

ANITA WERESKA  
*PhD student at the Institute  
of Spiritual Theology of KUL*

REPORT ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SYMPOSIUM  
ON THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE HOLY LAND – “PILGRIM MAN,”  
ORGANIZED BY THE INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES  
AND THE INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY  
OF THE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN  
(Lublin, 24 May 2016)

The symposium was held at the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of Christians on May 24, 2016, in the John Paul II Collegium of the Catholic University of Lublin. It was part of two important celebrations in the Church: the Jubilee of the Year of Mercy and the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Poland.

According to Prof. Antoni Jackowski, Head of the Institute of Sacred Geography of the Jagiellonian University, the tradition of walking pilgrimage is deeply rooted in our genes. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, someone who never made a pilgrimage was considered a freak. The Gospel Trail is a great place to wander for all those who want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In his book *Spiritual Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, Henryk Pietras writes: “In the Holy Land, Jesus no longer wanders in the mountains and plains. You cannot hear Him in the synagogues and the Temple. He does not eat meals in the homes of publicans and sinners anymore. Fortunately, He left vivid traces. Today you can meet Him on the roads of Galilee, Judea and bustling Jerusalem. With faith in your heart and the Gospel in your hand.”

What is a pilgrimage? Why pilgrimage? Who is “Homo viator?” In this trend of discovering and building the identity of the “Pilgrim Man,” the second symposium held as part of the series “Spirituality of the Holy Land” took place. The conference dedicated to the spirituality of the Holy Land was held on May 24, 2016. This event was part of two important celebrations held at that time in the Church: the Jubilee of the Year of Mercy and the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Poland. On this occasion in the Collegium Hall of John Paul II at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, one could listen to very interesting lectures, discussions, memories and see interesting multimedia presentations. The symposium was initiated by the Institute of Biblical Studies and the Institute of Spiritual Theology of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The aim of the symposium was to draw attention to the sanctity of pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the social and cultural dimension. The honorary patron of the event was the Mayor of Lublin—Krzysztof Żuk.

On this day in the university we hosted outstanding spirituality experts. This not only emphasized the importance of the conference, but also created a unique atmosphere of the meeting. The opening of the Symposium was performed by Rev. Prof. Dr. hab. Mirosław Kalinowski, dean of the Faculty of Theology of the John Paul II Catholic University of

Lublin. Speakers, guests and participants were welcomed and the introductory word was delivered by Bishop Mieczysław Cisło. The theme of the symposium “Pilgrim Man” referred to the concept of St. Paul, also presented by Vincent Pallotti, that every man is a “walker” and every Christian a “pilgrim.” To be a Christian is to wander, to be on the way all the time. Undoubtedly, the term *Homo viator* is appropriate to describe both the human condition and the identity of the Christian. This is where the depth of man’s vocation is most fully revealed; called by God for being out of love, he makes a pilgrimage to Him—full of Love. The symposium was an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the term *Homo viator*—who the “Pilgrim Man” is for religious faith, for Catholics and for the Church in Poland and in the world. These words became the keynote of many interesting reflections on the challenges and dilemmas faced by the contemporary Catholic—“Pilgrim Man.” Therefore, *Homo viator* has become the subject of lively discussion, during which representatives of various areas of spirituality had the opportunity to present the results of their research. They moved us to very personal areas of their travels to the Holy Land.

The theme of the meeting also referred to the social teaching of Pope Benedict XVI contained in his Message on the occasion of the inauguration of the Holy Year 2010: “On the Way, new horizons are contemplated that prompt one to reflect on the narrowness of one’s own life and the immensity that the human being has within him and outside him, preparing him to go in search of what his heart truly yearns for. Open to wonder and to transcendence, the pilgrim lets himself be instructed by the word of God, and in this way cleanses his faith from unfounded attachments and fears.”<sup>1</sup> Responding to the call of the popes, the speakers pointed to the elements that affect the heart of the “Pilgrim Man,” contemporary man, and thus the Church, these problems, threats, questions that need a new look in the light of God’s infinite love, require an indication of the sources trust and hope, protecting against loneliness, despair, a sense of abandonment and helplessness that permeate social life, and often also the life of ecclesial communities. They remain immersed in the surrounding social and economic reality and often need specific indications or impulses to change it.

It was about travels, about people, about their culture and civilizations, longings and dreams ... We heard speeches by eminent specialists who made a significant contribution to documenting the past, present and prospects of pilgrimage. Thanks to the knowledge and experience of the speakers, a high substantive level of the conference was ensured. Theoretical issues and the results of the latest scientific research were presented. The scholarly sessions were divided into three subject modules, separated by two coffee breaks. The first subject module *Pilgrimage in the Bible* was conducted by Rev. Dr. Tomasz Bąk. The introductory lecture on *Forms and Places of Pilgrimage in the Old Testament* was delivered by Rev. Prof. Mirosław Wróbel,<sup>2</sup> an eminent Biblical scholar from the

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<sup>1</sup> [BENEDICT XVII.] “Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI to h.e. Msgr. Julián Barrio Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) on the Occasion of the Beginning of the Compostela Year 2010,” Holy See, Benedict XVI, Messages, accessed 15 June 2018, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/pont-messages/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20091219\\_giubileo-compostelano.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/pont-messages/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091219_giubileo-compostelano.html).

<sup>2</sup> The author is one of the most competent scholars of the *Pentateuch*.

Institute of Biblical Studies of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (he is the director of the Intertestamental Literature and Auxiliary Sciences for Biblical Studies Department), a graduate of the prestigious *École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem*. Then, Rev. Mateusz Targoński, M.A. presented his paper entitled *The Heroes of the Bible as Pilgrims*, and Dr. hab. Krzysztof Mielcarek, Pro at KUL., an employee of the Department of Exegesis of the Gospel and Apostolic Writings, delivered a speech entitled *Jesus as a Pilgrim*.

The second session, *Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, was presided over by Rev. Prof. Mirosław S. Wróbel. The interreligious character of the symposium was confirmed by the presence of the leading representative of the Jewish community — Tomasz Krakowski from the Jewish Community. He presented the topic *Pilgrimage in Judaism*. Two issues were presented in this session. The first one, presented by Dr. Maria Magdalena Dylewska, was entitled *Pilgrimage in Christianity*. Dylewska holds a PhD in philosophy. She is the creator of icons, collaborator of the Committee for Research on Christian Antiquity at the Catholic University of Lublin, and the author of icons, among others for the convent of the Sisters of Zion (*Ecce Homo*) and the Benedictine Order in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. In her speech, she described one of the most famous ceremonies in the Orthodox Church — the miracle of the descent of the Holy Fire at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The next speaker was Father Krzysztof Modras OP, a holder of a theology doctorate of the Augustinianum, sub-prior, lecturer at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, lecturer at the College of Philosophy and Theology of the Polish Dominican Province in Cracow, congress lecturer and diocesan exorcist. He delivered a lecture on *Pilgrimage in Islam*, speaking of the habits of pilgrimages of the Muslim community.

The third session was entitled *Spirituality of Pilgrimage*. It was conducted by Prof. Teresa Paszkowska. A lecture on *The Fruit of Spiritual Pilgrimage* was delivered by Rev. dr hab. Jarosław Popławski, head of the Chair of Spiritual History at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. A lecture on *The Spiritual Testimonies of the First Pilgrims to the Holy Land* was delivered by Rev. Dr. hab. Adam Rybicki, Prof. at KUL, Director of the Institute of Spirituality at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (Department of Systematic and Practical Spirituality). He attempted to answer the question whether the spiritual testimonies of the first pilgrims to the Holy Land are compatible with their charisms and whether they respond to the signs of the times. The last speaker was Rev. Dr. hab. Stanisław Zarzycki Prof. at KUL, who delivered a lecture on *Christian Spiritual Life as a Pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem*. Prof. Dr. hab. Teresa Paszkowska (Chair of Systematic and Practical Spirituality, a member of many scientific bodies: Polish Association of Spiritual Theologists, Learned Society of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin Scientific Society and Committee on Theology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Lublin) also spoke.

Dr. Jan Miczyński moderated a panel discussion, and the Roma Dance band performed a concert “Life Is a Pilgrimage.” During the breaks between the sessions, a film about the Holy Land was shown.

At the end, in the short words of the summary, gratitude to the organizers was expressed for taking such an interesting and current topic. The speakers were also thanked for their substantive contribution, and the participants were appreciated for active co-creation of this meeting.

Everything that happened during the symposium can be summarized in a few simple words that Antoni Gołubiew, a well-known Catholic writer wrote: “I believe that there is only one Truth, one Way and Life—this is Christ. And besides Him? And besides Him, thousands and millions of people are wandering and longing, bothering and struggling, fighting and sinning, unable to find this Truth and Way and Life. Somewhere between them I trudge, lingering and accelerating my pace, full of longing and sadness, but with the hope that I will finally arrive. Because Christ is stronger than my weakness, and His love is greater than my frigidity.” Considering all the speeches, an eloquent remark on these reflections was made by St. Faustina Kowalska in her *Diary*. Jesus said to her: “Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy [the Sacrament of Reconciliation] There the greatest miracles take place [and] are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one’s misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated.”<sup>3</sup>

To describe the state of “man on the way,” Vincent Palotti<sup>4</sup> uses in his *Writings* a very original term for his day: *Uomo viatore* (*Homo viator* in Latin). *Homo viator* is the *topos* of man as a traveler. This is the *topos* of a wanderer, an emigrant, which is very popular in the Mediterranean civilization.<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Marcel, a French philosopher and thinker, published in 1945 a book entitled *Homo Viator*, where man was presented as a man on his way. In his book, Marcel wrote that *being is being on the way*. And further: “It is of the soul and of the soul alone that we can say with supreme truth that ‘being’ necessarily means ‘being on the way’ (*en route*).”

*Translated by Karolina Jurak*



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<sup>3</sup> *St. Faustina Kowalska Diary—Divine Mercy in My Soul*, 1448.

<sup>4</sup> Vincenzo Francesco Luigi Pallotti was born in the house at Via del Pellegrino. His parents' apartment was located at 130 Via del Pellegrino. However, these are two different streets. The first one is located in the Vatican State and the second one is located in the center of Old Rome (Centro Storico). The name of the street means “pilgrim,” coming from the now-defunct Inn under the same name (Trattoria del Pellegrino). Pilgrims walked the street to get to St. Peter's Basilica. It is worth noting that at “Via del Pellegrino,” Pallotti lived until 1837, when his father died, that is, for 42 years—Vincent was born in the house at Via del Pellegrino, and he lived and died like a “pellegrino.”

<sup>5</sup> The literary realization of *Homo Viator* is, for example, “Odysseus” by Homer. In various ways, *Homo Viator* was a source of inspiration for artists, poets and philosophers.