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THE UNIVERSAL CHARACTER OF THE
APOSTOLATE OF ST. CLEMENT MARIA HOFBAUER¹

1. – «*Dangerous fanatic*»; 2. – «*To unite all things again...*»; 3. – «*On Europe's roads*»; 4. – «*Uniting Europe in Christ*»; 5. – «*To evangelize the poor*»; 6. – «*Faith and Reason*»; 7. – «*The pleasing fragrance of Christ*»; *Conclusion*

Two years ago the entire missionary Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists) solemnly celebrated the 100th anniversary of the canonisation of their Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer. Then in this year of 2010 there occurs the 260th anniversary of his birth. The unique role St Clement played in the Redemptorist Congregation is undisputed, and what he accomplished for his Congregation has been described on many occasions.²

¹ This text is an unabridged, translated version of the article having the same title in «*Studia Redemptorystowskie*» 7 (2009) 45-64.

² R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer im politisch-geistigen Umfeld seiner Wiener Zeit*, in SHCSR 49 (2001) 4-28; F. FERRERO, *Función histórica de s. Clemente Maria Hofbauer en la Congregación del Smo. Redentor (1785-1820)*, in

This presentation is an attempt to look at the work and life of the saint from a perspective that is wider than that of the Redemptorist Congregation to which he was fully dedicated. Although Hofbauer was someone who aimed at establishing a firm unity between people of different nationalities, social strata, religions and generations, he was nevertheless rooted within his own epoch with all of its reality and limitations, and at the same time was always faithful to his spiritual roots. He travelled widely throughout the Napoleonic Europe, labouring tirelessly toward establishing what John Paul II in recent years referred to as a «common house...built with the bricks of human consciences, baked in the fire of the Gospel, united by the bond of fraternal social love...»³

Twenty years ago, when the Berlin wall was falling in the atmosphere of universal euphoria, and «both lungs of Europe began again to breathe evenly the air of freedom after fifty years, the European imperative, «*We must give Europe a soul!*» reverberated against the marbled walls of the chambers in Brussels. Then the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, courageously asked the citizens of Europe, «What would you like to pass down to your children: a Europe that is a cradle of values and testimony of true culture, or a Europe where every family aims at buying another refrigerator, television set and car?» He gave a rhetorical answer, «If in the years ahead we don't succeed in giving a soul, a spirituality, a meaning to Europe, we will

SHCSR 34 (1986) 318–348; J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus» Klemens Maria Hofbauer*, in SHCSR 34 (1986) 349–381; E. HOSP, *Der heilige Klemens Maria Hofbauer*, Vienna 1951; G. ORLANDI, *Gli anni 1784–1787 nella vita di s. Clemente Maria Hofbauer. Suggestimenti per una rilettura*, in SHCSR 34 (1986) 187–280; A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie 1787–1808 [The Redemptorists-Bennonites in Warsaw 1787-1808]*, Kraków 2003; O. WEISS, *Die transalpinen Redemptoristen und der «Zeitgeist»*, in SHCSR 35 (1987) 155–174.

³ JOHN PAUL II, *Homily on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the death of St. Adalbert*, Gniezno, 3 June, 1997, in *Jesus Christ Yesterday, Today, and Forever. Sermons during the Apostolic Pilgrimage of the Holy Father in Poland, 1997*, Warsaw 1997, 62. The full text of this homily can be found on the Vatican Website, www.holysee, English edition.

have lost the struggle».⁴ The foundation for unity in our civilisation is not material culture and scientific-technological progress, but rather a sense of spiritual community, as well as cultural communication. Therefore it reaches beyond the borders of European metageography. That is why Jean Guiton prophesied, «Europe will be a continent of believing people or it will not exist at all».⁵ Those sentences resonate emphatically with the words of John Paul II spoken with concern about the spiritual face of the Old Continent to the presidents of seven European countries in Gniezno, «There will be no European unity until it is based on unity of the spirit». Apart from this meaningful warning, the Pope presented his diagnosis of Europe as being affected by amnesia:

«This most profound basis of unity was brought to Europe and consolidated down the centuries by Christianity with its Gospel, with its understanding of man and with its contribution to the development of the history of peoples and nations. This does not signify a desire to appropriate history [...]. The foundations of the identity of Europe are built on Christianity. And its present lack of spiritual unity arises principally from the crisis of this Christian self-awareness».⁶

At the threshold of the third millennium the sign-posts toward escaping that crisis are the lives of those who proved the unity of the European identity and its Christian roots, by taking down walls of division that for ages had grown up among the

⁴ G. ROBBERS, *Europa und die Kirche*, in «Stimmen der Zeit» 216 (1998), issue 3, 146–157.

⁵ «In fact, Europe is an autonomous subject only as a cultural unity. It remains such a unity only as a world shared by its own culture and history»; N. LOBKOWICZ, *Europa jako rzeczywistość kulturowa. Założenia i problemy* [Europe as a cultural reality. The assumptions and problems], in *Europa – zadanie chrześcijańskie. Księga pamiątkowa z okazji 65. rocznicy urodzin księdza profesora Helmuta Jurosa* [Europe – Christian task. A commemorative book on the occasion of the 65th birth of Rev. Prof. Helmut Juros], ed. A. Dylus, Warszawa 1998, 172; cf. Ch. DAWSON, *Tworzenie się Europy* [Europe's Creation], Warszawa 1961, 333; cf. M. SADOWSKI, *Karły na ramionach olbrzymów. Kościół w średniowieczu a współczesna cywilizacja* [Dwarfs on the giants' shoulders. The Church in the Middle Ages vs. contemporary civilisation], in «Homo Dei» 68 (1993), issue 3, 45.

⁶ JOHN PAUL II, *Homily on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the death of St Adalbert in Gniezno*, 3 June 1997, 63.

heirs of the Old World. The clear truth is that in the pantheon of the patrons of European unity thus understood, we find saints from various periods and different nations who were connected by their common vocation to religious life. The first of these saints is St Benedict of Nursia, the father of the Western monasticism. The Apostles of Slavic peoples, Saints Cyril and Methodius, were monks of the Eastern Tradition. Three holy women, also patrons of Europe, were consecrated religious: St Catherine of Siena, a Dominican tertiary, St Brigid of Sweden, the founder of the Brigittines, and the Carmelite nun, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein). In the past, religious congregations played the special role of universal bearers of the unifying Gospel message in their multiple missionary, liturgical, social and cultural involvements.

The missionary institute of the Redemptorists, founded in 1732 by St Alphonsus Maria Liguori, has been engaged in this universal dimension of the Church's influence. It was St Clement Maria Hofbauer who had the courage to plunge into Europe's «deep challenges and possibilities», leaving behind the safe but too narrow Napoleonic harbours into which the Congregation was drifting, especially in the period of the painful *Regolamento*.⁷

1. – «*Dangerous fanatic*»

«This is a dangerous winding snake that sneaked unnoticed, under the mask of piety, into the German homeland, and treacherously deceived its authorities as he led weak people back to the bonds of ignorance, superstition, fanaticism and abusive power».⁸

This is the way a devilish high-ranking policeman in Jestetten, Germany, saw the work and activities of St Clement Hofbauer. It represents a typical memorandum written about the saint and his fellow Redemptorists by various informers who col-

⁷ The *Regolamento* refers to the «new rule» of 1780 which made the Redemptorist Congregation to exist solely by decree of the King of Naples. It effectively created a two-fold institute, one in the Papal States abiding by the pontifical rule of 1748, and the other in the Kingdom of Naples; this split was not healed until 1790. See BOLAND, 313-314.

⁸ G. JÄGER, *Jestetten und seine Umgebung*, Jestetten 1930, 427.

laborated with the «enlightened» authorities. Hofbauer and the other Redemptorists were presented as «weeds», «rejects of society», «a band of beggars», «a sect of Pharisees», «a comet announcing misfortune», «a superstitious band of Taborites»,⁹ and «a terribly fanatic horde». In Triberg, Germany, their stay was summarised with two statements: «It would have been better if those Poles had never been allowed to come»; [and] «...the Italian Liguorians are eating the bread of the local poor».¹⁰

St Clement was imprisoned for 106 days in Kraków¹¹; he was also questioned repeatedly by the police and secret agents who spied on the Church, having become an easy target for vague accusations of «intolerance and fanaticism».¹² It was a time marked with keen hatred toward the Church. The vicious sting of attacks, egged on by Freemasonry, was directed at religious congregations. Moreover, public opinion in the waning years of the eighteenth century commonly regarded men religious as a privileged caste, having both the power and the means to hold sway over others. They were portrayed as the personification of obscurantism and fanaticism, collectively a bastion of ignorance, laziness and social uselessness.¹³ As for Church-State relations, the ancient association of «throne and altar» was passing away. The symbolic standard of this «divorce» was the French Revolution, which advanced the new social-political order devoid of God and Church – paradoxically, in the name of the basically Christian motto: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!*

⁹ The Redemptorists' residence at Jestetten was named «Mt. Tabor»; hence the epithet *Taborites* was applied to them.

¹⁰ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię. Św. Klemens Maria Hofbauer (1751–1820)* [*Preaching the Gospel Anew. Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer (1751–1820)*], Tuchów 1992, 64.

¹¹ Cf. MH I, 4ff.

¹² MH V, 36, 115; VI, 23; VII, 19; XII, 107: «Patres de Ssmo Redemptore, exorbitans fanaticorum cohors»; cf. E. HOSP – J. DONNER, *Zeugnisse aus Bedrängter Zeit. Der heilige Klemens Maria Hofbauer in Briefen und weiteren Schriften*, (Miscellanea. Neue Reihe. Arbeitskreis für Kirchliche Zeit- und Wiener Diözesangeschichte. Wiener Katholische Akademie, Bd. 67), Wien 1982, 252.

¹³ A. ODERMATT, *Auf des Umfeld achten. Gedanken zur Geschichte der Redemptoristen*, in *Bei Ihm ist Erlösung in Fülle. 250 Jahre Redemptoristen*, ed. J. Scheibeck, Gars am Inn 1982, 14.

In the chaos of revolutionary transformations and re-evaluations, and especially in a struggle for «reign over souls», St Clement assumed an unambiguous attitude of total fidelity to the Pope and Catholic teaching. Within liberal circles his stance was regarded as an expression of fanatical backwardness in this period of intense criticism of Church authority.

One should mention here that Hofbauer did not assume the attitude of an uncritical papist. Rather, inspired by care and love of the Church, he bravely voiced objections with respect to the Roman Curia.¹⁴ From the perspective of almost two centuries of experience of tensions between integrist and progressive attitudes within the Church itself, there is the temptation to put St Clement into the narrow framework of the twentieth century categories of thought about the Church and the contemporary world. But such would be an oversimplification and would have the characteristics of facile projectionism – an «original sin» of all historical comparisons and references.

Johann Michael Sailer (1751–1832), an outstanding theologian and one of the pioneers of contemporary ecclesiology, had a different stance, with his views on the presence of the Church in the world. Sailer's focus was on one's strong inner spiritual life, with tolerance between various denominations and other ideas. Hence, he departed from the emphases of his epoch. Hofbauer's charge against the professor from Dillingen was that he was not Catholic enough; also, that he blurred the essential differences between denominations, regarded faith as a «private» matter of human conscience, and marginalized external forms of worship. Although full of emotion, this was a sincere, reaction by Hofbauer to Sailer's ideas, which the declared curialist regarded as contributing to the fall of the triumphant Church, «*extra quam nulla salus*».¹⁵ Despite their differences there was no personal hatred between the two theologians. Hofbauer wrote about his adversary, «He never insulted me; on the contrary he always

¹⁴ MH XIV, 121–123.

¹⁵ MH XII, 258–259; cf. K. FLEISCHMANN, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer. Sein Leben und seine Zeit*, Graz 1988, 238–240. The Latin phrase is the contentious phrasing of «outside the Church there is no salvation».

sought my friendship». ¹⁶ And Sailer's thought was that «Hofbauer is a pious, deeply thinking man [...] with a pure heart». ¹⁷

We would be quite erroneous in considering St Clement as a theological thinker and church diplomat. Above all, he was a shepherd and missionary, and it was from this perspective that he looked upon the Church and any imminent threats to the faith of people around him. ¹⁸ He kept repeating his characteristic and daring sentence, «How can one have God as Father if one does not want to have the Church as mother»? ¹⁹ On the other hand, he dismissed the accusations of his alleged intolerance and fanaticism with insightful irony: «Some fell to kiss my feet, but the number of those who slung mud at me was triple. Some insulted me too much, whereas others respected me too much». ²⁰

2. – «To unite all things again...»

Evangelisation as well as a desire for unity and reconciliation were the specific motives of the life of St Clement. The environment in which he was born and educated, sheds light on his efforts to reconcile and blur the boundary limits of any feud.

Clement Maria Hofbauer was born to a Slavic-German family in southern Moravian Tassowitz on 26 December, 1751, as a subject of Empress Maria Theresa. His father Pavel Dvořák was probably a Bohemian. He came from the vicinity of Moravian Budějovice, which he left about 1730. Clement's mother Maria came from the family of the local community judge and master-butcher Pavel Steer, a German. ²¹ The Margraveship of Moravia

¹⁶ J. DONNER – J. STEINLE, *Nur Mut, Gott lenkt alles. Klemens Maria Hofbauer in seinen Briefen*, München 1984, 39–41.

¹⁷ O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern (1790–1909). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ultramontanismus*, (Münchner Theologische Studien, I. Historische Abteilung», 22), St. Ottilien 1983, 146.

¹⁸ ID., *Die transalpinen Redemptoristen und der «Zeitgeist»*, in *SHCSR* 35 (1987) 162–163; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 134–135; O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 145–149.

¹⁹ MH XI, 149, 162, 238; XII, 171; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 132.

²⁰ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 5.

²¹ MH XII, 22, 35, 339: entry in the book of baptisms in the parish of

was ethnically and culturally diversified like the multinational monarchy of the Habsburgs, including Bohemia and Moravia. In the eighteenth century those territories painfully experienced the unjust divisions and absolutist ambitions in the era of bloody military conflicts that swept across Europe, especially in the Seven Years War between Prussia and Austria (1757–1763). The personal experience of his identity at the edge of two nationalities (with a Czech father and German mother) and his small homeland, where those speaking a different language were regarded as alien, made Clement adopt a universal view on the surrounding reality and on deeply understood and experienced Catholicism.²² In his childhood he already experienced the truth about Europe, which was more *unitas multiplex* than *unum ex pluribus*. However, his faith and the constantly valid message of the Gospel were always for him the keystones of variety and richness of cultures.

As a priest, and as a religious in accord with the charisma of his Redemptorist founder Alphonsus Liguori, Clement Hofbauer realised the idea of building a «common house», open for all. Like the Apostle Paul in early Christianity, St Clement became an Apostle to the Nations in the Napoleonic era, as he travelled throughout Europe, then divided by its thick network of frontiers and territorial restraints. Without his courageous dynamism the message of God's Plentiful Redemption proclaimed by the Redemptorists would not have crossed the Alps.²³

Budějovice and Tassowitz; E. HOSP, *Abstammung des heiligen Klemens*, in *SHCSR* 4 (1954) 87–97; J. HOFER, *Der heilige Klemens Maria Hofbauer. Ein Lebensbild*, Freiburg 1921, 2ff; J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 7.

²² St Clement did not suffer, however, from «nationality schizoprenia», identifying himself clearly with the culture of the German-speaking area: «Ich Klemens Hofbauer aus Mähren bin der erste Deutsche (...) in dieser Versammlung». [«I, Clement Hofbauer, am the first German... in this Congregation».] *MH* VIII, 145; cf. O. WEISS, *Gründungsversuche der Redemptoristen in Deutschland und der Schweiz in den Jahren 1790–1808*, in *SHCSR* 47 (1999) 279.

²³ «A pesar de todo, la difusión de la Congregación fuera de Italia ha tenido lugar a partir de los Redentoristas formados por s. Clemente y por el P. Tadeo Hübl». [«In spite of everything, the spread of the Congregation outside of Italy has taken place, starting with the Redemptorists formed by St. Clement and Father Thaddeus Hübl»]. F. FERRERO, *Función histórica de s. Clemente Maria Hofbauer...*, 321.

Together with two other Redemptorists, Father Thaddeus Hübl and Brother Emanuel Kunzmann, he reached Warsaw in February 1787. But the missionary plans of St Clement were far-reaching, and Poland's capital was intended to be only a stop-over on his way farther north, according to some sources, «*destinati... pro Stralsunda civitate in Pomerania Suecica*».²⁴ Other sources claim that the territory of the Redemptorists' future ministry was to be «*Polonia Russa*», i.e., Courland and the territories occupied by Russia after the first partition of Poland.²⁵

It took great courage and missionary zeal to dream of apostolic work in those desolate and neglected territories; their deplorable condition followed the political edicts which three neighbouring countries had arbitrarily made concerning the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Hofbauer himself was witness to one of the most tragic moments in the history of the Polish nation – the drama of The Partitions.

At first Hofbauer and his companions were treated by the Polish people with distrust because the Redemptorists, who were German-speaking and caring for the community of St Benno's, were regarded as hostile Protestants. We must bear in mind the fact that the Polish people still remembered the role of the Prussians during the first partition of their country.²⁶ Then the change of attitude that came over the citizens of Warsaw was revolutionary. It rose favourably in keeping with the tempo and level of the pastoral involvement of the «Bennonites» in the religious and spiritual life of the capital city.²⁷

²⁴ MH IV, 143; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 14-15. – The Latin phrase means «destined for the city of Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania». Stralsund today is in northeast Germany on an inlet of the Baltic Sea; in Clement's day Sweden had political control of the Pomeranian area in which Stralsund lay.

²⁵ MH XI, 18, 71, 317; XII, 8, 11, 23, 105; cf. G. ORLANDI, *Gli anni 1784-1787 nella vita di s. Clemente...*, 187-280.

²⁶ MH VIII, 148; XI, 211; XII, 235.

²⁶ MH VIII, 148; XI, 211; XII, 235.

²⁷ A. OWCZARSKI, *I redentoristi a Varsavia 1787-1808*, in *Storia della Congregazione del Santissimo Redentore*, ed. O. Weiss, vol. 2/I, Roma 2010, 371-374. – «Bennonites», a popular term ascribed to the Redemptorists at their church of St. Benno.

For the most part St Clement directed his Redemptorist apostolic spirit to the poor and abandoned. He pointedly dedicated himself to the education of children and youth, a challenge which he always cherished, and which he now undertook despite the literally understood rules of his own Congregation. The Redemptorists gathered on average about 300 boys in their school consisting of three grade levels.²⁸ Even as many as forty boys and thirty girls found shelter in the orphanage. These orphans came his way especially after the failure of the Kościuszko Uprising and the Massacre in Praga in 1794.

With very little contribution from the state, the Redemptorists provided education and other benefits to the children without cost. The basic condition for admittance to the school or orphanage was a child's poverty. Lessons were conducted in Polish and German, which were not subject to the conditions of international agreements concerning the treatment of minority groups. St Clement and his companions did not grant admittance according to any ethnic or religious criteria; hence the school and orphanage took in German, Polish and Russian children who came from Protestant, Catholic and even Jewish families.²⁹ There was no preference given according to one's social background or parent's profession. That is why under Redemptorist care there were children from families of the nobility, the townsfolk, and even the Prussian military³⁰.

Hofbauer and his companions wrote in a letter to the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III, «We make no difference among the children whom we teach and feed, regardless of their family background, civilian or military; it is enough that they are poor or orphaned».³¹

The first free vocational school for the poor was founded in 1795, and it often accepted troubled young women. Such a school was unique in the Polish system of education in the Commonwealth, and perhaps in Europe.³² Like the school founded

²⁸ Cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 132–147.

²⁹ MH III, 4, 34, 44–45, 50–51, 55; VIII, 148.

³⁰ A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 129.

³¹ MH III, 34.

³² MH I, 84; III, 67; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w War-*

earlier exclusively for boys, it was an adequate response to the concrete needs of the Warsaw citizens who were experiencing the trauma of the Partitions of the late eighteenth century.

After the pupils had finished their schooling, the Redemptorists helped them find proper jobs. This action brought vigorous reproaches from the Prussian inspector. He accused the Redemptorists of excluding the children from «the proletariat class and increasing their aspirations to the comfortable life in this environment».³³

The schools run by the Bennonites began gaining increased confidence of the people, as is shown by the fact that parents from the farthest districts of Warsaw and nearby settlements sent their children to the Redemptorists.³⁴ It was also an expression of how the people increasingly accepted the educational efforts of St Clement and his companions, efforts which were carried out in a non-political and non-nationalistic style.³⁵ In the era of political, ethnic and social divisions, St Clement proved himself a pioneer of social concord and applied subsidiarity.

However, the fundamental task and mission of Hofbauer was to preach the Gospel to the poor and abandoned. In his rich personality one can find traces of some extraordinary skills and courage toward enculturation. Risking the displeasure of superiors, and surmounting his own doubts, he had the courage to adjust his methods of pastoral involvement to the requirements and cultural conditions of the territory.

An example of this characteristic trait of Clement was his introduction of the now legendary «perpetual mission» at the Church of St Benno, as he found it impossible to conduct parish missions according to the established Redemptorist model.³⁶ Apart from the sermons preached in Polish, German and sometimes in

szawie..., 147–151.

³³ MH III, 5–6.

³⁴ A. OWZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 141.

³⁵ J. F. BYRNE, *The Redemptorist Centenaries*, Philadelphia 1932, 32–33.

³⁶ A. OWZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 157–184. Traditional Redemptorist missions were impossible because of the political situation; Warsaw was under Prussian occupation and the authorities had forbidden such apostolic endeavours.

French,³⁷ a special feature of the liturgy was the superior quality of the religious music and singing – a matter which brought protests from some Redemptorist sources. St Clement was persistent in explaining to his Superior General Peter Paul Blasucci that

«The northern peoples by their nature are so inclined to singing that it is not easy to find others like them in the East, the South and West. [...] This custom is in accordance with their natural inclinations, and does not aim only at pleasant stroking of ears or vain stirring of hearts, but also at lifting of one's thoughts more easily to God. [...] The same should be understood and judged about the Masses sung with musical accompaniment».³⁸

Hofbauer also had the courage to change the rigid practice of taking an afternoon siesta. His reason was that «it would evoke great astonishment if someone introduced this custom here». Such a community «would be regarded as sluggish and would lose all respect because lay people do not sleep during the day».³⁹

Clement's expressed his opinion about his confreres from France who grumbled about the violation of certain rules: «It is known that the clergymen belonging to that nation demand that things be done only as they are done in France; they cannot adjust to other locales».⁴⁰ That ability to adjust, to understand the pastoral and cultural needs of the times, as well as his own openness to the signs of the times, were some of the foremost virtues in Hofbauer's personal holiness.⁴¹

3. – *On Europe's roads*

Another dimension of the universal message, which St Clement contributed to the history of Europe, was his supranational apostolate. For years he dreamed of creating an international seminary having «a large number of missionaries who could help the Church all over the world». His essential idea was to gather

³⁷ MH II, 48; VIII, 72; XI, 55; XII, 11–12; cf. A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 168–174.

³⁸ MH VIII, 88; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 363.

³⁹ MH VIII, 87.

⁴⁰ MH VIII, 253; XIV, 97–98.

⁴¹ F. FERRERO, *Función histórica de s. Clemente Maria Hofbauer...*, 339, 344–345.

«Frenchmen, Germans, Poles and men of other nationalities to send them out two by two to the countries where God would call them».⁴² His intentions were realised in the Warsaw community to a certain extent since young people from various parts of Europe began coming to the Redemptorist novitiate from behind the Alps: from Saxony, Silesia, Warmia, Bohemia, Thuringia, Switzerland, France, Suabia, Moravia, Lotharingia, Alsace, Austria, Pomerania of Gdańsk, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia. The largest group was from Poland.⁴³

In his selection of candidates, Hofbauer did not discriminate by reason of their country of origin, and certainly not by their financial status. This policy stood in contrast to a stringent decision made during this period affecting the Redemptorist novices in Italy – not to accept any foreigners. Although this xenophobic decision in Italy was indeed abandoned after some time, there was retained a financial criterion for candidates – admittance in Italy was conditioned on a certain monetary sum.⁴⁴ Since the arrival of the first Redemptorists in Warsaw in 1787 until their dramatic dispersal in 1808, the Warsaw residence had been home to seventy-six priests, brothers, novices and pre-novice candidates.⁴⁵

The multinational character of the community was the effect of the numerous visits of St Clement, who as the Vicar General for transalpine Europe, tried to develop the Congregation in various countries. He and his companions crossed many borders and lines of demarcation which then divided Europe. One of the chroniclers related:

«We mostly went on foot, seldom in carriages. We covered about ten miles a day, regardless of rain, wind, snow, frost, or bothersome heat, carrying our clothes, books and cooking utensils in backpacks [...]. In the evening, very tired, we could hardly find poor food and lodging in some inn».⁴⁶

⁴² MH IV, 14–15; VI, 14; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 363.

⁴³ MH VIII, 38, 40, 50, 52, 60, 269; XIII, 250–251; XV, 187–202; A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 63.

⁴⁴ E. HOSP, *St. Klemens und das Generalat*, in *SHCSR 2* (1954) 156–157; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 72–73.

⁴⁵ A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 63.

⁴⁶ M. PELISSER, *Le Père Passerat. Un sillage de feu...*, 23 (handwritten co-

One of the first centres which St. Clement founded in 1795 was at the former Jesuit monastery in Mitau.⁴⁷ This mission in the capital of Courland was of a type not very different from what Hofbauer and Hübl originally had in mind. However, the difficult political situation in the territories which were incorporated into tsarist and Orthodox Russia (after the Third Polish Partition) broke the bonds with the motherhouse at St Benno's in Warsaw.⁴⁸ Similarly, the remaining foundations in Western Europe, despite initial success, did not last for long.

During the second foundation trip (July 1797 – August 1798) St Clement tried to found a mission centre in Wollerau, in the Swiss canton of Schwyz.⁴⁹ Here his attempts came to naught, and what was worse, on his way back Clement was arrested in Kraków by the Austrian police and was forced to remain under house arrest for over three months. From there he made a daring escape.⁵⁰ As early as 1799 Hofbauer went to Święta Lipka in the district of Warmia. However, his labors were in vain, as were the attempts of Archbishop of Mohylev, Stanislaus Siestrzencewicz, to bring the Redemptorists to his Belorussian diocese.⁵¹

As it turned out, the foundations in southern Germany and Switzerland lasted at least for relatively short periods: in Jestetten on Mount Tabor (1802-1806),⁵² in Triberg (1805-1807),⁵³ in

pies in the Provincial Archives of Tuchów).

⁴⁷ Mitau was today's Jelgava, Latvia. Its history included a series of sieges and conquests.

⁴⁸ MH VIII, 66; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 193–196.

⁴⁹ «Hinc ab eodem anno Pater Hoffbauer pluribus peractis excursionibus ab anno 1795 usque ad annum 1802 fuit etiam per Germaniam propagata adeo, ut non parvus sodalium numerus in Silesia, Moravia, Bohemia, quin et in Svevia, Austria, Carinthia et mox per Silvam Hercyniam, etiam in Helvetia modo valeat reperiri». MH II, 53; VIII, 57–60; cf. O. WEISS, *Gründungsversuche der Redemptoristen...*, 284–286; Id., *Tentativi di fondazioni in Germania e in Svizzera dal 1790 al 1808*, in *Storia della Congregazione del Santissimo Redentore*, ed. O. Weiss, vol. 2/I, Romae 2010, 429–450.

⁵⁰ MH I, 29ff; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 58.

⁵¹ MH VIII, 190, 193–194; A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 199–201.

⁵² G. JÄGER, *Jestetten und seine Umgebung...*, 418–431.

⁵³ E. HOSP, *Der heilige Klemens Maria Hofbauer in Triberg im Schwarzwald*

Babenhausen (1805-1807) and finally, in the Premonstratensian monastery in St. Luzi near Chur and Visp in the Swiss canton of Valais (1807-1812).⁵⁴ This unique sequence of foundations is explained by the difficult situation in Poland, which the invaders erased from Europe's map, and the increasing interference of the Prussian officials in the life and pastoral activities of the Clement and his companions. His ever-uncertain circumstances forced Clement to keep seeking out safer places, far from his enemies and political turmoil. His determination pushed him, as Transalpine Vicar General, to plan a foundation in France⁵⁵ and even to dream of going to Canada.⁵⁶ Being reproached by the Superior General that he should restrain «his too zealous desire to create foundations of the Congregation», St Clement answered that «as far as human weakness allows him» he would like to «work for the salvation of souls» through these new foundations.⁵⁷ The most important thing for him was not the development of the Congregation, but his pastoral care for people.

In 1802 St Clement, aptly described as an «Apostolic Man»,⁵⁸ saw from his pastoral perspective the necessity of unity between Eastern and Western Europe. Thus arose his plan to dispatch some Redemptorist missionaries to the Eastern lands of the former Polish Commonwealth (Mitau, Mohylev) and also Crimea.⁵⁹

1805, in *SHCSR* 3 (1955) 412–446. Triberg, in the Black Forest and famous for its wooden clocks, is some thirty miles northeast of Freiburg.

⁵⁴ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 62–68; O. WEISS, *Gründungsversuche der Redemptoristen...*, 286–304; por. J. DONNER – J. STEINLE, *Nur Mut, Gott lenkt alles...*, 42–75; cf. E. HOSP – J. DONNER, *Zeugnisse aus Bedrängter Zeit...*, 115ff. – Babenhausen is sixteen miles southeast of Frankfurt.

⁵⁵ MH XIII, 211; cf. M. PELISSER, *Le Père Passerat...*, 18.

⁵⁶ «I am thinking about the fate of Canada with joy. [...] You will be surprised to see my plans and will certainly say that the distance to Canada is very great. Despite that, we could stay there until better times, and train missionaries for unfortunate Europe». (MH VI, 28; XV, 22; cf. M. PELISSER, *Le Père Passerat...*, 23).

⁵⁷ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 53.

⁵⁸ The Latin phrase «*homo apostolicus*» was used by the then Papal Nuncio to Austria, Archbishop Antonio G. Severoli in his letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Ercole Consalvi: «Il P. Clemente Maria Hoffbauer di essa è uomo veramente apostolico...». MH II, 50.

⁵⁹ MH I, 87–94; XIV, 127ff; XV, 17; cf. J. DONNER – J. STEINLE, *Nur Mut,*

The foundation in the southern land of Wallachia (present day Romania) was especially meaningful within the apostolic vision of Hofbauer.⁶⁰

After being expelled from the Duchy of Warsaw in 1808, Clement went to Vienna. From this capital of Austria he sent four Redemptorists to Bucharest in October 1815 by virtue of his authority as Vicar General and in answer to the request of the apostolic prefect of Moldova and Wallachia, Bishop Fortunato Ercolani.⁶¹ The foundation in Bucharest reminded Clement of Warsaw, «This city [Bucharest] is a melting-pot of all nationalities and religions, as was Warsaw during my stay there».⁶² But his Redemptorists colleagues did not encounter adequate conditions for development of the Bucharest mission. This was due to the extremely difficult political and economic reality in a territory then controlled by the Turks. By 1821 the Bucharest centre had to be closed. Nevertheless, it was a courageous attempt to pursue apostolic work in the spirit of Alphonsus Liguori among

Gott lenkt alles..., 29; E. HOSP, *Der heilige Klemens maria Hofbauer*, 224; O. WEISS, *Gründungsversuche der Redemptoristen...*, 305–306; A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 193–201.

⁶⁰ M. BRUDZISZ, *Les projets missionnaires de Clément Hofbauer en Europe de l'Est*, in *SHCSR* 58 (2009) 135ff; cf. ID., *Bukareszt – ostatnia fundacja św. Klemensa Hofbauera [Bucharest – the last foundation of St Clement Hofbauer]*, in *Wierni Tradycji – otwarcie na znaki czasu. Materiały Sympozjum na Stulecie Warszawskiej Prowincji Redemptorystów i kanonizacji Św. Klemensa Marii Hofbauera, Tuchów 9–10 Października 2009 [Faithful to the Tradition – Open to the Signs of the Times. The Proceedings of the Symposium on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Warsaw Redemptorist Province and the Canonisation of St Clement Maria Hofbauer, Tuchów, 9-10 October, 2009]*, (*Studia do Dziejów Redemptorystów Polskich*, 1), ed. M. Sadowski, Kraków 2009, 29-67.; cf. ID., *Vicende dei redentoristi – benoniti dispersi e tentativi di Clemente Hofbauer di ricostruire la vita comunitaria 1808-1820*, in: *Storia della Congregazione del Santissimo Redentore*, ed. O. Weiss, vol. 2/I, Roma 2010, 484-487.

⁶¹ Father Josef Forthuber, seminarian Josef Libotzki, seminarian Franz Hätscher and Brother Matthias Widhalm. Cf. the preserved rich correspondence among the following: St Clement, Nuncio Antonio Severoli, Cardinal Lorenzo Litta and Bishop Fortunato Ercolani. (MH XIV, 1ff; see MH XI, 20, 56, 149, 238, 268–269; XII, 12, 40, 261–263; XIII, 295–299). – It is worth noting that Franz Hätscher, was later, as a priest, among the first band of Redemptorists sent to America in 1832.

⁶² E. HOSP – J. DONNER, *Zeugnisse aus Bedrängter Zeit...*, 195.

believers destined to be forgotten even within some church circles.⁶³

A well-known fact about the missionary foundations of Clement Hofbauer was their failure to survive during his lifetime. His efforts in the East and the West simply did not yield expected results.⁶⁴ The work of his life was ruined when he found himself in the hands of the Viennese police in September 1808, now burdened with the charge of being a legal fugitive. However, it was about him, the allegedly lost and burnt-out idealist, that Zacharias Werner uttered the meaningful, and yet somewhat incredible words in this context, «In Europe I know only three great men: Napoleon, Goethe and Father Clement».⁶⁵

Hofbauer was neither a genius nor a superman; he experienced his weaknesses painfully. Yet he was a prophet of his era, and at the same time he contributed to the spiritual and moral renewal of Warsaw, Vienna and every other place he himself went, or to which he sent his confreres to preach the Good News of Plentiful Redemption. Hofbauer was called «a man of God» and «a saint» by the local citizens in all those places.⁶⁶ He was the one who wished to unite people not on behalf of political ideas and revolutionary mottoes, but for Christ and in Christ.

4. – *Uniting Europe in Christ*

Hofbauer was a man of his time. During the epoch of militant Josephinism and progressive secularisation, he tirelessly testified that the experience of God and God's Love was possible even in the most unfavourable political, economic and historic conditions.⁶⁷ St Clement experienced painfully that «the contemporary world did not want to believe». But he did not seek out

⁶³ MH XI, 56; J. DONNER – J. STEINLE, *Nur Mut, Gott lenkt alles...*, 82–83.

⁶⁴ E. HOSP, *Erbe des hl. Klemens Maria Hofbauer. Erlösermissionäre in Österreich 1820–1951*, Wien 1953, 22.

⁶⁵ MH XI, 39–40; XII, 308; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 81; cf. J. F. BYRNE, *The Redemptorist Centenaries...*, 35.

⁶⁶ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 83; cf. G. JÄGER, *Jestetten und seine Umgebung...*, 424.

⁶⁷ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 83.

the underlying causes of this condition in purely external circumstances. Rather he looked toward clergymen who allowed themselves to be overcome by a vision of the world without God, and toward various other believers who were lethargic, who doubted the effectiveness of the Gospel, and who allowed themselves to follow current fatal trends. He sorely regretted the danger of ongoing recruitment conducted by numerous religious sects.⁶⁸ Facing the revolutionary transformations that were sweeping over Europe, St Clement opposed defeatism and church torpor, realising his life motto, «the Gospel must be preached anew».⁶⁹

At the turn of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries Europe was overrun by the ideology of French Jacobinism, free thinking, political rebellion, and disparagement of all kinds of authority, as well as separation between faith and culture. For the Catholic Church the special threat was not only the loss of current enormous political and economic privilege and influence, but also rampant, strongly renewed separatist tendencies towards Rome. There was also the real threat of developing state churches. This movement, also called «Josephinism», became extreme in Austria. The Church could be rendered a lifeless tool in the hands of a random enlightened ruler and his administrative apparatus.⁷⁰ Evidence of state interference in Church life is the fact that the number of candles on the altar during Mass could be regulated by some ministerial order.⁷¹ In the era of Josephinism the parish ministry of a priest was not to care for pastoral needs, but first of all to perform administrative duties in his rectory office.

Facing such an effective policy of state absolutism, St Clement saw the threat that clergymen would be far from the Gospel and care of their flock.⁷² Therefore, in this context the police

⁶⁸ E. HOSP – J. DONNER, *Zeugnisse aus Bedrängter Zeit...*, 99.

⁶⁹ MH XII, 245–246; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 96.

⁷⁰ R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 12

⁷¹ W. HOYER, «Nur Mut, Gott ist der Meister». *Josephinismus-Gegenwind im Leben des hl. Klemens Maria Hofbauer*, in «Pfarrblatt der Dompfarrerei St. Stephan» 56 (2001), issue 3, 11; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 87.

⁷² Cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosic na nowo Ewangelię...*, 83; see W. HOYER, «Nur Mut, Gott ist der Meister»..., 11.

report written at a Vienna police station should not be surprising, «[Hofbauer] made indecent judgements against the Austrian government».⁷³ The expert in this era, Richard Kralik, called St Clement «a conqueror of the Enlightenment in Austria». However, Clement's merits in this field were not that he opposed the absolutism of Josephinism directly, condemning its ideologists and promoters, but that through his apostolate he offered his contemporaries a positive programme for the revival of religious commitment and spiritual life.⁷⁴ From the historical perspective three forms of Hofbauer's pastoral activities seem to be especially characteristic and meaningful.

5. – «To evangelize the poor»

Following the spirit of Alphonsus Liguori, the Redemptorists' founder, Hofbauer was with people and for people all his life. He cared first for their eternal salvation, but also attended to the improvement of the physical and social conditions of those who were poor and abandoned. He had a great charisma to search out and contact people. He knew how to find impoverished and neglected individuals within the environment where he ministered. In Warsaw these were the orphans and children who had no access to schooling. By running schools and an orphanage he helped children have a better start in life.⁷⁵ In Vienna he visited daily the poverty-stricken districts, carrying food and clothing hidden under his coat.⁷⁶ His solidarity with these people was so extensive that the door of his small flat on Seilerstätte Street was always open to them and «he always hosted the destitute and very poor at his table». He welcomed all people, regardless of their philosophy of life or religion.⁷⁷

The essential element of his service was not what he did for the poor but *who he was* for them, and the fact that, apart

⁷³ MH XIII, 28; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 131.

⁷⁴ MH VI, 75, 78; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 132; W. HOYER, «Nur Mut, Gott ist der Meister»..., 12.

⁷⁵ Cf. A. OWZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 127–157.

⁷⁶ MH XI, 163–164, 183, 210, 162, 239; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 369.

⁷⁷ MH XI, 236; XII, 47–48, 115, 147.

from food, he gave them a sense of their human and Christian dignity. He had a special devotion toward the sick and dying. It was during his stay in Warsaw that he and his companions visited the sick both in private homes and in both civilian and military hospitals, «always concerned for those in danger of death».⁷⁸ His confreres and Clement himself helped Poles, Germans, Frenchmen and Italians.⁷⁹ Similarly, when he lived in Vienna, St Clement cared for the sick and dying. During his twelve-year ministry in the capital of Austria he attended over 2,000 dying people.⁸⁰

Like St Alphonsus Liguori in his diocese of Saint Agatha of the Goths, and like Blessed Gennaro Sarnelli in Naples, St Clement helped marginalised people, especially female prostitutes. The citizens of Warsaw were much indebted to him for this ministry, particularly in the district of Nowe Miasto. The occupants, especially the Russians, promoted prostitution and drunkenness as effective means of demoralising the Polish nation.⁸¹ In fact, at that time in Warsaw it was reportedly hard to «find a street ... without one or even several brothels».⁸² Hofbauer, being convinced that there was more good than evil in every person, and believing in the possibility of conversion of every sinner, he admitted bitterly that «nobody wants to notice the causes of this evil».⁸³ Together with his confreres he was not indifferent towards the condition of the impoverished and abandoned women and girls. His support was not a form of short-term alms, but was intended to ensure for them a better life. Consequently, the Bennonites helped them find jobs, taught them worthy professions and organised for them retreats and days of reflection.⁸⁴

For his contemporaries St Clement was also, or perhaps above all, a physician treating spiritual malnourishment; this was

⁷⁸ MH IX, 37.

⁷⁹ MH X, 55; cf. A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 215–216.

⁸⁰ MH XII, 239; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 369.

⁸¹ W. ZALESKI, *Z dziejów prostytucji w Warszawie* [From the history of the prostitution in Warsaw], Warszawa 1924, 13–14, 18; cf. A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 218.

⁸² MH III, 16.

⁸³ MH II, 48–49, III, 16.

⁸⁴ A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 218–220.

especially evident in his ministry in the sacrament of reconciliation. As a charismatic confessor and spiritual director of people of all social strata and professions, he greatly helped those penitents who may have been «stifled in confessing their faith because of modern trends toward Josephinism and escalating secularisation». He aided in restoring their sense of faith and zealous love for God.⁸⁵ The extraordinary gift of spiritual healing, with which St Clement touched human consciences, was described by Zacharias Werner, «Hofbauer saw through the small crevices of hardened hearts.»⁸⁶

6. – «Faith and Reason»

Clement Maria Hofbauer was one of the most meaningful personalities of his times.⁸⁷ His name and activities are commonly connected with the renewal movement in the Church in the nineteenth century, which he and his confreres initiated in Warsaw and Vienna, these capital cities being bridges between the European East and the West.⁸⁸ An essential element of this programme of renewal was St Clement's efforts to make generally recognized personages of culture and science come closer to the sources of faith and morality.

We can state that during his stay in Warsaw Hofbauer was known as an advocate of close collaboration with Church laity, understanding such «collaboration» in the context of the possibilities and pastoral standards of his era. After a one-year stay in the capital of the Polish Commonwealth, he brought into being the Association of Oblates of the Most Holy Redeemer. Early in the 1790s, he opened a publishing house and a lending library at the Church of St Benno to serve the needs of that fruitful mission.⁸⁹ Similar associations among the laity originated in those

⁸⁵ W. HOYER, «Nur Mut, Gott ist der Meister»..., 12.

⁸⁶ MH XI, 27, 236; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 371.

⁸⁷ R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 3.

⁸⁸ J. KŁOCZOWSKI – L. MÜLLEROWA – J. SKARBK, *Zarys dziejów Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce [An outline of the history of the Catholic Church in Poland]*, Kraków 1986, 175.

⁸⁹ A. OW CZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 152–155.

places where the Redemptorists started their foundations in Western Europe.⁹⁰ «Hofbauer was neither the only one nor the first to have this idea. But he exerted his personality on the work and contributed much to its expansion in the world».⁹¹

In Vienna, where spiritual and cultural life had already developed among circles of friends, St Clement was quick to judge situations and discover what were the possibilities for ministering to various lay women and men. Soon such a circle of friends came into being which was centred around him. It was a gathering of about fifty people, mostly students. Hofbauer's quarters were the designated place of meeting and dialogue for people of various social strata and interests: clerks and prelates, scientists and artists.⁹² Hofbauer was a confessor and trusted friend of numerous representatives of the intelligentsia of Vienna, the so-called «Romantic circle.» The group included Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) – scholar, linguist and poet, the founder and theoretician of the Romantic school in literature; Ferenc Széchenyi (1754–1820) – Hungarian politician and aristocrat; Johann Emanuel Veith (1787–1876) – born of Jewish Orthodox parents, and professor and director of the school of veterinary medicine in Vienna; Zacharias Werner (1768–1823) – a poet, a creator of «fate tragedies», a friend of Goethe, a Prussian clerk and Freemason, convert to Catholicism in 1810 and (after 1814) an ordained priest and outstanding preacher in St Stephen's Cathedral.⁹³ Hofbauer, together with the laity, saw the benefits of the press and used it – as he put it – «as a kind of constant pulpit».⁹⁴

Many of his friends and penitents became priests and religious, while one of his disciples, Joseph Othmar Ritter von Rauscher, became Cardinal and Archbishop of Vienna (1753–1775). The

⁹⁰ MH XV, 127–131; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 46–47; A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 205–212.

⁹¹ E. DUDEL, *Klemens Hofbauer. Ein Zeitbild*, Bonn 1970, 67–69.

⁹² R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 14–15; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 379.

⁹³ MH XI, 30–47; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 139f; cf. R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 14–15; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 104–107; cf. K. FLEISCHMANN, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 94ff. – «Fate tragedies» were gruesome plays in which blind chance had a dominant role.

⁹⁴ J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 379–380.

cardinal was later to utter these significant words about St Clement, «Hofbauer gave a better direction to the spirit of the time».⁹⁵ It may seem astonishing that all these powerful and influential people gathered around the simple priest, who was a baker by profession, and a butcher's son. Although St Clement is called «the father of political Catholicism»⁹⁶ and the year of his arrival in Vienna in 1808 is described as marking the birth of Catholic restoration in Austria by many historiographers,⁹⁷ the far more important and unquestionable fact is that Clement Maria Hofbauer was first of all a shepherd, the true Apostle of Warsaw and Vienna.

7. – «The pleasing fragrance of Christ»

Hospitality is one of the fundamental features of the common European home. Both the Redemptorist residence of St Benno in Warsaw and the small flat of Hofbauer in Vienna had an «open door» policy.⁹⁸ They were each a specific refuge for the poor, the deserted and those seeking the truth. The Viennese residence, without locks or enclosure, offering grand friendship and hospitality which St Clement expressed to everyone, became a religious centre of the Habsburg capital.⁹⁹ «They could visit him at home as many times as they wished [...]. He always had time for them even when he was very busy or in suffering».¹⁰⁰

Most of St Clement's guests were young people. They were drawn by the personality and holiness of the old Redemptorist. It was a Viennese policeman, whose task was to observe Hofbauer's flat and be aware of all who entered, described his scrutiny very accurately in his report. He wrote that the effect of

⁹⁵ ID., *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 109; ID., *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 380.

⁹⁶ K. GANZER, *Der Heilige Hofbauer. Vater der Gegenreformation im 19. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 1939; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 142; R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 12.

⁹⁷ O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 139; cf. J. F. BYRNE, *The Redemptorist Centenaries...*, 35.

⁹⁸ MH XI, 236; cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Der «Homo Apostolicus»...*, 367; cf. E. HOSP – J. DONNER, *Zeugnisse aus Bedrängter Zeit...*, 93.

⁹⁹ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 99.

¹⁰⁰ MH XI, 212, 233, 321; XII, 143.

those meetings «was suspicious because the participants turned out to be completely changed».¹⁰¹ Those «changed» after leaving Hofbauer's flat included numerous Protestants, agnostics and even people of Jewish faith. The spiritual power of Clement's conversation and, above all, the example of his life, occasioned their conversion or their return to faith.

St Clement and his confreres began pastoral work also among people of other religious groups in Warsaw. Sometimes they reached out to those who professed no faith at all, and these, it is estimated, made up some twenty-five percent of Warsaw in the 1790s).¹⁰² Hofbauer, although he had no special training in Hebrew religion or culture, is credited with conducting effective discussions with those of the Jewish faith in Warsaw.¹⁰³

At first one of the means to establish ties with Warsaw Protestants was by the liturgical music provided in the celebration of worship in St Benno's. Moreover, the style and quality of preaching, as well as the pastoral care provided by the priests, brought many evangelicals to the Redemptorists' parlour, wanting to meet and debate certain theological and spiritual issues. Subsequently, these dialogue meetings then had to be scheduled in a hired hall nearby.¹⁰⁴ St Clement himself was intensely involved in these «ecumenical» gatherings, which led to the conversion of many who were «influenced in a remarkable way by his special faith and zeal, simplicity, prayer, and his limitless love».¹⁰⁵ It is said the motive behind numerous conversions in Vienna was always the same, namely, «the pleasing fragrance of Christ».¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 101.

¹⁰² A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 212.

¹⁰³ MH V, 130; XI, 70, 198, 218–219.

¹⁰⁴ MH V, 150; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 215–216.

¹⁰⁵ A. PRUSINOWSKI, *Jan Klemens Maria Hofbauer, Wikary Generalny Zgromadzenia Przenajświętszego Zbawiciela. Ustęp z dziejów Kościoła XIX wieku w Warszawie i Wiedniu [Johann Clement Maria Hofbauer, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. A story of the 19th century Church in Warsaw and Vienna]*, in «Przegląd Katolicki» 19 (1864), 295; cf. A. OWCZARSKI, *Redemptoryści benonici w Warszawie...*, 215–216.

¹⁰⁶ MH XI, 59, 219, 269; XII, 40, 122. Cf. II Cor. 2:15.

However, the convert from Judaism, Johann Veith, who testified during Clement's beatification process, stressed powerfully that Clement had always showed great sensitivity, gentleness and tact in his sincere desire to convert as many «separated brothers» to the Catholic Church as possible.¹⁰⁷ One of the proofs that Hofbauer did not conduct a type of cheap proselytism was the respect he enjoyed with the educated representatives of Protestant circles.¹⁰⁸ The *universalism* which was the hallmark of St Clement's thoughts and actions certainly went beyond the narrow framework of this period of history. For what was stirring then was an intense nationalism and, often, a sense of superiority of one race over another. On the other hand, Hofbauer was a man of his time, affected to some degree by human limitations and stereotyping.

Conclusion

«Through some students he converted other students, through some workers he made other workers come closer to Jesus, and through some politicians he converted other politicians. Through children he reached parents, and through women he reached the men in their lives. Thus he brought about conversions of family members, without any display or self-seeking. He was always in conscientious pursuit of his pastoral goal».¹⁰⁹

Hofbauer was a saint «without posturing and ostentation, a friend of young people, a confidant of people's hearts, someone in whom there was no trace of deceit. Offering a cheerful welcome to visitors, he lived with a steady contemplative sense of God. At the same time he was a practical man», esteemed by those with whom he came in contact.¹¹⁰ Clement was a man with an

¹⁰⁷ MH XI, 33–34; XI, 21; XII, 110; cf. M. LEITGÖB, «*Fidelis servus et prudens*». *Klemensa Marii Hofbauera droga ku beatyfikacji i kanonizacji* [Clement Maria Hofbauer's path to Beatification], in: *Wierni Tradycji – otwarci na znaki czasu. Materiały Sympozjum na Stulecie Warszawskiej Prowincji Redemptorystów i kanonizacji Św. Klemensa Marii Hofbauera, Tuchów 9–10 Października 2009*, (Studia do Dziejów Redemptorystów Polskich, 1), ed. M. Sadowski, Kraków 2009, 24.

¹⁰⁸ MH XI, 242; cf. O. WEISS, *Die Redemptoristen in Bayern...*, 132–133.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. K. FLEISCHMANN, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 219.

¹¹⁰ MH XII, 245–246; cf. R. DECOT, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer...*, 26.

authentically «Catholic heart»; his homeland was Europe without borders, although it was marred by territorial obstacles and divided as never before. Europe, as experienced by St Clement, was not so much a measured space as it was a unified reality in which people could meet and experience an unparalleled affinity of spirit.¹¹¹

The imperative of unity was, so to speak, etched into the life of the saint from his birth, through his Slavic father and German mother, united in one marriage and family. Hofbauer experienced a special unity within his religious Congregation, which he took north beyond the Alps, trying to develop it in both East and West. The seed of Plentiful Redemption, which he unstintingly sowed in «Europe's fields», was eventually to yield ripe fruit, but only after his death.

In the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth, which was being torn apart by various invaders, Hofbauer and his Redemptorist companions were a sign of unity as they served among those of German, Russian, French and Jewish descent. They moved among multiple traditions, mentalities and languages, giving witness that, despite diverse backgrounds, people could be of one heart in facing poverty and abandonment. In the spirit of Christ St Benno's Church and community constituted a «shrine of united nations», and the beloved children of the Redemptorist orphanage were to be as so many heralds articulating a new European metageography, the dictionary of which does not include the word «alien».

Travelling throughout Europe, which lay crushed by the mad charge of Napoleonic imperialism and absolutism along with its pseudo-Enlightenment, St Clement looked for a stable place where he could «gather at one table people from different nations, French, German, and Polish», subsequently sending them forth as missionaries throughout the Old and New Worlds.¹¹² He was concerned for the «common European house», then being destroyed by hatred, and he asked the rhetorical question, «How can I be indifferent towards such difficult situations in Germany, France, Europe?»¹¹³

¹¹¹ Cf. J. HEINZMANN, *Głosić na nowo Ewangelię...*, 52.

¹¹² MH IV, 14–15; VI, 14.

¹¹³ J. DONNER – J. STEINLE, *Nur Mut, Gott lenkt alles...*, 34–36.

As the Apostle of Vienna, he was uniquely capable of bringing together scientists and beggars, students and aristocrats, clerks and artists, young people and old. His extraordinary charisma for uniting individuals and nations led always to the person of Jesus, and to the heart of Christian faith. Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini saw Clement as a saint to whom «the European idea was not unfamiliar».¹¹⁴ St Clement Maria Hofbauer is undoubtedly a patron of all initiatives and activities for the cause of European unity, based on the Gospel. «One cannot build stable unity without Christ. One cannot do it cutting off oneself from these roots from which Europe's nations and cultures originated, as well as from all kinds of richness of the spiritual cultures of the past»¹¹⁵. St Clement exerted influence on Europe's history, which is «a big river» because he dedicated his life and vocation to «the numerous tributaries and streams constituting Europe's tradition and cultures».¹¹⁶ His heart and spirit were akin to that divine desire, as expressed in St. Paul to the Ephesians, «to sum up all things in Christ».¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ The homily of Cardinal C. M. Martini on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the birth of St Clement Maria Hofbauer, delivered during the liturgy celebrated with Archbishop emeritus of Vienna Cardinal Franz König in the Viennese Cathedral on 15 March, 2001 (quoted by the Catholic Information Agency KAI).

¹¹⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Homily on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the death of St. Adalbert*, Gniezno, 3 June, 1997, 62.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Ephesians 1:10.

SUMMARY

The essential characteristic elements of the apostolate of St Clement Hofbauer included the universalism of his mission. The article is an attempt to describe the views and activities of St Clement as a missionary and shepherd in his ministry as a builder of solid unity among people of various nationalities, view points, social strata, religions and generations. It is also an attempt to look at his work and life from a perspective that is wider than the perspective of the Redemptorist Congregation. Traveling the roads of a divided Europe during Napoleon's time, St Clement made a living sacrifice of his life and his Redemptorist vocation so as «to sum up all things in Christ».

RÉSUMÉ

Chez St Clément Hofbauer, c'est l'universalité de sa mission qui constitue l'élément le plus caractéristique de son apostolat. Cet article tente de décrire les idées et les activités de Clément en tant que missionnaire et pasteur. Un pasteur qui s'efforçait de construire une solide unité entre différentes nationalités partant de points de vue différents, dans une diversité de couches sociales, de religions et de générations. C'est aussi un effort de considérer sa vie et son œuvre dans une perspective plus large, dépassant la Congrégation des Rédemptoristes. En parcourant les routes d'une Europe déchirée par les guerres napoléoniennes, St Clément a fait de sa vie et de sa vocation rédemptoriste un sacrifice continu pour «récapituler toutes choses dans le Christ».