

BIOGRAM

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk was born on October 29, 1955, in Danków Duży (Włoszczowa district), Kielce diocese. He was ordained a priest on May 29, 1980. He began his biblical studies at the Higher Seminary in Kielce under the guidance of Rev. Prof. Józef Kudasiewicz, which he completed in January 1984 with a doctorate in biblical theology at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow. At the request of the examination board, his doctoral thesis, entitled *Theophany in the Psalms*, was published in 1985 by the Polish Theological Society in Krakow. In 1986, he began his studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in 1988, and on December 17, 1991, he successfully passed the *lectio publica* exam, thus completing his *annus ad doctoratum*.

In September of 1992, he took up lectures on the Old Testament at the Higher Seminary in Kielce. On October 1, 1995, he took up a post at the Institute of Biblical Studies at the Catholic University of Lublin as an assistant in the Department of New Testament Biblical Theology. On November 17, 1997, he presented his habilitation thesis, *"This poor one cried out, and the Lord heard" (Ps 34:7a). A model of diaphanous communication in the Psalms*. In 1998, he was appointed Head of the Department of Biblical Theology at the Institute of Biblical Studies of the Catholic University of Lublin, and in 1999, he took up the post of Associate Professor. In the three years after his habilitation, he published 3 books and almost 20 scientific articles. He also participated in numerous academic sessions organised at the Catholic University of Lublin. On October 2, 2004, he received his professorial nomination from the hands of the President of the Republic of Poland. In 2004, he received an award from the Minister of National Education and Sport for his book *The Passover of Jesus as the Answer to the Sin of the World. The Eschatological Sacrifice of Expiation and the New Covenant*. From 2008 to 2016, he served as director of the Institute of Biblical Studies, initiating the International Autumn Bible Days as early as 2006 and organising them annually. They provide a forum for scholarly debates that has included many specialists in history, qumranology, biblical hermeneutics and exegesis.

In April 2012, as Director of the Institute of Biblical Studies of the Catholic University of Lublin, he began discussions with the Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Lublin and the Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome to coordinate teaching and research work between the two centres of biblical studies and research.

In 2002, he started the publication of the biblical-theological semiannual *Verbum Vitae*. A few years ago, it was noted in the *Scopus* list and is available online, with a high ranking on the list of scientific periodicals compiled by MEiN (Ministry of Education and Science) – obtaining 140 points. In March 2011, he transformed the biblical journal *Biblical Annals* into

an English-language version of *The Biblical Annals*. He decided that the editorial board should start cooperating with foreign authors and enter the digital platform, resulting in a high place on the MEiN list and obtaining 200 points. Both scholarly journals, now published as quarterly journals, are flagship publications of the Institute of Biblical Studies of the Catholic University of America, and since 2019, also part of the Biblical Studies Section and the Institute of Theological Studies of the Catholic University of Lublin. In 2015, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk received the Second-Degree Team Award of the Rector of the Catholic University of Lublin.

On September 18, 2003, in a secret ballot, Polish biblical scholars entrusted him with the function of deputy president of the Society of Polish Biblical Scholars for a five-year term (2003-2008). He also served as deputy president of the SPBS for a second term, 2008-2013. At the 10th General Meeting of the Association of Polish Biblical Scholars in Toruń, on September 17, 2013, Rev. Prof. H. Witczyk was elected president of the SPBS for a new five-year term (2013-2018), and on September 17, 2018, for a second term (2018-2023).

In November 2009, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk as a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC), and in 2014, the appointment was renewed for a second term by Pope Francis. In his first term, he co-authored the document *Ispirazione e verità della Sacra Scrittura. La Parola che viene da Dio e parla di Dio per salvare il mondo*, translated it into Polish and published it under the title *Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture. The Word that comes from God and speaks of God to save the world* (2014). In his second term, he actively participated in the debates on the study “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” *Un itinerario di antropologia biblica*. This document was published on December 16, 2019. Rev. Prof. H. Witczyk translated it into Polish, and it was published in 2020 under the title “*What is man?*” (*Ps 8:5*). *An Outline of Biblical Anthropology*.

Currently, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk directs the work of the Department of Biblical Theology and Protohistory at the Institute of Biblical Studies of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, where, together with him, two assistant professors conduct research: Rev. Dr Marcin Kowalski, Prof. of the Catholic University of Lublin, and Rev. Dr Marcin Zieliński. The main academic interests of the Chair's staff are issues of biblical hermeneutics (especially inspiration, the truth of Scripture, the latest methods of interpretation), ecclesiology and biblical anthropology seen from the perspective of the sapiential books, the evangelical tradition and the teachings of St Paul. They respond to the most pressing needs of the universal Church.

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk has dealt with the subject of the inspiration and truth of the Holy Scriptures in more than a dozen papers and academic research articles. Together with the entire IBS staff of the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), which he directs, he organised two symposia on this topic: the first, under the theme "Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," took place within the framework of the 10th International Autumn Bible Days on October 22-23, 2014; the second, under the theme "God revealing Himself in His Word. The Truth of Scripture," was held in the same note at the International Bible Days on October 20-21, 2015. The Department of Biblical Theology and Prophetic Studies took an active part in them, both in terms of content and organisation. The most important papers of both symposia were published in “*Analecta Biblica Lublinensia*,” vol. XV: *The Inspiration of Scripture*. In

the light of the testimony of the texts about themselves (eds. M. Wróbel, S. Szymik, K. Napora, KUL Publishing House, Lublin 2017).

In the Department of Biblical Theology and Prophoristics in recent years, the male-female relationship has been studied, both in the dimension of marriage and family and in the dimension of spousal love as a symbol of love between God and man. The Department's staff presented the results of their research in the form of papers at symposia (e.g. organised by the Department of Biblical Theology and Prophetic Studies at the Catholic University of Lublin on March 17, 2021, on the topic "Homosexual Relationships and the Creator's Intention for Man and Woman"), also published in the highest-scoring academic biblical journals abroad and in Poland.

In 2021, Witczyk published the monograph *Inspiration - Truth - Salvation*, in which he developed the Christological-pneumatological model of biblical inspiration.

Editorial and organisational work

From 1995 to 2005, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk was the academic editor of the ten-volume edition of the *Bible for Everyone* (Jedność Publishing House, Kielce). From 2007-2012, he was responsible for the academic editing of the Polish edition of the 17 volumes of *Daily Lectio divina* (Loretto Sisters Publishing House, Warsaw). Under his academic editorship, such important works on biblical culture and knowledge as the *New Biblical Lexicon* (Jedność - Herder, Kielce 2011), the *New Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Jedność, Kielce 2016) and the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Jedność - TN KUL, Kielce - Lublin 2017) were also published.

In 2005, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk prepared the statutes and founded the John Paul II Biblical Work in Poland. The statute was approved by the Polish Bishops' Conference for three years, and in 2008 for an indefinite period. Elected by the members and moderators of the John Paul II Biblical Work, he serves as its chairman. The election for each successive five-year term is approved by the Polish Bishops' Conference. The main aim of the founder and chairman of John Paul II Biblical Work was and is to animate, deepen and strengthen the apostolate of the Word of God in Poland and to inspire the latest culture and life of Poles with the content of Revelation started at the initiative of Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk in March of 2008. The Polish Episcopal Conference established the nationwide Bible Week, which begins with Bible Sunday.

In September 2012, under the auspices of the Biblical Work, he organised the Television Bible University, which regularly broadcasts lectures on biblical studies (the second and fourth Saturdays of the month on TV Trwam). Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, became the Grand Chancellor and guardian of this initiative. In close cooperation with the board and diocesan moderators of the John Paul II Biblical Work, on October 28-30, 2012, Rev. Prof. H. Witczyk organized the First Bible Congress in Poland under the motto "The Bible as a cultural code of Europe." The special guest was Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, and the main theme was taken up in the speeches of eminent biblical

scholars from various university centres in the country. They spoke of the Bible in the works of Goethe, Słowacki, Dostoyevsky, Mann, Herbert, Kamińska, the biblical inspirations in the music of Bach and Verdi and movies, e.g., Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and Kieslowski's *The Decalogue*. The first Bible Congress in Poland was a response to Benedict XVI's post-synodal exhortation *Verbum Domini* published in 2011.

In June 2016, the Polish Bishops' Conference appointed Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk to the academic editorial board of the Bible of the Millennium, entrusting him with the role of editor-in-chief and commissioning him to work on the next, sixth edition. It should inspire the thinking, culture and faith of Poles based on the latest philological and exegetical research, which applies new methods of interpreting Scripture.

In 2017, Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk put forward the idea of organising the National Bible Reading on Bible Sunday. He officially submitted this project to the President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, and through him to all the Polish bishops who agreed to the initiative. The first National Scripture Reading took place in April 2017 on the second Sunday after Easter. In 2018 (March 15), a special message was addressed to the participants of this initiative by Pope Francis.

Rev. Prof. Henryk Witczyk has promoted 21 PhD and 38 MA dissertations. He is the author of 18 books and academic editor of 30 books, 163 articles and scholarly reviews and more than 200 television and radio scripts. Since 2002, he has been the editor-in-chief of 39 volumes of "Verbum Vitae" - initially a biblical-theological semiannual, and since 2021 - a quarterly. As President of the Association of Polish Biblical Scholars, from October 2019 he undertook efforts at the Ministry of Education and Science and the Educational Council of the Polish Bishops' Conference to establish a separate academic discipline in the field of theological studies – "biblical studies." These efforts were crowned with success. With a decree dated 16.10.2022, the Minister of Science and Higher Education, Przemysław Czarnek, established the discipline of "biblical studies" in Poland's academic system.