

SUMMARY

The years 1914-1918 are one of the darkest periods in the historiography of Europe and main reason of the humanism idea collapse, which promoted the idea of human dignity respect. This was the first World War that brought it with great material and spiritual destruction.

During the First World War the district of Wieluń overlapped its administrative boundaries with a network of Catholic parishes, between which the farthest distance was up to 80 km. That time the deanery of Wieluń included 38 parishes. Certain symptoms that pointed to the possibility of reorganizing the church administration in the Kingdom of Poland, appeared after the Regency Council's announcement of the initial independence freedoms acts of Poland (issued November 5th, 1916 and September 12th, 1917). For that reason since 1st of January 1917, with the efforts of the Bishop Stanisław Kazimierz Zdzitowiecki, the diocesan of Włocławek, the former deaneries were divided into smaller territorial units. The deanery of Wieluń district was thus divided into four deaneries: Bolesławiec, Praszka, Wieluń and Wieruszów, with 39 parishes (in 1917 the parish in Jaworzno was reactivated).

Pastoral work in difficult conditions of German and Austro-Hungarian occupation included not only typical priest's duties (sacramental ministry), but also: keeping civil status records, raising the awareness of taking care of hygiene, increased educational activity (especially elementary schools) and helping people suffering from difficult financial situation, which was also the priests' problem. These tasks were taken on large scale by the Dean of Wieluń - priest Wincenty Przygodzki, cooperating with nearly 50 priests at that time. The spiritual center of Wieluń district and its boundaries, starting from Czestochowa to Sieradz, was the convent of the Bernardine Sisters, who helped materially and spiritually almost everyone looking for help at that time.

This publication would like to present to the contemporary catholics, especially those living in the historical land of Wieluń, the activities of the Catholic Church during the First World War.

Ms. Kamil Klesik