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dos Chagas Marianas da
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tua em Portugal a metida
Belgica, Polaco na eta Ca
za de N. S. de Balamas
da Vila de Chacim Balpa
dica Propicia aos 21 de Ma
de 1707 de idade de 20 anos

PILGRIMAGE TO THE END OF THE EARTH

**PILGRIMAGE
TO THE END OF THE EARTH**

Zygmunt Proczek, MIC, Ph.D.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE END OF THE EARTH

ABOUT THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD
FR. CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI, MIC
(1700–1755)



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The portrait of Fr. Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński (1700–1755) and Our Lady shows Mary holding the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception, commonly called the Blue Scapular. The Venerable Servant of God zealously promoted this devotion to Mary Immaculate. Painting from the second half of the 18th century, attributed to Antonio J. Padrão. Marian monastery on Mount Balsamão, Portugal.

Back cover:

Front view of the Marian Church on Mount Balsamão, Portugal.

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes he was dubbed a “pilgrim.” When only ten years old, without the knowledge of his parents, he set out for Rome. He managed to cover several dozen kilometers before his brother caught up with him and turned him back. In his youth he probably travelled to church fairs in the area of his native town in Mazovia. When he was twenty-one he pledged to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, one of the most famous sites near the Cape Finisterre, the last point of pilgrimage along St. Jacob’s trail—in antiquity believed to be the end of the earth. He did not complete this pilgrimage because of an illness; he was obliged by the ecclesiastical authorities to visit Roman shrines instead. While in Rome, he received God’s gift of a vocation to the Marian Order. For three winter months he traveled back to Poland to bid farewell to his dying mother and to place himself under the care of Mary Immaculate in the Marian Order. For 30 years he served God and people under the banner of Mary. He entrusted to her all difficult matters of the Order, which he served at times as its General Superior, and made pilgrimages to various shrines in Poland, most frequently visiting Jasna Góra in Częstochowa.

Being in Rome on his Order’s business, he often went to Loreto in search of God’s enlightenment and help. He took along on his trip to Portugal a candle

from Loreto so that its light would remain with him at the hour of his death. Death found him in Balsamão, Portugal, which isn't far from Cape Finisterre. He knew that he was reaching the end of his earthly travels and was about to meet God beyond. He died in the opinion of holiness. Soon after, the Church process for his beatification was opened.

Father Casimir Wyszyński (1700-1755) is this pilgrim, whose life and work are depicted in this book.

Interest in the person and work of the Servant of God Casimir is now growing in Portugal, Poland, Brazil, the United States and other countries. Symposia, books, and articles, which appeared on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of his death, tell about various aspects of his life and work. I have based the present publication primarily on the *Positio*, describing Fr. Casimir's life and virtues, which has been prepared for his beatification process, as well as on my own books, such as: *Stróż duchowego dziedzictwa marianów* (2004) [Guardian of the Marian legacy]; *Najstarsze Świadectwa o Słudze Bożym o. Kazimierzu Wyszyńskim* (2005) [Oldest Testimonies about the Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński]; *Śladami Założyciela Zgromadzenia Księżów Marianów* (2007) [In the footsteps of the Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers].

The goal of this work is to bring closer to the faithful the person of yet another candidate for the altars (of

the Church) from the Congregation of Marian Fathers. The Apostolic See has already issued a decree on his heroic virtues and now only the recognition of a miracle granted through his intercession is needed. While working for the beatification of Fr. Founder, Fr. Casimir stressed particularly the importance of producing ample information about the life of this candidate for the altars, thus encouraging the faithful to ask his intercession before God. Therefore, this book is intended to present against the background of harsh historical reality the life and work of Fr. Casimir—a religious priest and a man whole-heartedly dedicated to God and people.

I give my thanks to Br. Andrew Mączyński, MIC, for persuading me to undertake this work and to the Association of Marian Helpers for publishing it.

The Author

PART ONE

TOILING TO DISCOVER HIS VOCATION

In Search of a Way of Life

Three hundred years ago the village of Jeziora Wielka and neighboring towns in the district of Grójec belonged to the family of John Casimir [Jan Kazimierz] and Hedwig [Jadwiga] Wyszyński. They were distantly related to powerful noble families of Poland and spiritually associated with various religious orders.

On August 19, 1700, the Wyszyńskis rejoiced in the birth of their seventh child who was baptized Januarius Francis, although he was commonly called Francis in later years. At the parish church in Jeziora one can still see the baptismal font of the period and the image of Our Blessed Mother previously belonging to the Wyszyński family's house chapel. The parishioners still offer prayers before this image for the beatification of their compatriot.

The joy of these parents over the birth of another offspring was overshadowed by ongoing war. Swedish, Saxon, and Russian armies marched through Poland, marking their passage by plunder, fires, ruin, and forcible draft of local farmers. The devastation was made worse by sweeping epidemics which con-

siderably decreased the number of the Polish population.

Anthony, one of Francis's brothers, was in the army fighting the invaders, and the Wyszyńskis, fearing persecution from the Swedes, sought refuge in the southern part of Poland. It was not until 1708 that the family was able to return and rebuild the ruined estate. However, their greater concern was always for the proper nurturing and education of their children. The youngest boys, John and Francis, were sent to the Piarists' school in the nearby town of Góra Kalwaria.

Francis soon became noted for his piety and righteousness although at first he struggled with studying. His displeased father brought him back home and began treating him harshly. One day, without his parents' knowledge, Francis set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. However, his older brother Michael caught up with the young pilgrim, who agreed to go back only out of concern for his worried mother and with the promise of his father's forgiveness. Indeed, from that day on his father showed him more kindness and allowed him to renew his studies.

In 1714, due to public unrest and epidemics, the school closed and Francis went home. Three years later he started his studies again, this time at the Piarists' College in Warsaw, where he stayed at a hostel for students from gentry's families.

Following his father's wish, he trained to serve at the Warsaw municipal chancellery. Having worked a year there, he suddenly pledged to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. This time he wanted to do so with his parents' blessing, therefore he told his plans to his brother Michael who informed their parents.

Initially, their father did not consent to this pilgrimage, but when the ecclesiastical authorities pronounced Francis's pledge irreversible, he fashioned pilgrim's clothing for Francis and gave his blessing. Along with a group of Polish pilgrims, the young man went to Rome. He arrived there in October of 1721.

From the Eternal City he took the road to Spain. He managed to reach its borders, but fell gravely ill. Doctors resolutely opposed all further travel plans. Francis returned to Rome, where he got his pledge replaced with an obligation to visit Roman shrines and do works of mercy. While staying in Rome, he earned his living by copying documents at a lawyer's office as well as working for a time at the desalination plants administered by the Vatican.

Francis did not reveal his reasons for the pilgrimage. Undoubtedly, one of them was the tremendous shock he experienced after the suicide of his colleague's servant. In the words of his biographer, Alexis Fischer, "He [Francis] felt greatly repulsed by secular life and was searching for more secure ways to salva-

tion.” He was not attracted by any career as a layman since it often entailed injustice and humiliation of the lowly. Instead, he wanted to get more fully involved in doing God’s work, to which two of his older brothers were already committed: one was a Piarist, the other a member of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul. By going on pilgrimage, Francis wished to seek divine enlightenment as to his road of life; he discovered it in Rome.

In Atonement for His Brother

In the fall of 1723, Francis met Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, a Marian who had come to Rome on his Order’s business, which was connected indirectly with the Wyszyński family.

Around 1716, Francis’s elder brother Joseph entered the Marian novitiate. Being used to the free reign of soldierly life, he couldn’t adjust to the religious order’s regulations. Along with Fr. Matthew Krajewski, then the General Superior, “enraptured by a desire of procuring lay prelatures,” they laid blame on the Order before ecclesial and lay authorities, insisting on its disbandment and suggesting that the Marian priests be employed at abandoned parishes.

Instructed by the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Adam Rostkowski conducted a visitation of the Marian monasteries, and using the lack of papal approval of the

Order's Constitutions as a pretext, he forbade admitting new candidates to the novitiate while allowing younger priests to transfer to parishes left without priests because of epidemics. Just a few Marians, mostly the elderly, remained at the monasteries. This difficult period in Marian history lasted six years, from 1716 to 1722; it is known as the "Rostkovian dispersion."

The new bishop of Poznań ordered all the Marians to return to their monasteries, to elect a General Superior and prepare new statutes. Father Joachim Kozłowski was dispatched to Rome to seek papal approval of the Order. There he met Francis Wszyński and told him about his brother's harmful actions against the Order. Franciszek made a decision at once: "I ask for the habit. I wish to mend what my brother has destroyed."

For some time Fr. Joachim kept a close eye on this candidate, trying to decide if his desire to join the Order was not indeed just a whim. It wasn't until November 18, 1723, at St. Stanislaus's church in Rome, that he admitted Francis into the Marian Order and gave him the religious name of Casimir of St. Joseph. He also ordered him to undergo a year-long novitiate in Poland.

Many years afterwards, Fr. Casimir told his brother Valerian of some mystical experiences that influenced his decision to join the Marians: "Like a second

Saul I came to this Congregation which our people, namely our brother Joseph attacked, after the Blessed Mother said to me: “Francis, why do you persecute me?” Not daring to kick against the goad, I had to take on the habit in Rome” (August 5, 1752). And just like St. Paul who, after meeting the Risen Christ, gave himself entirely to spreading the faith and strengthening the Church, so Francis decided to repair the wrongs caused by his brother and dedicate himself entirely to the service of God in the Order that gave honor to Mary Immaculate.

PART TWO

RENEWAL AND GROWTH OF THE MARIAN ORDER

Faithful to the Founder and His Work

In December of 1723, Fr. Joachim, and his companion Br. Michael, and Casimir set out on the return journey to Poland. Already on this trip Casimir found courage to tell his superior that by putting excessive burdens on Br. Michael, he transgressed against fraternal unity and charity. Angered, Fr. Joachim ordered his former companions to continue the trip on their own. They traveled on foot, hauling the luggage and praying together. When they were passing by Casimir's family home, his mother lay dying there. He had a chance to bid her farewell and to attend her funeral. Then he continued to the Marian hermitage in Puszcza Korabiewska (presently Puszcza Mariańska) and on March 19, 1724, the solemnity of St. Joseph, he was admitted into the Marian novitiate. "After the demise of his worthy mother he followed the salvific voice and dedicated himself to imitating the life of Mary Immaculate." (A. Fischer).

Consumed by the mission of mending the wrongs caused by his brother to the Marian Order, Casimir did his best, striving to abide strictly by the rule and constitutions. His zeal awoke a dislike in his brethren who

had returned after the dispersion full of rotten habits. Therefore, they tried to ridicule him. One day someone splashed red paint over the crucifix in Casimir's cell, trying to create the appearance of a miracle. Casimir did not rise to this deception. He simply cleaned the crucifix and kept silence about this spiteful act. "He bore much oppression, hatred, and persecution. Amidst all this he preserved his peace of mind as befits a venerator of Mary and a good Marian" (A. Fischer).

There was a custom of sending the novices on various errands outside the monastery, which greatly interfered with their formation. Dispatched to deliver some letters, Casimir stopped at his family home and through his brother Michael's mediation, asked the Franciscans to conduct a visitation (at that time the Marians were under the Franciscans' jurisdiction). The visitator, Fr. Jacob Wolski, delegated two Reformed Franciscans to take over the office of Novice Master and instructor of theology at the Marians. Incidentally, he also wrote his testimony about the Marian Founder who had foretold his (Wolski's) election to the office of Provincial several years earlier.

On March 19, 1725, Casimir of St. Joseph Wszyński made his solemn vows before Fr. Joachim Kozłowski. Then, on Holy Saturday, March 31, 1725, he received the tonsure and four minor orders at St. John's Collegiate Church in Warsaw. On December 22 of the same year he was made a sub-deacon and was ordained a deacon on March 16 of the following year.

On April 20, 1726, John Joachim Tarło, Bishop of Poznań, ordained him to the priesthood at the Warsaw Collegiate Church.

Mindful of the significance of his priestly obligations, Fr. Casimir insisted on getting proper training. He recalled later: “When he did not want to send me to study, I spoke up. It is not fitting to be a priest without education and it is dangerous to engage in hearing confessions without proper knowledge. Therefore, I had to cleverly steer him into organizing studies for us.”

In 1725-28 Fr. Casimir took theology under the guidance of the Marian and Franciscan priests, at the same time filling in as the philosophy instructor for his confreres-seminarians. Soon after, the Franciscans entrusted to him the offices of Novice Master and theology instructor and went back to their monasteries. The Franciscans noticed this young priest’s great spiritual and intellectual gifts, which he was able to share with his confreres.

The Marian General Chapter of 1728 charged Fr. Casimir with the duties of substitute for the house superior in Puszcza Korabiewska, general secretary of the Order, and novice master. Unfortunately, he wasn’t able to properly fulfill his duties with regard to the novices, being sent frequently to minister in parishes.

By joining the Marian Order, Fr. Casimir wanted to mend the harm caused by his brother. As a Marian

he noticed that by unfaithfulness and bad example his brethren also were causing a lot of harm to the community. He bore a great many trials from them; even an attempt on his life was planned, as his brother Michal recalled later.

However, Fr. Casimir persevered in his vocation and was true to his decision of restoring fidelity to the Marian way of life in the Order founded by Father Stanislaus Papczyński. His once-closest collaborator, Fr. Joachim, began ascribing to himself the role of the founder, which stirred up a dispute among the Marians. In these circumstances Fr. Casimir set out on a trip to Rome, where he planned to seek a remedy for the rift within the Order as well as to settle other important matters. He arrived in the Eternal City in 1731, along with two companions and took up lodgings at the Franciscan monastery *Aracoeli*.

During his stay in Rome, Fr. Casimir was able to secure the memory of Blessed Stanislaus as the Founder of the Marian Order. He left the following account: “Being finally convinced that [Fr. Joachim] plans to transform our Order and appoint himself its founder, while concealing the memory of its rightful founder, I had to go to Rome to put a stop to all those novelties. Although he [Fr. Joachim] tried to interfere in all possible ways, he did not attain the results he desired. I was also a hindrance to him in Rome when he tried to obtain without my knowledge certain documents for our Congregation, which would have brought about

great disturbance in the Order and repel our benefactors because of our irresoluteness. However, God Himself discovered his machinations in Rome and I was able to interfere.”

Father Wyszyński made efforts towards founding a Marian monastery in Rome, which would facilitate watching over the matters of the Order. An opportunity occurred to purchase a chapel where veneration of the miraculous image of Mary whose scarred face was reminiscent of the story of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa was held. Father Casimir took up residence near this chapel and busied himself with accepting candidates to the Order. However, his superiors in Poland did not consent to this transaction because of the considerable expenses involved and also because the chapel was located in a damp, malarial place harmful to health. Candidates to the Order could not bear it there, and Fr. Casimir himself contracted malaria that was ruining his health ever since. Unfortunately, no other site for the Marian monastery was found in Rome at that time.

Father Casimir spent a great deal of time in prayer, on visits to Roman churches, and reading the Scriptures. He was in the habit of reading the entire Scriptures within a year. He also ministered pastorally among the shepherds near Rome. He taught them the truths of the faith, prepared them for the sacraments, and celebrated the Eucharist. Additionally, his apostolic work involved the preparation and publication of his

reflections on St. Ignatius of Antioch whose devotion to Christ was sealed by his martyr's death in Rome.

The Servant of God Casimir studied books on Marian topics, and even copied one of them entirely. In 1749 he translated this book and, having first adjusted it to the Rule of the Ten Virtues, published it under the title of *The Morning Star*. In order to promote Marian devotion more fruitfully, especially by fostering confraternities of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and spreading honor to Mary Immaculate, he obtained from the Theatine Fathers in Rome the privilege to bless and confer the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.

In the beginning of 1734, Fr. Casimir returned to Poland and on July 3 of that year he participated in the General Chapter. He was very pleased to note a higher level of spirituality in the Marians' life, to which Fr. Rafał Chełchowski, the Franciscan visitor, greatly contributed.

The Chapter elected Fr. Casimir the Vicar General and Novice Master. In the years to follow, he was also the substitute for the superior in Puszcza Korabiewska, instructor of moral theology, and spiritual director of that monastery. He always gave great example of religious zeal. The number of those in favor of lax religious discipline gradually declined, and the new generation of Marians wanted Fr. Casimir for the office of General Superior.

General Superior of the Entire Marian Community

On December 12, 1737, the General Chapter of the Marians in Skórzec elected Fr. Casimir Wszyński as General Superior. He declared that he accepted the obligation so as to carefully uphold the statutes and the rule. He promised to make sure that the Chapter's decisions would be put into life instead of remaining on paper.

His first and most urgent concern was to lay solid foundations for his brethren's inner life and striving for holiness. He urged the monasteries' superiors to set an example of good religious life, to make sure that all religious practices are conscientiously fulfilled, and to watch over the young brethren. The superiors were to treat their subordinates in a fatherly manner, without being impatient or guided by ambition. They were to supply their subordinates with necessary provisions thus protecting them from any transgression against the vow of poverty. He required that house superiors and treasurers give reports on managing the communal property. Professors were obliged to diligently use time assigned for classes and to watch over the recreation of their pupils. He reminded the latter of the importance of being properly prepared for carrying out their future duties. The professors were to set a good example to their pupils and to punish, even publicly, those who failed in their studies.

Father Casimir fully realized the significance of a good religious formation and fervently watched over the novices' education. He ruled that the General Superior alone was allowed to control the Novice Master. He issued appropriate regulations for the novices and separated their quarters from those of the professed members. He demanded that no one leave the monastery without the expressed permission of the superior or his substitute; the Marians who are sent out on a long journey were to be supplied with letters of recommendation.

In order to gain new candidates for the Order, he dispatched Fr. Casimir Polak (a Czech by birth) to Prague several times. In 1738, six Czech candidates joined the Order; in 1739 five, and as many as 11 in 1740. These men made a valuable intellectual and spiritual contribution to the Congregation and became a credit to the Marians and to the Czech nation. The new community members worked with great dedication in Poland, Rome, and Portugal.

Father Casimir set a great example of faithfulness to his vocation and while visiting the Marian monasteries, fortified his confreres in their zealous service to the Lord in the spirit of the Marian charism. As his letters show, during visitations he paid special attention to how love of God and fraternal love was practiced, how the Church's regulations on the religious life were observed and the Marian virtues fostered as depicted in the Rule of the Ten Virtues of the B.V.M.

“I would like to find you adorned with spiritual, heavenly, and everlasting desires, not entangled in earthly and transitory matters. I hope you can present yourselves as such people during this canonical visitation! (...) During this visitation my task will be to evaluate everyone’s adherence to their superiors’ directives; to see if the brethren live in fraternal love and abide by our Rule and Constitutions, Papal Decrees and the Chapter’s laws. I must find out if they make retreats, pray in choir and meditate; I must know if they lead a harmonious life inside their monastery and behave in an exemplary way outside” (1738).

“During the forthcoming visitation I would like to find out in particular if love of God and neighbor is filling up your hearts because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. This I shall demand, encourage, and examine. For we love God truly when we fulfill His commandments, as well as the regulations of our beloved Marian Institute, and when we abstain from personal whims. We truly love our neighbor if we do not deny him anything that is his by right and do not wish him harm. If we have no love, everything else is nothing. Everything can be achieved with love” (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-3) (June 1, 1739).

“It is necessary to see if we can safely show before Christ the Judge our hearts along with the Virgin’s virtues radiating in us—the subject of our vows. During this visitation we are going to see if all of this is carried out with God’s help so that we may fearlessly

give the most detailed account of ourselves before God. For the Apostle of the Nations admonishes us in these words: “Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers to shepherd the assembly of God (Acts 20:28,) (November 21, 1739).

Being himself a great and zealous venerator of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Casimir called his confreres to faithfully imitate her life: “Just like a well-grounded plant, the Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived, which we vowed to uphold, must radiate, bloom, and bring fruit in our Marian hearts. For it is not in speech, but in truth and fact that we must imitate and practice the most Chosen Virgin’s virtues spoken of in the Rule. I recommend partaking in the most delectable fragrance of these virtues to all the Marians. I declare my intention to examine your conscience soon in this respect” (June 10, 1740).

Caring for the Founder’s Tomb

The General Superior of the Marians was allowed to reside in any monastery of his choice. Most frequently it was the Korabiew hermitage. In 1739, Fr. Wszyński settled in Góra Kalwaria, near the Church of Our Lord’s Cenacle—the site of the Marian Founder’s burial. The area was marshy and so flooded in spring that the church and monastery became acces-

sible only by boat. Buildings were gradually falling into ruin and the lack of steady income made repair works unattainable. Father Casimir was eager to remedy the situation, thus he took up residence at the local monastery, also assuming the office of local superior. He counted on his brother Michael and other benefactors' help.

One of his first actions was to safeguard the remains of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, deposited in the church's wet ground. Upon receiving the consent of the Church's authorities, he moved the Founder's bones into a new casket donated by his brother and placed it in a new tomb. In regard to this action Fr. Alexis Fischer, an eye-witness of this period of Fr. Casimir's life, reported a most amazing intervention of the Marian Founder himself: [Father Wyszyński] "found the monastery and church in a state of great ruin; the tomb of the Founder was damaged also. Prompted by filial reverence, he decided to exhume the bones and place them in a new casket. While delaying the realization of this plan because he wanted to fix the monastery first, he fell ill. Almost losing his life, he went to the church to pray. Once there, he felt strongly reminded about the promised casket and in his spirit he heard a voice saying: "Where is my casket?" He procured a new casket at once: it was the one his own brother Michael kept on hand for himself. Father Casimir ordered a new stone tomb to be erected for the Venerable Founder and placed his bones

there, after exhuming them from the watery, muddy ground with the permission of a Warsaw official. Next, he drained water out of the church by digging a trench and putting up a tall flood bank greatly admired by everybody. He built a new monastery and repaired the church with his brother's help."

With the consent of the Chapter, Fr. Casimir managed to have made and distributed a prayer card with the picture of the Founder of the Marian Order.

On August 8, 1741, a new General Superior was elected, but Fr. Casimir remained in the office of superior of the monastery in Góra Kalwaria for another six years.

Thanks to his good example and mild manner of admonishing, he was instrumental in increasing religious fervor in his confreres. Seeing him tidying up the church and doing all sorts of menial tasks, residents of Góra Kalwaria admired his industriousness and humility. They benefited from his pastoral ministry, service in the confessional and in the pulpit. For several years, the Servant of God was the confessor to the Dominican Sisters, just like Blessed Stanislaus was in his time. Many years later, the Sisters gave witness to his prudence and great zeal.

Father Casimir had a great devotion to Divine Providence, which found its practical expression in his establishing the Confraternity of Divine Providence at the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria.

Shepherd of the Marian Community

On June 19, 1747, the General Chapter celebrated in Skórzec elected Fr. Casimir the General Superior for the second time. Accepting the post, he announced that he would carry it out in the spirit of service to the community and he called his confreres to be faithful to the grace of vocation:

“Do not be afraid, little flock; I come to you by way of legitimate election in no other guise than that of a good shepherd. I come for no other reason but in obedience to God’s will, resisting which would be more than disobedience and persisting in stubbornness would be more than ingratitude.

“I come to serve not to govern. I am not a hired worker indifferent to the fruits of his labor, but a true shepherd led by sincere love. Dearly beloved Fathers and Brothers, may your hearts be at rest. Just like by the will of heaven Joseph was once made the governor of all of Egypt in order to save his brothers, so am I the superior of this holy Congregation for no other reason than Divine Providence. I shall use Joseph’s words spoken at the meeting with his brothers: “Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God” (Gen 45:8, Vulgate). God made me your father as it were; He appointed me the steward over you, not as one of you, but just as I am: a gentle Father, loving Brother, managing Superior, caring and watchful Shepherd.

“Therefore, sheep of the little flock, heed my voice. This is the voice of your Shepherd speaking from the seclusion of the Marian hermitage [in Puzzcza Korabiewska]. Pave the way for the Lord with your worthy deeds of spiritual life. Make straight pathways for God by staying on the road of the vocation of which you have been found worthy. May any erroneous and crooked deviations from the Rules and Statutes, any irregularities in upholding the religious discipline, turn into straight paths of God’s commandments. All this is so that you may find yourselves in the pasture with your Shepherd, to which you are called by the Lamb that grazes amidst lilies.” (July 27, 1747)

During his second term in the office of General Superior, Fr. Casimir demonstrated truly great commitment to the matters of his Order. Above all, he made sure that novices were provided with proper conditions for their spiritual life and in preparation for carrying out their future duties, since he fully realized that “the entire well-being of our wretched little Order depends upon it.” Placing his trust in God, he encouraged the brethren to fight evil and to choose the good. He pointed out the role of the Holy Spirit in nurturing fraternal love and urged everyone to follow the Immaculate Mary, Patroness of the Order. He expressed his intentions in circular letters to the confreres, in which he announced specific goals of his visitations in the monasteries: “Strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we set out on the road of canonical

visitation, asking ourselves: did anyone of us depart from the way of love, truth, and peace? Are we all following the same course in spreading the glory of God and Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Conceived without original sin? Did we depart from abiding by our laws and Roman Statutes, as well as the approved and practiced recommendations of our Chapters? I order you: prior to my arrival, make sure that your churches, sacristies, and monasteries are orderly, neat, and adorned” (1748).

“I will check to see if we are realizing all that the Holy Spirit placed in us. Shall I find the Marians truly following the example of Mary and diligently observing the Rule and the Constitutions? Do they act in love and fraternal peace? Do they properly observe poverty, chastity, and obedience? Is praise being properly given to God day and night, as per regulations? And finally, are the principles of religious discipline strictly followed?” (1749).

He did not spare efforts to put in order the legal status of both existing monasteries and new foundations. A friend of Fr. Casimir, Wojciech Magnuszewski, a *Wojski*¹ of Czersk, who presented him to the presidium of the Diet, recalled that the MPs “recognized his great holiness, seriousness, and humility—values

¹ The *Wojski* [pronounced “voysky”] was an officer in medieval Poland, responsible for the security of voivodships or districts at times when voivods and castellans had accompanied the szlachta (nobility) to war (info from Wikipedia).

that they highly appreciated. They promised their willing assistance in securing the approval when the memorandum would be submitted for debate.”

Thanks to Fr. Casimir’s personal zeal and his concern for the quality of the Marians’ spiritual life, the Order was noted by the public, which translated into the founding of new monasteries.

George Matuszewicz, a Cześnik² of Mińsk, took steps towards bringing the Marians to his estate in Raśna. However, he met with his wife’s opposition who did not wish to deplete the family property. Bishop Francis Kobielski also opposed it because he wanted this foundation to go to Fr. Stefan Turczynowicz who was in the process of creating a new order. It was not until 1747 that the bishop let the Marians settle in Raśna and two years later he personally installed them in that new foundation. For many years the monastery in Raśna served as a House of Study for seminarians and it was one of the wealthier and most prospering monasteries until the suppression of 1864.

Father Casimir also accepted an offer from Mrs. Frances Butler to take over the pastoral care of people living at a great distance from the church in Prienai.

² *Cześnik* (pronounced “ches’nik”— a cup-bearer) was a court office in Poland and Lithuania until the end of the 13th century. The holder was responsible for the wine-cellar of the King and for serving him cups with wine at banquets. Since the 14th century, it has been an honorary title in the Crown of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and later in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (info from Wikipedia).

The Marians began to work in Staropole, later renamed Marijampole, as early as 1750. They weren't solemnly installed there until 1758, when the church and monastery were built. The Marians received other pastoral locales in Lithuania, where they contributed to the strengthening of faith and the growth of Marian devotion. However, in 1864 the Tsarist authorities closed down all local Marian monasteries, except for the one in Marijampole, to which they transferred the majority of the Marians. Prohibiting the admission of new candidates into the Order, the authorities condemned the community to a slow death. However, Divine Providence saved the cause which Fr. Casimir served with such dedication. In 1909, when out of the whole Order only the General Superior remained alive in Marijampole, he secretly admitted Fr. George Matulewicz into the community. Soon after the death of the General Superior, Fr. George took over the Order and opened a new stage in its history known as the Renovation.

Both above-mentioned monasteries were founded in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Father Casimir also took steps towards founding monasteries in Berezdiv and Ostrykiv in Rus' that were eventually opened at a later time.

Father Casimir regarded his work for the Order as a public service because its goal was to rescue people from the clutches of evil. Along with his brethren he strove for its realization through fervent pastoral min-

istry and printed materials that fostered spiritual values practiced by his Order.

In 1749, Fr. Casimir published a book entitled *The Morning Star*, based on the treatise by a Spanish Jesuit, Francis Arias, which we already mentioned previously. He also published Blessed Father Stanislaus Papczyński's work *Templum Dei Mysticum (The Mystical Temple of God)*. He wanted to pass on the spiritual values lived out by his Order to other people.

Also thanks to Fr. Casimir's efforts, the Order took on a more universal character. Czechs, Italians, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Hungarians and Frenchmen made their novitiate in Poland. Consequently, they contributed to the growth of the Marian community by carrying out important offices in the Order. Several years later, Fr. Casimir would reach Portugal and plant the Order there.

Working for the Order in Rome

Members of the General Chapter which was celebrated in Skórzec elected a new General Superior on November 12, 1750, while Fr. Casimir was sent to Rome to negotiate important matters for the Order in the capacity of Procurator General. Along with a companion, Fr. John Kanty Szkraffer, he started on the journey to Rome in winter. We don't have any detailed reports regarding this trip, except for a reminiscence of

Fr. Bixy's hospitality accorded to them in the vicinity of Vienna. Although the church building there had perished in fire shortly before their arrival, the pastor gave them shelter in the remaining quarters. A few days later he bade them farewell outside Vienna and set them on the right road to Rome. At that very time the ceiling collapsed in the room where they had spent the night.

Father Casimir learned about this incident only several months into his stay in Rome. In his letter to Fr. Bixy he said: "We give thanks to God for shielding us from danger of which I was informed by the brother-hermit. We were able to reach Rome and to accomplish many good things for our Congregation, which would have been impossible should we not have been saved from danger. Accordingly, we received everything that we asked the Holy See for. What is more, the King of Portugal invited us to his kingdom so that devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. might grow there through the ministry of our Marian Congregation." Father Casimir was deeply convinced that he survived thanks to the intercession of Father Founder and that the matter could be brought forth as a proof of Fr. Stanislaus's holiness.

The travelers from Poland reached Rome on April 30, 1751, and settled at the Franciscan monastery "Ara Coeli." Shortly after, Fr. John Kanty went back to Poland, while Fr. Casimir, although frequently in poor health, fervently carried out all the tasks entrusted to him.

His first task was to resolve the Marians' dispute over the title and habit with Fr. Turczynowicz. The latter endeavored in Vilnius to convert Jews into Christianity. From 1744, he was the pastor of St. Stephen's parish in Vilnius and chaplain at the hospital associated with this church. He placed about 30 newly converted persons into this hospital and supported them with his own means as well as solicited donations. However, two consecutive fires in Vilnius prevented the people from offering much to the collectors of alms.

Then, Fr. Turczynowicz made an attempt to found an association of the newly converted under the title and habit similar to that of the Marians', so that, dressed this way they could set out to collect alms. The immoral behavior and religious views of these people astonished and scandalized the public who took the newly converted to be the Marians.

Father Casimir had to go to Vilnius twice, in 1748 and in 1749, in attempts to peacefully settle this matter so detrimental and unpleasant for the Marians. When all attempts failed, the General Chapter delegated him to the Apostolic See to decide this matter there. This step was necessary because Fr. Turczynowicz applied for approval of his association under the title of the Marians.

Father Wszyński's intervening on the Order's behalf with the Roman Congregations took from May

of 1751 to July 15, 1752. After he obtained a statement from the Bishop of Vilnius denying that he ever gave consent to this association, on November 12, 1751, the Congregation of Bishops and Religious issued a decree instructing the Ordinary of Vilnius “to order them to immediately abandon the habit and title that do not fit a foundation of St. Lazarus and were taken on without the consent of said Ordinary for the purpose of collecting alms.”

Father Turczynowicz’s lawyer appealed to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith under the pretext that it was the only authority empowered to rule on the neophytes. After studying the documents, this Congregation also issued a final decree on July 3, 1751, forbidding the use of the title and the habit incompatible with the foundation. Earlier, Fr. Casimir had made a pilgrimage to Loreto and prayed for the intercession of the Marian Founder. It is alleged that a Marian appeared to Cardinal Bardi, the judge in this matter, and talked with him at length. Returning from Loreto, Fr. Wyszynski, who knew that he himself was the only Marian in Rome, showed a picture of Fr. Stanislaus to the Cardinal’s servants who recognized the picture as the Cardinal’s guest.

Father Casimir fervently strove for the beatification of the Marian Founder. While still in Poland he searched for witnesses, collected their testimonies, and visited places where Fr. Papczyński used to live. In Rome he wrote down all that he heard from other peo-

ple about Fr. Stanislaus's life, work, and extraordinary signs of holiness. He appealed to the Marians and their powerful friends to search intensively for people who used to know the Founder and urged them to raise funds for his beatification.

He also insisted on taking steps towards safeguarding the wooden Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Góra Kalwaria—the site of Fr. Stanislaus's tomb. He frequently exhorted that Fr. Founder's writings and memorabilia needed collecting. He encouraged the Marians in Poland to raise funds to defer the cost of the beatification process. He personally studied the laws regulating beatification procedures. With help from a lawyer he composed a highly detailed instruction on conducting the process on the diocesan level. He petitioned the Ordinary of Poznań for his support in the Marian Founder's beatification process, since Fr. Papczyński had worked and died in his diocese.

Father Casimir saw a strict correlation between the efforts made towards the Founder's beatification and the growth of the Order: "God imparts His blessing unexpectedly to those who remember their ancestors and fathers. It is quite evident that after the exhumation and placement of the bones of our Father in a new casket, which the Marians in Poland did upon my urging, the Lord God in turn provided me with a comfortable cell in Rome. As soon as I sent to Poland the instructions for opening our Father's process and confirmed our fathers' readiness to do so—the Father Pastor

[General Superior] himself corroborated their intentions of doing their utmost in this process—a great blessing from God came upon us at once: the unexpected invitation from the highly esteemed Portuguese monarch.”

“It was much the same during my stay in Poland as an unworthy superior of our Congregation. When I first petitioned the Ordinary for the exhumation of our Venerable Father from the muddy grounds at the church of The Lord’s Cenacle and placing them in a new casket, the Lord God helped us raise this very church from nearly total ruin. And yet I had no earlier help before all this came to pass. When the Chapter decided to have his picture painted and printed and when we had it done, soon after two foundations in Lithuania were made available to us, which we took over even before the picture was completed. And to think how many problems from various sides we had encountered previously while trying to obtain the same foundations! Having the picture completed, everything started to go without a hitch (swimmingly). Even those people who previously impeded us from procuring the foundations later began to help” (April 10, 1752).

Having obtained this ruling, auspicious for the Marians, Fr. Casimir wrote: “Now that the Lord deigned to let us rejoice in this matter, we must begin working assiduously on spreading our Order and the honor of the Blessed Mother by fostering the process of the Venerable Father Founder. For it is certain that

this victory also came to pass through his intercession. Here we did not have any patrons, only antagonists, very numerous and powerful at that. I commend myself to our saintly Father” (July 15, 1752).

Father Casimir called upon his confreres in Poland to take the Founder’s beatification cause into their hearts: “We offend this great Servant of God and venerator of the Blessed Mother by not fostering his devotion. After all, he earned this honor with us as our Father and our Leader” (March 14, 1752).

“It grieves me deeply that our Venerable Father’s process has not been opened yet. I fear very much that the remaining eye-witnesses will soon leave this world; this would do damage [to the process] as has already happened because of our predecessors’ negligence, who did not open the process although there were available a great many eye-witnesses to the sanctity of the Servant of God. In spite of all this, thanks to Divine Providence, which is mysterious and unfathomable, the success of our Order has not been impeded” (July 19, 1752).

Father Casimir’s wishes came to pass only 250 years later: on September 16, 2007, Fr. Stanislaus was proclaimed a Blessed.

One of the goals of the Marian Order was to bring spiritual help to the souls suffering in purgatory. Father Casimir obtained special indulgences for the deceased

which could be earned at the Marian churches. He sent to Poland all the documents pertaining to these privileges, along with his own instruction about devotion on behalf of the deceased.

Witnesses of Fr. Casimir's sojourn in Rome emphasized his great devotion to the Eucharist which found its expression in lengthy adorations and meticulous celebrations of Holy Mass. It was the same at every place he stayed in: he celebrated each Mass as if it were the very last one of his lifetime. He also composed a two-week series of meditations for before and after Mass.

His devotion included visits to shrines and pilgrimages, especially to Loreto. He brought back from that shrine a candle that he took with him to Portugal since he wished to have it lit at the hour of his death. He also obtained relics for Countess Frances Butler: one of the Holy Cross and another of St. Frances of Rome.

The Marian Founder had instructed his followers to take special care of the country folks. This most numerous social group was devoid of legal protection and frequently of spiritual care as well. The Marians made every effort to help the farmers "get to know God and learn to praise and love Him and to fulfill their Christian duties." In their sermons and parish missions, they also strove to make the upper classes more sensitive and kind towards the country dwellers.

Father Casimir engaged in this work with great fervor. His pastoral ministry and writings aimed at influencing the conscience of the gentry in such a way that they would treat their servants in the spirit of Christian love. Recalling the Marian devotion of his compatriots, Fr. Casimir wrote: “The one who attaches himself to Mary must imitate her virtues and stay on the road that she followed, in Christ’s footsteps (...) How can one be considered charitable or merciful who does not perform acts of mercy, who does not take pity of his neighbor or help him when the opportunity arises, who does not pray for his neighbors and who does not come to the rescue of the souls suffering in Purgatory by participating in Masses, prayer and giving alms?”

Witnesses testified that Fr. Casimir zealously supported the needy and that he personally worked at the construction of the monastery alongside the laborers. For him it was an occasion to teach them catechism and church hymns. On the other hand, while in Rome, he intervened in the matter of the clergy sometimes abusing their authority on the occasion of Easter confessions. In the 18th century a great number of peasants died because of wars and epidemics. Since hands for hire were scant, certain country pastors would set a day for confessions prior to which peasants had to work long hours on the presbytery farms. Hungry and tired, but talking and joking, people couldn’t properly prepare for receiving the holy sacraments. Many paid for this with their health, while others took to heavy drinking in taverns which scandalized non-believers.

Father Casimir presented a report on this abuse of authority to the Pope who ordered the matter to be investigated and the practice stopped.

During his two-year stay in Rome, Fr. Casimir did everything in his power to find a place for a Marian monastery. And just like 20 years ago, his efforts failed. Although he had an opportunity to purchase a church from Prince Barberini, the transaction did not go through for lack of funds. It was not until 1779 that the Marians were able to purchase St. Vitus's Church with the adjacent Cistercian monastery.

In his Diary of deeds Fr. Casimir meticulously described his activities in Rome.

Mission in Portugal

In March of 1752, Fr. Wyszyński received news that the King of Portugal is inviting the Marians to his country. In turn, he informed his General Superior, urging him to make a decision immediately in the matter. Father Casimir himself wished to go to Portugal because the Roman climate was bad for his health. He also appealed to his friends in Poland for help in organizing this journey.

On August 6, 1752, Fr. Casimir was instructed to go to Portugal along with Fr. Benon Bujalski. He made a pilgrimage to Loreto to implore the Blessed Mother's

protection for the Portuguese mission. Coming back from the pilgrimage in early November, he found two Fathers from Poland waiting for him: Fr. Bujalski and Fr. Fischer. The latter was to take over the duties of Procurator in Rome. It was impossible to set off for Portugal at this time of year, so they had to stay in Rome until spring.

Father Casimir was writing farewell letters to his brethren and friends in Poland, with the inkling that he would never see them again. He pleaded with them not to neglect the Marian Founder's beatification cause. He wrote thus to the General Superior: "I shall confess to you, Very Reverend Father, that I don't dare to leave Rome until I hear that the process has been opened. After all, it should be our utmost concern. Our development depends on it, otherwise we shall go extinct. Definitely, if things in Poland cannot be managed without me and my return and taking over the process should be necessary, I do not shirk the work and I am ready to renounce Portugal. For the love of God, I am not alone in the Congregation after all! Why cannot something of the utmost benefit and need for us come to pass without me? (...) It is necessary to remember that by planting our Congregation in Portugal yet failing to have our Founder's process begun, we run the risk of the Portuguese community Marians' dissociating from us. It is the glory of the holiness of our first founder that will keep us in unity. At the same time, so wealthy a country could help with the beatification,

even though the process may continue for some time. It is necessary to carefully consider all this. Thus, I advise and plead for the love of God to have this cause opened as soon as possible. Let us not be deterred by privation or unfavorable circumstances. Let us not stop even if a disaster, God forbid, were to strike the Kingdom of Poland. In all troubles let us take our Father for our Patron and God will not refuse graces to those who honor Him in His servants” (July 19, 1752).

In May of 1753, Fr. Casimir and Fr. Benon set off for Portugal. At first, they traveled on foot from Rome to Genoa, where they boarded a ship to Spain. It was not until October that they arrived by land in Lisbon, Portugal. In his Diary Fr. Casimir recorded details of this journey, which lasted as long as five months and abounded in adventures and perils. He was convinced that he owed his survival amidst all dangers to the protection of Mary Immaculate and the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński. He described the beginnings of the Marian mission in Portugal in two letters to the General Superior of the Marians in Rome.

When in October of 1753, the two travelers arrived in Lisbon they discovered that neither the royal court nor any person of note in Portugal had ever thought about a foundation for the Marians. The entire matter proved to be a fabrication of Fr. Anthony de Souza Salazar who had himself tried to establish an Order of the Immaculate Conception. His efforts hitherto were not yielding any results.

From the Franciscans he learned of the existence of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception and decided to bring them over to Portugal to carry out his own plans. The Marians from Poland were to be only a tool in his hands. He treated them very badly, insulting and degrading their dignity, thus putting to trial their humility and sanctity. Father Benon Bujalski could not bear such treatment and became seriously ill. On December 26, 1753, as soon as his health allowed, he set out on a return trip to Poland by land.

The Servant of God, Fr. Casimir, remained alone in Fr. Salazar's house, condemned to endure sufferings, offences, mortification and brutality. He was tested and sorely tried as if the worst of novices so that he would apply himself to founding a new singular religious Order. Years later Salazar came to regret his behavior and intended to go to Balsamão to beg forgiveness for his harshness at Fr. Casimir's tomb.

Our Lord rewarded the heroic dedication of the Venerable Servant of God. In a letter of June 13, 1754, to the General Superior, Fr. Casimir related that two of his Portuguese friends obtained from the Pope an iron letter by the power of which [Fr. Casimir] was delivered from Salazar's hands. "Following Fr. Benon's departure, I had to break with Fr. Salazar because I could not arrange anything with him regarding the promotion of our Order. The Lord God, however, gave me protectors who from Salazar's hand, almost by force, opened for me a way to better promote our Order."

One of these two people was John of God of the Immaculate Conception who also made attempts at founding a religious order in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Father Casimir took up residence at the Reformed Franciscans' monastery in Lisbon, where on March 25, 1754, he invested John of God with the white Marian habit.

This first Portuguese Marian was instrumental in the installation of the Marian monastery in Balsamão. He knew about St. Francis' Tertiaries who lived at the local Shrine of Our Lady and were looking for a religious order to join. Having learned this, Fr. Casimir wrote to the Bishop of Miranda, John of the Cross, a Carmelite, including information about the Marians and a picture of the Founder. In his reply of July 1, 1754, the Bishop wrote that, having obtained the opinion of the local residents and the pastor of the Chacim parish as well as the information about the Marians, he decided to forward to Fr. Casimir the hermits' petition. Also, he pledged his help in the realization of Fr. Casimir's project and gave the following piece of advice: "I believe it is advisable that you, Reverend Father, should go and take up residence there to allow the locals to get to know you. I am certain that they will receive you with love because they wish to join an institute that has already been approved."

Father Casimir also received a letter from the superior of the community in Balsamão, containing a heartfelt invitation: "Please come shortly for my heart

and my embrace are open to receiving you.” This superior was Fr. Hieronimus of the Holy Trinity—a zealous and saintly priest. Not only did he attend to the tenor of the Tertiaries’ spiritual life, but also to their finances and the outward appearance of the hermitage. Due to his efforts the Stations of the Lord’s Passion were built, which still adorn the mount and attract pilgrims from the area.

The Servant of God and his companion, Fr. John of God, arrived in Balsamão on September 6, 1754, and were heartily welcomed by the residents of the monastery and dignitaries of Chacim.

Shortly afterwards, Fr. Casimir, accompanied by Fr. Hieronimus, already vested with the Marian habit, went to see the Bishop visiting in Bragança. Father Hieronimus died there unexpectedly, having first made his profession of vows before Fr. Wyszzyński, whom the Bishop now made the superior of the hermitage in Balsamão.

On October 1, 1754, the Servant of God Fr. Casimir began the religious formation of the hermits in Balsamão. After six months of preparation, he vested five Portuguese men with the Marian habit; one of them was a seminarian in minor orders. More candidates applied. Father Wyszzyński presented to them the Marian Rule, customs, and the person of the Founder. He joyfully informed his superior in Poland about the new candidates for the Order and about his plans of founding a

monastery in Spain. He also said that a certain Franciscan had been healed through the intercession of Fr. Stanislaus. Out of gratitude for the healing, the Franciscan translated into Portuguese Fr. Stanislaus's biography composed by Fr. Wyszyński: "We expect a successful progress of our Reverend Founder's process for he has many venerators here. As soon as the matter reaches the Sacred Congregation of Rites, then undoubtedly this kingdom rich in gold will help us, being aware that it is a matter of the beatification of a holy man. Even as I am writing this letter, my great benefactor, having visited an artist, has commissioned a statue of our Father Founder" (August 3, 1754).

By the word and example of his life, the Servant of God Fr. Casimir laid the foundations for permanently establishing the Marians on Portuguese soil. However, he felt the end of his laborious life approaching. It was his wish that the ties between the Marians in Portugal and the Order's government in Poland would not end with his death. Therefore, he wrote to the General Superior: "We have to take into serious consideration the fact that the Congregation here will undoubtedly grow and ought not to separate from us after my death for lack of contact with Poland..."

Indeed, Fr. Casimir's premonition of impending death shortly came true. On Friday, September 19, 1755, an attack of malaria put him to the sickbed. With great difficulty he managed to celebrate Holy Mass that day in honor of St. Januarius, his patron saint. The time

to struggle with final sufferings that lasted a month came upon him. On Saturday, October 4, the liturgical commemoration of his second patron, St. Francis of Assisi, Fr. Casimir could not rise from bed.

Witnesses of the Servant of God's last days spoke of his extraordinary patience and gratitude towards those attending to him. He remained mentally fit, of peaceful mind and in assent with God's will until his last moment. He wished to stay together with the Suffering Christ. He calmly prepared himself for passing from this life to another, believing firmly that Satan was powerless in the face of a venerator of Mary Immaculate. He frequently repeated: "Blessed be the Name of the Lord!"

He comforted the weeping novices, telling them not to lose heart: "Do not weep! The Most Blessed Virgin is your Foundress. When I will leave this body and my soul will be led to God, as I hope will happen, having put my trust in Divine Mercy and the merits of my Savior, I will assist you even better" (A. Fischer).

Crushed by malaria, he left this world on October 21, 1755, mourned by the small group of Portuguese Marians. According to local custom, he was buried on the same day in sand without a coffin, in the presence of only a few participants at the funeral. His body was placed under the floor of the church in Balsamão. It was not until 1759, that his earthly remains were exhumed from the sand and placed in a coffin,

where they rested until 1955. Then they were moved to a specially prepared niche in the church wall where they remain to this day.

Eight days after Fr. Casimir's death, Fr. John de Rosario Diaz arrived in Balsamão with the intention of joining the Marian Order. The Bishop appointed him the superior of the Marian community. Father Diaz delivered the eulogy in Fr. Casimir's honor on the 30th day after his death. He expressed his conviction that Fr. Casimir heroically served God and people and that God had called Fr. Casimir to Himself to reward him with eternal glory.

Father Diaz said that the purity and sanctity of Fr. Casimir's soul were confirmed by the fact that birds used to flutter into his cell and wouldn't leave until Fr. Casimir nodded. Everyone was astounded to hear a chance bird's sweet song as Fr. Casimir lay dying. The bird instantly disappeared at the moment of his death. Another sign of his sanctity was the unusual elasticity of his body parts after death, along with the beauty of his face and the sweet aroma pervading his cell.

Father Casimir's death was a great blow to the Portuguese Marians. They were left not only without a superior, but also without a priest. None of them had yet made a profession of vows. They immediately besought the General Superior in Poland to have some Marians dispatched to continue the work started by Fr. Casimir. The Marians in Portugal passed the news

of Fr. Casimir's death to Poland through the Polish Franciscans who were attending their General Chapter in Spain in 1756. The Marians asked the General Superior to send a "second Casimir," who would help them properly prepare for entering the Marian way of life.

The Portuguese men also related that the most important documents regulating Marian religious life: the Rule of the Ten Virtues, Statutes, Horology or the Book of Ceremony, and the Marian prayer book, along with the list of indulgences attached to the holy scapular, had been sent to print. They asked for details of Fr. Stanislaus's life and information on the foundations of his Order. In addition, they requested particulars of Fr. Casimir's life and work in Poland: in Portugal he was called a saint. In a letter to Michael Wszyński, expressing their unity with the pain caused by his brother's death, they emphasized that in Fr. Casimir's person their community lost a father, a teacher, and a superior.

In September of 1757, the Marian General Chapter decided to send Fr. Alexis Fischer and Fr. Rafael de Buffa to Portugal. They arrived in Balsamão on March 8, 1758. Until his death on December 31, 1783, Fr. Alexis fulfilled the duty of superior of the Marian community which counted several monasteries.

In view of the many pilgrims coming in Balsamão to implore the "Holy Pole's" intercession before God,

Fr. Alexis petitioned the Bishop for permission to exhume Fr. Casimir's body and place it in a more worthy place: "After all, the opinion of his holiness is growing; at his tomb people receive miracles that God allows His saints to perform." The Bishop gave consent for the exhumation which took place on June 26–July 18, 1759. Father Casimir's bones and bodily remains were transferred to a double casket and placed under the church floor.

The suppression of religious orders in Portugal in 1834 hindered the growth of the Marian community in this country. It was only in 1955 that the Marians returned to Balsamão. They felt great joy in discovering that the memory of the "Holy Pole" was still alive, which was testified to by numerous pilgrimages to his tomb and the fact that his cell in which he had died, remained intact along with his memorabilia. They also lived to see the happy day when the Holy See proclaimed Fr. Casimir's heroic virtues. The Marians enlarged the monastery building and repaired the church. Now they wait in hope for the beatification of the man who planted the Marian Order in Portugal 255 years ago.

PART THREE

STEADFAST IN ATTAINING HIS GOAL

External Criteria of Holiness

The Portuguese people's strong belief in the "Holy Pole," as they called Fr. Casimir, as well as pilgrimages to his tomb and graces received through his intercession contributed to the opening of the beatification process. Down through the centuries the Church's canonization procedures have improved, due in great part to Pope Benedict XIV. To facilitate the opening of the process of beatification for the Founder, Fr. Papczynski, Father Casimir arranged the Pope's recommendations in the form of instructions.

To examine external manifestations of a person's relationship with God, such as fortitude, miracles, and heroic virtues, a trial by a Church tribunal must be held. It is important to establish with great accuracy historical facts under various circumstances from the life and manner of practicing Christian virtue by the beatification candidate.

Pope John Paul II, who performed many canonizations and beatifications, called his compatriots to cooperate with Divine grace in achieving holiness: "*Do not be afraid of holiness. Have the courage to strive for the full measure of your humanity!* Demand this of yourselves, even if others should not demand it

of you!” (Gorzów Wielkopolski, June 2, 1997). He encouraged the young not fear adversities because a man can be more powerful than the conditions he lives in: “The human person is strong; he is strong by his understanding of goals, awareness of tasks, recognition of his duties, and realization of the fact that he is loved. Therefore, in order to succeed I must have the certainty of being loved” (June 10, 1997).

Father Casimir Wszyński possessed such understanding from his very youth and did not lose it until his last moment on earth. In all of his life’s circumstances he did his best to follow the path of God, seeking help from Mary and imitating the example of the saints. That is why in the last moments of his life he could repeat the Psalmist’s words: “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast” (Ps 57:8). His entire life always pointed to God, just like the compass needle always points north. He used to frequently repeat the words of the prayer that he composed: “Dearly beloved Lord, how can I ever repay my infinite debt to You; how can I show my gratitude that You saved me from such great evil, and in Your goodness placed Your mercy and actions, words and thoughts in my heart? I give You thanks for having created me and redeemed me with Your precious Blood; for having washed me of my sins in the holy baptismal font and for having called me to this Holy Order, thus including me among Your servants who venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother and our Lady”.

Opinions of Father Casimir's holiness

In 1763-83, the Church tribunals in Portugal, Poland, and Rome collected testimonies of witnesses to Fr. Casimir's life and made an evaluation of his writings. Unfortunately, the process was impeded by Poland's loss of independence and the suppression of religious orders in Portugal. It was picked up again in the mid-20th century and successfully concluded with the decree of the Apostolic See recognizing Fr. Casimir's heroic virtues. Testimonies given by witnesses to Fr. Casimir's life and writings were instrumental in the proceedings of the process.

All the witnesses from Poland, Rome, and Portugal emphasized that the Servant of God Casimir was always mindful of God's presence. He taught to others the values he lived by and the things that help drawing closer to God. He was a man of profound prayer which he did not neglect even on his travels. He had a great veneration for the Most Holy Sacrament and was very meticulous and attentive in celebrating Holy Mass. With tears running down his face, Fr. Casimir used to ponder the Passion of Christ frequently. He did his best to deepen Marian devotion, especially the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., thanks to which he as well as other people, could glorify God and praise Mary not only with their sentiments and word of mouth but also by imitating Mary's virtues. Father Casimir's faith showed itself particularly in his behavior during his final illness and preparation to meet God.

Father Isidore Taudt was the only one who testified twice before the Church tribunal on behalf of the Servant of God Casimir, pointing out the latter's exemplary life and emphasizing his role in the renewal and growth of the Order: "To everyone in the Order he was a shining example of sanctity and fervent piety. (...) When he lived in Poland, he used to encourage the members of his institute to hold devotion for the Most Holy Sacrament, Christ's Passion, and the Blessed Mother, setting a good example himself. He used to get up early in the morning and go directly before the Most Holy Sacrament. With great zeal he taught simple folks the truths of the faith. Also, the Servant of God Casimir radiated with exceptional veneration of God and the things of God, to which he was wholeheartedly devoted. He considered the truths of the faith and God's commandments to be sacred and did his utmost to fulfill them (...). He frequently encouraged us, his brethren, to diligently conduct religious education among plain country folks, in accordance with our Order's goal."

Father Benon Bujalski, the Servant of God Casimir's companion on the journey to Portugal, testified among other things: "In various difficulties and in times of food shortage and lack of other goods for the community in Góra, the Servant of God always placed his hope in God. He kept telling his brethren to do the same while suffering these trying shortages of food or clothing. He cared for all with great trust and concern.

Even when he and his subordinates lived in poverty, he ensured the magnificence of worship and divine cult and provided food for the assembled faithful to stir up their piety.”

Experiencing many obstacles, perils, and famine on his trip to Portugal, “the Servant of God placed his hope in God’s help and displayed the utmost patience and steadfastness in achieving his goal. This encouraged me, his companion, to be patient and trustful” (Fr. Bujalski).

Father Alexis Fisher pointed out Fr. Casimir’s filial bond with Mary Immaculate: “He had such an unbreakable faith in the power of the Immaculate Conception that in various circumstances, in weaknesses and perils, either his own or somebody else’s, he recited the following words, thus achieving the expected result: «May the Virgin Mary’s Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection».” Father Alexis personally experienced the healing power of this prayer when the Servant of God Casimir traced on his forehead the initials of this invocation.

The same biographer passed on to us a testimony given by our Portuguese brethren pertaining to the time of the Servant of God’s last illness: “With great love [Fr. Casimir] wished to alleviate the strain on the brethren waiting on him. He used to pray throughout his entire life that he would not become a burden to his brethren because of a long illness. As long as he was

able he tried to get up on his own [...] and only shortly before dying did he allow for a night vigil to be kept at this bedside. When he needed something or wished to call brethren to pray, he tapped his cane.”

The first Portuguese Marians perceived Fr. Casimir as someone dedicated to fulfilling the will of God and endowed with extraordinary patience and gentleness: “He was very polite towards everybody and did not scandalize anyone with his words” (Brother John of St. Mary). The same witness emphasized Fr. Casimir’s great piety with which he prepared for Mass, as if it were his last before dying.

In addition to testimonies given by various people, Fr. Casimir himself provides an important witness which flows out of his writings. In his introduction to *The Morning Star*, he reminds us that “one’s virtue is proven by persevering in it until the end. Only those steadfast in virtue may be recognized as perfect, not those who enter the road of virtue occasionally and then deviate from it for a trifling reason.”

Strengthened by the Eucharist and Mary’s intercession, Fr. Casimir did not deviate from the road of perfection. On his journey to Portugal, after Mass in Genoa, he recorded the following reflection: “On the day of the Most Holy Trinity I celebrated Mass at the altar of the B.V.M. à la Pace at the Reformati Fathers, where we were staying. I reflected on how the unfathomable God can fit into such a small host. Then it

came to me: since He, the head of the Church, deigned to stay in the darkness of the Blessed Virgin's womb and chose her to be His mother, He wants all members of the Holy Church to have her as their Mother as well. Therefore, unhappy are those Churches and their members who think it shameful to accept her as their Mother, she who was honored by the God-Man who gave himself in submission to her. «And was obedient to them» (Lk 2:51)” (June 17, 1753).

Father Casimir sought safety from the dangers of sea-crossings by entrusting himself to the Mother of God and Blessed Stanislaus: “I do not call for any other than my usual help: «Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio sit nobis salus et protectio» [May the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception be our health and our protection]. I also frequently recited the Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, made a sign of the cross towards ominous clouds, and called for the intercession of our Venerable Father [Papczyński]” (June 1, 1753).

Father Wszyński diligently imparted basic elements of the Marian spiritual heritage to the laity. He accomplished it, among other things, by printing Fr. Papczyński's book entitled *The Mystical Temple of God* which teaches the Christian way to holiness. On the other hand, in his book *The Morning Star* he presents Mary as a special patroness in the battle against evil: “I called the book on imitating the evangelical virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary *The Morning Star*

because I knew that, because of its errors and heresy, nearly the whole world, sunk in anger, numerous addictions and ignorance of what is good and salvific, was distancing itself from Christ, the Sun of Justice. And just like the morning star, known as the first light, is the announcement of sunrise, so the virtues of the Blessed Virgin will give hope to anyone who voluntarily accepts them for drawing near to Christ, the Sun of Justice.”

“Even if someone gets entangled in the greatest darkness and wanders in the terrible night of a bad conscience, by reading this book, diligently following the teaching of the Morning Star, and imitating her 10 evangelical virtues, that person will see the day of a good conscience and the radiance of Christ the Lord, the Sun of Justice. Therefore, with no difficulty or darkness, as if in the middle of the day, he will go forward under Mary’s protection until he sees God on Mount Zion.”

Father Casimir reminded those unduly concerned with earthly matters that the most important thing is “to meet in heaven.” He also fostered devotion for the deceased and made it possible for people to obtain indulgences for the deceased in the Marian churches.

Conclusion

The Servant of God, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński, appears as a man exceptionally significant in his endeavor to fulfill his life's purpose. Already in his youth he started developing the grace of faith received at baptism by practicing conscientiously the pious devotions of the day. He did not follow the clerical career as his father wished. Instead, he discerned and unwaveringly answered God's call of a religious vocation in the Marian Order. He joined the Order clearly understanding his mission to mend the wrongs done by his own brother and those inflicted by the weaknesses of his brethren. With exceptional courage he undertook the task of bringing order into religious life in accordance with Church regulations and the instructions of the Marian Founder. He accomplished it by setting a good personal example of faithfulness, regardless of insults and a threat to his life. Instead of indulging in futile criticism, he used legal means [of correction] such as religious visitations. His dedication was instrumental in stimulating the Order's inward dynamics and outward growth.

He was the first novice of the recently revived Marian Order. He stayed with his religious family until the end, when Christ, through an illness, knocked on his door in Balsamão. Like Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński, Fr. Casimir bore a deep conviction that "this tiny Congregation of the Immaculate Conception has been raised up by God" and therefore it was necessary to take good care of it.

In his sermon of 1968, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński emphasized Fr. Casimir's role in awakening a hope for the nation's survival, thanks to Mary's special protection: "To a nation of people who were losing their freedom, Fr. Casimir revealed their very Mother. He tied this nation personally to her through the veneration of her Immaculate Conception."

Appreciating the importance of the outward signs of Marian piety, Fr. Wyszyński pointed out the need of conversion in Christian life. For this reason, he did his best to instill into Marian cult the practice of imitating Mary in her attitude towards God, her love of Christ and fulfillment of the Gospel precepts. Father Wyszyński exhorted that it was not enough just to call upon God with one's lips while failing in the external manifestations of faith. One's salvation may be secured only through the effort of fulfilling God's will at any stage of one's life. This is the kind of attitude that Mary teaches us. Therefore, one must entrust everything to Mary, for she is the Morning Star that leads to Christ, the Sun of Justice. By imitating the attitude of the Mother of God we can also draw closer to other people. After all, her eyes always saw other people's needs; they noticed the humble and the hungry whom God nourishes with goods.

Guided by the Morning Star, the Immaculately Conceived Mary, Fr. Wyszyński consequently followed the road to holiness throughout his entire life. People took notice of his sanctity; they felt drawn to him and

sought his assistance. Interaction with Fr. Casimir prompted people to be kind towards others and to work on themselves. Judging by the biography of the Servant of God, it is possible to say that he made a large contribution towards the revival of the nation because he did his best to help overcome the decline of the Saxon period. His influence spread far beyond the borders of his homeland, which he loved and wished happiness for. His concern was manifested, for instance, in sending back seeds that could grow well on Polish soil, or in reporting the ways of making the bamboo canes or tobacco which he learned, or the cooking recipes. In Rome he kept in touch with his compatriots, but was also open to other nations, which the Portuguese people in particular had a chance to experience.

One of the theologians who evaluated the documents and testimonies concerning the life of the Servant of God for his beatification process, explained Fr. Casimir's timeliness for our day thus: "Father Casimir can be offered as a model for the modern world because he showed how to carry out in the Church the duties of guiding one's brethren and giving honor to the Immaculate Virgin in the context of man's humanity which is so greatly scarred by sin."

The call for conversion remains timely in today's world, which is afflicted by significant instability of opinions and attitudes, which in turn leads to weakening of the faith, the break-up of marriages, and the abandoning of priestly and religious ways of life.

APPENDICES

Decree of Heroic Virtues

The thorough examination of Fr. Casimir's life and work conducted by Church tribunals was crowned by a decree affirming his heroic virtue issued by the Congregation for the Saints in 1989. The contents of this decree include: an emphasis on the Marian way of the Servant of God in his striving for holiness; the history of his life; the history of the process of examination of testimonies regarding his sanctity, and the final decision.

**DECREE IN THE DIOCESE OF MIRANDA-BRAGANÇA
ON THE CANONIZATION CAUSE OF THE SERVANT OF
GOD CASIMIR OF ST. JOSEPH WYSZYŃSKI,
A PRIEST AND RELIGIOUS IN THE CONGREGATION OF
MARIAN FATHERS OF
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE B.V.M.
(1700-1755)**

Question: Is it quite certain that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love for God and neighbor as well as the cardinal virtues of diligence, justice, moderation, and courage along with related virtues were practiced by the person whom this cause regards?

This is the answer:

The Marian Character of Spirituality

“I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth, in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come to me, all you that desire me and be filled with my fruits. He that hearkens to me, shall not be confounded and they that work by me, shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting” (Eccl 24:24-26, 30-31 Vulgate).

These words, as if spoken by the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the Church incorporates in various liturgical texts in her honor, prompted the Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński, since his early life to strive untiringly for holiness under the guidance and protection of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. What is more: his entire life gives witness to the great effectiveness of this “Marian” way in striving for holiness. The Servant of God stands on this road as “a shining example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity” (1 Tm 4:12).

[Father Casimir] endeavored to deepen devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary by imitating her virtues. He emphasized this in the book “The Morning Star” which he prepared “for the benefit of the faithful in all walks of life.” In his introduction to this book, he states that “the most effective devotion to the Blessed Virgin consists in imitating her virtues as brought to us by the Gospels.”

Vatican (Council) II also solemnly confirmed this way and in a clear statement pointed it out to the faithful as always vital: “But while in the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection (...), the followers of Christ still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues” (*LG*, 65).

Pope John Paul II saw the reason for this state of things in the fact that “The Mother of the Redeemer has a precise place in the plan of salvation.” “Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, for individuals and for communities, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity,” so that “Mary does not cease to be the «Star of the Sea» (*Maris Stella*) for all who are still on the journey of faith. If they lift their eyes to her from their earthly existence, they do so because «the Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren (*Rom 8:29*)» and also because «in the birth and development» of these brothers and sisters «she cooperates with a maternal love (*LG*, 63)” (*Redemptoris Mater*, 1, 6).

Biography

The Servant of God Casimir was born August 19, 1700, at his family estate Jeziora Wielka, then part of the Diocese of Poznań, presently the Diocese of War-

saw, as the seventh of eight children of John Casimir and Hedwig (born Zawadzka). He was baptized on October 4 of the same year. He received the basics of religious education from his parents who were deeply ingrained in the Catholic faith. From his childhood Fr. Casimir had a great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Having received his education at the Piarist Colleges—first in Góra Kalwaria and then in Warsaw—following his father's pressure, at the end of 1718 he went into legal apprenticeship. However, in 1721 he resigned in order to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain in fulfillment of a previously made promise. While on the road, he fell ill and thus was prevented from carrying out his vow. Therefore, he went to Rome, where he was able to obtain dispensation from his vow. Also in Rome, he met Fr. Joachim Kozłowski, the Procurator for the Marian Order, and declared before him his readiness to join the Order. In 1723 he received from him the Marian habit.

Upon his return to Poland, he began his noviceship at the Marian Fathers, and, having completed it, he made a profession of solemn vows in the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary on March 19, 1725. The same year he received his minor orders and was made a sub-deacon, and finally, in 1726, he was ordained to the priesthood.

Already in the novitiate he became noted for his meticulous observance of religious regulations and zeal

in growing in virtue. Therefore, soon after ordination he was entrusted with various offices and duties in fulfillment of which he rendered the Order a great service through the riches of his spiritual and intellectual life as the Novice Master (1727-30), substitute for the superior in the Korabiew monastery (1728-30), General Procurator in Rome (1730-33), Secretary General, again Novice Master and substitute for the superior in the Korabiew monastery, General Assistant (1734-37), instructor of moral theology (1735-37), and spiritual director of the Korabiew monastery (1736-37). Faithfully performing these duties, he used every opportunity to strengthen religious discipline and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin among his brethren, as well as to revive the spirit of their Founder. His fruitful activity was supported above all by his personal witness of life filled with particular care for obtaining and improving his virtues.

Elected General Superior (1737-1741), he used all means available to this office to renew and improve the customs and spirit of the Order but especially to eliminate the damages caused by the so-called “Rostkovian dispersion” (1715-22) and fatal influences of moral depravity dominating the Polish population of the day.

As the superior of the monastery in Góra Kalwaria (1739-47), he did his best to increase its spiritual and material goods, being particularly concerned with rescuing the Founder’s earthly remains from total ruin.

At the same time he dedicated himself to a fruitful apostolic activity, serving as a confessor to the nuns of St. Dominic's Order at the convent in Góra Kalwaria, among other things. He was also the Moderator of the Confraternity of Divine Providence, which he established at the Cenacle of the Lord church.

Re-elected the General Superior (1747-1750), [Fr. Casimir] reached out to his subordinates through letters, in which he presented himself as "a father resolving various disputes, a loving brother, a legitimate administrator managing the community, and a concerned and watchful minister," endeavoring to keep fidelity to the Rule, mutual charity and peace in the community. As a faithful son of the Founder and a guardian of his spiritual legacy, he also diligently supported the souls in Purgatory.

However, the novitiate and proper formation of the young Marians were his primary concerns. In this respect he was greatly helped by numerous candidates whom he recruited for the Order from Bohemia who possessed an extensive theological knowledge. Thanks to this fact, he intensified his efforts for spiritual renewal and intellectual development of the Order. The growing number of Marians made possible the foundation of four new religious houses in Lithuania and Volhyn'.

Named Procurator General of the Order in November of 1750, [Fr. Wyszyński] successfully car-

ried out his duties in Rome for two years (1751-53), effectively fending off the false “Marians” from Vilnius (who usurped the rights of his Order) and, among other things, preparing the beatification process of the Founder.

Being sent to Portugal in 1753, he was greatly mistreated in Lisbon by a man who used deceit to bring the Marians there. However, in October 1754, Fr. Casimir eventually obtained from the Ordinary of the Miranda Diocese (presently Diocese of Bragança) a place for the Order on Mount Balsamão. He died of malignant fever on October 21, 1755, in the opinion of holiness, having received the sacraments of the Church and being in the middle of his committed work of formatting the first Portuguese Marian community of hermits residing at this hermitage near the Marian Shrine. He was put to rest near the main altar at the church in Balsamão, greatly mourned by all.

Examination of Testimonies

The opinion of holiness that the Servant of God enjoyed already in his lifetime, especially during his two-year residency in Portugal, began to spread quickly after his death. Less than a year later the Bishop of Miranda, responding to the petition of the Marian community in Balsamão, ordered the opening Fr. Casimir’s beatification process.

Unfortunately, the bishop's unexpected demise halted the process until 1763, when the new Bishop of Miranda gave instructions to conduct an informative process in the diocese (1763-68). Additional processes were held in Lisbon (1768), in Poznań (1775-76), and in Rome (1779).

Upon the completion of the proper examination of the Servant of God's writings, on January 15, 1780, Pope Pius VI by his authority, as was customary, signed a decree establishing a committee in charge of presenting this matter before the Apostolic See. Consequently, the episcopal curias in Poznań (1781-83) and in Miranda-Bragança (1783) conducted apostolic processes in accordance with the legal regulations with regard to the virtues of the Servant of God. On November 25, 1788, the Congregation for the Saints issued a decree confirming the credibility of the above processes.

However, as a result of events of a political and religious nature, both in Poland and in Portugal, a total silence fell upon the beatification cause of the Servant of God. It was re-opened only on June 17, 1955, and dispatched to the Historical Section of the then Holy Congregation of Rites. After gathering and securing various documents about the life and work of the Servant of God, an extensive *Positio* on his virtues was prepared in 1986. In October of the same year this *Positio* was positively evaluated by the experts in history appointed by the Congregation for the Saints.

Accordingly, on March 21, 1989, the theologians-consultants gathered in special session presided over by the General Promoter for the Faith, Fr. Antonio Petti, unanimously declared that the Servant of God practiced Christian virtue to a heroic degree.

On November 7 of the same year, His Eminence Andrzej Maria Cardinal Deskur, the President of the Pontifical Academy of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., presented the cause to the cardinals and bishops gathered in their ordinary meeting; they recognized that the Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński practiced the theological, cardinal and related virtues to a heroic degree.

Eventually, the undersigned Cardinal Prefect presented the account on these matters to the Holy Father John Paul II. His Holiness, having accepted with satisfaction the opinion of the Congregation for the Saints, instructed them to prepare an appropriate decree on the heroic virtue of the Servant of God.

When his directive had been carried out, the Holy Father called in the Cardinals, the undersigned Prefect, Cardinal A.M. Deskur, the presenter, and myself, the Bishop's Secretary, along with all other persons who must be called in according to custom, and solemnly proclaimed in their presence the following:

It has been recognized as certain in the presently discussed case and all its consequences that the

Servant of God Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope and love of God and neighbor, as well as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude along with related virtues, to a heroic degree.

The Holy Father ordered this decree to be publicly proclaimed and deposited in the archives of the Congregation for the Saints.

Rome, December 21, A.D. 1989

✠ *Angelus Cardinal Felici*
Prefect

✠ *Traianus Crisan*
Titulary Archbishop of Drivasto,
Secretary

PRAYERS OF FR. CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI***Daily Profession of Faith***

O Lord, Almighty and Triune God, Creator of heaven and earth, before Your Divine Majesty I declare that I believe in everything that our Holy Mother Church believes in. namely, in everything that concerns the most holy Incarnation, the human nature, life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; in everything that concerns the Holy Spirit, the Advocate; the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar and of the Eucharist; the Immaculately Conceived Virgin Mary, Mother of God; the seven holy sacraments; the Saints who reign in heaven; in everything that is in heaven, Purgatory, Inferno, and eternity; the immortality of the soul just like the holy Mother Church believes and like You, my Lord, want me to believe; also. I want to live in this faith until death, and I wish to die and shed my own blood for this faith, if such be Your will. Amen.

Act of Thanksgiving

O Lord God Almighty, I believe that you are present here and everywhere. I thank you that you have created me and redeemed me with the Precious Blood of your Son, that you gave me new birth in the baptismal font and cleansed me in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I thank you that you nourish me with spiritual and earthly food. I thank you also for calling me to this Congregation, and for numbering me among

your servants who venerate the Virgin Mary, our Mother and Queen. I thank you also for all the blessings of which I am continually and bountifully the recipient. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Thanksgiving to the Lord our God

Lord Jesus Christ, I offer myself to You and with my thanks and praise, I dedicate to You my soul and my body with all my senses for the sake of the immeasurable mercy and favor, both natural and supernatural, that were granted to me out of Your infinite kindness.

My dearly beloved Lord, will I ever be able to repay my infinite debt to You for having set me free from this great evil; for Your mercy and works, words and thoughts that You put into my heart out of Your kindness?

My Lord and my God, here I am appealing to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother along with the choirs of angels, the righteous and the holy ones in heaven, in every manner available to me, in accord with my understanding and ability, and asking and imploring them to help me give thanks, to which I am bound by all the innumerable favors received, in general and in particular.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, my most beloved Mother and Lady, how much I must be thankful to you and how little I am grateful! You are my Mother indeed; do not look back on the past. Hasten to my rescue in the future so that each moment of my life may become a

continuous thanksgiving of my every heartbeat and every breath. And should I forget, please accept this right now as done once and for all.

Entrusting Himself to the Lord, our God

Into Your blessed hands and the most sweet embrace of Your Divine Providence, I entrust my spirit and my body, my entire being, but especially my duties. Take us, O Lord, under the wings of Your protection and kindly keep us pure and innocent so that we may live and die with You and have eternal rest in You.

Entrusting Himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother and Lady

Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven, Lady of the world and Immaculate Virgin preserved from the stain of original and any other sin, kindly accept my decision. You have always been, and please remain in the future, my dearly beloved Mother worthy of continuous love and praise. May I always be your special son! Please show yourself as my Mother, O gracious, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!

Entrusting Himself to His Guardian Angel

My dearly beloved Guardian Angel, you have kindly accorded me your careful protection thus far; please help me also now to preserve my body in chastity and innocence so that I may eternally gaze at and adore the Holy Trinity. Amen.

Entrusting Himself to his Holy Patrons

My holy patrons, whom I chose to be my advocates, support me on the road to the fullness of happiness. O God's chosen ones, help me to overcome my faults and to praise God and proclaim His glory, so that, strengthened in life by His grace I may merit eternal communion with You.

Prayer Before Mass

Almighty and eternal God, I offer You this holy and wonderful Sacrifice of the true Body and Blood of Your dearly beloved Son. I want to be a part of it with all attentiveness, for the sake of Your glory and the entire heavenly court, in thanksgiving for all favors received out of Your most generous hand, for which I also hope in the future along with all people in the world. Grant us perfect love for You and our neighbors and grant us perseverance in Your grace until the end.

Through the merits of this most divine Sacrifice, kindly release the souls of the departed suffering in Purgatory. I offer for them the part of the Sacrifice that is due to them in addition to the part that regards me and my important duties.

I offer You [this Eucharist] for the conversion of those who remain engrossed in mortal sin. I offer it for those who live in Your grace so that You kindly strengthen them in it. I offer it for the Holy Father so that You keep him in health and in happy ministry; also, for the exultation of holy Mother Church. I offer it for the peace and quiet of this Kingdom and all Christian rulers and kings. I offer it for the destruction of heresy,

conversion of infidels and all heretics and schismatics. I offer it for the increase of the spiritual goods of my Holy Order and for all those for whom I must pray out of justice and love. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving After Mass

Most gracious and most merciful Jesus, have mercy on your Church; have mercy also on this place where we come together; bring it about that sincere peace, genuine humility and magnanimous love may always reign in our midst. Support us with your grace that we may conduct ourselves with dignity, serve you faithfully, love you, and be pleasing to you. To your mercy we commend all our works, concerns and occupations. Ever keep on imparting your blessing upon us. Grant us the grace of persevering in your service to the very end. You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady

O Blessed Virgin Mary, most Pure, most Holy, Immaculate one, God, our Lord made you beautiful above all and bestowed upon you the privilege of the sun and the moon. By virtue of your miraculous Conception and for the pain that pierced your heart while you were watching your Son die on the cross, please be with me and guard me in the dreadful hour of my death for you are the powerful Lady. Protect and guard me from the snares of the enemy of mankind. Obtain for me from your Beloved Son the forgiveness of all my sins, and thus, supported by your love, may I share in the joy of your eternal glory. Amen.

**PRAYERS FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF
FR. CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI**

First Prayer

O Jesus, You deigned to call Your Servant Casimir to the Order dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin and Your Mother Mary, bring it about if such be Your Most Holy will, that though her intercession we may rejoice without delay in his elevation to the alters of the Church. Amen.

Second Prayer

Let us pray that God will raise the Venerable Servant of God, Fr. Casimir Wyszyński to the altars and ask his intercession for us with God.

O God, joy of the saints, make us glad by the exultation to the honors of the altars of Your faithful Servant Casimir and grant us the zeal to imitate him on our way to holiness.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

Divine Master, You who call us to Your service, by the example of the Venerable Servant of God Casimir, fill us with concern for the growth of religious life in our country and all the Church.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

O Holy Spirit who, in the Immaculate Virgin Mary has prepared a worthy dwelling place, by the

example of Your Servant Casimir make us fervent venerator of her Immaculate Conception.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

O God, fountain of all good, make prejudices and injustices disappear from the face of earth and grant us grace after the example of Your Servant Casimir to be ardent defenders of all those who suffer.

We ask You, hear us, O Lord.

Most holy and undivided Trinity, You choose to live in the hearts of Your faithful servants, and after their death to reward their merits with the glory of heaven. Grant, we implore You, that Your Servant, Casimir, who with apostolic zeal faithfully Served the Church under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, may be numbered among the Blessed, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Prayer

Most holy and undivided Trinity, You choose to live in the hearts of your faithful servants and after their death to reward their merits with the glory of heaven. Grant, we implore You, that Your Servant Casimir, who with apostolic zeal faithfully served the Church under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, may be numbered among the Blessed. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PRAYER FOR A SPECIAL GRACE
THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF
THE SERVANT OF GOD FR. CASIMIR**

O God, Merciful Father, in the heart of Your Servant Casimir You aroused such a great zeal for accomplishing corporal and spiritual deeds of mercy; deign to grant me (us) through his intercession the grace ..., for which I (we) implore You. Amen.

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be to the Father.

Please send information about graces received through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir Wyszyński to:

**Vice-Postulator
for the Marian Causes of Canonization
for North America and Asia
Congregation of Marian Fathers
Eden Hill, Stockbridge, MA 01263.**

PRAYER**FOR THE CONGREGATION OF MARIAN FATHERS**

Almighty God, you endow the Church with the charism of the religious life. I give you thanks for the gift of the Marian community, which Blessed Stanislaus Papczynski founded by your inspiration, and which Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz renewed in a most wonderful way. I thank you for the beautiful witness of the life of the many Marian Fathers and Brothers who faithfully brought to fulfillment the gift of the Marian vocation they received.

I ask of you, God, the grace of productive fidelity for all whom you called to the Marian way of life. Bring it about that, strengthened by your grace, they may zealously spread the honor of Mary Immaculate, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. With their eyes fixed on her example of life, may they uphold the beauty of the Marian image of the Church. Set ablaze in them an ardent love for bringing help to the departed, and to all who find themselves drawing to the close of their life and at the gate to eternity with you. Let them show forth to all the purpose of human life, which is eternal happiness with you, and may they perseveringly accompany them in the daily pilgrimage by the way of faith, hope, and love. Keep strengthening them in the service of the Church that they may always be inflamed with the holy fire of zeal, and courageously proclaim to the world the Good News about your mercy, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Savior. Keep on pouring into their hearts the zeal and wisdom in render-

ing help to the poor of the contemporary world, and especially to people sunk in various addictions, to those relegated to the margins of society, to the forgotten, and to those held in contempt. May they know how to bring the Good News to them with great haste, and to let them see your Fatherly Face.

O God, who desired to include every one of us in your providential plan of salvation, I pray you: Keep on enlightening the Congregation of Marian Fathers, that it may know how to discern the signs of the times, and courageously go there where the need is greatest and the conditions most difficult. May it know how to undertake with humility all sorts of tasks in the Church, even if that would require following the road of hardships, suffering, and adversity.

I ask of you, O God, new and holy vocations to the Congregation of Marian Fathers, that the Marian charism of life may enrich the Church in various nooks of the world. Send, O Lord, courageous and zealous men that, enamored of Christ and the Church, they may know how to efficaciously lead others to you. And as for those who are called, support and strengthen them in the life they chose, that no deceptions of the world may draw them away from you, who alone are Goodness and Beauty.

Bring it about that the beauty of the Marian charism may shine on the face of the Church and radiate to all, who are on their pilgrim way to you, and are filled with longing for you. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

CHAPLET

OF THE TEN EVANGELICAL VIRTUES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Marians recite this prayer since the time of approval of the Order upon the "Rule of the Ten Evangelical Virtues of the B.V.M." by Pope Innocent XII in 1699. Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński, Founder of the Marians, was the first to make his solemn vows on this rule on June 6, 1701.

First, we make the Sign of the Cross, then we recite one *Our Father* and 10 *Hail Mary's*, mentioning after the words "Holy Mary, Mother of God" one virtue in the order given below.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Our Father who are in heaven...

Hail, Mary, full
with you.
among women,
is the fruit of
Holy Mary,



of grace, the Lord is
Blessed are you
and blessed
your womb, Jesus.
Mother of God,

Most	1.	pure,
Most	2.	prudent,
Most	3.	humble,
Most	4.	faithful,
Most	5.	devout,
Most	6.	obedient,
Most	7.	poor,
Most	8.	patient,
Most	9.	merciful,
Most	10.	sorrowful.

Pray for us, sinners,
of our death.



now and in the hour
Amen.

V. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:
R. As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

V. In Your Conception, O Virgin Mary, You were Immaculate.
R. Pray for us to the Father whose Son, Jesus, you brought forth into the world.

Let us pray:

Father, You prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of Your Son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by His death, and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in Your presence without sin. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

V. The Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception,
R. Be our Health and our Protection.



The Venerable Servant of God Fr. Casimir of St. Joseph Wyszyński (1700–1755). Copperplate engraving by J.C. Winkler (Vienna, second half of the 18th century).

The front view of
the Marian Church
on Mount Balsamão
in Portugal.

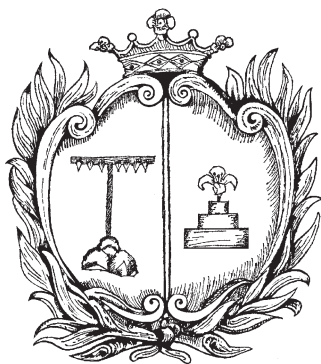


The white marble
monument
to Fr. Casimir
located next to
the church.





Basilica Aracoeli and the entrance to the monastery of Reformed Franciscans in Rome, where Fr. Wyszynski stayed as a guest during his frequent trips to the Eternal City.
Engraving from 1748.



Coat of arms of
the Wyszynski
family.

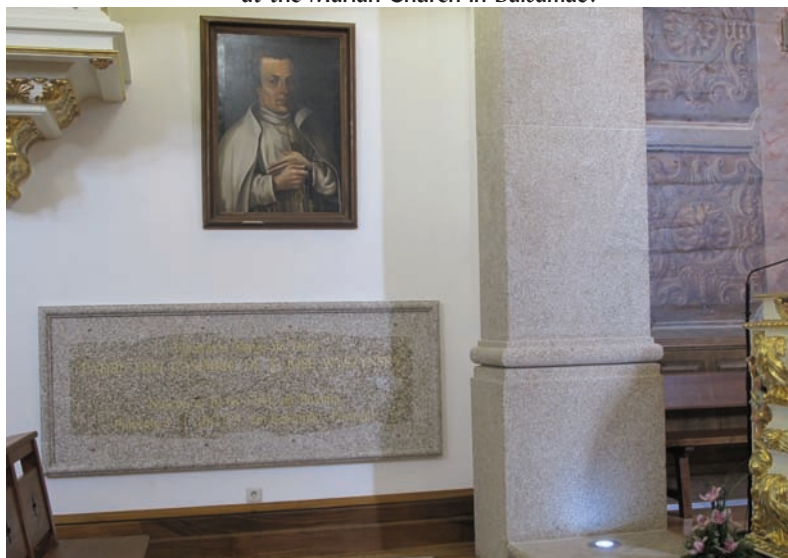


The old atrium of the Balsamão monastery at night. The lit window on the second floor belongs to Fr. Casimir's cell.



Inside the newly renovated Marian Church in Balsamão.

The granite stone with an appropriate inscription covers the coffin containing Fr. Casimir's earthly remains at the Marian Church in Balsamão.





The frame of Father Casimir's bed, his trunk, and walking cane preserved in his simple cell at the monastery in Balsamão. The Venerable Servant of God was known for his austere, monastic lifestyle.

A metal cilice that Fr. Casimir used for mortification.

Such a device was commonly used by clergy and religious of the day to mortify the flesh.



Father Casimir
Wyszyński on the
18th century
portrait located at
the Archbishop's
Palace in Lisbon,
Portugal.



The baptismal font
in Fr. Casimir's
native parish
church in
Jeziórka near
Grójec.
In all likelihood,
this is where
the Venerable
Servant of God was
baptized in 1700.

Father Casimir's personal cutlery. These are some of his personal belongings which are on display at the museum in the Marian monastery on Mount Balsamão.



The beads on which Fr. Casimir recited the Chaplet of the Ten Virtues of the B.V.M. discovered at his graveside. He found meditation and prayer upon the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be a great source of spiritual strength and consolation.



TOWARDS THE BEATIFICATION
OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD
FR. CASIMIR WYSZYŃSKI,
WHO ESTABLISHED
THE CONGREGATION OF MARIAN FATHERS IN PORTUGAL