



THE POLISH  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

# Tadeusz Styczeń

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I.

TADEUSZ STYCZEŃ SDS:  
PERSON AND WORK



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Tadeusz Józef Styczeń was born on 21 December 1931 in the village of Wołowice near Krakow as the second child of Anna and Tadeusz. His father worked as a mason tender and a village shopkeeper.

Tadeusz began his secondary education during the years of the Nazi occupation, attending underground classes run by the Salvatorian Friars in Zakrzówek, a district of Krakow. After the war, he continued education at Salvatorian schools in Krakow, Bagno and Mikołów. In 1947, he graduated from Władysław Sikorski Middle School and joined the novitiate of the Society of the Divine Saviour (the Salvatorian Friars) in Bagno near Wrocław, adopting the monastic name of Józef. He took his perpetual vows in the Society in 1953 in Trzebinia, and was ordained a priest in 1995 by Bishop Franciszek Jop.

In the years 1949–1955, he studied at the Theological Faculty of the Jagiellonian University, and after the Faculty was closed, at the Institute of Philosophy and Theology run by the Dominican Friars in Krakow. During his studies at the Jagiellonian University, he attended seminars in the philosophy of nature taught by Rev. Professor Kazimierz Kłósak. He also took music lessons from a Krakow teacher, Paweł Mastela, learning to play the piano and the organ. After he was ordained a priest, he wanted to continue his musical education, but did not receive permission from the Provincial Superior.

In 1995, he began studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), where he defended his M.A. thesis in 1959 (entitled “The Concept of Virtue in Nicolai Hartmann”), and in 1963 was awarded doctorate based on a thesis entitled *The Possibility of Scientific Ethics in John Locke*. He wrote both theses under the guidance of Karol

Wojtyła. During his years as a student, he worked as an assistant-volunteer at the Department of Ethics chaired by Karol Wojtyła at the Catholic University of Lublin, and after defending his Ph.D. thesis became a full-time faculty member. In 1971, he wrote a postdoctoral dissertation on *The Possibility of Ethics as an Empirically Substantiated and Universally Valid Theory of Morality*. In 1978, after Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was elected Pope, he was appointed chair of the Department and Institute of Ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin. In 1981, he was conferred the title of Associate Professor, and in 1992 awarded the title and position of full Professor. He promoted ten doctors and the doctoral theses written under his guidance encompassed a broad spectrum of issues in ethics and moral theology:

*Philosophical Aspects of the Discussion Around Universally Valid Norms in Contemporary Theology* (Andrzej Szostek),

*Dietrich von Hildebrand's Concept of Spousal Love* (Teresa Wojtarowicz),

*Determination of the Principles of Social Coexistence According to John Rawls* (Ryszard Moń),

*Anthropological and Ethical Implications in the Poetry of Karol Wojtyła* (Anna Zmora),

*Person as a Being and Norm in the Philosophy of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła* (Henryk Tomasik),

*The Standpoint of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II in the Dispute Over Love as a Criterion in the Moral Evaluation of Contraception* (Marek Czachowski),

*Man as a Gift: The Anthropology of "Familiaris Consortio"* (Bogusław Szpakowski),

*Ethics as the First Philosophy: Experience of the Normative Power of Truth as the Source and Foundation of Ethics as the First Philosophy* (Kazimierz Krajewski),

*Natural Law and the Naturalist Error. Josef Fuchs's Criticism of the Scholastic Concept of Natural Law* (Jarosław Merecki),

*The Problem of Imperfect Laws: The Democratic Rule of Majority and the Human Right to Life and Freedom of Conscience (A Logical and Ethical Analysis)* (Piotr Ślęczka).



Apart from his lectures on ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin, he taught for many years at the Higher Salvatorian Seminary in Bagno. In 1975, he was a guest lecturer at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and in 1994 at Ateneo Romano della Santa Croce in Rome. From 1981, he regularly delivered lectures and seminars at the John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences (Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II per studi sul matrimonio e sulla famiglia) at the Lateran University in Rome. In 1981, together with Professor Josef Seifert and Professor Augustin Basave, he founded the International Academy of Philosophy in Dallas, USA, which was transferred to Europe five years later and now operates as Die Internationale Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentums Liechtenstein. He was a member of the Academy's Senate, delivered lectures and developed academic cooperation between the Catholic University of Lublin and the International Academy of Philosophy.

As a result of his efforts, the Academic Senate of the Catholic University of Lublin established the John Paul II Institute on June 25, 1982 as an interdepartmental academic and educational facility with the goal specified in the Statute as "studying the thought and work of Pope John Paul II and building a community of persons in the spirit of Christ's teaching as taught by the Pope." The work of the Institute is focused mainly on ethical and anthropological problems from the perspective of philosophy and theology. In the years 1982–2006, Styczeń held the office of Director of the John Paul II Institute, and in the years 1988–2006 he was the editor-in-chief of the *Ethos* quarterly, issued by the Institute since 1988 in cooperation with the John Paul II Foundation in Rome. Its goal was a broadly conceived reflection on contemporary intellectual challenges from the personalist perspective inspired by the thought of Karol Wojtyła, and then John Paul II.

Aside from working as the editor-in-chief of *Ethos*, Styczeń also co-edited the *Roczniki Filozoficzne* [Philosophical Annuals] issued by the KUL Scientific Society for many years, as well as scientific magazines issued abroad: *Aletheia* (IAP Liechtenstein) and *Anthropotes* (Lateran University in Rome). He also cooperated with the Italian magazines *Il Nuovo Areopago* and *La Nuova Europa*. Styczeń was a member of several Polish and foreign scientific societies, including *Societas Ethica*, the KUL Scientific Society, the Polish Philosophical Society and the Polish Theological Society, as well as the Board of Directors of the

Pontifical Academy for Life (Pontificia Academia Pro Vita). From 1981, he was a consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Health Care Workers. He was a member of the Scientific Council of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University Institute for Family Studies. In 1990, he was appointed an expert of the Senate Constitutional Committee.

In 1994, the University of Navarra in Pamplona, and in 2007 the Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences at the Lateran University in Rome awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Styczeń's academic work includes approximately 500 publications. His most important books are: *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnie ważnej teorii moralności* [The Possibility of Ethics as an Empirically Substantiated and Universally Valid Theory of Morality] (1972); *Zarys etyki: Metaetyka* [An Outline of Ethics: Meta-ethics] (1974); *Etyka niezależna?* [Independent Ethics?] (1980); *ABC etyki* [The ABC of Ethics] (1981); *W drodze do etyki* [On the Way to Ethics] (1984); *Wolność w prawdzie* [Freedom in Truth] (1988); *Solidarność wyzwala* [Solidarity Sets Free] (1993); *Urodziłeś się, by kochać* [You Were Born to Love] (1993); *Wprowadzenie do etyki* [An Introduction to Ethics] (1993); *Rozum i wiara wobec pytania: kim jestem* [Reason and Faith Facing the Question: Who Am I?] (2001); *Gratias ago, ergo sum* (2007).<sup>1</sup> He also edited several books by Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, as well as works dedicated to the Pope's thought.

Awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2006), he was also the recipient of the Medal of Merit from the Catholic University of Lublin (2007). He was with John Paul II during the last moments of his life on April 2, 2005. He died on October 14, 2010 in the St. Hedwig of Silesia Hospital in Trzebinia and was buried in the Salvatorian shrine at the church in Trzebinia on October 21, 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> All of Styczeń's works have been published as *Collected Works*, in seven volumes; their titles and the editors' names are provided in the Bibliography. The respective years of first publication are provided in parentheses.