

## Abstract

This doctoral dissertation, entitled *The Parish Clergy of the Uniate Church in the Kingdom of Poland in the Period of 1815-1875*, deals with the presence and activities of Uniate priests. The Greek Catholic Church was established in the Polish territory as a result of the Union of Brest in 1596. Over the next two centuries, its structures developed. Eventually, after the politically turbulent late 18th Century and early 19th Century, the Kingdom of Poland was established, and the Uniate Diocese of Chełm came to function within its borders. Under the new political conditions, the operational principles of the Uniate Church were laid down. The Diocese of Chełm was administered by a bishop, assisted by a cathedral chapter and a consistory, with field structures being represented by deanery and parish administrations.

In the period in question, parish priests, administrators, vicars and co-operators were hired in nearly 300 Uniate parishes. Over six decades, 866 priests passed through these structures, most of whom had graduated from a diocesan educational institution (the Theological Seminary in Chełm) preparing staff for conducting pastoral activities. Although the prevailing number of priests came from the local Uniate communities, by the end of the operation of the Uniate Church in the Kingdom of Poland, a group of several dozen priests came there from Galicia, contributing to its incorporation into the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church.

More than 80% of the priests serving in the Diocese of Chełm came from families of parochians involved in pastoral work, either in that diocese or in Galicia. The remaining group consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the gentry. In most cases, these priests had their own families. Priests' wives mainly came from the clerical state, which proves that the clergy of the Uniate Church formed quite a hermetic social group. Celibacy was encountered only when the presbytery's function was held by a representative of the Basilian monastery.

Initially, land belonging to the parish was the primary source of income for the analysed group. In addition, priests obtained financial resources from tithes and *iura stolae*, and received subsidies from the government of the Kingdom of Poland, but these were quite rare. The situation changed in July 1866, when all Uniate priests performing their duties in parishes, deaneries and diocesan administration were offered fixed salaries paid from the state treasury.

Throughout their operation in the Kingdom of Poland, the clergy witnessed a range of political, social and religious processes. The two Polish uprisings, taking place in that period, affected the structures of the Uniate Church to some extent. However, the most serious consequences were borne by the Greek Catholic Church after the collapse of the January Uprising. The Russian government took political measures aimed at introducing changes in the Uniate Church that would make it similar to the Orthodox Church. The multifaceted delatinising process inspired social unrest and met with opposition from part of the clergy. This resulted in the appearance of a Muscovite group of priests from Galicia, the deportation of representatives of the clergy and parishioners, and the emigration of some priests. In this manner, those resisting the Russification of the Greek Catholic Church disappeared from the diocese, which eventually led to the elimination of this denomination by its official incorporation into the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church in May 1875.

Piotr Secyga