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ŁUKASZ KALISZ
ORCID: 0000-0001-8217-2954
The University of Białystok

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CHARITABLE WORK OF REV. KAROL LUBIANIEC (1866–1942)¹

PREFACE

The philanthropic activity of the first half of the 20th century in Poland was an important element of sustaining Polish identity and survival of the nation during difficult years of the annexation and war. It was the people doing charity and educational work who replaced state structures and took care of children, providing accommodation, as well as intellectual, patriotic and religious education. One of such distinguished philanthropists working in the Vilnius Region was rev. Karol Lubianiec.

Despite his huge accomplishments for education and the Polish culture on the Polish Eastern Borderlands, he is little known due to an insufficient number of academic publications regarding his work. The only existing publication on rev. Karol Lubianiec is a book published in 1983 written by his student, rev. Mieczysław Paszkiewicz². This book, however, has many shortages as it was based only on his students' memories, without queries in foreign archives – which was impossible in the 1980's. In this article, the author is going to make an attempt to fill in some of these gaps, basing on documents found in the Vilnius archives.

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² M. Paszkiewicz, *Ks. Karol Lubianiec 1866–1942 [Rev. Karol Lubianiec 1866–1941]*, Białystok, Wydawnictwo Kurii Arcybiskupiej w Białymstoku, 1983.

This is the first time that many of these sources have become the subject of a scientific analysis.

Karol Lubianiec was born on 7th January 1866³ into an agricultural family living in the Lida District. He received his education in Vilnius, where he also entered the Seminary of Vilnius and after having been noticed by his superiors, he was sent to continue further studies at the *Saint Petersburg Theological Academy*. On 31st May 1898 he received his priestly ordination in the academic chapel in St. Petersburg. Then, after his return to Vilnius he became a lecturer and a chaplain in the Seminary of Vilnius. Since 1917 he was a canon capitular (since 1935 – a prelate) in the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter⁴.

PROFESSOR OF THE SEMINARY OF VILNIUS

In the Seminary of Vilnius rev. Karol Lubianiec taught history of the Church, liturgy, and singing. He also gave lectures on the Holy Bible, biblical archeology and Canon Law. His additional position as an inspector in the seminary required engagement and commitment not only in the education, but also in the upbringing and the spiritual life of candidates to the priesthood.

Rev. Michał Sopoćko, who worked in the Seminary of Vilnius, wrote about rev. Lubianiec that: *he skillfully emphasised the flaws which were inseparable from common life, and for which he reprimanded with love and compassion, avoiding acerbity. Even when sometimes giving punishment, he evoked love, because he would forget the fault and never showed that he ever thought of it. He condemned wrongful deeds, but at the same time he respected the person who did them. His figure alone, of a true ascetic, commanded respect in anyone who was lucky enough to meet this always smiling, full of energy and endearing kindness priest*⁵.

Józef Obrębski, a prelate, who was taught by Lubianiec, in turn recalled him in this way: *I met him as a canon in 1926. He was a spiritual father, a confessor, a seminary inspector, and of course a member of the chapter. He was characterised by his deep devotion, dedication and faith. When he entered the room or was giving a sermon, we always felt great respect towards him. None of us dared to play pranks, which sometimes happened in other cases. He was very calm and it was his attitude that commanded respect among the seminarians. I remember how in the first year we were assigned, one after the other, to ring the bell at 4:30 in the morning, and there were 140 of us in the seminary then. I was supposed to do this chore twice and I overslept both times. When I heard the bell, I jumped up and ran towards it, but saw no-one there. Not until a few years later did I find*

³ Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, [The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, hereinafter called: LMAVB], f. 342–28739, p. 1.

⁴ Ibid; T. Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945 [Martyrdom of clergy of Vilnius Archdiocese 1939–1945]*, Białystok, Wydawnictwo BUK, 2017, p. 249–250.

⁵ T. Krahel, *Ks. pralat Karol Lubianiec [Rev. prelate Karol Lubianiec]*, „Czas Miłosierdzia” 2000, No. 8, p. 14.

*out that it was rev. Lubianiec, who hid afterwards, and most importantly, did not scold me. It was said that his bed was often undone, because he would pray, wake, and contemplate the entire night*⁶.

CHAIRMAN OF THE CHARITABLE SOCIETY “THE HOUSE OF JESUS’ HEART” (DOM SERCA JEZUSOWEGO)

Apart from his work in the seminary and his extensive priesthood activity, the main sphere of rev. K. Lubianiec’s activity was care, as well as educational and social work.

Since 1901 the charitable society called “The House of Jesus’ Heart” (Dom Serca Jezusowego) [hereinafter called: DSJ] under the direction of rev. Karol Lubianiec provided care and organized secret Polish education for people. The goal of the society, approved by governorate Commission in Vilnius in 1907⁷, was to concentrate on professional, intellectual, physical, social and moral education⁸. Since the very beginning, the society had a strictly Polish nature – its members and wards were only of this nationality⁹. In 1908 a dormitory in “Nowe Zabudowania” District was organised, where an educational programme for orphans was conducted through games, plays, singing, as well as vocational education. The upbringing of an abandoned child to be a brave man required its isolation from the street life. Next to the house, rev. Lubianiec created a new street and named it “Dobrej Rady”, dedicating it to Our Lady of Good Counsel (she was also the patroness of the institutional chapel)¹⁰. Religion, Polish, arithmetic and Polish history were taught in secret. In order to teach Polish in a safer way, some of the children were sent from the dormitory to Russian governmental schools. The number of pupils of both sexes from the ages of 4 to 20 was rising constantly: from 21 orphans in 1909 to 854 people in 1924¹¹. Several dozens of people took care of and handled the facilities of the society. The head director of the shelter was Celestyna Fryde. Amidst the pupils of the DSJ society, 60 boys served in the Polish army: *well-dressed, shod, supplied with good underwear, and above all with highly developed patriotic spirit. Many of*

⁶ C. Paczkowska, *Na 60-lecie męczeńskiej śmierci ks. prałata Karola Lubianca (1866–1942). Świadectwo Prawdzie dawane życiem i śmiercią [For the 60th anniversary of Rev. prelate Karol Lubianiec’s martyr death (1866–1942). Testimony given for the truth with life and death]*, „Magazyn Wileński” 2002, No 10, p. 28–29.

⁷ The act of Vilnius Charitable Society known under the name of “The House of Jesus’ Heart” (Dom Serca Jezusowego) was approved for the second time on 15.12.1912 by the Minister of Internal Affairs in Petersburg; approved for the third time by German authorities on 12.02.1916, until was finally approved and registered on 4.11.1919 by the authorities of the Vilnius District. – Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas, [Lithuanian Central State Archives, hereinafter called: LCVA], f. 53 ap. 23, b. 1846, p. 10.

⁸ LMAVB, f. 318–37745, p. 3.

⁹ LMAVB, f. 318–38444, p. 2.

¹⁰ Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, ref. 2640, *Historia Instytucji wychowawczo-zawodowej pod nazwą „Dom Serca Jezusowego” w Wilnie [The History of the Educational – Vocational Institution under the name of “Home of Sacred Heart of Jesus” in Vilnius]*, p. 2.

¹¹ LMAVB, f. 318–32592, p. 1.

them were decorated with orders such as: *Virtuti Militari* and the Cross of Valor, and military authorities often thanked sincerely for the well-mannered and bravely fighting boys from “The House of Jesus’ Heart”¹². The society was also developing vocational education. For girls they organised: a laundry room, a sewing workshop, a trickot and stocking embroidery workshop, weaving, wool and linen spinning for home use, bakery and cookery classes¹³. The following workshops were prepared for boys: shoemaking, musical instruments making, bronze-gilding, carpentry, ironworks, men tailoring and basket-weaving. Additionally, the boys and the girls under the direction of a gardener gained knowledge in the fields of gardening and vegetable growing¹⁴.

In 1913 rev. Karol Lubianiec built the Church of the Divine Providence (Kościół Opatrzności Bożej)¹⁵ on the premises of the institution. The facility also had its shop on Zamkowa Street, where self-made goods were sold. In 1915 a mill was bought for internal use and electricity was installed. Next to the shelter, a hospital for local needs and baths were set up. There were also facilities for breeding rabbits and all kinds of domestic poultry. In 1916, as a consequence of the implementation of the last will of late rev. Gintowt Dziewałtowski, they brought livestock from Korycin and put it next to the shelter (22 Dobrej Rady Street)—horses, cows, pigs, goats and sheep¹⁶. The growing number of children and difficulties in feeding them, resulted in the need to place them in reliable families and also other locations, outside the main building of the shelter located on Dobrej Rady Street. The sources of income of the DSJ Society included membership charges, fees of children’s caretakers working in the shelter, donations from the society, earnings from plays, fund-raising and others, as well as earnings from selling goods produced in the workshops and ateliers located in the shelter¹⁷. The society also had at its disposal a house at 50 Konarskiego Street¹⁸, 14 Wielkiej Pohulanki Street, as well as in Czarny Bór (formerly Rejslerów) and Polepie. Secret education in the Second Polish Republic was already turned into primary schools: No. 30 (Dobrej Rady Street), No. 21, No. 34 (Wielkiej Pohulanki Street), No. 28 (Stefańska Street) and No. 54 (in Czarny Bór). Additionally, there was a male craft school on Dobrej Rady Street¹⁹. Apart from developing craftsman skills, the youth were involved

¹² LMAVB, f. 318–37745, p. 19.

¹³ LMAVB, f. 318–32592, p. 1–2.

¹⁴ LMAVB, f. 318–32592, p. 2.

¹⁵ LMAVB, f. 318–37745, p. 20.

¹⁶ LMAVB, f. 318–36896, p. 1.

¹⁷ The Statute of the Society approved on 4.11.1919. – LCVA, f. 53, ap. 23, b. 1846, p. 5.

¹⁸ On Konarskiego Street there was a pension ‘Bethany’ (“Betania”) created mainly for former teachers, who after having worked for a common good, needed peace and quiet at their elderly age. – LMAVB, f. 318–36896, p. 1.

¹⁹ LMAVB, f. 318–32592, p. 3; There are also other school numbers such as No. 28, 30, 31, 34 and 53 (in Czarny Bór). – *Praca filantropijna na kresach. Zakłady wychowawcze Towarzystwa Dobroczynnego p.n. „Domu Serca Jezusowego”. (Z powodu 15 letniej rocznicy istnienia) [The philanthropic work on the Borderlands. Educational establishments of the Charitable Society under the name of “The House of Jesus’*

in farmwork on the farm in Polepie, which made it possible not only to gain new skills, but also provided food and expanded the warehouses of the shelter²⁰.

CHAIRMAN OF THE “MODERATION AND WORK” (POWŚCIĄGLIWOŚĆ I PRACA) SOCIETY

Another organization directed by rev. Karol Lubianiec was the Society of Saint Francis de Sales “Moderation and Work” in Vilnius. It was founded by rev. Napoleon Dyjakowski²¹, who started his educational work in 1904²². On 6th September 1907 the Statute of the Society of Saint Francis de Sales “Moderation and Work”²³ was legalized, which gave the official name to the dormitory and the ‘nazareth’ (“nazaret”). The society’s shelter changed its location²⁴ and in 1908 it was situated in the houses on Stefańska Street in Vilnius, in the neighbourhood of the Church of St. Stephen. In 1911 they proceeded to expand the housing base. As a result, a dormitory for boys with rooms for workshops was built, whereas girls stayed in the adjacent smaller house²⁵. Rev. Dyjakowski’s establishments aimed at taking care of both girls and boys of Roman Catholic religion, as well as fulfilling their physical and moral needs, and bringing them up moderately and inspiring a love of work. Thanks to the offers made by the society, two shelters for girls and boys, and workshops were founded: carpentry, shoemaking, basket-weaving and turnery²⁶ along with ironworks, forging shop, female tailoring and haberdashery²⁷.

Organisational changes of the society took place after its initiator, rev. Napoleon Dyjakowski, suffered a martyr death during the Bolshevik invasion in Grodno in 1920²⁸. The board of “Moderation and Work” Society, during its meeting on 21st July 1921, adopted a resolution to take over the estate of the society from its previous director rev. Ziemkiewicz. The management of the establishments, the shelter

Heart” (Due to 15th anniversary of existence)], „Kresy” 1923, No. 17, p. 7.

²⁰ *Praca...*, p. 7.

²¹ In literature also referred to as Diakowski or Dyakowski – Ł. K.

²² The institution was established in 1904 (Czesław Kustra) or 1905. – C. Kustra, *Działalność edukacyjna Towarzystwa „Powściągliwość i Praca” w latach 1898–1949 [Educational activity of the Society “Moderation and Work” between 1898–1949]*, Olsztyn, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Informatyki i Ekonomii Towarzystwa Wiedzy Powszechnej, 2005, p. 100; *Historia powstania i rozwoju zakładów „Powściągliwość i Praca” w Wilnie [The history of establishment and development of “Moderation and Work” institutions in Vilnius]*, no place or year of publication.

²³ LCVA, f. 51, ap. 12, b. 927, p. 26; *Historia...*

²⁴ Initially the institution was located in Nowy Świat District, near Wielki Nikodemski Alley and Ponomarski Alley, as well as in Lipówka suburbs and on Targowa Street. – *Historia...*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Kalendarz Ilustrowany „Kurjera Litewskiego” na rok 1910 [Illustrated Calendar of “Lithuanian Courier” for the year 1910]*, Vilnius. Published by “Kurjer Litewski” p. 47.

²⁷ *Historia...*

²⁸ C. Kustra, *Działalność...*, p. 100.

and the school were handed over to canon Karol Lubianiec²⁹. As a result of the requests of the “Moderation and Work” Committee, rev. Karol Lubianiec agreed to take over this charitable organisation, which was put at the complete disposal of “the House of Jesus” Heart’ Committee. Due to rev. Lubianiec’s activity a craft school was opened on Stefańska Street, which allowed further development of the establishment³⁰.

INITIATOR OF BRINGING SALESIAN COMMUNITIES TO VILNIUS

In 1924 thanks to two-year personal efforts made by rev. Lubianiec Salesian priests (**the Society of St. Francis de Sales**) and Salesian nuns (Daughters of Mary Help of Christians), to whom he passed on educational institutions in Vilnius, Laurów and Polepie, arrived in Vilnius. Rev. Lubianiec also managed the shelter in Czarny Bór. After conversations with Urszula Ledóchowska, a nun, he passed it on to the nuns of the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. The retired priests’ home created by rev. Lubianiec, called “Bethany” (Betania), was handed over to the Society of Priests “Unitas” on 12th April 1927 in Vilnius. In gratitude for the donation, rev. Lubianiec was granted a lifetime title of Honorary President of the “Unitas” Department in Vilnius³¹.

The handing over of the property to Salesian priests was a result of financial difficulties and inability to maintain the establishment. Despite the fact that Salesian institutions operated in Vilnius since 1924, it was not until 12th April 1927 when the Charitable Society “the House of Jesus’ Heart” passed on a part of its property to i.a. Salesian Communities during a General Meeting of important state and church figures³². It was the official confirmation of the decision reached by the DSJ Committee on 4th February 1927 of transferring some of the Society’s departments and properties to different institutions. Pursuant to that decision, the Salesian Society received land properties on Dobrej Rady Street in Vilnius and Kurhan Manor situated in Lida District. All of the properties mentioned above were given away, along with the real estate and all equipment i.a. the Church of the Divine Providence, Chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel, dwelling houses, ateliers and workshops, as well as all kinds of deadstock and livestock. Most importantly, however, the DSJ Committee

²⁹ LMAVB, f. 318–38038, p. 1.

³⁰ *Praca...*, p. 7.

³¹ “Bethany” was legally transferred on the basis of the notarial deed on 28.02.1928. – S. Nawrocki, *Betania [Bethany]*, “Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Wileńskie” 1928, No. 11, p. 165–167.

³² The following figures participated in the meeting: bishop Kazimierz Michalkiewicz, the salesian superior rev. Dr. Antoni Hlond, salesian sister superior Sr. Laura Meozzi, the mother general of the Ursuline sisters Sr. Urszula Ledóchowska, the representative of Vilnius voivode and the head of Labour and Social Security Department Konrad Jocz, senator of the Republic of Poland rev. canon Leon Żebrowski, chairman of Post and Telegraphs Directorate Jan Popowicz, general prosecutor Adolf Kopeć, retired general of the Polish Army Aleksander Antonowicz, chairman of DSJ rev. canon Karol Lubianiec and the members of Vilnius Metropolitan Chapter, representatives of various organisations and Vilnius social groups. – Archiwum Inspektoriatu Córki Maryi Wspomożycielki in Wrocław [hereinafter called: AICMW], D I Wln 27.

passed on to the Salesians over two hundred boys of all ages, mostly orphans. The Committee's personnel were also left under the Salesians' care.

The DSJ Committee gave the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: "Zachęta" shop located at 5 Zamkowa Street in Vilnius including its inventory: all sewing machines, knitting and hosiery machines, and equipment for embroidery and church work, as well as tools for linen and wool spinning with weaving workshops, which were situated in the facilities belonging to DSJ. Moreover, they transferred the *leasehold title* of Polepie Manor in Rudomińska District along with all household equipment, agricultural implements and livestock and also a wooden house with the surrounding area at 107 Legionowa Street. Along with facilities mentioned above, Salesian sisters were handed over the care of over three hundred girls of different ages, mostly orphans.

Salesian nuns and priests committed themselves to certain obligations, such as bringing up the youth in Roman Catholic religion and Polish nationality spirit for the good of the motherland.

Thanks to the efforts of rev. Karol Lubianiec, the establishments of 'Moderation and Work' Society at 37 Stefańska Street in Vilnius were handed over to Salesian nuns on 1st September 1924³³. The society operated in Vilnius until 1927. During the General Meeting on 27th June 1927, a resolution on its dissolution and *definite liquidation*³⁴ was passed. Consequently, Salesian nuns received³⁵: land property Sakiszki (later Laurów) situated in Vilnius District, in Gmina Niemenczyńska; the right to lease all buildings at 37 Stefańska Street belonging to the Church of St. Stephen in Vilnius until the expiration of the lease contract i.e. to 29th September 1942. Moreover, they were given all goods that were located in the buildings at 37 Stefańska Street in Vilnius: a steam traction engine, a large iron water tank and all central heating devices, an electric motor and a complete electric installation, furniture, educational aids, all workshops and workrooms, tools, machines, instruments, equipment, the kitchen, the dormitory and school devices. The nuns were also given the ownership of the entire laundry at 41 Stefańska Street including boilers, wash-tubs, buckets, mangles and other equipment.

Since the official handover of the the Society of Saint Francis de Sales "Moderation and Work" to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the name was changed from "Institution of Salesian Sisters Moderation and Work" ("Zakład Sióstr Salezjanek Powściągliwość i Praca") to "The Female Institution of Salesian Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" ("Żeński Zakład Serca Jezusowego Sióstr Salezjanek")³⁶.

³³ LMAVB, f. 318–38038, p. 3.

³⁴ LMAVB, f. 44–811, p. 16.

³⁵ It was the repetition of the declaration of the Society "Moderation and Work" on 7.04.1925. – AICMW, D I Wln 15–39, D I Wln 22; Lietuvos Valstybės Istorijos Archyvas [Lithuanian State Historical Archives, hereinafter called: LVIA], f. 604, ap. 1, b. 6473, p. 11.

³⁶ LMAVB, f. 44–811, p. 17.

MISSIONARY WORK AND MARTYR DEATH

Apart from the above mentioned merits in the field of the youth's care and education, rev. Lubianiec was also an initiator of the construction of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Vilnius, designed by Antoni Wiwulski. It was supposed to be a brave initiative for that time as reinforced concrete was used for the construction. Yet, due to the death of the architect in 1919 and financial difficulties, the church was not finished³⁷. Rev. Lubianiec also served as an archdiocesan priest of the Apostleship of Prayer and the archdiocesan director of the Eucharistic Crusade. He was invited to preach a sermon and conduct retreat very often. He was also a member of the Archdiocesan Synodal Commission. Furthermore, he became even president of the Temperance Society in Vilnius³⁸. The accomplishments of rev. Lubianiec were highly appreciated and that was the reason why he was regarded as a strong candidate for the position of an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Vilnius. Finally, after a few years of delay, rev. Kazimierz Michalkiewicz took up this post³⁹.

In 1935 rev. Lubianiec settled down in the village called Plebania in Mołodeczański District, where he engaged into already existing missionary work among orthodox people (formerly Uniates or Catholics)⁴⁰. After the outbreak of World War II and military intervention of the Soviet army, the deanery of Mołodeczański District was within the area of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. Due to difficult communication with the Ordinary of Vilnius, rev. Lubianiec received special competencies of the general vicar from the Holy See in October 1940⁴¹. In June 1941 the German forces entered the archdiocese's land. As a result, numerous casualties among the clergy suffered, and many churches were liquidated. Rev. Karol Lubianiec was also one of the victims of the German operation "Polenaktion" that was set off in 1942⁴². He was executed on 23rd July or 28th September 1942, and the news of his death was commented by local people with words *they killed a saint*⁴³.

³⁷ In the 1960's of the 20th century, on the pretext of non-completion of the church construction, on the orders of the Soviet authorities, the temple was closed and then pulled down, and the Culture Palace of Builders was constructed on its foundations. – D. Lewicki, *Świadek wiary katolickiej [The Witness of Catholic Faith]*, „Nasza Gazeta” 2018, No. 8, p. 4–5.

³⁸ M. Paszkiewicz, *Ks. Karol...*, p. 23–24.

³⁹ S. Wilk, *Episkopat Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w latach 1918–1939 [The Episcopacy of the Catholic Church between 1918–1939]*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Salezjańskie, 1992, p. 33–35.

⁴⁰ *W kuźni pracy polskiej [In the smithy of Polish work]*, „Kurier Poznański” 1938, No. 463, p. 6.

⁴¹ T. Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej. Studia i szkice [Vilnius Archdiocese in the years of World War II. Studies and sketches]*, Białystok, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2014, p. 34.

⁴² Ibid, p. 194–195.

⁴³ T. Krahel, *Martyrologia...*, p. 251.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the figure of rev. Lubianiec deserves recognition and memory. Thanks to the facilities erected and operated by him, many thousands of children were educated and provided with care, which sometimes even saved their lives. He presided over the largest network of educational care facilities in northeastern Poland.

Unfortunately, all charitable institutions that he had founded and handed over to Salesian priests as well as Salesian and Ursuline Sisters were liquidated during World War II. After the war and the changes of borders they were not reactivated. Also, his missionary engagement in the face of ecumenism, in our times, can be a reason of at least an uncomfortable feeling. However, during that time such as activity was considered patriotic and was supported by the archbishop of Vilnius.

Rev. Lubianiec was one of many who within their lifetime were highly respected and admired in Vilnius. He was a true spiritual foundation of the city. Living in the world without moral role models, it is worth knowing that we can find them in the not-too-distant past⁴⁴.

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⁴⁴ C. Paczkowska, *Na 60-lecie...*, p. 29.

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Charitable work of rev. Karol Lubianiec (1866–1942)

Summary

The article (on the basis of the unpublished archival documents) presents the figure of rev. Karol Lubianiec, a great philanthropist, a teacher and a social activist. At the beginning of the 20th century he created the biggest network of care and educational institutions working in the Vilnius Region. They provided the youth and children with both open and secret schooling. The educational institutions managed by rev. Lubianiec in the 1920's were handed over to the Salesian Communities and the Grey Ursulines, and they were expanding dynamically till

the outbreak of World War II. Rev. Lubianiec also worked as a lecturer in the seminary, a builder of the churches, a missionary on the Borderlands as well as a propagator of the temperance movement. Rev. Karol Lubianiec was killed by the Germans in 1942.

Keywords: Karol Lubianiec, Second Polish Republic, care, Borderlands, Vilnius, Salesian Communities, Grey Ursulines, the Archdiocese of Vilnius.