

**PRÁVNO-SPRÁVNE A SPOLOČENSKO-POLITICKÉ ASPEKTY  
FUNGOVANIA MIESTNEJ CIRKVI NA PRÍKLADE WARMIJSKEJ  
DIECÉZY / ARCIDIECÉZY**

**LEGAL-ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ASPECTS OF  
THE FUNCTIONING OF THE LOCAL CHURCH ON THE EXAMPLE  
OF THE WARMIA DIOCESE / ARCHDIOCESE**

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**Abstrakt**

*Miestny kostol, vrátane warmianského, sa zvyčajne posudzuje z teologického, pastoračného alebo kultúrneho hľadiska. Veľmi zaujímavým aspektom, ktorý v súčasnosti vzbudzuje veľký záujem a ktorý však ešte nebol rozpracovaný, je sociálno-politický a administratívno-právny aspekt. Cieľom tohto vystúpenia je predstaviť činnosť varmiánskej cirkvi v priebehu takmer 700 rokov v uvedených perspektívach.*

**Kľúčové slová:**

diecéza / arcidiecéza Warmia

**Abstract**

*The local church, including the Warmian church, is usually considered from a theological, pastoral or cultural perspective. On the other hand, a very interesting aspect that is currently arousing a lot of interest, and which has not yet been worked out, is the socio-political as well as the administrative and legal aspect. The speech aims to present the activities of the Warmian Church over the course of almost 700 years in the above-mentioned perspectives.*

**Key words**

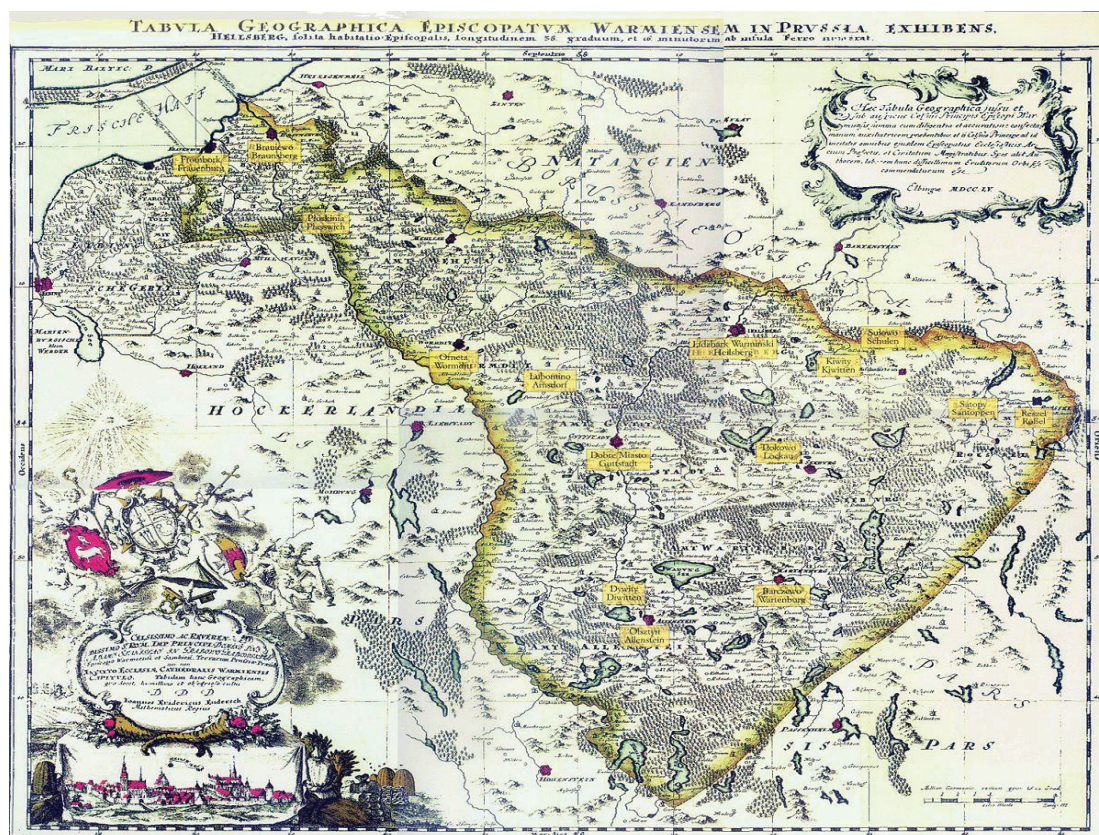
Diocese / Archdiocese of Warmia

Archdiocese of Warmia, which covers 12.000 km<sup>2</sup> of the area, is located on the Warmia and Mazury's voivodeship. It borders on the east with Elk's diocese and on the southeast with Łomża's diocese, on the south with Płock's diocese, on the southwest with

Toruń's diocese, and from the west with Elbląg's diocese. North border of archdiocese is in the meantime country border with Russia<sup>1</sup>.

From the administrative and legal side, crucial for Warmia's diocese was the year 1243. Right then it was found as one of the fourth Prussian Archdiocese. At first, its borders were set out in a very general area: on the west Vistula Lagoon, on the north Pregoła river, from the south Družno lake, then Passaluk river on the east side until Lithuanian border<sup>2</sup>.

### Map of Holy Warmia



Source: <https://archwarmia.pl/archidiecezja/o-archidiecezji-warminskiej/> [accessed: 10.11.2020].

With time on the diocese was selected territory representing the salary of the bishop and cathedral chapter, which was called Warmian dominium or Warmia. Anselm, the first

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<sup>1</sup> See. GUZEWICZ, W.: Ustrój i administracja diecezji/archidiecezji warmińskiej (Wybrane zagadnienia). In: Rocznik Elcki 2014, v. 11 [druk: 2015]. ISSN 1896-334X, pp. 40-43.

<sup>2</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Z dziejów diecezji / archidiecezji warmińskiej [accessed: 10.11.2020], <http://archidiecezjawarminska.pl/node/6>.

bishop, had chosen lands located in the center of the diocese, lived by Warm, Natang, and Galind's tribes. Covering the third part of the whole area (4249 km<sup>2</sup>) dominium consisted of ten vassalages. Seven of them (with headquarters in Barczew, Braniew, Dobrze Miasto, Jeziorany, Lidzbark Warmiński, Orneta, and Reszel) were ruled only by bishops, the rest three of them (with headquarters in Frombork, Olsztyn and Pieniężno) – were ruled by cathedral chapter. Besides mentioned cities there are also two others, Biskupiec and Bisztynek and almost five hundred villages<sup>3</sup>.

Historical diocese of Warmia for 223 years (until second Toruń's peace) was under the country of Teutonic Knights rule. In 1466 r. territory of the bishop and chapter (the mentioned dominium), but also regions of the Tolkmicko and Elbląg were incorporated into Poland, and 306 years later – because of the first Partition of Poland – into Prussian and German country. In the beginning only German and Prussian people lived there, but since the middle of the XV century, also Poles<sup>4</sup>. This division does not suit today's categories of nationalities, which is why, local inhabitants are called Warmians. This situation changed again after the second world war<sup>5</sup>.

The capital of Warmia and bishops' mansions at the beginning was Braniew; in the 1341 year, it was transferred to Orneta, from the 1350 year to 1795. – it was transferred to Warmian's Lidzbark, half-century later Frombork was the capitol, and since the 1945 year – Olsztyn. The spiritual center of Warmia was and still is Frombork, where was located headquarter of Warmian's chapter brought to life in 1260. In years 1329-1388 on Frombork's hill a marvelous cathedra has been built – a jewel of the Gothic style – the cathedra was named: *Castrum Dominae Nostrae* (Castle of Our Lady), in German – *Frauenburg*<sup>6</sup>.

Diocese of Warmia also had its capital of culture – Athens of the North. This name was given to Braniew, the oldest city in Warmia, which from the XIV century belonged to the Hanseatic League. In 1565 r. bishop Stanisław Hozjusz invited to Braniew Jesuits, they had organized first college, spiritual and papal's seminary preparing the missionary for Scandinavian and Russian countries. In 1589 r. founded also printing house. It published

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<sup>3</sup> KUMOR, B.: *Granice metropolii i diecezji polskich (968-1939)*. In: *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne* 1970, v. 20 ISSN 0518-3766, pp. 253-374; GUZEWICZ, W.: *Ustrój i administracja diecezji/archidiecezji warmińskiej (Wybrane zagadnienia)*, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> See. BIAŁUŃSKI, G.: *Przemiany społeczno-ludnościowe południowo-wschodnich obszarów Prus Krzyżackich i Książęcych (do 1568 roku)*. Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 2001. ISBN 83-87643-32-7.

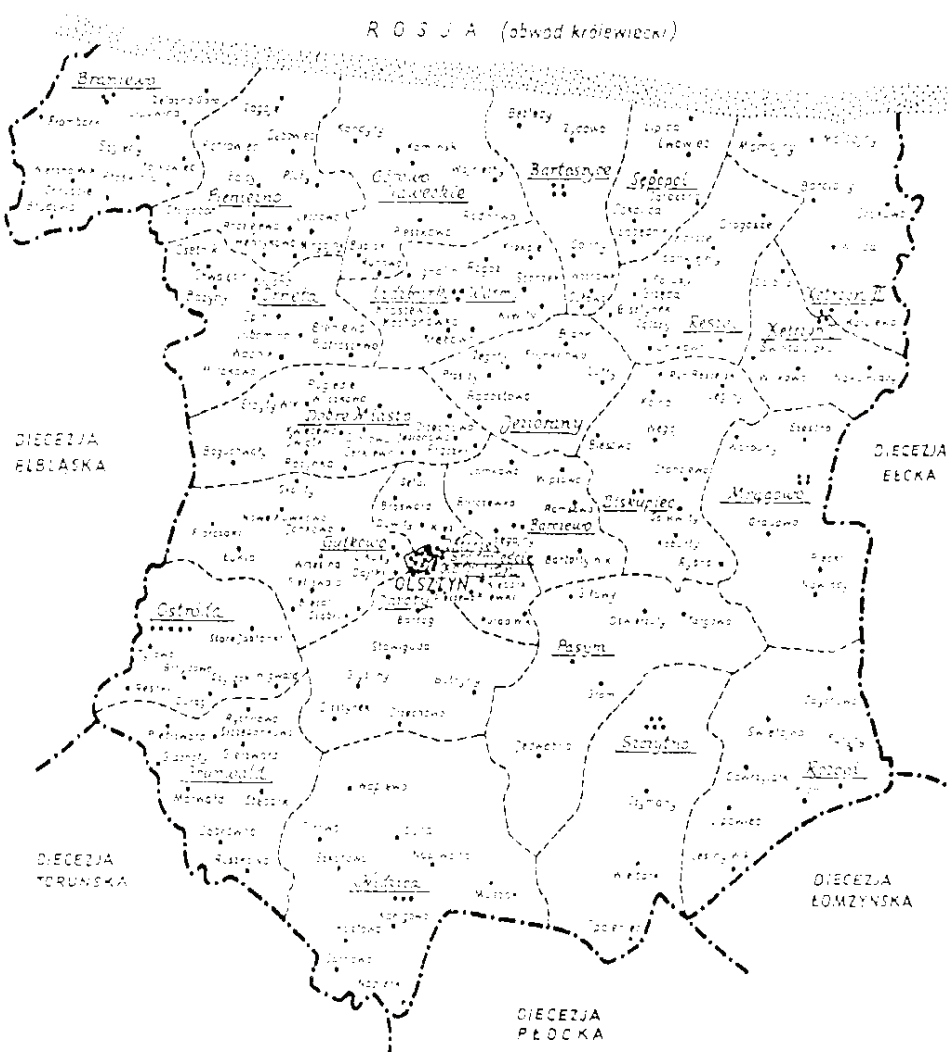
<sup>5</sup> See. SZORC, A.: *Dzieje diecezji warmińskiej (1243-1991)*. Olsztyn: Warmińskie Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: *Z dziejów diecezji / archidiecezji warmińskiej* [accessed: 10.11.2020].



official documents, liturgical books, theological polemical, historical, devotional, and panegyric works, also student's books. In the XIX century on previous schools' basis, a Hosianum Highschool was created, to which clerics arrived only for lectures, but priest formation was gained in their own seminary building<sup>7</sup>.

**Map of archdiocese of Warmia (from 1995)**



Źródło: In. Rocznik archidiecezji warmińskiej 1995. ISSN 1425-4891, p. 36.

First temples in Warmia were built at the end of XIII century. Around 50 churches have been erected in first half XIV century. In Teutonic part, to build a religious building involve strictly with colonization and lasted to the end of XV century. In general, before the

<sup>7</sup> See. SZORC, A.: Kolegium Jezuitkie w Braniewie i jego księgozbiór 1565-1626. In: Seria historyczna. Supplement Hozjański 1998, v. 3. ISSN 1425-3038.

1525 year in the whole diocese (not only in dominium) functioned around 272 parish churches and chapels<sup>8</sup>.

The biggest changes in parish web were caused by reformation, but not at all. In 1525-year, part of the diocese converted to Protestantism, this part undergoes to secular Authority of Teutonic Order, also small territories from the west, in Tolkmick and Elbląg region, which since the 1466 year belonged to Poland. Catholicism continued at the Warmian dominium on the Polish territory. Based on post-visit protocols, we can establish that after 1550 years in the diocese of Warmia 74 parishes and 19 churches were working, this situation lasted to 1772. In the XVII and XVIII centuries, several chapels and new pilgrim churches have been built. Mary's sanctuaries are located in Gietrzwałdz, Święta Lipka, Stoczek, and Krosno. Worship/Cult of Holy Cross has spread in Chwałęcín, Braniew, and Międzyziesie. Two churches are sanctified by the special service of the Holy Sacrament (Głotowo and Bisztynek). Furthermore, many pilgrims traveled to the sanctuaries to honor saints, for example to Tłoków (Saint Roch) and Barczew (saint Anthony)<sup>9</sup>.

Further change of Church organisation on this territory, started after partitions of Poland, when lands belonged to Prussia. The agreement of Holy See and Prussian state announced papal documents *De salute animarum* and *Quod de fidelium*. Due to this documents diocese of Warmia was given status of removal (*exempta*) and obeyed directly to Holy See<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, Pomezan diocese (officiality) with headquarter in Malbork was attached to it. It was consisted of five deaneries and since 1577 was under the rule of Chełmińska's diocese. These de jure parishes belonged to the still formally existing Pomesanian diocese, abolished by the bull *De salute animarum*. Thus, the Warmia diocese was expanded to 30 parishes and 13 branches. Since then, it already included 113 parishes and 29 branches, as well as two chapels (with the rights of branches)<sup>11</sup>. The parishes in Königsberg, Klaipeda and Szyłtygi from the abolished Sambia diocese were also attached to the Warmia diocese. By virtue of the bull, the parish in Oliwa, which belonged to the Chełmno diocese, was incorporated into the bishopric of Warmia (the pope, however,

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<sup>8</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Z dziejów diecezji / archidiecezji warmińskiej [accessed: 10.11.2020]; See. GUZEWICZ, W.: Prasa diecezjalna w Polsce północno-wschodniej jako źródło wiedzy o społecznej nauce Kościoła (1989-2009). Elk: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne Adalbertinum, 2012. ISBN 978-83-60737-17-0, pp. 68-77.

<sup>9</sup> See. OBLĄK, J. – KOPICZKO, A.: Historia diecezji i archidiecezji warmińskiej, Olsztyn: Wydział Duszpasterski Kurii Metropolitalnej w Olsztynie, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> See. OBLĄK, J.: Egzempcja diecezji warmińskiej i jej obrona za biskupa Mikołaja Szyszkowskiego. In: Polonia Sacra 1955, v. 2-3. ISSN 1428-5673, pp. 123-136.

<sup>11</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Reorganizacja Kościoła katolickiego w Prusach na podstawie bulli *De salute animarum*". In: Kościół w Polsce. Dzieje i kultura 2013, v. 12. ISSN 2080-1238, p. 78.

indicated that it would be in the hands of the Warmian diocese as long as Bishop Józef Hohenzollern remained the abbot of the local Cistercians, which in practice meant that his death, i.e., 1836<sup>12</sup>.

Social institutions were established at parish churches: schools, hospitals, shelters and fraternities. In Warmia - as in any part of Poland - schools existed in every parish. Some of them, especially the city ones, had a relatively high standard and prepared them for further education in Jesuit colleges in Braniewo or Reszel. Girls also benefited from teaching, which was a rarity in the past. There were about 30 hospitals and shelters in the years 1525-1772, of which about 10 were in the villages. The elderly, the sick, the poor, the disabled, orphans and widows found refuge and care here. From 1600 pharmacies were established and doctors were employed. Numerous confraternities in honor of the Lord Jesus (8), the Blessed Virgin Mary (38), saints (29) and state (29) were conducive to deepening the religious life of lay people and conducting charity campaigns. Marian sodalities operated at the Jesuit colleges.

The Warmian Church was conducting external missions all the time. From the 17th century, they were concentrated in the Duchy of Prussia, in the so-called diaspora. In 1617, the bishops of Warmia received the title of administrators of the Sambia diocese. Three years earlier, the construction of a church in the protestantized Königsberg commenced. The mentioned Saint Lipka was also a mission center in Prussia. In the second half of the 17th century, a temple was erected in Tylża, where raftsmen floated wood and other goods on the Niemen. In addition to three institutions established in the diaspora *sensu stricto*, there were also three churches located in Royal Prussia: in Elbląg, Tolkmicko and Kadyny<sup>13</sup>.

However, the greatest number of Catholic pastoral centers in the Protestant part were established in the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. This was dictated by the influx of Polish settlers, seasonal workers and soldiers of the Catholic faith. In 1927, there were already about 40 parishes in the diaspora. Their number was also influenced by the new regulations of diocese borders (1821, 1854, 1859, 1922, 1936). In 1939, 311,000 Catholics lived in the Warmia diocese, with 175 parishes (which constituted 14% of the total population)<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> EICHORN, A.: Die Ausführung der Bulle „De salute animarum“ in den Diözesen des Preußischen States durch Fürstbischof Joseph Hohenzollern. In: Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands 1874, v. 5, pp. 114-130.

<sup>13</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Z dziejów diecezji / archidiecezji warmińskiej [accessed: 10.11.2020].

<sup>14</sup> See. BIELAWNY, K.: Dzieje katolików polskich w diecezji warmińskiej w latach 1918-1945 w refleksji historyczno-teologicznej. Olsztyn: Warmińskie Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne, 2007. ISBN978-88348-64-8.

The development of religious, social and cultural life was interrupted by the Second World War. The native population of Warmia and Mazury, which for centuries ensured the historical continuity of Warmia, left the area of the Warmia diocese. This was due to the orders of the local German authorities, the fear of Russian tanks, and the hostile attitude of the Polish communist authorities. About 20 priests were murdered in the first months of 1945 by Red Army soldiers. The Polish National Committee, operating in Olsztyn, refused Polish citizenship to Bishop Maksymilian Kaller and forced him to leave Poland. The same was done with other clergymen - Warmiak. Card. August Hlond appointed the apostolic administrator of the Warmia diocese, Fr. Msgr. Teodor Bensch, who moved the bishop's curia from Frombork to Olsztyn<sup>15</sup>.

The place of the autochthons was slowly taken by newcomers from the Vilnius and Grodno regions, as well as from Lviv, Przemyskie, Warsaw and Białystok regions. Pastors came with them. The economy and culture were slowly rebuilding, and often within new parish structures<sup>16</sup>.

The diocese managed to set up all the institutions needed for proper functioning: the curia and the bishops' court as well as lower theological seminaries (dissolved by the communist authorities in 1952). In 1949, the higher theological seminary was reactivated, first at ul. Mariańska, then after the building was taken over by the City Hall - at pl. Bema 2, and from 1991 in Redykajny. In 1951, the cathedral chapter was reactivated, and nine years later - the first collegiate chapter. In 1979, the Historical and Pastoral Institute was established, gathering diocesan theological colleges, and in 1999, on its basis, the Faculty of Theology was established as part of the newly created University of Warmia and Mazury<sup>17</sup>.

In order to improve the pastoral care, the number of deaneries and parishes was constantly increased. The priests and the faithful put a lot of effort into rebuilding the destroyed temples. There was also a problem of taking over post-evangelical buildings in connection with the change in the religious structure of the local population. However, the post-war years are marked by a cross of oppression on the part of the socialist state structures hostile to religion. The administrative authorities tried to limit the influence of the Church.

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<sup>15</sup> See. BREWCZYŃSKI, S.: Ks. Adalbert (Wojciech) Zink – rządcą diecezji warmińskiej w latach 1951-1953. Olsztyn, 2006. ISBN 978-83-923565-5-4.

<sup>16</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Z dziejów diecezji / archidiecezji warmińskiej [accessed: 10.11.2020]; GUZEWICZ, W.: Ustrój i administracja diecezji/archidiecezji warmińskiej (Wybrane zagadnienia), op. cit., pp. 40-43

<sup>17</sup> See. WOJTKOWSKI, J.: Diecezja warmińska w latach 1945-1972. In: Komunikaty Warmińsko-Mazurskie 1996, v. 1. ISSN 0023-3196, pp. 81-100.

Catholic associations and Caritas were dissolved, religion classes were removed from schools. A dozen or so priests were imprisoned, others were under surveillance and blackmailed. On January 26, 1951, Fr. Theodore Bensch and his vicar general, Fr. Mieczysław Karpiński. The Council of Consultors elected Fr. Wojciech Zink. Initially, he was only an administrator, and six months later, after reactivating the cathedral chapter, he was elected vicar of the chapter. Unfortunately, the state authorities acted brutally with him as well. On October 3, 1953, he was arrested and imprisoned. In his place the chapter chose - imposed by state factors - Fr. prof. Stefan Biskupski<sup>18</sup>.

A breakthrough in relations between the state and the Church took place in 1956. The Warmia diocese then received a new ordinary in the person of Fr. Bishop Tomasz Wilczyński. This nomination was issued by the Holy See in 1951, but the government of the Polish People's Republic did not allow the bishopric to be taken over. Such a possibility appeared only after the October events<sup>19</sup>.

Bishop Tomasz Wilczyński was the first post-war diocese governor to be ordained. He was very active, and most importantly - courageously and uncompromisingly he defended the rights of believers. His famous performances after the liquidation of the chapel in Sanatorium Anti-Tuberculosis in Olsztyn (May 1965) are known. It happened in the year of preparations for the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland. The bishop himself did not live to see these ceremonies. He died of a heart attack on August 5, 1965. Bishop Józef Drzazga, a suffragan of Warmia, became the next vicar of the Chapter. He received the papal appointment as administrator only after two years, on May 25, 1967, and he became a full Warmian bishop on June 28, 1972. On the same day, the Warmia diocese was subordinated to the metropolis of Warsaw. Previously (from 1929) it belonged to the metropolis of Wrocław. The next bishop of Warmia was Józef Glemp, the later Primate of Poland. He only worked here for two years, but they were very fruitful. He managed to activate the laity and develop the cult of St. Adalbert, reorganize theological studies. The next bishop, Jan Oblak, was a great expert on these lands and published many articles about the past of the Warmia diocese. He took the helm of the diocese in old age and therefore ruled for a very short time - three years. In 1985, he was assisted by the Chełmno suffragan, Bishop Edmund Piszcz, who in 1988 became the

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<sup>18</sup> KOPICZKO, A.: Kościół warmiński a polityka wyznaniowa po II wojnie światowej. Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 1996. ISBN 0585-3893.

<sup>19</sup> See. ZIELIŃSKI, Z.: Kościół w Polsce (1945-2002). Radom: Polwen, 2002. ISBN 83-88822-37-3.



49th Ordinary of Warmia. Currently, the diocese is governed by Archbishop Józef Górczyński<sup>20</sup>.

On March 25, 1992, the Holy See, as part of the reorganization of the Church in Poland, divided the Warmia diocese into the Warmian archdiocese and the Elbląg and Ełk dioceses<sup>21</sup>. At that time, the Warmia diocese had 700,000 inhabitants, of which approximately 690,000 people claimed to be Catholic. It was divided into 24 deaneries and 223 parishes. In total, it had 508 priests, including 404 diocesan and 104 religious. At that time, there were 42 female religious houses with 256 sisters in the archdiocese<sup>22</sup>.

After almost twenty years of functioning of the archdiocese, the number of believers remained at the same level (about 693,000). On the other hand, the number of deaneries (33), parishes (259), diocesan priests (453), religious priests (122), and the number of nuns (346) increased<sup>23</sup>.

The faithful of the Archdiocese of Warmia are mainly of Polish nationality. The Ukrainian population, who also lives in these areas, falls under the Przemyśl-Warsaw diocese and has its own parish network. A small German minority also has its own pastoral ministry. 60% of the population lives in cities (there are 24 cities in the archdiocese), 40% in the countryside. At the beginning of the 21st century, the unemployment rate was 29% and was the highest in Poland (at the beginning of 2011, it was approx. 23%). At that time, there were 700 unemployed per one job offer. The highest level of unemployment in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodship is recorded in the poviats of Braniewo (32%) and Bartoszyce (34%). The rural population suffered the most by the abolition of State Farms on January 1, 1992<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> ACHREMCZYK, S.: *Poczet biskupów warmińskich*. Olsztyn: Ośrodek Badań Naukowych im. Wojciecha Kętrzyńskiego, 2008. ISBN 978-83-60839-20-1.

<sup>21</sup> I IOANNES PAULUS PP. II: *Totus Tuus Poloniae Populus* (25.03.1992). In: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 1992, vol. 84, p. 1099-1112; text in Polish available at: *Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Kanonistów Polskich* 1992, nr 2, pp. 4-27; GUZEWICZ, W.: *Diecezja ełcka w zarysie (1992-2012)*. Ełk: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne Adalbertinum, 2012. 115 pp. 17-19 ISBN 978-83-60737-20-0.

<sup>22</sup> In: *Rocznik archidiecezji warmińskiej* 1992. ISSN 1425-4891.

<sup>23</sup> <http://archidiecezjawarminska.pl/node/6> [accessed: 10.11.2020].

<sup>24</sup> GUZEWICZ, W.: *Prasa diecezjalna w Polsce północno-wschodniej jako źródło wiedzy o społecznej nauce Kościoła (1989-2009)*, op. cit., pp. 68-77.

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