

# Stanisław Urbański

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## The Polish School of Spirituality (Piotr Semenko, Paweł Smolikowski, Marcelina Darowska)

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STANISŁAW URBAŃSKI

**THE POLISH SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALITY  
(PIOTR SEMENENKO, PAWEŁ SMOLIKOWSKI, MARCELINA  
DAROWSKA)**

The founders of the Polish school of spirituality in the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX century were Fr. Piotr Semenenko (1814-1886), Fr. Paweł Smolikowski (1849-1926) who were the first Resurrectionists, as well as mother Marcelina Darowska (1827-1911) – the co-founder of the Immaculates, all found themselves in their congregation-forming activities in a very specific mixture of religious, social and political conditions which were prevalent at that time in Poland. They knew very well that the situation of this complex inter-dependence had a significant influence on the development of spiritual life and as a result, had a key role in the life of the Nation and of the Church. Knowing the Polish mentality and the living conditions, they were able to indicate where one should look for the strength to overcome one's own imperfections and external threats.

Aware of the dangers mentioned above as well as of the need to deepen Catholicism in the Polish Nation, they founded new religious congregations (the Resurrectionist's and the Immaculates) which they themselves deemed as the most effective „cure” for all the problems in religious and social life. Without mentioning the activity of these congregations we will concentrate on our authors' doctrine which was the essence of the authors' spiritual life as well as the essence of the above mentioned congregations, thus giving shape to their community life. Due to the external activities undertaken by certain members from these congregations, the spirituality of the authors' spread and had an impact on the formation of the spiritual lives of Poles.

The fundamental elements of the doctrine of the school of Resurrectionist's are: introspection, optimism, personal idealism, the primacy of love, integrity as well as the Trinitarian aspect.

### Introspection

Introspection leads to knowledge about the human interior. One can say that it means coming to know the truth about oneself; that is, gaining a knowledge about one's own poverty and of one's own nothingness. At the same time it leads to the consciousness in a person of that, which is the „property” of God in him and of that, which is purely human. The truth about oneself makes a person realise their dependence on God and the need to co-operate with Him. The authors understand the term „wretchedness” as the lack of that which man had before original sin and should have but lost after Adam was thrown out from God's Eden. The Thomistic conception of original sin allowed us to consider „wretchedness” on two levels: the supernatural and the natural. The former depends on the loss of sanctifying grace and of the supernatural gifts connected to it. From then on mankind was unable to effectively fight with concupiscence because he no longer had the ability to turn to God in a way fitting to His divine nature. Man is unable to avoid sin by his own strength or to carry out any supernatural action. Wretchedness analysed by the authors' on the natural level consists in the loss of original order and harmony. Mental powers without supernatural powers guiding it to the ultimate goal, rebelled against the human being just as they did against God and with time took control of the person. Being under the pressure of matter, the senses and passions the person lost control of his body and the body lost touch with the soul because of suffering and death.

The authors' put greater stress in their doctrine on the disorganisation in nature, the consequence of which is the lack of correct orientation toward the divine goal. From the moment that first man committed original sin, mental powers turn towards the created objects without being co-ordinated among themselves and without referring to the ultimate goal. Wretchedness causes the Christian to substitute God with his own „self” in his spiritual life. Natural activity can be changed into supernatural only through intensive work based on the „new creation” received through Baptism as well as with the vital help of actual grace. Otherwise the evil which arose after original sin is a substantial obstacle in receiving the correct spiritual formation.

Like St. Ignatius Loyola, the authors' emphasise the continual need of having the awareness of one's own wretchedness. They maintain this point of view despite being convinced that a person will never come to know it sufficiently enough and will never destroy it completely. This awareness helps to be aware of one's dependence on God and ones need to continually turn to Him and seek help from Him.

The lack of awareness of ones own wretchedness makes us give up the fight to eliminate it, which in turn leads to a naturalism which a person cannot free themselves of by their own strength. Without having the courage to take another step forward, a person succumbs to fear and even despair, which leads to a nervous breakdown and to doubt in the ability to make the effort to work oneself. The authors' define „nothingness”, as a full dependence on God – both ontological and moral. The first is connected with the credos about the act of creation. God is a subsistent absolute, completely independent, who has in Himself the reason for existence. „Nothingness” is not the being but a contradiction of it, therefore the statement that besides God, before the creative act there had been only pure nothingness, means that apart from Him, no other beings existed. Nothingness in its moral sense is not an intellectual contradiction of the being in general but it signifies the threefold condition of a human. Mankind did not create itself because it received its existence independently of itself, nor was it created in its final form because it developed materially, mentally and spiritually; it cannot hold and maintain its own being because it is mortal. Everything – that is subject (human nature) and object (life) as well as the power uniting the subject with the object is given to him from the exterior. Although man received existence in the moment of creation, God has to incessantly support it. Also the faculties of man do not have the ability in themselves to fully satisfy desires because that „something” that a person desires comes from the exterior.

The authors' Semenenko, Darowska and Smolikowski did not treat the term „nothingness” in a purely negative way. Despite the knowledge of pessimistic currents, which were particularly strong in Europe in the XVII and XVIII c., Polish authors were not adherent to them. In the second half of the XIX c. Father Lacordaire in France and Fr. Faber in England started to promote optimistic views, presenting „nothingness” in a positive way - as a complete dependence on God in existence and activity. The authors' deduce the following conclusions for spiritual development from the fact of the „existence” of nothingness:

1. The human is inclined towards nothingness and death without God and because his life is dependent on the Creator, one could say that he does not live but is receiving the gift of life in every moment of his existence. So nothingness is the foundation on which our participation in the divine life is realised by co-operating with the Creator.

2. „Nothingness” is the cause for distraction and dryness in prayer and of the resulting indifference to God.
3. „Nothingness” is the foundation of humility as it was also for the angels, for Adam before the fall and also even for Christ the Man.

Uniting the divine life with human nothingness in Christ is an example of the perfect human humility that human nature has towards God. Constant and comprehensive awareness of one's „nothingness” and its acknowledgement is the requisite to achieve humility and love. Disregarding it leads to pride, in other words to falsehood about oneself, blindness and self love.

In the arguments concerning one's nothingness and wretchedness, Semenenko, Smolikowski and Darowska, despite having drawn the concepts from the French school, rejected the negative approach to the consequences of original sin. The authors introduce the dogma of original sin to the formation of interior life so as to overthrow the trends exaggerating the affirmation of human autonomy in making decisions and in co-operating with God's grace. It is not the detailed analysis of the essence of original sin which is their aim, but its influence on thwarting spiritual transformation. Hence, the issue is very important and has a crucial role in their teaching. It is the starting point from the awareness of which the development of interior life should begin. That is why the authors' made a detailed analyses of the action of human wretchedness in the human faculties, trying to invoke disgust, hate and contempt for the evil present after the sin of Adam. They suggest, at the same time, a means of purifying the faculties from the effects of original sin so as then to lead to a harmony in its activity.

The authors' great merit is incorporating the psychological aspect into the analysis of wretchedness both in theory, as for the faculties of nature, and their principal rules of activity and in practice concerning the detailed observation and analyses of spiritual-mystical experiences. They found many arguments confirming their subtle reflections on wretchedness and nothingness as well as the futile attempts of man, if dependent solely on his own effort. The psychological realism based on the framework of their personal psychological observation skills as well as introspection into the secrets of the human nature appear throughout their works.

Upon reading it one can have the impression that they often turn their attention to the knowledge of the tarnished human nature from which, as a somewhat biased approach, there may arise a danger of deviation. These very objections were raised against the authors', but Semenenko does

not fail to point out in his works the danger of solely analysing one's own wretchedness. This misunderstanding of Semenenko's teachings was the result of a lack of differentiation by the one's raising these objections, of one's nature from a person and wretchedness from sin. Wretchedness exists in the tarnished nature but it cannot be attributed to the person until they accept it as his or her own. And as nature acts through reason, will and heart, the movements of concupiscence present in man are not a sin up to the point when a person begins to accept them as their own.

The authors', based on a realistic psychological analysis and on the teaching concerning the action of Divine grace, prove that a person reaches union with God through a deep distrust in one's own strength which is the foundation for a fuller entrustment of oneself to the Creator.

The problem of „nothingness" and wretchedness is an important element in the teaching of the authors'. It is not depressing although it retains a reasonable pessimism concerning the state of human nature after original sin. However, once a person acknowledges the natural values of the human being and building the whole edifice of interior life on grace and love of God, the doctrine of our authors' finally turns out to be optimistic.

A thorough knowledge of the defiled human nature and of our own helplessness allows a person to gain a much better understanding of the words of Christ: *Without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:15). This truth force us to seek help from God and to co-operate with Him. It should also lead us to the virtue of humility which should be based on full knowledge of the human nature taking into account both the positive and the negative aspects.

### **Optimism**

The optimism promoted by our authors' is based on the fact of Redemption and Resurrection. The love of God for mankind is revealed in salvation history, which restored the correct relation between man and Creator, transforming it into a relation of a bride to her Lord. The soul has not become a slave but a bride of God. This fact should give a person the courage and energy in action but above all should urge them on to work on their interior life.

The authors' optimism is also visible in their views concerning leading harmony in the human faculties. They neither propose resignation from the human faculties nor uprooting the lower faculties (the aim of the Stoics) but a full purification from the effects of original sin thus leading a person to a fuller co-operation with grace.

This attitude of the authors' has serves to highlight the joyful character of Catholic spirituality. The authors' do not hesitate to show believers the importance of caring to keep a joyful disposition of spirit, regarding it as a moral duty. They treat sorrow as a very dangerous state for spiritual life. They pay much attention to this vice analysing carefully the cause of it arising and appropriate methods of combat. Therefore, spiritual formation according to the concept of the authors' does not stifle joy and does not lead to sorrow because a joyous spirit should always accompany a Christian on his way to God. Thus, it is clear that the authors' stand in opposition to the rigorous theories of pessimism which treat God as only the „Lord” and „Judge”.

### **Personalism**

At the base of the authors' concept of spiritual life is a clear differentiation between a person and one's nature. In accordance with this rule, they first analyse the terms: „ontical” and „ethical” person. Accepting the ontic existence of a person allowed them to assent to the trend in Christian theology, which acknowledged the substantiality of a person. This view, originating from Boethius, acknowledges the existence of a person's substantial core which is the underlying foundation for all changes and acts.

Accepting the ontic person as the substantial basis of human actions, as the cause of actions and of everything that occurs in human nature lead Semenenko to the definition of the ethical person. For the authors', the ontic person is the base for the ethical person because it is the same person considered as the subject of actions. The first assumes the existence of the second. The freedom of choice in the system of values is the attribute of the ethical person. Semenenko does not connect this characteristic with the human will but with the person as the subject. This freedom is the potential of determining or not the faculties of nature to act. This is most actively expressed in the process of striving to union with God in love through the free choice of co-operating with Him and abandoning oneself to Him. At the same time it contributes to one's own development, which becomes a personality due to persistently working on one's self, thus gaining permanent dispositions. Therefore, the personality is formed through creative work, understood as working on vices and gaining traits. This in fact is St. Paul's rule about the stripping of the old man (cf. Col 3:9) which is the echo of Christ's teaching about combating one's vices explained in a scientific way, which has been so stres-

sed by the authors'. He who surrenders his nature to the action of God and his own formation, he who brings into it the ruler-ship of love, will achieve a personality. That is why the authors' suggest the continual development of a person and their openness to God and to other people in the development of spiritual life.

Having made the distinction between the ontic person and the tarnished human nature, the authors', in accordance with the doctrine of personalism, begin to analyse the relation of the person to nature. They believe the person to be realistically separate from nature. According to the authors', the person has a role of utmost importance in relation to nature both from the side of the structural being and from the side of action. Semenenko believes that the person differentiates one being from another, while nature is the same in all people. The person takes the place of existence, the nature, meanwhile, of the form. The existence determines the form and therefore Semenenko attributes to the person the role of forming nature. Nature is an instrument and means thanks to which a person can keep in contact with the purpose of life. The decision of a person in their actions causes a change in the type of action from material to formal. The authors' speak of the internal growth or stagnation of a person depending on the moral value of all of its faculties, and the freedom rooted in it gives it its primacy in carrying out all human acts. In this way, a person is the source of all their actions and at the same time is the cause, the promulgator of laws and executor of sanctions. Only due to nature can a person act and undergo development which in itself is limited by the wretchedness in a person resulting from original sin. The way a person uses their nature is explained by the authors' through analogy to the mystery of the Trinity and the incarnation where the activity common for all the three Divine Persons is externally separated from the activity of every one of the Persons. Despite it being only Christ as the second Person of the Holy Trinity who assumed human nature as a result of the action of all three Persons of the Trinity, its acceptance, however, is the personal act of the Son of God who Himself does not undergo any change. All human action occurs in nature which is under the control of the person who can accept or reject this activity through the free act of will.

In the doctrine of this school of spirituality the personalistic concept of the human was enriched by the teaching of the Holy Bible about the human „image” and „likeness” of God in a person. The „image” according to F. Smolikowski is found in human nature, in its faculties and was given by God in the moment of creation. „Likeness” on the other hand, is

based on virtue and righteousness of God, which occurs in us as a result of our co-operation with God. The authors' teaching, which gives an in depth analysis of the human nature and person as well as all their aspects suggests self-criticism, especially in the mystical progress. At the same time it shows Christ as the greatest ideal of a personality and teaches about the ennobling influence of His nature on the human person when He engrafts his nature into a person and unites with them like the graft in the grapevine.

The deeply personalistic system of the Resurrectionists school of spirituality was ahead of its time and preceded by far the doctrinal formulation of the theory which was formally accepted in the XX c. In the doctrine of the Polish authors' it became the key to formulating the conception of interior life, as well as the relation between God and man and human relations.

### **Voluntarism**

In the school of the Resurrectionist's the will has a decisive role in the spiritual formation of the Christian. Despite reason having priority among the faculties of a person, it is the faculty of acting that is of fundamental value in the field of spiritual life and in the relation of the soul to God. The act of free will based on choice is a very complicated process because it is very difficult to separate it from the influence of emotions, instincts and the subconsciousness. That is why the conception of the formation of spiritual life suggested by the authors' is aiming at liberating the will from various different bad influences to make it truly free, yet not left without guidance.

In stressing the role of the will they did not want to be preferential towards it but they did however want to emphasise its authentic role while at the same time appreciating all the human faculties. They recommended avoiding the continual brandishing of evil in man and to pay particular attention to the possibility of doing good. Voluntarism understood in this light has a large amount of joy and optimism.

### **The primacy of love**

The authors' in their concept of interior life have acknowledged the primacy of love and concentrate the whole of Christian life around it. Therefore, they often write that the aim of man is God and His love. This

love is not an abstract term for them, but the act of a living person, understood as the participation in the love of God – towards Himself and towards creation. Therefore, it is both the foundation of holiness and as well as the motivating power behind a persons efforts to reach union with God. Human relations are a test of this love when people fulfil the will of others in everything apart from sin. The authors' are conscious that here on earth a human will never overcome his own egoism, which inevitably will be giving signs of life from time to time. It does not however, relieve a person from the continual effort to overcome it. Through this doctrine, the authors' wanted to show people that the way of perfection is long and difficult and it cannot be achieved by a single effort. Therefore Christians should not be afraid when there comes a time of crisis after the period of initial fervour – the power of love mobilises the will enough to fight every obstacle.

The words of St. John: *God is love* (Jn 3:16) is the key to understanding the nature of love and in this light, to understanding the mystery of God and His interior life and to acknowledge that love is the ultimate reason for the work of Creation and Salvation. According to Semenenko these words express the identity of the nature of God with love and referring to St. Augustine, he sees this fact as a starting point to interpret the mystery of the Trinity. He considers this scheme to be the most perfect because it allows getting to know the way love exists in God and to discover its laws. The main results of God's identity with love in the interior life of God are the Three Persons. God is Triune because He is Love.

God-love wants to love Himself, which is why He has to come to know Himself earlier. To achieve this, He presents Himself, in other words His Divine nature, in front of Himself as the subject and at the same time He gives it (the nature) the „second position”, the position of the Known One and Loved One, that is the Son. God as the subject of the love, thus also the Son, assume Divine nature, in other words, Love and with this same love devotes Himself to the Father. Thus, He appears as love „giving back”, as the known and beloved God and consequently coming to know and loving in return. The Father and Son, coming to know one another as the One God, become a common subject in regards to their nature and love, so as to know it and love it together as their unity. In loving this unity of theirs – Semenenko states that „they make a separate pre-person”, in other words, they give out the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit therefore, as God has the „third position” what with being both come to be known jointly and loved jointly and consequently the one who comes to know conjo-

intly and comes to love conjointly. In regards to perfection, He is a person equal to the Father and the Son, thus, He is the love of God's love. This is why love exists between the Divine Persons. The Father and Son give themselves to one another in love, they love the Holy Spirit with a joint love and they unite with Him. The Holy Spirit in turn loves the Father and Son with their own love and in giving Himself to them, He binds them to one another. In this way, love is revealed in the Trinitarian truth. Divine life depends on this external and necessary interior imparting and giving back going on between the Divine Persons. And because giving oneself is love, then God's life is love. This is the essence and content of His life. Despite the characteristic Tri-unity – the threefold base of existence but one being, has place in Him – the Threefold way of life exists in Him, but there is one life and one love.

The authors' see in this statement the relation between God and man, in whom supernatural love is revealed. Man comes into the world with the need of loving in general and with the need of abandoning oneself to Him. God has created and grafted this human need into the human person and nature. Being closed to God and neighbour leads to egoism and love of one's own nothingness. The result of such action is a gradual self-annihilation. Thanks to the gift of supernatural love and actual grace (*gratia actualis*) one can use the other faculties in a supernatural way and transform their acts into acts of love. Through this, supernatural love makes it possible to participate in God's love, which is why a person can become open to the love with which God loves Himself and can manage to make an internal effort to concentrate his own thoughts, feelings and actions on God. By accepting this grace a person is obliged to struggle to conform his thoughts, feelings, desires, to God's plan concerning him. Such love of God fashions a person's temporal life, giving it the fullness of supernatural value. Through this devotion to the Most High and in striving to union with Him, a human being most fully becomes „himself”.

The authors' show love to be a personal act, which is why all of the relations between man and God and between human beings become personal the more they are transformed into love. A person's relation to objects may also have a dimension of love when it becomes a sign and expression of love towards a person. The love of neighbour is also realised as supernatural love to the extent that it occurs in an atmosphere of complete openness towards another person.

Love, in the opinion of the authors' is the most perfect means leading to union with God. It allows God to dwell in the very centre of the human

personality and to take possession of it completely. On the other hand a person finds his fullness and his greatest happiness in God through love. The consequences of this communion are very important for a Christian because the loving God, who loves a person and is present in him, transforms his actions so as to conform them to His own. It is as if He divinizes the human person, thanks to which he can say: *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me* (Gal 2:20).

It is clear to the authors' that devoting oneself to God who is Holy, makes a person holy. Semenenko, in line with the teaching of St. Augustine, writes that holiness depends on union with God as the final goal and the limit of human knowledge and human love. The essence of holiness is the union of man with his Creator in an act of love because it is through love that we can most fully adhere to anyone as well as to God Himself. Destroying this communion by a mortal sin causes the loss of one's sense in life.

Although God is the ultimate aim of man, it is Christ in whom it is realised. A Christian can reach union with God in the Holy Spirit through union with Christ in love and through being transformed to become more like Him. That is why the authors' regard love as the cause and the basic act of communion with God, also in the aspect of the filial relation. By abandoning oneself to Christ and co-operating with Him, a Christian person is „filled” by Christ and his interior and exterior are transformed into His acts. This process stems from Jesus as its source and occurs through the love that brings with it union in common existence and activity.

The authors' name the attributes that should characterise love of God. It should be total, which means one should encompass God with one's heart, will and reason – with all of one's faculties. To love God with one's whole heart means to turn to God with all of one's desires as the only good and the only law of affective life, to devote one's heart to love the goodness of God and searching for His will and happiness in us instead of our own pleasures. To love with an undivided will is to turn to God who is Holiness and law, thanks to which one can accept Him as the unique almighty law of all actions and life and as the one Lord. It also means to abandon oneself wilfully and freely to the will of God. To love with all of one's thoughts means to turn with all of one's reason towards God as the truth and beauty as well as the almighty law of intellectual life, to give up one's reason to love the Divine truth.

The union between man and God is the biggest mystery of the human being, thus being called the „sacrament” of love by the authors'. They think that a human can subjectively feel the love that is the bond in this union, and

objectively can see its effects. This union between man and God gives rise to peace and happiness in the human soul. At the same time it entails a submittance to every event, humiliation, trial, which God of course sends purely for the sanctification of a person and for His own glory.

The authors', in accordance with the teachings of St. Thomas state that love, in its essence, is the love of friendship which a person should give God because of His infinite kindness. Real friendship can be characterised by three traits:

1. Good will expressed by the desire for good of one's beloved. It is the acknowledgement of God as good in Himself and striving towards Him as one's good so as then to share it with others.
2. Mutuality, whose need exists in the very nature of friendship. The one who loves, in giving himself, receives the gift of mutual abandonment to one another.

Abandonment of oneself to somebody, signifies the incessant giving of everything and above all of oneself. Its main trait is the abandonment of oneself with one's whole nature, with all of one's faculties supported by grace.

An obstacle in abandoning oneself to God is self love flowing from nature tainted by original sin, which directs the human faculties towards another person arousing the desire of possessing, of taking and devoting everything to oneself. Generally, it can be said that everything that comes from self-love negates the abandonment of oneself to somebody. And so, vanity, falsehood, laziness, rashness; everything which goes against our union with God and everything that is directed at seeking one's own benefit is a negation of abandonment of oneself to somebody.

The authors' quite rightly state that progress in perfection is dependent on the frequency of making acts of love by a person. On the one hand, people love God by mortifying themselves and fighting with their bad inclinations, on the other, by abandoning everything that is good in themselves to the Creator. Therefore, all the good deeds of a person are, at the same time, acts of love.

The idea of the primacy of love in spiritual life was also acknowledged by the teachings of Vatican Council II, giving it the biblical foundation, which our authors' had put forward many years previously. The Council accepted love of God as the main element of Christian life. This love defines a person whose every faculty is directed towards it and should serve it. The virtues that a Christian acquires through spiritual formation are also the means of leading to it and expressing it.

### **Integrality**

The conception of interior life presented by the authors' emphasises the integrality of the natural and divine element with the priority, in terms of action, being given to the latter. The teaching about grace is of utmost importance in their doctrine.

Natural skills must however be continually supported and guided by supernatural virtues, whose aim is to create the perfect human with the help of grace. Human nature has been given the special ability to receive the supernatural, although this trait has a passive character because nature can not do anything on its own in the supernatural domain as it is merely the basis for the supernatural. At the same time, nature does not exclude the supernatural factor although it can only accept it when God will want to gift it with participation in supernatural goods. Therefore, there is no proportion between the supernatural and the natural elements which is why the ability to accept supernatural gifts by human nature is defined as *potentia oboedientialis*.

The supernatural factors bring out all the creative values of the natural character, gifting it with power and developing it in an intensive way. They not only protect it from bad inclinations which could expose it to the danger of loosing the state of grace but with time, they protect more and more efficiently both from the smaller imperfections, which in fact do not break the border line of venial sin but always halter spiritual development. The human personality does not die out nor give way to a psychic annihilation when entering the domain of supernatural life. On the contrary, the more a person is richer in the order of nature, the more perfectly he can fulfil the role of the subject in regards to supernatural intervention. This is why the Christian is able to bond all the deeper and all the stronger both factors of interior life – the natural and the supernatural – as one complete whole, establishing harmony between them. According to the authors', only the notion about a harmonious co-operation of both factors can correctly express the essence of the development of spiritual life. They believe that the perfect development of the interior life of a person can not be limited only to the ascetic aspect, that is, to subjugate the tainted nature. In accordance with the conception that these two elements are in harmony in interior formation, a person's full spiritual up bringing is to lead to mystical union with God.

The authors', on the basis of this, gave the formation of spiritual life a dynamic character. They presented this dynamism of the development

of spiritual life in light of the three traditional ways - the purifying, the enlightening and the unifying.

A very detailed and in depth analysis both from the positive and the negative aspect of every one of the three ways indicates how very much our authors' wanted to show the conditions of growth, maturing and the bearing of fruit of the spiritual life of a person, in true light. The negative aspect is the struggle to combat the negative effects of original sin, vices and sins committed and the positive aspect is spiritual formation of nature and her faculties through the action of virtues infused by God and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The aim of these paths is to lead a person to the summits of perfection. Interior growth is difficult and tedious which is why, in explaining about the states that a soul may experience, the authors', in accordance with the teachings of the masters of spirituality, suggest the means and necessary counsel to reach union with God.

The authors' support those schools of spirituality, which acknowledge mystical life as a normal stage of development of interior life.

#### VII. The Trinitarian Aspect

The main starting point for this theory is the doctrine about the relations between the persons of the Holy Trinity. Foregoing the scientific analyses of these relations, it is important to mark that the doctrine also contains the pneumatological dimension in respect to spiritual life.

The whole conception of formation of interior life put across by our authors' consists in three fundamental problems:

1. The knowledge of and overcoming of the tainted human nature.
2. The co-operation with God's grace.
3. The union with God.

This theory is implemented in practice in the following way: the whole reality has been formed by the Creator according to one basic model; that He Himself and His triune way of existence, is. That is why, in every created being, both material and spiritual, one should look for the resemblance to the unity and triplexes of God. One should look for this kind of existence in every creature. This existence causes its substance to appear once as absolute and three times as relative. The basis for unity and a certain triplex exists in every one of them, while each of the three „elements” is a separate aspect or it fulfils a certain function of its own which is analogous to the function that the corresponding Person of the Trinity fulfils in the immanent Divine life.

#### THE POLISH SCHOOL OF SPIRITUALITY

The doctrine of the Resurrectionist's school of spirituality is still actual even today, particularly in regards to the question of prayer whose indispensability is felt more and more by the person lost in contemporary times, in regards to the love which people are continually in need of, in regards to living in grace, which is not appreciated by the Christian who is presently all geared toward consumption as well as in regards to the struggle with the defects of our nature.

The problems presented in the article do not exhaust the whole conception of spiritual life. Only the more important elements and have been put forth here in a general outline.

*Stanisław URBAŃSKI*