives rise to questions and gives answers. It makes one wonder to whom Jonah directed his proclamation and if the audience of this message of God in Nineveh above all were the prophet's countrymen. Answers to these questions lead one to think about the subject of Jonah's calling: is it a summons to believe in God, or an appeal to live the right way, in accordance with the faith of one's ancestors, which was a priority in the aspect of functioning and maintaining one's religious and cultural heritage while abroad?

Rev. Dr. Mariusz Szmajdziński reminded the audience that the "Lord's Day" is still a very relevant and rich in meaning theological idea that presents a passage from the worldly reality to the eschatological one. He also presented the current state of research on this topic whose common denominator essentially comes down to the following expressions: 1) there is widespread hope that the "Day of the Lord" will come, 2) it will come quickly, and 3) God rules over everything.

During the second day of the symposium, papers were presented by Dr. Hab. Krzysztof Mielcarek of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and Dr. Hab. Krzysztof Pilarczyk of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. The former presented a paper titled *Ewangelie dzieciństwa. Między Scyllą faktografii i Charybda mitu* ("The Gospel Infancy Narratives: Between the Scylla of Facts and the Charybdis of Myth"), while the latter presented *Dzieje a początki Kościoła: wokół problemu datacji dzieła Łukasza* ("Acts of the Apostles and the Beginnings of the Church: With Regards to the Problem of Dating Luke's Work").

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk, chairman of the association, spoke at the end of the meeting. He said that the next meeting of Polish Biblical scholars would take place on September 19–21, 2016, in Rzeszow.