

Katarzyna Parzych-Blakiewicz¹
Faculty of Theology
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

“Hagiological Patronage” – a Theological Reflection on the Traces of Memory of Blessed Dorothy of Małowy (in Poland)

[„Hagiologiczny patronat” – teologiczna refleksja nad śladami pamięci o bł. Dorocie z Małow (w Polsce)]

Streszczenie: W artykule przedstawiono problematykę świętości ukazaną w patronacie średniowiecznej mistyczki i rekluzji mieszkającej w Prusach (dzisiejsza północna Polska). Studium wpisuje się w aktualną refleksję nad nauczaniem Franciszka o powszechnym powołaniu do świętości. Celem podjętych badań jest określenie aktualności modelu świętości przedstawionego przez bł. Dorotę z Małow (1347–1394). Argumenty opierają się na dwóch zbiorach informacji: mapie polskich miejsc kultu Doroty oraz dzieła Jana z Kwidzyna opisującej jej życie. Najwięcej śladów kultu rekluzji można odnaleźć w miejscowościach: Małowy Wielkie, Kwidzyn, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Dorotowo, Koszalin. Istnieją świątynie pod wezwaniem bł. Doroty oraz jej wizerunki. W kalendarzu liturgicznym mistyczka jest wymieniona w archidiecezji warmińskiej i gdańskiej oraz diecezji elbląskiej i koszalińsko-kołobrzeskiej. Sława jej świętości rozwinęła się zaraz po śmierci. Kilkakrotnie inicjowano proces beatyfikacyjny, a kult zatwierdzono w 1976 r. Charyzmat Doroty cechuje miłość do Boga, pokuta, pielgrzymowanie i niezłomność w wierze. Duchowość rozwijająca się według tego wzorca jest bliska potrzebom katolików mieszkających w diecezjach, w których jest czczona. Słuszne jest zatem, aby te kościoły lokalne promowały dorotański model pobożności, korelując duchowe potrzeby współczesnych chrześcijan z powszechnym powołaniem do świętości.

Summary: The article presents the issue of holiness shown in the patronage of a medieval mystic and recluse living in Prussia (today's northern Poland). The study is included in the current reflection on the teaching of Francis on the universal call to holiness. The aim of the undertaken research is to define the relevance of the model of holiness presented by Blessed Dorota of Małowy (1347–1394). The arguments are based on two sets of information: a map of Dorota's Polish places of worship and a work describing

¹ Katarzyna Parzych-Blakiewicz, Department of Fundamental, Dogmatic Theology and Biblical Sciences, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, ul. Hozjusza 15, 11-041 Olsztyn, Poland, kaparz@uwm.edu.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7965-9064>.

her life by Jan of Kwidzyn. Most signs of the cult of the recluse can be found in the following towns: Małowy Wielkie, Kwidzyn, Elbląg, Gdańsk, Dorotowo, Koszalin. There are churches dedicated to Bl. Dorothy, and her images. In the liturgical calendar, the mystic is mentioned in the Archdiocese of Warmia and Gdańsk as well as in the Diocese of Elbląg and Koszalin-Kołobrzeg. The fame of her holiness developed immediately after her death. The beatification process was initiated several times and the cult was approved in 1976. The charism of Dorota is characterized by the love of God, penance, pilgrimage and steadfastness in faith. Spirituality developed according to this model and is close to the needs of Catholics living in dioceses where she is remembered. It is legitimate for these local churches to promote the Dorothean model of piety as appropriate to correlate the spiritual needs of contemporary Christians with the universal call to holiness.

Słowa kluczowe: Dorota z Małowa; rekluza; Warmia; Żuławy; Pomezania; mistycyzm; świętość.

Keywords: Dorothy of Małowy; recluse; Warmia; Żuławy; Pomezania; mysticism; holiness.

Papal teaching since the Second Vatican Council clear emphasis on the issue of the universal call to holiness, the exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* of Pope Francis (March 19, 2018) should be emphasized here. The popes point to specific attitudes of the saints and the blessed. This submission deals with the topic of holiness in the scope of Blessed Dorothy of Małowy Wielkie (a village in the northern part of Poland) and her patronage, defining the term “hagiological patronage” (the Greek word *hagios* means saint, holy). In main, “hagiological patronage” combines the idea of a universal call to holiness with individual and community activity implementing this call according to the model of holiness represented by a particular saint or blessed Christian. The purpose of this presentation is to read an evangelical testimony from the person and life of Dorothy of Małowy and the cult, the traces of which are present in Warmia, Żuławy and Pomerania (regions of northern Poland). What does Dorothy say to the believers of the contemporary Catholic Church? What of her life and cultivated patronage illustrates the Gospel and the Christian ethos? The answers to these questions determine the content of this Blessed Woman’s hagiological patronage and its sense for modern times.

The following reflections are based on two pillars. The first is a map of places in Poland where there are traces of the memory of Dorothy; it will allow us to determine the scope and strength of her religious memory. The second is the biographical sources and studies on Dorota. The most important is “Żywot” (biography) by Master Jan of Kwidzyn and studies that describe the spiritual and mystical experiences of the Blessed mystic. It will indicate the characteristic elements related to the person of Dorothy

as a blessed of the Catholic Church, significant from the point of view of the development of the worship of God associated with the honour due to persons elevated to the altars. This is a look at Dorothy in the theological and hagiological perspective with the historical element in the background and not in the foreground. The point is to confirm in the consciousness of contemporary people the image of the Blessed as showing how to imitate Christ, and not just presenting the uniqueness of the life and personality of a saintly human being.

1. Map of the cult of Blessed Dorothy in Pomerania, Żuławy and Warmia

Dorothy lived in the years 1347–1394. She was born in Małowy Wielkie near Malbork (Poland). She was a wife and mother, and after her husband's death, a recluse at the Kwidzyn cathedral (now the diocese of Elbląg). In her spiritual formation, she is associated with the Teutonic Order. She became famous as a mystic, whose experiences were written down by her spiritual guardian – Master John of Kwidzyn².

In Poland, traces of the memory of Blessed Dorothy are found in the northern part, including Pomerania, Żuławy and Warmia – which is appropriate for the Archdiocese of Gdańsk, the Archdiocese Warmia and the Diocese of Elbląg, as well as the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg. Blessed Dorothy is also listed among the patron saints of the Diocese of Toruń (Jakubek-Raczkowska M., 2022, p. 75–94).

- a) Churches of Blessed Dorothy are located in the following towns
- Małowy Wielkie in Żuławy (diocese of Elbląg) – here is the parish church of Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles and Blessed Dorothy, the shrine is also her sanctuary, (*Parafia pw. św. Piotra i Pawła*, 2022)
 - Elbląg (capital of the Elbląg diocese) – the church and parish of blessed Dorothy of Małowy is located at Rawska Street No 16a, (*Parafia bł. Doroty z Małów*, 2022)
 - Gdańsk (archdiocese of Gdańsk) – the church and parish of Blessed Dorothy of Małowy is located in the Gdańsk-Siedlce deanery, at Kartuska Street No 349, (*Parafia pw. bł. Doroty z Małew – Gdańsk Jasień*, 2022)
 - Dorotowo (near Olsztyn, Archdiocese of Warmia) (*Parafia bł. Doroty z Małów w Dorotowie*, 2022) – the church and parish of Blessed Dorothy of Małowy.

² The opus of John of Kwidzyn translated into Polish by Bishop prof. Julian Wojtkowski: *Żywot Doroty z Małów* (KUL, after 2010) *Siedmiolilie* (Olsztyn 2012), *Księga o świętach* (Olsztyn 2013).

b) Other places related to Dorothy

- Kwidzyn (Elbląg diocese) – collegiate church, Pomesanian cathedral (Wiśniewski J., 2014, p. 53), in this place was Dorothy's hermitage, here is also the place of her death,
- Gdańsk – in this city Dorothy lived with her husband, on Długa Street, she attended the Dominican and St. Mary's Church,
- Mount of Chełmno in Koszalin, the monasteries in Kartuzy and Piaseczno – places where Dorothy made pilgrimages (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 79).

c) Images of Dorothy

Images of Dorothy of Małowy appear in sacred art in many places in Poland and also abroad. (Cf. Bosko J., Jezierski J., Towarek P., 2017, p. 153–166) In Poland, we can note:

- the city of Elbląg (Cathedral of St. Nicholas, Church of Blessed Dorothy, Church of the Holy Trinity, Galeria EL),
- towns in the Diocese of Elbląg – Kwidzyn (Holy Trinity Church, St. John's Co-Cathedral, Franciscan Monastery, private collections of the Chapter Provost at the Kwidzyn Co-Cathedral), Małowy Wielkie, Malbork, Nowy Dwór Kwidzyński, Morań (St. Peter and Paul Church), Stary Targ (rectory of the parish of St. Simon and Jude Thaddeus), Ryjewo (sanctuary of the Holy Family),
- towns in the Archdiocese of Warmia – Frombork, Kętrzyn (St. Catherine's Church), Dorotowo,
- towns in the Archdiocese of Gdańsk – Gdańsk-Jasień (Blessed Dorothy's Church),
- others towns – Pelplin (Bishop's Palace), Chełmno on the Wisła (Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

According to sources, the paintings expressing the cult of Dorothy were present already in the 15th century, in the church in Małowy Wielkie (Blessed Dorothy's painting, feretron and tabernacle door with the image of this mystic), (Hochleitner J., 2014, p. 15) in the cathedral in Kwidzyn and Chełmno and in Gdańsk (St. Mary's Church and the Cistercian church in Oliwa). (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 258) After World War II, this list was joined by shrines in Kwidzyn (Saint Trinity), Elbląg (Blessed Dorothy), Kętrzyn (Saint Catherine), (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 259).

The oldest presentation of Dorothy, by Jakub Karweysy³, shows her with arrows piercing the body, a prayer rope (equivalent to a modern rosary) and a lantern or book. This image is an inspiration for other representations, variously modified – showing the mystic in ecstasy, a communicant

³ It is a woodcut from "Vita germanica" by John of Kwidzyn (Kowalczyk M. 2018, p. 98). See also Grabowska-Lysenko A. (2014, p. 177).

with the attributes of a rosary and a brick wall. Such images in the form of a picture can be found in the church in Małowy Wielkie, (Zasada-Kłodzińska D., Zielińska K., 2014, p. 195-206; Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 101, 205) and in the stained glass windows in Elbląg (the Holy Trinity church) and in Morąg (the church of St. Peter and Paul), (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 111–112).

There are several images of Dorothy in Kwidzyn. In the co-cathedral: with spears stuck in the body – it is a modern icon (Sonak D., 2014, p. 213–221) in ecstasy – a painting from 1956 and 1944 (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 102, 104)⁴ (both by Richard Pfeiffer), also in ecstasy – the image was placed on a feretron (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 103). Dorothy in ecstasy is depicted in a painting in the Elbląg Cathedral of St. Nicholas (here, by the Host exposed for adoration, a painting by Joseph Łapiński) and in the Elbląg church of Blessed Dorota of Małowy, (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 106) in Frombork⁵ (Archdiocese of Warmia) and the parish of Blessed Dorothy in Gdańsk-Jasień (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 107).

There are also modern icons with the image of Dorothy, remaining in private collections. There are also alleged images of the recluse, for example in the company of saints. The mystic is recognized by the arrow attribute.

d) The fame of holiness

Dorothy's extraordinary piety was known even before her death. Therefore, the fame of her sanctity spread and developed rapidly after her death. Witnesses of Dorothy's life called her 'blessed' and 'patron' (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 258)⁶. Marian Borzyszkowski wrote, that the constant increase in the veneration that the people had for Dorothy, from the moment she was locked in a cell by the cathedral, and the influx of news that prayers were heard through her, prompted the church authorities to initiate efforts to canonize her (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 259). Appropriate documents were prepared by the authorities of the Chełmno and Warmia Churches and the abbot of Oliwa and sent to the Holy See already in 1406, but they were lost in the turmoil of war. In 1485, 1637, 1935 and 1955 there were repeated attempts to carry out the trial. Finally, the approval of the cult and beatification ceremonies took place in 1976,

⁴ A copy of this image (1987), is in the church in Nowy Dwór Kwidzyński (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 104).

⁵ Such an image can also be found in Vienna (Grabowska-Lysenko A. 2014, p. 177; Kuprjanik S., 2014, p. 207–211). The Frombork image is by Jan Bochenek, it differs from the Viennese one in that there is no Teutonic cross on the coat (Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 100).

⁶ According to Borzyszkowski, the cult weakened in the 16th century, which is partly justified by Protestantism developing in Prussia at that time (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, 258; cf. Kowalczyk M., 2018, 89–90).

in Gdańsk, Małowy Wielkie, Kwidzyn, Frombork, Olsztyn and Monastir (Borzyszkowski M, 2018, 260; Iwicki Z. 2015, p. 11)⁷.

In the liturgical calendar, on June 25, there is a memory of Dorothy of Małowy, obligatory in the Archdiocese of Warmia and the Diocese of Elbląg and optional in the Archdiocese of Gdańsk and the Diocese of Koszalin-Kołobrzeg (*Lekejonarz Mszalny*, 2019, 230). It is therefore legitimate to see these local Churches as responsible for the development of devotion to Blessed Dorothy, to bring her charisma closer to wider circles of Catholics, and thus give access to spiritual support resulting from her patronage. For this purpose, it is worth discussing the implementation of joint –inter-diocesan – pastoral projects focused on the ‘Dorothean’ theme.

2. The charism of holiness of Dorothy

Dorothy of Małowy is present in historical memory as a mystic, pilgrim, prayerful and penitent person, but also a woman living in an unsuccessful marriage and the mother of nine children, including seven who died early. In the biographical information we get an image of a husband who mistreated his wife and an image of a wife who patiently endured a difficult fate until her husband converted (Borzyszkowski M., after 1984, p. 11–12; Wiśniewski J., 2014, p. 55). Dorothy is shown as a person strongly connected with the Church environment and avoiding the festive company brought home by her husband. She is characterized by a deeply ascetic life, and yet she did not neglect her maternal duties, placing her trust in God. (John of Kwidzyn, 1964, part 2,32a) She often fasted, scourged herself and scalded herself with boiling water – feeling stimulated ‘to very severe punishments and inflicting wounds for the love of God...’ (John of Kwidzyn, 1964, part 2,32a, 2,22a). Her behaviour was not understandable to her relatives, but it is also difficult for contemporary readers of biographical descriptions. Only the formulation of the theological and hagiological message, explaining the sense of Dorothy’s behaviour, shows the image of Dorothy more readable from the point of view of people who want to deepen their inner life, and not only broaden their knowledge of facts and events.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger presents Blessed Dorothy as a woman and mother, a pilgrima and a hermit (Ratzinger J., 2016; cf. Jeziński J., 2014, p. 3; Karp H.J., 2017, p. 17–25). This is a historical view, focused on the facts from her life. We accept them as the basis for creating a hagiological

⁷ Dorothy of Małowy is the first person beatified associated with Warmia (Świto L., 2009, p. 70; Świto L., 2017, p. 14).

perspective, i.e. focused on holiness – from the charism read in the person and life of Dorothy to focusing on the purpose of sanctification of the faithful. In the hagiological perspective, the aspect of the evangelization needs of the modern Church is taken into account, where greater emphasis is placed on the depth of union with God, while in interpersonal relationships – including marriage – on equality and mutual respect between people. The point is not to look at Dorothy through another analysis of her austere, penitent life, but from the side of creative love that gave her serenity and countenance. Such a view is more correct than just historical, because of this value, crowds came to Dorothy asking for advice and prayer (Małkowski S., 2014, p. 102). Dorothy’s hagiological charisma as a blessed person of the Catholic Church is more clear when we look at her as a believer who desires closeness to God and union with Him, and at the same time as an example for contemporary Catholics who face various challenges of the world and experience difficulties in maintaining faithfulness to God while struggling with ordinary everyday life.

What does Dorothy teach contemporary Catholics? The topic of the so-called difficult marriage, important in the context of the contemporary crisis of marriage and family. When discussing this subject in the Christian kerygma, one should carefully refer to the Blessed, taking into account the historical context and the danger of anachronisms resulting from the mental differences between the generations living in the Middle Ages and today. The story of Dorothy, on the other hand, conveys a message pointing to the foundations of Christian life, found in penitential and ascetic practices. Dorothy’s spirituality is strongly Christocentric and Eucharistic (Kowalczyk M., 2014, p. 97). This is where the practice of deepened Eucharistic, Passion and Marian devotion comes from (Borzyszkowski M., after 1984, p. 17–21). Getting to know this spirituality can motivate contemporary believers to radically direct their lives towards God, consisting in entering the space of a loving relationship with Jesus and transforming the human heart.

Dorothy shows Catholics three ways in which a human being can find himself with God. These are: living in God’s love, a pilgrim spirituality and steadfastness in faith.

a) Living in God’s love

Dorothy had a desire to give her life completely to God (Wiśniewski J., 2014, p. 54). Her whole life became a desire for God, a way towards Him, and a constant imitation of Him (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 261). She had to reconcile this desire with the living conditions in which she found herself, being persuaded to marry Adalbert, many years older than herself. She

had to reconcile her religious desire with obedience to her mother and older brother (Hochleitner J., 2014, p. 17). However, she remained faithful to the decision made in childhood, when she expressed the desire that her soul would be filled only with the glory of Christ⁸.

The era in which Dorothy lived, is characterized by the development of spirituality practiced by lay Christians, which consists in deepening the inner spiritual life⁹. The movement of the Friends of God, and then the *Devotio moderna*, is known in this period¹⁰. People belonging to this movement fulfilled their duties of the lay or clerical state – in church, family and social life – and at the same time worked on the development of their spiritual life, focusing on following Jesus; they adored the Sacred Host and communion, made pilgrimages to shrines and practiced the hermit life. Such spirituality can be read in the life and behaviour of Dorothy¹¹, who, after the visions of Jesus suffering on the cross (still in her childhood), (Borzyszkowski M., 1968, p. 111–119) developed a passion spirituality. In her confessions written down by John of Kwidzyn, there are many statements about the love for Jesus piercing her person – heart and soul¹². Love penetrates deeply into the person and life of Dorothy (Małkowski S., 2014, p. 102). In 1385, she experienced a ‘change of heart’ (Borzyszkowski M., 1995, col. 141–143)¹³. It happened during the Holy Mass, during the transubstantiation. The biographer describes that the Lord Jesus, her beloved, took out her old heart, and in its place put a new and hot heart. Then Dorothy, devoid of external senses and exalted above herself, felt that her heart was being extracted and replaced by a fleshy mass, completely fiery. When she received it, she delighted in it so wonderfully that she couldn’t talk about it (John of Kwidzyn, 1964, part 3,1 b).

⁸ As a seven-year-old girl, Dorothy suffered a burn accident. It was then that she experienced the depth of a relationship with Jesus Christ and His suffering. This experience is recognized by experts on the subject as crucial in the hagiological image of the Blessed (Ratzinger J., 2016, p. 4; Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 261; Kowalczyk M., 2018, p. 43).

⁹ Jan Wiśniewski points to this aspect, referring to Marian Borzyszkowski (Wiśniewski J., 2014, p. 56).

¹⁰ *Devotio moderna* – a current of religious spirituality, clearly Christocentric, focusing on the imitation of Christ, with the focus on achieving perfection in theological and moral virtues while fulfilling the duties of everyday life (Borkowska U., Daniluk M., 1979, col. 1220).

¹¹ Borzyszkowski states that Dorothy was associated with the circles of the religious movement of the Friends of God in Gdańsk, known in the late Middle Ages and developed in Western Europe (Borzyszkowski M., 1918, p. 268).

¹² Marek Karczewski showed that John of Kwidzyn in the “*Żywot*” outlined Dorothy’s spiritual profile on four theological and biblical lines. These are: theocentric, Christocentric, the eschatological perspective and the ecclesial perspective (Karczewski M., 2017, p. 121–122).

¹³ David Wallace believes that it should be assumed that the “*Żywot*” by John of Kwidzyn encourages us to understand this phenomenon physically and spiritually – analogously to the image of a sleeping Roman, to whom the holy ancient physicians – Cosmas and Damian transplanted the ‘black’ leg of the Moor (2011, p. 5).

In the history of spirituality, there are descriptions of mystical experiences similar to those of Dorothy¹⁴. They are used in pastoral care, in the development of Eucharistic piety, with the focus on the union of the human person with God. Currently, in the diocese of Elbląg, services of the Transformation of the Heart are conducted according to the piety of Dorothy. They consist of: adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Mass, the Rosary and individual blessings. The service takes place every second Saturday of the month in the sanctuary in Małowy Wielkie (*Parafia pw. św. Piotra i Pawła*, 2022)¹⁵. A series of services in the spirit of Eucharistic piety of Dorothy – the service of the Transformation of the Heart – is also organized in the Kwidzyn co-cathedral (*Diecezja Elbląska*, 2022).

b) Pilgrimage and penance

Dorothy made pilgrimages to European sanctuaries – in Poland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. She was in Kartuzy and Piaseczno, and abroad in Aachen (Rhineland, 1384), Strasbourg, Zürich, Einsiedeln and Rome (1390), (Borzyszkowski M., after 1984, p. 12–15; see also Hochleitner, 2014, p. 19). From there she drew knowledge and an example of a deeply religious life, introducing to the level of mysticism revealing the secrets of God himself to man. Its spirituality was influenced by the greatest medieval thinkers and mystics, such as: Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, John Tauler, Henry Suzo (Borzyszkowski M., 2018, p. 268).

Hagiographic sources say that Dorothy used various forms of asceticism and mortification: fasting and abstinence, self-mutilation, self-flagellation, persistence in the cold, burning herself with hot water, iron, lighted candle and others. She also felt the pain of the stigmata, humbly endured violence from her husband, and finally locked herself in a hermitage at the Kwidzyn shrine (Hochleitner J., 2014, p. 14, 20–22; Wiśniewski J., 2014, p. 64–66).

c) Steadfast in faith

Dorothy lived in a patriarchal culture characterized by the excessive dominance of man over woman (Puchalska-Dąbrowska B., 2014, p. 127), who was given little consideration because of her weakness and physical fragility, considered by the system as inferior to man (Skiendziul S., 2014, p. 104). The medieval woman owed obedience to her husband (Skiendziul S., 2014, p. 106). The biographer, John of Kwidzyn, states that by God’s command, Dorothy obeyed her husband, who beat her, leaving ‘the Lord speaking sweetly to her’ (John of Kwidzyn, 1964, parts Tablica

¹⁴ An experience also known to other mystics, described theologically (Kowalczyk M., 2017, p. 80–101).

¹⁵ See also: *Nabożeństwo Przemiany Serca* (2022); *Pozwól Bogu przemienić swoje serce* (2017).

[posłuszeństwo], 2,41b, 3,14 f-g). In Dorothy's time, violence against wives was common (Skiendziul S., 2014, p. 106, 108). Like many medieval women, Dorothy was also characterized by an attitude of humility towards her husband, also in enduring violence against her (Skiendziul S., 2014, p. 106, 113). Dorothy, however, stood out among the women of her contemporaries because she clearly and consistently remained faithful to her decisions regarding spiritual life, despite her husband's disapproval¹⁶. She leaned towards contemplation and did not share her husband's inclinations to participate in social life. She shunned games and feasts, avoided alcohol, and devoted herself to a stricter asceticism (Puchalska-Dąbrowska B., 2014, p. 119). Nevertheless, she was aware of her marital duties, therefore – as the biographer states – she was leaving the good Lord, and followed her husband and served him faithfully and endured hard words and blows in his service she suffered because of her vow of obedience (John of Kwidzyn, 1964, part 3,14g; cf. Puchalska-Dąbrowska B., 2014, p. 129). We know, however, that Dorothy's steadfast attitude of fidelity to God ultimately led to her husband's conversion (Puchalska-Dąbrowska B., 2014, p. 129–130).

3. Spiritual desires of Catholics from the dioceses of Gdańsk, Elbląg and Warmia

In the period since November 2021 till June 2022, meetings of the first stage of the synod on the synodality of the Church were held in the local communities of the universal Church¹⁷. The authors of the nationwide synthesis determined on the need to open churches outside the time of celebrating the liturgy, due to enabling the faithful to meet with God in silence before the Blessed Sacrament. People taking part in consultations and synodal meetings see a deep need for a moment of adoration in silence after receiving Eucharistic Communion. The possibility of all-day adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is extremely appreciated, and where it does not exist, it is postulated to introduce it (*Synod 2021–2023. Synteza krajowa*, 21–22). According to the synthesis of the local churches of Gdańsk, Elbląg and Warmia, some of the faithful express the need for continuous religious formation aimed at deepening their inner life. In the synodal synthesis of the Archdiocese of Gdańsk, we read, that the believers pay attention to the

¹⁶ Wiśniewski explains that the environment of the townspeople of Gdańsk also did not accept Dorothy's 'distinguished' piety (Wiśniewski J., 2017, p. 68–70).

¹⁷ XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on *Towards a synodal Church – communion, participation, mission – 2021–2023* – see website the *Synod 2021–2023*, www.synod.org.pl.

need to regularly deepen their religious knowledge – e.g. they expect well-prepared catechesis for adults, especially on the liturgy and the Eucharist. They testified to their attachment to the Church and their love of prayer, especially adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; they expressed a request to create places of adoration and extend the opening hours of the church during the day (*Synteza synodalna Archidiecezji Gdańskiej*, 2022). There is an obvious need to deepen faith by focusing on a relationship with God; there is the desire to be faithful to Christ, and the need to love the Eucharist, to pray and also listen to God’s voice to discern what He says. Among the faithful, the need to deepen the liturgy with the sphere of the image that brings us closer to God was noticed (*Synteza synodalna Archidiecezji Gdańskiej*, 2022; *Archidiecezja Gdańska*, 2022; *Skrócenie dystansu duchowieństwo – świeccy*, 2022). In the synodal synthesis of the Elbląg diocese, among others, we can find the postulates concerning formation of lay people, that mystagogical catechesis is necessary, and also smaller formative and prayer communities are needed in the parish (*Synteza synodalna diecezji elbląskiej*, 2022; *Diecezja Elbląska*, 2022). In the synodal synthesis of the Archdiocese of Warmia we read about the need of making a living faith in Jesus Christ (*XVI Zwyczajne Zgromadzenie Ogólne Synodu Biskupów – etap diecezjalny – Synteza*, 2022; *Archidiecezja Warmińska*, 2022). Synodal meetings made it possible to notice that contemporary Catholics – also living in the areas where Blessed Dorothy lived – they have similar desires as the medieval mystic in Pomerania. They love the Eucharist and want to be in the church, despite the variety of activities and difficulties brought about by the events of everyday life. Therefore, it is justified to make a pastoral effort in these local churches to promote the spirituality characteristic of the Blessed mystic.

In the face of cultural changes that affect the modern world, together with the Church, the hagiological patronage of Dorothy of Małowy appears as an inspiration to develop Eucharistic spirituality, emphasizing the motif of Christ’s love for people and people for Christ. This spirituality, clearly Christocentric, introduces human beings into the space of a sanctifying encounter with God. It protects against loneliness resulting from excessive attachment to transient things and entanglement in the meanders of moral and religious relativism. In other words, it brings the human person to a position in which he has a proper view of facts, things, events and people, i.e. showing sense and harmony.

Conclusions

What is the hagiological patronage according to Blessed Dorothy of Małowy? What does Dorothy say to the believers of the contemporary Catholic Church? What of her life and cultivated patronage illustrates the Gospel and the Christian ethos?

The state of research on the person of Blessed Dorothy, her spirituality and cult, allows us to outline her hagiological profile and the associated patronage. Scriptural testimonies present many biographical details, also concerning Dorothy's personal life, at the level of marital relations and internal religious experiences. On the one hand, they show her as a person obedient to her husband married before God. On the other hand, as unbreakable and remaining faithful to her ideals, which focus on love for Christ. If Dorothy had abandoned her desires, acting against herself and her desire to immerse herself in God's life, many situations in her relationship with her husband would probably have been more bearable for her. Dorothy annoyed her husband with her piety, but she did not give up her resolutions about 'being' with Christ and listening to His 'sweet speech'. After several centuries of worship directed at Dorothy, it can be said that she broke the medieval stereotype of a woman deprived of the right to respect for personal dignity and having her own vision of life. It can be suggested that Dorothy has transcended her era. She further shows, also to the contemporaries, that all personal fulfilment can only take place in God; that no human being, no system, no set of political, social or economic powers guarantees true fulfilment.

In this sense, Dorothy of Małowy is not only an icon of a liberated woman, but also a human being who lives to the fullest of humanity. She fought for her image in the likeness of Christ, and did it in His closeness and union with Him. She did it by going against the tide of a difficult existence, prepared by a vile social system and people subordinated to it. In this hagiological patronage, Dorothy seems to say that the strength to overcome all stereotypes and adversities comes from the love of God, from adherence to Him and faithfulness to Him, and that suffering becomes bearable only in love and through the love of Christ.

Blessed Dorothy, her life and traces of her memory left in our culture illustrate the bonds of friendship between the human being and Jesus. Her spiritual experiences recorded by John of Kwidzyn and interpreted by subsequent generations of theologians and the sense of faith of the believers of the Catholic Church, we can read as an illustration of the words from the Gospel of St. John about Christ's love (15:14-15). In this passage Jesus allows his disciples to experience the vitality of His heart, filled with

sacrificial love and knowledge of God’s mysteries, and thus making the disciples His friends. The hagiological profile of Dorothy of Małowy shows that she matured to the state of friendship with Jesus. Such patronage is needed today, as it inspires efforts to strengthen in Christocentric spirituality. Approaching Christ, imitating Him in everyday life is the foundation of the Christian ethos, expressed in the moral attitudes and activity of Christians in the world.

Hagiological patronage of Blessed Dorothy of Małowy is for contemporary Christians a symbol of their own effort of getting closer to Christ and making friends with Him. This patronage inspires us to take care of one’s own total adherence to Him, to the point of a change of heart and union with God. The hagiological patronage of Dorothy, a medieval mystic, proposes a spirituality that she lived, and which is consistent with the assumptions of the Friends of God movement – *Devotio moderna*. It shows us that this style of piety has not expired, but has pastoral potential, correlating with the Church’s idea of a universal call to holiness.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Borkowska Urszula, Daniluk Mirosław, 1979, *Devotio moderna*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 3, Lublin, col. 1220–1222.
- Borzyszkowski Marian, after 1984, *Błogosławiona Dorota z Małowów*, Olsztyn.
- Borzyszkowski Marian, 1995, *Dorota z Małowów*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 4, Lublin, col. 141–143.
- Borzyszkowski Marian, 2018, *Pielgrzymowanie Błogosławionej Doroty z Małow do Einsiedeln w kontekście wpływów ówczesnych ideałów duchowości religijnej Nadrenii (cz. 1: Błogosławiona Dorota z Małow Wielkich, jej życie religijne i duchowość)*, Forum Teologiczne, vol. 19, p. 251–268.
- Borzyszkowski Marian, 1968, *Problematyka filozoficzna i teologiczna w twórczości Jana z Kwidzyna (1343–1417)*, Studia Warmińskie, vol. 5, p. 111–119.
- Bosko Janina, Jezierski Jacek, Towarek Piotr, 2017, *Błogosławiona Dorota z Małow w sztuce sakralnej*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prussiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Małow Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 153–166.
- Grabowska-Lysenko Alicja, 2014, *Ikonoografia błogosławionej Doroty z Małow Wielkich*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Małow Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 175–194.
- Hochleitner Janusz, 2014, *Dziedzictwo błogosławionej Doroty z Małow Wielkich (inspiracje dla turystyki kulturowej Powiśla)*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Małow Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 11–31.
- Iwicki Zygmunt, 2015, *Błogosławiona lub święta Dorota z Małow (1347–1394): jej życie i kult na Pomorzu (i w Prusach): dawniej i dziś*, Acta Cassubiana, vol. 17, p. 7–21.

- Jakubek-Raczkowska Monika, 2022, *Błogosławiona Dorota z Mątwów w Wielkich (1347–1394)*, in: Juliusz Raczkowski (ed.), *Dioecesis nostrae patroni – wydawnictwo jubileuszowe z okazji trzydziestej rocznicy erygowania Diecezji Toruńskiej*, Toruń, p. 75–94.
- John of Kwidzyn, 1964, *Żywot Doroty z Mątwów. Z krytycznego wydania: Hans Westphal Annelise Birch-Hirschfeld-Triller, BHLAU Verlag KLN Graz 1964*, translated by Biskup Julian Wojtkowski, Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Jeziarski Jacek, 2014, *Słowo wstępne*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 3.
- Karczewski Marek, 2017, *Teksty biblijne, w „Żywocie Doroty z Mątwów” mistrza Jana z Kwidzyna*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prusiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 114–123.
- Karp Hans J., 2017, *Do Dorotheenpredigt Kardinal Ratzingers in der Münchener Michaelskirche am 17. Juni 1979*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prusiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 17–25.
- Kowalczyk Marta, 2018, *Bł. Dorota z Mątwów*, Poznań.
- Kowalczyk Marta, 2014, *Charakterystyka doświadczeń mistycznych bł. Doroty z Mątwów na podstawie historycznych źródeł autorstwa Mistrza Jana z Kwidzyna*, *Studia Warmińskie*, vol. 51, p. 95–107.
- Kowalczyk Marta, 2017, *Doświadczenia duchowe bł. Doroty z Mątwów na tle przeżyć wybranych mistyczek średniowiecznych*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prusiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 80–101.
- Kuprjaniuk Stanisław, 2014, *Obraz błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich w bazylice archikatedralnej pw. Wniebowzięcia NMP i św. Andrzeja Apostoła we Fromborku*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 207–211.
- Malkowski Sławomir, 2014, *Trzydzieści sześć stopni miłości błogosławionej Doroty*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 93–102.
- Lekcjonarz Mszalny*, 2019, vol. VI. *Czytania w Mszach o Świętych*. Second edition. Palottinum – Poznań.
- Puchalska-Dąbrowska Bernadetta, 2014, *Obrazy pożycia małżeńskiego w „Żywocie Doroty z Mątwów” Jana z Kwidzyna*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 115–131.
- Ratzinger Joseph, 2016, *Droga ku wnętrzu. Święta Dorota z Mątwów. Kazanie ku czci św. Doroty z Mątwów, wygłoszone 17 czerwca 1979 roku w kościele św. Michała w Monachium*, transl. by Marian Borzyszkowski, Olsztyn.
- Skiendziul Sylwia, 2014, *Problemy życiowe średniowiecznej kobiety na przykładzie Doroty z Mątwów*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 103–114.
- Sonak Dariusz, 2014, *Ikona błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów formą przekazu jej duchowości*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzyńska rekluza. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogosławionej Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 213–221.
- Świto Lucjan, 2017, *Dorota z Mątwów Wielkich – błogosławiona czy święta?*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prusiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Mątwów Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 9–16.

- Świto Lucjan, 2009, *Procesy beatyfikacyjne w Kościele Warmińskim*, Studia Warmińskie, vol. 46, p. 69–87.
- Wallance David, 2011, *Strong women. Life, Texts, and Territory 1347–1645*, Oxford.
- Wiśniewski Jan, 2014, *Niektóre aspekty pobożności błogostawionej Doroty z Mąków*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzińska relikwia. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogostawionej Doroty z Mąków Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 53–76.
- Wiśniewski Jan, 2017, *Środowisko społeczne życia bł. Doroty z Mąków Wielkich (1347–1394)*, in: Wojciech Zawadzki (ed.), *Beata Dorothea Montoviensis, Prussiae Patrona. 40 rocznica zatwierdzenia kultu bł. Doroty z Mąków Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 61–79.
- Zasada-Kłodzińska Daria, Zielińska Klaudia, 2014, *Obraz „Błogostawiona Dorota z Mąków” w świetle badań i działań konserwatorskich*, in: Janusz Hochleitner (ed.), *Kwidzińska relikwia. Uniwersalne i regionalne przejawy kultu błogostawionej Doroty z Mąków Wielkich*, Kwidzyn, p. 195–206.

Internet sources

- Archidiecezja Gdańska, in: *Synod 2021–2023. Ku Kościołowi synodalnemu. Komunia – uczestnictwo – misja*, www.synod.org.pl/archidiecezja-gdanska/ (16.08.2022).
- Archidiecezja Warmińska, in: *Synod 2021–2023. Ku Kościołowi synodalnemu. Komunia – uczestnictwo – misja*, www.synod.org.pl/archidiecezja-warmińska/ (16.08.2022).
- Diecezja Elbląska, www.facebook.com/diecezja.elblag/photos/a.1014437515288335/5740771319321574/ (13.09.2022)
- Diecezja Elbląska, in: *Synod 2021–2023. Ku Kościołowi synodalnemu. Komunia – uczestnictwo – misja*, www.synod.org.pl/diecezja-elblaska/ (16.08.2022).
- Jest potrzeba zniwelowania dystansu między duchowieństwem a świeckimi – wynika z syntezy synodalnej archidiecezji gdańskiej*, in: *Dzieje.pl – Portal historyczny*, www.dzieje.pl/dziedzictwo-kulturowe/jest-potrzeba-zniwelowania-dystansu-miedzy-duchowieństwem-swieckimi-wynika-z/ (2.08.2022).
- Nabożeństwo Przemiany Serca*, in: *Gwiazda Beltejemaska*, www.gb.webtechnika.pl/d/nabozenstwo-przemiany-serca-matowy-wielkie/ (5.08.2022).
- Parafia bł. Doroty z Mąków*, www.parafia.blogoslawionadorota.org/ (15.09.2022).
- Parafia bł. Doroty z Mąków w Dorotowie*, www.parafiadorotowo.pl/ (15.09.2022).
- Parafia pw. bł. Doroty z Mąków – Gdańsk Jasień*, www.parafijasien.gda.pl/ (15.09.2022).
- Parafia pw. św. Piotra i Pawła*, www.dorotazmatow.pl/matowy/msze-sw-i-nabozenstwa/ (15.09.2022).
- Pozwól Bogu przemienić swoje serce*, in: *Wyższe Seminarium Duchowne Diecezji Elbląskiej*, www.wsdelblag.pl/?p=7632/ (13.02.2017).
- Skrócenie dystansu duchowieństwo – świeccy. Synteza synodalna z Gdańska*, in: *eKAI*, www.ekai.pl/skrocenie-dystansu-duchowieństwo-swieccy-synteza-synodalna-z-gdanska/ (3.08.2022).
- Synod 2021-2023. Synteza krajowa*, in: *Synod 2021-2023. Ku Kościołowi synodalnemu. Komunia – uczestnictwo – misja*, www.synod.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Synteza_SYNOD_2021_2023_2.pdf/ (16.09.2022).
- Synteza synodalna Archidiecezji Gdańskiej*, in: *Archidiecezja Gdańska*, www.diecezja.gda.pl/content/synteza-archidiecezji-gdanskiej.pdf/ (2.08.2022).
- Synteza synodalna diecezji elbląskiej*, in: *Diecezja Elbląska*, www.diecezja.elblag.pl/diecezja/nowa-strona-4/ (30.06.2022).
- XVI Zwyczajne Zgromadzenie Ogólne Synodu Biskupów – etap diecezjalny – Synteza*, in: *Archidiecezja Warmińska*, www.archwarmia.pl/wydarzenia/xvi-zwyczajne-zgromadzenie-ogolne-synodu-biskupow-etap-diecezjalny/ (30.06.2022).

