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The Church of the Resurrection in Rome as a Temple of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

LA CHIESA DELLA RESURREZIONE A ROMA COME TEMPIO
DEL COMMONWEALTH POLACCO-LITUANO

Summary

The paper examines the primary iconography of the interior design of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome, located in via San Sebastianello 11, reconstructed thanks to the archival materials. The interior of the church of the Resurrectionists in Rome was consecrated on November 5th, 1889, during the time of partitions and the lack of representation of the temple of the Polish nation in the Eternal City. The church until the 1979 renovation had a homogeneous decoration in the historicizing trend, which was bound together by polychromy in the type of “carpet polychromy” (*Tapisseriesmalerei*), capturing the most semantically significant elements of decoration – stained glass windows and historical paintings. Iconography in the chancel referred to the Resurrection and the role of the Church in delivering this message. On the axis of the apse there was a stained-glass window with an image of the Risen Christ, flanked by two stained glass windows with representations of Immaculata and St. Joseph, whose cults were promoted in the Church by Pope Pius IX. The stained-glass windows also included the coats of arms of Pope Leo XIII and the founders. The main altar: a mensa from 1775, from the former church of St. Paul the First Hermit of the Pauline Fathers (formerly the Polish temple), over a wall-mounted canopy whose founder was Father Władysław Czaratoryski, with an image of Our Lady of Częstochowa. The triumphal arch on the pillars framing the altar featured painted figures of St. Stanislaus and St. Sebastian, and on top of the chancel arch was an image of the *Vernicle*. Above the stalls there were figural paintings relating to the handing down the mission in the Church during various historical moments: The Ascension by Henryk Siemiradzki (on the south side) and The First Vows of the Resurrectionists and the Approval of the Congregation by Pius IX by Józef Unierzyski, enframed in a wooden frame with the coats of arms of Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX. In the window area above it, there was the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Poland, while in the successive spans of the nave there were the coats of arms of Cardinal Mieczysław Ledóchowski and the Lithuanian Pogoń. Across the nave,

there were two figural paintings by Franciszek Krudowski, depicting encounters with the Risen Christ on earth: Infidel Thomas and Noli me tangere. Therefore, the southern wall of the presbytery and nave depicted the presence of the Risen Christ on earth, while the northern wall pointed to the Church of Poland, from the formation of the Resurrectionists to the symbols of the state and the primate-interrex. The symbolism of the connection between the Universal Church and the Polish Church was developed on the choir wall, divided by the organ emporium into two tiers, in which stained glass windows were placed, in the lower one were the figures of the three Archangels and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Annunciation scene, in the upper one were Saints Casimir and Josaphat, all stained glass windows were accompanied by coats of arms, whether of the Polish State or the founders. The Church of the Resurrection thus merged the iconography of the cult of the Resurrection of Christ with national representation, which was expressed both by the depicted saints and the extensive heraldic program. The emphasis on the cult of Christ and the saints of the Polish church has a reference to the first temple of the Polish nation of St. Stanislaus, whose main patron was the Blessed Savior; the image of St. Stanislaus also referred to the name of this temple. The presence of St. Josaphat, on the other hand, refers to the tradition of the Uniate hospice of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus, representing the Ruthenian nation. The iconography with images of St. Casimir, St. Josaphat, the Eagle and Pogoń coats of arms indicated that this was the temple of the First Republic, a buried state, which was represented in Rome by the Resurrectionists, the informal Polish ambassadors to the apostolic capital, who also protected and spread the Uniate rite. The saints present in the temple's iconography and the emphasis on the relationship between the Polish Church and the Universal Church were also reflected in the Resurrectionists' apostolic mission. The union of Church and state – altar and throne in the iconographic program of the Resurrection temple emphatically indicated that there would be no resurrection of the homeland without the Church, which was also confirmed in the political and social program of the Resurrectionist congregation.

Keywords: Resurrectionists; Church of the Polish Nation in Rome; St. Josaphat; Resurrection iconography

Sommario

Il documento esamina l'iconografia primaria dell'arredamento della Chiesa della Resurrezione a Roma, situata in via San Sebastianello 11, ricostruita grazie ai materiali d'archivio. L'interno della Chiesa dei Resurrezionisti a Roma fu consacrato il 5 novembre 1889, durante il periodo delle divisioni e della mancanza di rappresentanza della nazione polacca nella Città Eterna. Fino alla ristrutturazione del 1979, la chiesa presentava una decorazione omogenea nella tendenza alla storicizzazione, che era legata alla policromia del tipo "policromia a tappeto" (Tapisseriemalerei), catturando gli elementi più semanticamente significativi della decorazione – vetrate e dipinti storici. L'iconografia del presbiterio fa riferimento alla Resurrezione e al ruolo della Chiesa nel trasmettere questo messaggio. Sull'asse dell'abside vi era una vetrata con un'immagine di Cristo risorto, affiancata da due vetrate con rappresentazioni dell'Immacolata e di San Giuseppe, i cui culti furono promossi nella Chiesa da Papa Pio IX. Le vetrate includono anche gli stemmi di Papa Leone XIII e dei fondatori. L'altare principale: una mensa del 1775, proveniente dall'ex chiesa di San Paolo Primo Eremita dei Padri Paolini (ex tempio polacco), sopra un baldacchino a muro il cui fondatore fu Padre Władysław Czaratoryski, con un'immagine della Madonna di Częstochowa. L'arco trionfale sui pilastri che incorniciano l'altare presentava le figure dipinte di San Stanislao e San Sebastiano, e in cima a questo arco santo c'era un'immagine del *Velo della Veronica*. Sopra gli stalli c'erano dipinti figurativi relativi al passaggio della missione nella Chiesa durante vari momenti storici: L'Ascensione di Henryk Siemiradzki (sul lato sud) e I primi voti dei Resurrezionisti e l'approvazione della Congregazione da parte di Pio IX di Józef Unierzyski, incorniciati in una cornice

di legno con gli stemmi dei Papi Gregorio XVI e Pio IX. Nell'area della finestra sovrastante, c'era lo stemma del Regno di Polonia, mentre nelle campate successive della navata c'erano gli stemmi del Cardinale Mieczysław Ledóchowski e del lituano Pogoń. Dall'altra parte della navata, c'erano due dipinti figurativi di Franciszek Krudowski, che raffiguravano incontri con Cristo risorto sulla terra: Tommaso infedele e Noli me tangere. Pertanto, la parete meridionale del presbitero e della navata centrale raffigurava la presenza di Cristo risorto sulla terra, mentre la parete settentrionale indicava la Chiesa polacca, dalla formazione dei Resurrezionisti fino ai simboli dello Stato e del primato-interrex. Il simbolismo del legame tra la Chiesa universale e la Chiesa polacca si sviluppava sulla parete del coro, divisa dall'emporio dell'organo in due ordini, in cui erano collocate delle vetrate, in quella inferiore le figure dei tre Arcangeli e della Beata Vergine Maria nella scena dell'Annunciazione, in quella superiore i Santi Casimiro e Giosafat; tutte le vetrate erano accompagnate da stemmi, sia dello Stato polacco che dei fondatori. La Chiesa della Resurrezione fondeva così l'iconografia del culto della Resurrezione di Cristo con la rappresentazione nazionale, espressa sia dai santi raffigurati che dal vasto programma araldico. L'enfasi sul culto di Cristo e sui santi della Chiesa polacca ha un riferimento al primo tempio della nazione polacca di San Stanislao, il cui patrono principale era il Santissimo Salvatore; l'immagine di San Stanislao si riferiva anche al nome di questo tempio. La presenza di San Giosafat, invece, si riferisce alla tradizione dell'ospizio unificato dei Santi Sergio e Bacco, che rappresenta la nazione rutena. L'iconografia con le immagini di San Casimiro, San Giosafat, gli stemmi dell'Aquila e di Pogoń indicano che questo era il tempio della Prima Repubblica, uno Stato sepolto, che era rappresentato a Roma dai Resurrezionisti, gli ambasciatori informali polacchi presso la capitale apostolica, che proteggevano e diffondevano anche il rito Uniate. I santi presenti nell'iconografia del tempio e l'enfasi sulla relazione tra la Chiesa polacca e la Chiesa universale si riflettevano anche nella missione apostolica dei Resurrezionisti. L'unione di Chiesa e Stato – altare e trono nel programma iconografico del tempio della Resurrezione indicava con enfasi che non ci sarebbe stata alcuna resurrezione della patria senza la Chiesa, cosa confermata anche nel programma politico e sociale della congregazione dei Resurrezionisti.

Parole chiave: Resurrezionisti; Chiesa della Nazione Polacca a Roma; San Giosafat; iconografia della Resurrezione

Describing the foundation of the Church of the Resurrection, Konstanty Przeździecki started from reporting on the Resurrectionist Congregation's attempt to purchase two older Polish premises in Rome for its new headquarters: the former church of St. Paul the Hermit together with the monastery of the Pauline Fathers, as well as the Hosius hospice and the Church of St. Stanislaus, confiscated by the tsarist authorities.¹ The latter establishment was particularly important to the Resurrectionists, as Przeździecki noted, "we did all we could to redeem again this memento dear for all of Poland."² However, these attempts failed and therefore in 1885 Father Piotr Semenenko decided to acquire a site

1 General Archives of the Congregation of the Resurrectionist Fathers in Rome [further as ACRR], no. 65128: [K.?] Grabowski, *Powody opuszczenia kościoła i domu św. Klaudiusza przez Zgromadzenie Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego spisane na ządanie br. Konstantego Przeździeckiego [...] w roku 1892 dnia 9go maja*, ms., c. 1.

2 Ibidem.



Fig. 1. Church of the Resurrection, 1889, Rome, San Sebastianello 11.

Photograph P. Jamski.

near Piazza di Spagna in via San Sebastianello 11, called Villino Margherita,³ to establish a new headquarters for the congregation. The architect of the temple – the heart of the convent and the reconstruction of the monastery complex – was Pio Piacenti, one of the most renowned architects in Rome at the time and the creator of, among other things, the famous *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* (1883). This demonstrated the ambitions of the Resurrectionists, who wanted their new headquarters to be an important religious building on the map of the then Eternal City.⁴ However, due to a shortage of funds, the building plans under the direction of Luigi Tedeschi were reduced, the construction of the temple began in 1888, and the church was consecrated on November 5th, 1889 (fig. 1).⁵

As a result, a neo-Renaissance, rectangular, apse-ended church building was erected, which, due to the terrain constraints of the plot (narrow and long, situated on a slope), was designed on an east-west axis, with the entrance on the east, facing via San Sebastianello, the south wall attached to the neighboring building and connected from the north with the monastery buildings by a low passageway, in which the sacristy was located. The two-story, three-axis façade is articulated with pilasters in the Tuscan order and a cornice between the tiers, topped with entablature with a frieze decorated with an arcaded ornament, with a rectangular gable above. The rectangular entrance on the axis is framed by an arcade portal with pilasters in Corinthian order, with a tympanum in the lintel. The window openings, except for the rosette on the axis in the second tier of the façade, are rectangular, closed with a semicircular arch, on each story in the extreme sides of the façade and in the northern side 3 pairs, along with 3 openings in the apse. In the north corner of the façade, the four-story bell tower is distinguished from the body and adjacent to the sacristy. The church's simple architecture refers to the purity of early Renaissance designs. It exposes only the semantic elements of the facade – a portal with a full arch closed with a tympanum decorated with the Resurrected Christ chiseled by Pius Weloński (fig. 2) and a cornice above it with a majuscule inscription: "IN HONOREM JESU CHRISTI REDIVIV". The medallion with the Christogram XP in the gable and the cross-shaped ridge turret above it completes this semantics. Therefore, the faithful were informed directly from the entrance that this was the temple of the Resurrection.

3 See Antoni Lechert CR, Letter to Piotr Semenenko 18/07/1883, CRA-R 37145; 19/07/1883, CRA-R 37146, cit. per J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców. Historia Zgromadzenia Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, vol. 2: 1887-1932, transl. W. Mleczko, J. Piątkowska-Osińska, B. Tischner, Kraków-Kielce 2007, p. 32.

4 J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, pp. 31-36. See Raphael Ferrigno CR, Letter to Walerian Przewłocki CR 22/06/1888, CRA-R 12704, cit. per J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, p. 33.

5 Following the death of Father W. Przewłocki, the idea of building a church at the new site was abandoned due to lack of funds, and only the intervention of Ewelina Sobańska, the gift of Maria Przeździecka and the help of Leo XII led to the establishment of the temple: J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, p. 32; [K.?] Grabowski, *Powody opuszczenia kościoła i domu św. Klaudiusza przez Zgromadzenie Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, c. 1-3.



Fig. 2. Pius Weloński, Resurrection of Jesus Christ, tympanum, 1889, marble.

Photograph P. Jamski.

The hall church's interior, a four-span barrel-vaulted with lunettes, is articulated with engaged columns in Corinthian order with green marble shafts, topped with light stone entablature (made by Ciccaglia stonemasons).⁶ The original layout was disturbed by the 1979 renovation, when the decoration of the temple was also modified. The focus of this article is the iconography of the church's decoration and furnishings before the post-conciliar changes. The reconstruction of this design became possible through documentary work and queries in the Archives of the Congregation of the Resurrectionists in Rome. The interior of the church, as revealed by the discovered photographs, was covered with a painted decoration in a zone composition, emphasizing the architectural divisions and semantic elements of the temple (fig. 3, 4). It belonged to the movement of historicizing "carpet polychromies" (*Tapisseriemalerei*). The first zone (from the floor to the windows) consisted of ornamental decoration. In the nave it was a multiplied white quatrefoil, in the apse a rhombic plait resembling stylized curtain motifs. The strip was finished with

6 "La Voce della Verità", 9/11/1889, cit. per J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, p. 35.

a frieze with arcade ornamentation and floral decoration. The following zone featured oil paintings with historical scenes on the south wall of the nave, enclosed in frames resembling strips of drapery ending with tassels (made of wood), with ornamental decoration around them.⁷ In the north wall of the nave were doubled window openings with ornamental glazing, with a polychromy with coat-of-arms cartouches between them. In the apse and choir's window openings there were figural representations. The last strip of decoration consisted of geometric and floral polychromy of the vault in the nave and a starry one in the apse.



Fig. 3. Church of the Resurrection, interior, view of the presbytery, archival photograph circa 1975.
Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

7 Parts of the picture frames were found during an inventory carried out at the convent of the Congregation of the Resurrectionists in Mentorella.



Fig. 4. Church of the Resurrection, interior, view of the presbytery, archival photograph circa 1975.
Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

The lavish decoration formed semantic entities, focused on the liturgical centers of the temple. The first one – the presbytery area, distinguished by a raised level of the span and the apse – is the most sacred space, within which the main altar was located. It consisted of a mensa, transferred from the former church of St. Paul the First Hermit of the Pauline Fathers, dated 1775. Further away, on an axis on the apse wall, under the window row, there was a small marble wall-mounted baldachin, funded by Father Władysław Czartoryski.⁸ The interesting thing is that in many photographs, instead of a statue customary in such settings (such as the present Our Lady of Mentrone), there was a small image of Our Lady of Częstochowa. In the apse windows, above the main altar, there were three stained-glass windows depicting full-figure portraits in the arcades, crowned with a pointed arch resting on a pedestal with medallions: three in the central window, two in each of the side ones. The central glazing shows a frontally framed Christ in a red robe, encircled by a golden mandorla, rising from the tomb, with a soldier sleeping under a fallen boulder (fig. 5). It is flanked by stained-glass windows depicting, from the south, the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Immaculata type of image (fig. 6), with her hands folded on her chest and the moon under her feet, a blue cloak and a crown of stars; from the north, St. Joseph with a lily in his hand (fig. 7). The figures are therefore portrayed in accordance with the iconographic canon.⁹ The most significant among them, the image of the Risen Christ, refers to the temple's name, while the two figures flanking it correspond to the contemporary theological thought of Pope Pius IX. This is because on December 8th, 1854, he proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Immaculata Conceptio Beatae Virginis Mariae*), which was promoted enthusiastically by the Resurrectionists, as illustrated by the paintings of Edward Brzowski and Leopold Nowotny.¹⁰ In 1870, Pope Pius IX promulgated the decree *Quemadmodum Deus*, establishing St. Joseph as the patron saint of the Catholic Church.¹¹ The coats of arms placed in the pedestals, with the inscription (in majuscule): "Memento benefactorum congregationis a Resurrectione D.N.I. Ch," indicate the beneficiaries of this church. They include, in the central stained-glass window on the axis, the coat of arms of Pope

8 J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, pp. 34-35.

9 P. Wilhelm, *Auferstehung Christi*, in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 1, ed. E. Kirschbaum, Rom-Freiburg-Basel 1994, proofs 201-218. A. Kramiszewska, *Ikonografia Niepokalanego Poczęcia jako wyraz kultu Maryi Imakulaty*, in: *Święty wyjętek. Niepokalane Poczęcie Maryi. II Bocheńskie Sympozjum Mariologiczne, 25 września 2004 r.*, ed. J. Królikowski, Kraków 2004, pp. 127-155; G. Kaster, *Joseph von Nazareth*, in: *Lexikon Der Christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 7, ed. E. Kirschbaum, W. Braunfels, Rom-Freiburg-Basel 1994, proofs 210-222.

10 M. Nitka, *Biblia ilustrowana polska Leopolda Nowotnego a ikonografia historii Polski w sztuce nazareńskiej*, "Sacrum et Decorum. Materiały i studia z historii sztuki sakralnej", 10 (2017), pp. 50-66.

11 Bł. Pius IX (1846-1878), Dekret *Quemadmodum Deus* – ogłaszający św. Józefa Patronem Kościoła katolickiego, <https://www.swietyjjozef.kalisz.pl/BibliotekaSwJozefa/118.html> [access: 1.12.2023].

Leo XIII, on the left of Roch III, and the Przeddzieckis', presumably of Maria, and on the right the Sobańskis' Junosza, designating Ewelina.¹² Under the image of the Immaculata are found the Zaremba coat of arms of Wacław Mańkowski and Radwan (not determined whose), while under the statue of St. Joseph the Bożeniec and Przestał of Walerian Przewłocki. Therefore, the apse displayed the main patron saint of the temple, patrons of the church and benefactors of the establishment.



Fig. 5. *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), apse of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome.
Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 6. *Immaculata*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), apse of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome.
Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 7. *St. Joseph*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), apse of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome.
Photograph P. Jamski.

12 About 100,000 francs was donated to Father Semenenko for the construction of the church and monastery by Ewelina Sobańska and Pope Leo XIII, 60,000 francs as an advancement of the donation of 100,000, promised by Maria Przeddziecka; J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, pp. 32-33. See [K.?] Grabowski, *Powody opuszczenia kościoła i domu św. Klaudiusza przez Zgromadzenie Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, c. 1-3.

The altar was encircled by the frame of the chancel arch, whose decoration was the most refined part of the *Tapisseriesmalerei*. This is because its bottom part would feature figural representations in Gothic-style painted niches, including two saints: St. Stanislaus, on the north pillar, and St. Sebastian on the opposite side. The former is the patron saint of the Kingdom of Poland, who, as Father Jelowicki wrote in a sermon dedicated to him, “ascended the Wawel Hill [...] to guard the great Altar, under the shadow of which stood the throne of Poland.”¹³ He was also the patron saint of the church of the Polish nation in Rome, that the Resurrectionists desired to buy.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the second saint in question is the patron saint of the street where the existing church is located, but also the patron of the venue of the first meetings of the Resurrectionists in the Eternal City – the catacombs of St. Sebastian. On top of the chancel arch was placed an image of *Vernicle*, accentuating the passion of Christ, which was repeated beneath, on the altar.

In the presbytery span, against both walls were placed stalls and above them were two paintings: on the northern wall *The Ascension of the Lord* by Henryk Siemiradzki (fig. 8), and on the opposite side a painting by Józef Unierzyski depicting two vertically divided scenes: *The First Vows of the Resurrectionists and the Approval of the Congregation by Pius IX* (fig. 9) enclosed in a wooden frame with coats of arms in cartouches on top. There are therefore two rearrangements referring to the passing of the mission within the Church during different historical moments. The first artwork presents one of the fundamental themes of Christianity – the Ascension of Jesus Christ, as mentioned in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:50-53) and in the Acts of the Apostles, which preaches

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight (Acts 1:8-9).¹⁵

13 A. Jelowicki, *Kazanie o św. Stanisławie męczenniku, Biskupie Krakowskim, Naczelnym Patronie Królestwa Polskiego*, in: idem, *Kazania o świętych polskich i o królowej korony polskiej. Tudzież nauki przedślubne, mowy pogrzebowe i kazania przygodne*, Berlin 1869, p. 35.

14 J. Skrabski, *Kościół polski w Rzymie. Tożsamość i reprezentacja w perspektywie sztuki*, Kraków 2021, pp. 202-216.

15 Citations from the Holy Scriptures according to the New International Version (NIV) edited by Charles Caldwell Ryrie, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/niv/> [access: 10.12.2023].



Fig. 8. H. Siemiradzki, *Ascension of Jesus Christ*, 1891, oil on canvas, 250×150 cm, Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 9. Józef Unierzyski, *The First Vows of the Resurrectionists and the Approval of the Congregation by Pius IX*, circa 1891, oil on canvas, Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.

The cult of the Ascension of Christ has been present since the early centuries of Christianity, being mentioned already by St. Augustine as an apostolic holiday. It was also included among the truths of faith included in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (“et ascendit in *caelum* [caelos]”). This long theological tradition is reflected in the centuries-old iconographic representation of the Ascension scene, including both Western and Eastern churches.¹⁶ The iconographic tradition of both rites was primarily known for images consisting of two distinctly separated parts – the first, earthly part featured the Apostles with Mary, while the second, celestial part featured Christ. This division is also prominently reflected in the scene by Siemiradzki, where the disciples gather around an empty seat, in expressive poses, while the frontally depicted Christ with two angels towers above them. This distinction is highlighted by the striking color contrast, the darkness of the lower area and the brightness of the top. Such a composition could have been modeled on Perugino’s *Ascension*, and another scene – Raphael’s famous *Transfiguration*.¹⁷ Santi’s composition of the scene was regarded as the ultimate representation of the divine nature of Christ on earth. Equally, Siemiradzki’s work unveils the holy nature of the Savior manifesting Himself to the disciples in full glory and radiance, illuminating their darkness, with only Mary’s face being fully in the realm of brightness. It is the light

16 M. Janocha, *Wniebowstąpienie IV. Ikonaografia*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 20, ed. E. Gigilewicz, Lublin 2014, col. 820-822.

17 M. Nitka, *Obrazy religijne o funkcji kultowej w twórczości Henryka Siemiradzkiego*, “Sacrum et Decorum. Materiały i studia z historii sztuki sakralnej”, 15 (2022), pp. 8-38.

of the Risen Christ, who, by ascending to heaven, is therefore the source of the Ecclesia, and the intermediary along with Him is His Mother. Siemiradzki, by connecting and at the same time contrasting the heavenly and earthly realms, underlined the ecclesiological aspect that is fundamental to the theology of the Ascension.¹⁸

On the opposite side, there was a painting by the Cracow painter Józef Unierzyski located above the stalls as a *panneau* to *The Ascension* scene.¹⁹ It is a composition shaped as a horizontal rectangle also with a bipartite structure. Each of the scenes, divided vertically by a spiral column, portrays separate events: the Resurrectionists' first vows in the catacombs and the congregation's approval by Pius IX. The scene on the left illustrates the establishment event of the congregation, which took place on the night between Saturday and Easter Sunday (March 27th) 1842, in the catacombs of St. Sebastian in Rome. Father Hieronim Kajsiewicz elaborately described this story in a letter to Jan Koźmian on April 9th, 1842. He reminisced:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Finally, the Lord's work has been accomplished [...] I am writing to you being already a monk. You may ask under which rule [...] none of the existing ones seemed to appeal to us. [...] Thus, we decided to formulate our vision of things. [...] On Easter Saturday around midnight, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, we began to choose a superior. Brother Piotr was unanimously elected. [...] The Lord Christ had already been resurrected, for the seventh time, after the seventh Lent from our union, and there were seven of us. [...] It was around 3 after midnight when we settled down, and at 4 o'clock we got up and, after praying, went to the catacombs of St. Sebastian, an hour's distance outside the city, to make votive offerings before the Mass of the brother superior. [...] The Mass began [...] during which we all ardently begged the Lord to allow His work to be done [...]. First, the Superior then made his vows to God in the presence of Heaven and us, then we to God and him. Besides us the only other people who were witnesses were our young novice Zaleski and the Wielogłowski family, representing, in a way, you, dear lay brothers.²⁰

Unierzyski's painting portrays a scene from the last part of the story – the monks are in the catacombs of St. Sebastian, in front of the altar, on the left side of the composition is Father Sememenko in a chasuble, facing the kneeling brothers, who are (from left): Bogdan

18 In post-Tridentine Church theology, the Ascension was associated "with the vision of the Church triumphant in heaven. The Baroque era promoted the extension of this triumph also to the pilgrim Church and the introduction of the triumphalism that characterized ecclesiology until the Vatican Council" (M. Siodłowska, P. Królikowski, *Zmartwychwstanie w ikonografii. W kierunku interpretacji teologiczno-fundamentalnej*, "Resovia Sacra. Studia Teologiczno-Filozoficzne Diecezji Rzeszowskiej", 21 (2014), p. 384).

19 Józef Unierzyski (ok. 1861-1948) malarz akademicki, uczeń i zięć Jana Matejki, rodem z mazowieckiej szlachty, ed. B. Umińska, exhibition catalogue, Ciechanów 2023.

20 H. Kajsiewicz, letter to Jan Koźmian, 09/04/1842, cit. per P. Smolikowski, *Historia Zgromadzenia Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, vol. 3, Kraków 1895, pp. 10-11.

Jański, Józef Hube, Karol Kaczanowski, Hieronim Kajsiewicz, behind them Aleksander Jelowicki and Walerian Przewłocki, while Count Cezary Plater (1810-1869) stands.²¹ Consequently, the painting portrayed those who could not have participated in this historic event, including Bogdan Jański, then deceased, and Walerian Przewłocki, who had not yet become a Resurrectionist in 1842. By the spiral column separating the scenes, resembling those of St. Peter's Baldacchino, there is the coat of arms of Pope Gregory XVI at the base, during whose pontificate the first vows of the Resurrectionists were taken.

The second scene is, according to congregation's tradition, the *Approval of the Congregation by Pius IX*, i.e., the approval of the Order's rule on September 14th, 1860. Father Kajsiewicz mentions that it was achieved through the intervention of "the Cardinal vicar of Rome, the Cardinal archbishop of Paris, the bishops of Tivoli and Hamilton in America."²² The scene portrayed by Unierzyski is set during an audience, the Pope is shown on a throne in three-quarters and flanked by two cardinals, while in front of him a bishop is introducing to him two kneeling priests in black cassocks, shown in profile. The characteristic physiognomies allow one to identify them as Father Semenenko (closer to the Pope) and Father Kajsiewicz. The portrayal of the papal entourage enables to recognize the notables in question as well: on the right of the Pope is Cardinal Włodzimierz Czacki, on the other side is Cardinal Albin Dunajewski, while the one recommending the Resurrectionist priests is Archbishop Mieczysław Ledóchowski. If this was intended to be a scene of the congregation's approval, then the Polish church hierarchs shown in the painting could not have attended the audience, since in 1860 Father Ledóchowski had not yet received the episcopal sacrament (he received it a year later), similarly to Father Dunajewski (bishop since 1879, cardinal since 1890) and Father Czacki (bishop since 1879, cardinal since 1882). These hierarchs, as bishops, could not have participated in the joint ceremony with Father Kajsiewicz, since the latter died in 1873, that is, before the majority of them obtained ecclesiastical dignities. Furthermore, Unierzyski did not show the 1888 validation of the order's activities as Pius IX was no longer alive at the time, and neither were Fathers Semenenko and Kajsiewicz. That being said, the scene accompanying the vows in the catacombs is a representation in defiance of historical probability with a symbolic function, being an indication of the connection of the established order to the papacy and to the Polish Church. This semantics was accentuated by the frame, topped with the coats of arms of Pope Gregory XVI and Pius IX framed in cartouches, combined by the papal tiara (fig. 10).²³ The coat of

21 The figures were described in a pamphlet published by the Resurrectionists: ACRR photo library, no reference.

22 H. Kajsiewicz, *Pamiętnik o początkach Zgromadzenia Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, cit. per *Pisma X. Hieronima Kajsiewicza ze Zgromadzenia Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego*, vol. 3, Berlin-Kraków 1872, ed. M. Szlachciak, Rzym 2009, p. 54, <https://www.resurrectionist.eu> [access: 10.12.2023].

23 The papal coats of arms topping the frame were found during the inventory undertaken at the convent of the Congregation of the Resurrectionists in Mentorella.

arms of the Kingdom of Poland – a crowned eagle on a shield (fig. 11) – towered over the painting, in the strip between the windows. Therefore, above the Resurrectionists gathering in the stalls, there were images portraying, on the one hand, the mission of the Church on earth established by Jesus, and, on the other, the embracing of this mission by the order, which preaches the Risen Christ to the world. This aspect of the congregation's apostolic vocation was highlighted in their first rule, whose approval was celebrated by the Mass depicted by Unierzyski. According to it, the congregation was supposed to have the character of an "apostolic community."²⁴ The charism of the congregation, meanwhile, was shown in a stained-glass apse with the Risen One above the altar, with a humble but sacred to Poles image of Our Lady of Częstochowa underneath. The reference to the place and mission was also provided by two saints: St. Sebastian, the patron saint of the place of the first meeting of the monks and the location of their church on the map of Rome, and St. Stanislaus the patron saint of the Kingdom, whose coat of arms can be found in the presbytery area.



Fig. 10. The original frame of J. Unierzyski's painting *The First Vows of the Resurrectionists and the Approval of the Congregation by Pius IX*, archival photograph.

Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

24 W. Mleczo, *Nauka i świętość. Formacja kapłańska w myśli i działalności zmartwychwstańców*, Kraków 2014, p. 81.



Fig. 11. Part of the décor of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome, archival photograph circa 1975.

Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

Two side altars, with mensas constructed in the fashion of the main altar, led into the next part of the temple – the nave – a gathering space for the faithful, to whom the apostolic message is carried. According to an account in the 1891 guide to the temples of Rome, they were dedicated to Our Lady of Good Counsel and the Holy Cross.²⁵ In the first of the altars (from the south) was placed the image of Our Lady of Good Counsel (fig. 12), being a copy of the painting from the side altar of the church of St. Claudius, i.e., the first temple of the Resurrectionists in Rome.²⁶ In the second (on the north side) was the cross offered to the congregation by Pius IX on May 7th, 1848.²⁷ The altars were surrounded by votive offerings, a testimony to God's activity among the people gathering in the nave. In this section of the sanctuary, on the south wall in the upper part, were paintings in the quasi-square shape, painted by Franciszek Krudowski: *Unfaithful Thomas* (fig. 13) and *Noli me tangere* (fig. 14).²⁸ Both depict two meetings with the Risen Christ on earth, taken from the Gospel of St. John. First is the scene when St. Thomas, joined by the other Apostles, witnesses the appearance of Jesus, who displays his wounds

25 "La chiesa ha una sola navata e ha l'abside in fondo. Oltre il maggiore, ha due altari laterali, l'uno dedicato al Santissimo Crocifisso, l'altro alla Vergine del Buon Consiglio" (M. Armellini, *Le Chiese di Roma dal secolo IV al XIX*, 2nd edition, Roma 1891, p. 342).

26 V. Delbianco, *La Madonna del Buon Consiglio. Storia e fortuna di un'iconografia romana in Trentino*, "Studi Trentini. Arte", 95 (2016), pp. 7-31.

27 J. Iwicki, *Charyzmat zmartwychwstańców*, p. 34.

28 J. Białynicka-Birula, *Krudowski Franciszek*, in: *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających*, vol. 4, ed. J. Mauire-Białostocka, J. Debrojed, Warszawa-Wrocław-Kraków 1986, pp. 274-275.

for him to touch and believe (John 20:24-29). The subject is known from the first cycle focused on the presence of the Risen One on earth, from the mosaics in the church of San Apolinare Nuovo in Ravenna.²⁹ The composition by Krudowski features the meeting of the Apostles with the Savior both frugally and meaningfully: on the axis of the painting is the frontally framed Christ in a red robe, around him are the Apostles, depicted almost following the manner of isocephalism, gazing at the Messiah. Two of them break the symmetry, the one on the Savior's right, leaning gently toward him extends his hand in the direction of his chest exposed by the robe – this is St. Thomas.



Fig. 12. Altar of Our Lady of Good Counsel, interior of the Church of the Resurrection in Rome, archival photograph.

Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

29 *Thomaszweifel*, in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 4, ed. E. Kirschbaum, Rom-Freiburg-Basel 1994, proofs 301-303.



Fig. 13. Franciszek Krudowski, *Unfaithful Thomas*, circa 1890, oil on canvas, Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 14. Franciszek Krudowski, *Noli me tangere*, circa 1890, oil on canvas, Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.

The other Apostle, most likely St. Peter, is kneeling before Christ, who is pointing at him. The simplicity of this composition recalls the Renaissance approaches to this motif by, for example, Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano, which Krudowski became familiar

with either during his studies at the Viennese Academy or during his voyages in Italy.³⁰ Krudowski's second painting represents the meeting between the Risen Christ and Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-18) in the form of a modest two-figure composition, where the kneeling Mary Magdalene, shown in profile, extends her hands to the Christ standing *en face*. In the implementation of the *Noli me tangere* theme, present in iconography since the early Middle Ages, the artist once again relied on the simple solutions of the Renaissance masters, whether Titian's composition from the National Gallery, Andrea del Sarto's from the Uffizi, or the then-famous Neo-Renaissance painting by Alexander Ivanov from the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.³¹ In scenes illustrating the Risen Christ's encounters on earth, Krudowski skillfully utilized illustrative tradition, at the same time creating his own meaningful and coherent executions.³² Across the nave, on the north wall, between the windows there are coats of arms analogous to the presbytery span – in the second span the Ledóchowski's Szaława in a shield, above it a double archbishop's cross and a cardinal's hat, presumably referring to Cardinal Mieczysław Ledóchowski.³³ In the third span is situated the Lithuanian Coat of Arms Pogoń with a princely mitre above the shield, thus the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the upper zone between the windows were shown the emblems of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its primate of the time – the head of the Church and simultaneously the interrex. If the southern wall of the temple was depicting the Risen Christ on earth, the northern wall referred to the Church of Poland, ranging from the vocation of the Resurrectionists to the symbols of the state and the Primate.

The symbolics of the connection between the Christ-Universal Church and the Polish Church was developed on the choir wall, divided by the organ gallery into two tiers (fig. 15). Each contains stained glass in the window openings and additionally in the double doors framing the entrance. In the first story from the north was presented the Archangel Raphael (fig. 16), framed by a rectangular border, and above him in a semicircular enclosure, a coat of arms on the duke's mantle crowned with a mitre, in the shield

30 The work of G.B. Cima da Conegliano was sold in 1870 to London's National Gallery, which generated much interest among contemporaries. J. Dunkerton, *The Transfer of Cima's "The Incredulity of S. Thomas"*, "National Gallery Technical Bulletin", 9 (1985), pp. 38-43.

31 *Noli me tangere*, in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 3, ed. E. Kirschbaum, Rom-Freiburg-Basel 1994, proofs 332-336.

32 Krudowski's artistry was praised by the author of the quoted guide to Roman churches: "Nella parete sinistra vi sono due quadri ad olio, rappresentanti l'uno l'apparizione di Cristo alla Maddalena, l'altro San Tommaso che tocca le cicatrici del Salvatore. Questi due affreschi sono di stile ed arte così insigne, che mostrano nel giovane pittore signor Crudowski, che gli ha eseguiti, una maestria del tutto eccezionale" (M. Armellini, *Le Chiese di Roma*, pp. 342-343).

33 A. Galos, Z. Zieliński, *Mieczysław Ledóchowski (Halka-Ledóchowski) (1822-1902)*, in: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 16, ed. E. Rostworowski, Wrocław 1971, pp. 626-628.

the Sanguszek Coat of Arms Pogoń with the motto “By conviction.” Analogically arranged was the stained-glass window from the south with a representation of Archangel Michael (fig. 17) and above it the coat of arms Lis of the Sapieha family with the motto “Crux mihi foederis arcus.” The founder of these stained-glass windows was Teresa Sapieha, née Sanguszek.³⁴ In the door glazing with the scene of the Annunciation [fig. 18] – in niches topped with a wimperg there are two figures – the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Archangel Gabriel with the count’s coats of arms underneath. Under the Archangel Gabriel there was the coat of arms of Roch III, under the Virgin Mary a four-field coat of arms including: Nałęcz of the Ostroróg family and Oksza of the Pęcherzewski family (mother of Janina Umiastowska). Probably the founder of the stained-glass windows was Janina Zofia Umiastowska. The bottom tier depicts the scene of the Annunciation and all the archangels, God’s messengers on earth.

34 W. Wehr, *Polskie pamiątki heraldyczne w Rzymie*, “Materiały do Biografii, Genealogii i Heraldyki Polskiej”, 3 (1966), pp. 54-57.



Fig. 15. Interior of the Church of the Resurrection, view of the choir, archival photograph circa 1975.

Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrezione a Roma.



Fig. 16. *Archangel Raphael*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.

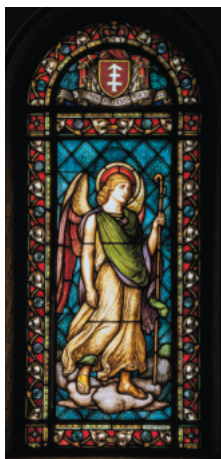


Fig. 17. *Archangel Michael*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 18. *The Annunciation*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.

In the second level, the glazing was decorated with images of St. Casimir (north) (fig. 19) and St. Josaphat (south) (fig. 20), framed by ornamental borders, with two coats of arms in medallions in the lower part of the composition. St. Casimir Jagiellon in a red coat, wearing a ducal mitre, holding a palm leaf in his hand, accompanied by the coats of arms of the Eagle of the Crown and the Pogoń of Lithuania, is portrayed following the canon of the mid-16th century Vilnius portraiture. The only notable difference being the palm, which is rather an iconographic mistake of the Munich illustrator of the cartoon.³⁵ Meanwhile, St. Josaphat Kuntsevych is depicted as an older man with a short beard, dressed in a long blue cloak with red lining, holding a book. His attire and portrayal are more akin to an apostle in conventional 19th-century depictions than a Uniate archbishop and Basilian. Under his image are unspecified coats of arms in a crown of nobility: Prus I and a four-field coat of arms with an ascending silver Lion (fields 1 and 4) and Pogoń (fields 2 and 3). The two saints were patrons of the multi-ethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: St. Casimir of Lithuania, and St. Josaphat, canonized in 1867, was announced the patron of Ruthenia, also becoming one of the most important saints for the

35 S. Maslauskaitė-Mażylienė, *Dzieje wizerunku św. Kazimierza od XVI do XVIII wieku*, transl. K. Korzeniewska, Wilno 2013, pp. 54-75.

Uniates.³⁶ Their cult was also promoted by the Resurrectionists, to whom, among others, Father Aleksander Jełowicki dedicated his sermons.³⁷ The Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ also played a role in the canonization of St. Josaphat. It took place in Rome on June 29th, 1867, and in the sermon delivered on the occasion, Father Jełowicki underlined the connection of the new patron saint of Poland, Lithuania and Ruthenia with the papacy, describing him as a protector and defender of the Greek Catholic union, a martyr for the unity of the Church and fidelity to Rome.³⁸ The Resurrectionists were supposed to be the custodians of this unity, when the Polish-Lithuanian state was not protecting it, which was symbolized by the candle given to them by Pius IX during the canonization of St. Josaphat.³⁹ The members of the Resurrectionist Order accepted this vocation to preserve the unity of the Church, provided spiritual care for the Uniates, supported the Basilian nuns in Rome, established a mission in the Uniate rite in Bulgaria, and later educated Unitarian priests at the Lviv seminary. They also fulfilled the testament of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where the Union was established and which, after its collapse, faced oppression from the Orthodox Church.

36 Cf. B. Krasucka, *Józafat Kuncewicz św. w ikonografii*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 8, ed. B. Migut, Lublin 2000, col. 107-108.

37 A. Jełowicki, *Kazanie o św. Kazimierzu, Królewiczu, Patronie Królestwa Polskiego; Kazanie o błogosławionym Józafacie, Męczenniku Uniackim Arcybiskupie Połockim, a osobliwym Patronie Rusi*, in: idem, *Kazania o świętych*, pp. 147-165; 44-58.

38 Idem, *Kazanie o kanonizacji świętego Józafata, odbytej przez Piusa IX w Rzymie w dzień XVIII stulecia męczeństwa Ś. Piotra, 20 czerwca R.P. 1867*, in: ibidem, pp. 59-69.

39 Father A. Jełowicki reported that Pope Pius IX, in handing over the candle, was supposed to have said, "Take this torch to the Polish Seminary, and let it be stored there until it can be safely carried to Warsaw" (idem, *Kazanie o kanonizacji świętego Józafata, odbytej przez Piusa IX w Rzymie w dzień XVIII stulecia męczeństwa Ś. Piotra, 20 czerwca R.P. 1867*, in: ibidem, p. 68).



Fig. 19. *St. Casimir*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.



Fig. 20. *St. Josephat*, stained-glass by Mayer (Munich), Church of the Resurrection in Rome.

Photograph P. Jamski.

The decoration of the choir was complemented by a rosette with ornamental glazing on the axis. The painted panel above it was inscribed in majuscule

CHRISTO DEO/MORTIS VICTORI/AEDES/A FVNDAMENTIS EX-
CITATA/ET ORNATIBVS EXCVLTA/ A. MDCCCLXXXIX/LEONE XIII
PONTIFICE MAXIMO/CVRA VALERIANI PRZEWLOCKI/ PRAEI-
POSITI/ SOCIETATIS A CHRISTO JESV REDIVIVO/AERE A POLONIS
COLLATO.

The south wall in the choir span featured coats of arms on both sides. The one that is legible in the photographs was located on the south side (fig. 21). These are two shields on a ducal cloak with a ducal crown, topped by a single noble's crown, with a variation

of the Radwan coat of arms on the first (above the banner there is a bird on a cross with a ring in its beak), and the Bogoria coat of arms on the second. This coat of arms potentially belonged to the Krukowski family, but its presence and significance require further research.⁴⁰ The second coat of arms is unknown from any photograph or accounts. The founders of the monastery (on the south wall) and the founders of the temple (on the opposite side) were also honored with epitaphs in the last span of the choir: Maria Przeździecka, Irena de Kościelec Podgorska and Janina Umiastowska.



Fig. 21. Unidentified coat of arms in the choir of the Church of the Resurrection, archival photograph.

Source: Archivio Congregatio a Resurrectione a Roma.

40 W. Wehr, *Polskie pamiątki heraldyczne w Rzymie*, p. 56.

Therefore, the Church of the Resurrection merged the iconography of the cult of the Resurrection of Christ with the national representation, which was manifested both by the depicted saints and a rich heraldic program. The focus on the cult of Christ and the saints of the Polish church refers to the first temple of the Polish nation of St. Stanislaus, for which the Blessed Savior was the main patron.⁴¹ Other references to this *patrocinium* included the image of St. Stanislaus on the pillar of the chancel arch, next to St. Sebastian – the patron saint of the new venue. The space also includes another “memento” of the Polish sacrum in Rome – an altar from the Church of St. Paul the Hermit. The Resurrectionist temple has represented more than just the Polish nation. The appearance of St. Josaphat recalls the tradition of the Uniate hospice of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus, a representation of the Ruthenian nation.⁴² The iconography including images of St. Casimir, St. Josaphat, the coats of arms of the Eagle and the Pogoń suggested that the community expected to gather in there was broader than merely ethnic, in fact, that was the temple of the peoples of the First Republic. The Church of the Resurrection continued to exist in the collective consciousness of pilgrims arriving in the Eternal City from various corners of the former Republic.⁴³ The representative function of the temple also reflected the role of the informal ambassadors of the Republic to the Holy See, namely the Resurrectionist priests. The Church of the Resurrection was therefore the temple of the First Republic, a buried state for whose resurrection fought successive generations of emigrants and pilgrims in Rome. The emphasis on loyalty to the Church and trust in its saints had clearly defined the path to the desired independence. This was explicitly expressed in a sermon on the XXXIII anniversary of the November Uprising in 1863 by Father Jełowicki: “to those who seek the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Poland will also be given!”⁴⁴ The union between Church and State – represented by the altar and throne in the iconographic program of the Resurrection temple vividly demonstrated that there would be no resurrection of the homeland without the Church.

41 J. Skrabski, *Kościół polski w Rzymie*, pp. 197-202.

42 The Hospice of Saints Sergius and Bacchus was established at the request of King Sigismund III as a temple and college for the studying youth of the Order of St. Basil. Ibidem, pp. 64-65.

43 S. Janicki, *Pamiętki polskie w Rzymie*, [Nakło nad Notecią] 1933, p. 20; J.A. Łukaszewicz, *Przewodnik po Włoszech ze szczególniejszem uwzględnieniem Rzymu*, Kraków 1897, p. 85; K. Nowak, *Zabytki polskie w Rzymie*, Poznań 1900, p. 31.

44 A. Jełowicki, *Kazanie na XXXIII rocznicę powstania narodowego miane w Paryżu w kościele Wniebowzięcia dnia 29 listopada 1863 roku*, in: idem, *Kazania o świętych*, p. 644.

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