

RAPHAEL OF. ST. JOSEPH (1835-1907)

Servant of God, priest (D)

Born at Vilna on Sept. 1, 1835, into a noble family, Joseph Kalinowski was a pious and studious youth. After spending seven years at the Institute of Nobles and earning a gold medal at graduation, he attended the school of agronomy of Horki for a year, during which his religious fervor cooled. In 1835 he was admitted to the Academy of Military Engineers in Petersburg, completing the course there with the rank of lieutenant (1857) and remaining on as an assistant professor in mathematics. Having entered the command of engineers at Petersburg (1859), he was sent to Kursk and to Odessa, commissioned with the planning of the railroad of Kursk-Kiev-Odessa and then assigned to the fortress of Brest-Litowski (1860). In 1862 he became a captain of the general staff. These were years of great activity, but also of profound faith, lived in charity, in prayer, and in the study of religious works. However, his living of Christianity was not up to the level which he later desired. His health caused him to retire on May 5, 1863; yet he received a commendation full of praise from Alexander II of Russia.

In the same year Poland began its insurrection against Russia. Kalinowski, who already in 1862 at Brest-Litowski had declared himself contrary to the first revolutionary movements and pointed out their dangers, at the start opposed the insurrection and affirmed that «Poland had no need of shedding blood, but of working.» Nevertheless, under the pressure of events and after long meditation, he decided while in Warsaw to participate in the insurrection. In May he entered the national government and was made commissioner of the war ministry in Lithuania, a charge which he accepted with the explicit condition that he would not have to condemn anyone to death. In June, at Vilna, one of the leaders of the insurrection, Sigismund Sierakowski, was hanged. Kalinowski, who was present, fell to his knees and made the resolution to consecrate his life to the service of God.

A short while later, at midnight between the 25-26 of March, 1864, he too was captured and imprisoned in the ex-convent of the Dominicans, where life was organized in convent style, with common prayer, meditation and Mass. But, above all, Kalinowski determined to return to the sacrament of confession. He prayed much, he contemplated the mysteries of the passion for long periods; but he still did not have a clear idea of the future, even though he did think of becoming a Capuchin. Meanwhile the insurrection, precisely because of the counsel given to Traugutt by Kalinowski, who, according to his own testimony, «had never been a convinced partisan» of the struggle, was extinguished. Joseph, motivated by his basic honesty and in order not to implicate the innocent, revealed his whole role in the insurrection and was condemned to death by the government of Murawiew, a penalty that was afterwards commuted to ten years of forced labor in Eastern Siberia.

He left for Siberia after he had been invigorated in spirit and requested the New Testament, Job, the Psalms, and the Imitation of Christ. He reached the salt mines of Usolje-Sibirskoje in 1865, and there he was to remain until 1868, the year in which an amnesty reduced his penalty to simple exile. He settled at Irkutsk, near lake Bajkal, on

the Mongolian border, where he carried out a true apostolate, even though afflicted by physical and moral sufferings that refined his spirit and united him ever more to God. In 1872 he left Irkutsk; but he had to remain in eastern Russia for two years, according to the requirements of the law. He chose Perm, on the Kama, but left it a year later because of his health that was ever more shaken. His final liberation occurred in 1874, but he was explicitly forbidden to make his abode in Lithuania.

The years in Siberia and in exile were years of extraordinary grace for Joseph. All witnesses and his companions in exile are unanimous in stressing the great patience of the servant of God, his availability in the service of all, the charity that urged him to deprive himself of what was necessary for himself in order to alleviate the sufferings of others, his continual prayer, his exceptional devotion to Our Lady. Father Wenceslaus Novakowski, O.F.M.Cap., a companion in prison and in deportation, vouches for the veneration that all had for Joseph, even to the point of inserting a special invocation into the recitation of the litany of the saints: «Through the prayers of Kalinowski, deliver us, O Lord!» It was during this long period of trial that the servant of God, a born contemplative, decided to become a Discalced Carmelite, as Card. Kakowski assures us.

During the ten years of trial, of suffering and of misery, with the thermometer at times reaching 45 degrees below zero (Cent.), he never left out his meditation; now, however, he reentered civilian life. His passport was restored, and in Warsaw he was able again to embrace those dear to him. Here he consented to become the preceptor of prince August Czartoryski, and this charge obliged him to follow the young man outside Poland. After a pilgrimage to Czestochowa, he left for Paris on Oct. 23, 1874, with «Gucio»— the diminutive nickname given to prince August—and there took up residence in the Hotel Lambert, the center from which the Czartoryskis helped and supported all the Polish political émigrés. During the following year Kalinowski continued to form the soul of his Guccio; meanwhile he had to accompany him to Menton and then to Neuilly, since the prince's lungs were already undermined. He filled the role «of father, mother, brother, companion, guardian.» And he did this with an extraordinary affection for the youth, remaining ever at his side with an interest stronger than that which could be aroused by any blood relationship.

Joseph accompanied Guccio on his travels in France, Poland and Italy. Guiding him by word and by the example of a coherent and affable Christian life, he took every possible care to strengthen his ward both in virtue and in physical health. Meanwhile, though outwardly everything seemed to be proceeding in an ordinary fashion, his decision to leave everything in order to consecrate himself to God in the religious life went on maturing. It was during the summer of 1876, at Davos, in Switzerland, where he had accompanied the prince, that Joseph made the definitive decision to become a Discalced Carmelite, after he had long considered all the aspects of this step. He was helped by the prayers of the princess Witoldowa Grocholska Czartoryska, an aunt of Guccio and a Discalced Carmelite nun with the name of Sr. Mary Xavier of Jesus, at Krakow-Wesola. During the following year he realized his decision.

During the first days of July, 1877, Joseph left the Hotel Lambert, and on the 14th of the month he was at the feet of the provincial of the Discalced Carmelites of Austria, on whom Poland then depended. He was sorrowed by his separation from Prince August — who later was to meet Don Bosco, become a Salesian (1887), and complete his time on earth in a short while (1893) and with such a repute for holiness as to warrant the beginnings of a canonization process. Meanwhile, on July 15, Joseph was immediately sent from Linz to Graz, the seat of the novitiate, which he began at the age of forty-two, on Nov. 28, 1877, taking the new name of Raphael of St. Joseph. He made his first profession on the same day of the following year, then went on to Raad (now Gyor, Hungary) for his studies in philosophy and theology, where he also made his solemn profession in the hands of the future Card. Gotti, at the time general of the Order (Nov. 27, 1881). He was then transferred to Poland, to the one decrepit convent for male religious that the Order had been able to keep open in the ancient hermitage of Czerna. There he completed his theological studies and received the various sacred orders, including the priesthood, conferred on him by Albin Dunajewski, bishop of Krakow (Jan. 15, 1882).

Almost immediately following his ordination as a priest he was named vice-master of novices, and in 1883 prior of the convent of Czerna. This office he later occupied almost continually, though he also served alternately as provincial councilor, confessor and director of the Discalced Carmelite nuns who from the one monastery of Krakow-Wesola — a monastery of «concentration» for various suppressed communities — had already overflowed into another monastery at Karkow--Lobzow (1875). Thanks to Fr. Raphael's interest, other Teresian monasteries later arose at Przemysl (1884) and Leopoli (1888). In 1900 he became the vicar-provincial for all these monasteries; he gave of himself unsparingly for the nuns of the Order so that, in line with the purest Teresian tradition, they would be authentic praying sentinels of the Church, for the good of the whole people of God.

Then, while the last Discalced Carmelite friars of the convents formerly existing at Berdyczow (Russia) and Lublin were dying out, Father Raphael founded a new convent at Wadowice (1892). He also built a church there which in a short time became an active center of spirituality, plus a seminary fostering excellent vocations on which he knew how to impress his hallmarks of serious formation and of Carmelite fidelity. He died a holy death at Wadowice on Nov. 15, 1907, and his body was transferred to the conventual cemetery of Czerna (Krakow).

The spiritual life of Father Raphael was marked by consistency. From the moment that he recognized his vocation to Carmel—thanks to his assiduous ascetical preparation—he was a coherent and convinced Discalced Carmelite, a man of God, solicitous about continuous communion with Him. Contemporaries are in accord in describing him as a «living prayer,» and he himself never ceased reminding his religious: «Our principal obligation in Carmel is to converse with God in all our actions.» For this reason he wished the renewal of Teresian Carmelite life in Poland to be built upon solid bases of true prayer, nourished and sustained by austerity, silence and recollection, realities that he himself first lived.

Another element of the Carmelite vocation with which he wished his life to be permeated, and which he insistently recommended to the friars and to the nuns, was intimacy with Our Lady. He venerated and loved her as the mother and the «foundress» of the Order; he strove to be always aware of her presence and to work for her glory. «For Carmelite friars and nuns,» he said, «honoring the Most Holy Virgin is of prime importance. And we love her if we endeavor to imitate her virtues, especially her humility and her recollection in prayer. ... Our eyes must be constantly turned to her; all our affections must be directed to her. We must ever preserve the memory of her benefits and strive to be ever faithful to her.» As expressions of his devotion are two booklets, *Maria zawsze i we wszystkim* (Mary always and in everything, Krakow, 1901), a filial invitation to do everything under her gaze and for love of the Virgin, and *Czesc Matki Boskiej w Karmelu Polskim* (The cult of the Mother of God in the Polish Carmel, Leopoli-Warsaw, 1905), and also the zeal that he expended in spreading the Third Order as well as the Confraternity of the Scapular in Poland and Roumania.

A true apostle of Our Lady, he did not tire in recommending this devotion to as many as came to him for spiritual direction. He was a much sought-for confessor, and a wise guide of souls. People came to him even from distant places, drawn by his fame of holiness and by his prudence and secure counsel. Ever available to all, he had taken as his program for spiritual direction the words of St. Paul: «Charity, joy, peace!» (Gal. 5:22). And his words instilled serenity and peace in all, even in non-Catholics, for whom he always had special apostolic interest. In this matter, he reminded his friars that the Order in Poland had a special mission to pray and to work for the unity of the Church and for the conversion of Russia. This was what he had learned from the history of the missionary origins of the Teresian Carmel in Poland and what he sought to achieve by immolating himself, so that there would be but one fold under one Shepherd.

As mentioned above, the Discalced Carmelite nuns benefitted from his special care and attention, also because of his official appointment by his superiors. He knew them individually, and guided them with gentle strength in the spirit of St. Teresa and of the first superiors of the Polish Carmel. For this reason too, with the collaboration of the nuns, he gathered together and published the history of the old Teresian monasteries of the nation: *Kiasztory Karmelitanek Bosych w Polsce, na Litwie i Rusi* (Monasteries of the Discalced Carmelite nuns in Poland, Lithuania and Russia, 4 voll., Krakow, 1900-4).

Esteemed for his holiness even during life, Father Raphael's intercession was invoked immediately after his death; and to judge by the graces that are attributed to it, the Lord seems to be pleased with this devotion. The ordinary processes were held from 1934 to 1938; on April 4, 1943, his writings were approved; on March 2, 1952, Pius XII approved the commission for the introduction of the cause of beatification (AAS, XLTV /1952/, pp. 750-2). The apostolic processes were conducted from 1953 to 1956.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Of prime importance are the autobiographical Memoirs of the Servant of God, which extend to 1877. Extracts in French: *Memoires du r.p. R. de St. J.*, were published in various fascicles of *Chroniques do Carmel* (Vaux-sous-Chevremont) during

the years 1908-10. The complete edition in the original language is recent: Josef Kalinowski *Wspomnienia, 1835-1877*, care of Richard Bender (Lublin 1965); T. Lubinska, *Zyciorys W. O. Rafala od Sw. Jozefa*, Cracovia 1932; Jean Baptiste, *Pologne-Russie-Sibere, Joseph Kalinowski... d'après ses Mémoires et sa correspondance*, Liege 1923 (1st vol. relative to the life of K. up to his entrance into Carmel; for the following period a brief historical synopsis is given, with further reference to a second vol. still unpublished). Id., *Rafal Kalinowski*, Cracow 1932; (Bernardus a Matre Dei), O. *Rafal Kalinowski, Karmelita Bosy*, Wloclawek 1933; Alfonso di S. Giuseppe, *P. Raffaele di S. Giuseppe*, Rome, 1934; *Positio super causae introductione*, Rome 1951; Jole Galofaro, *Al Carmelo attraverso la Siberia, P. R. di S. G.*, ibid. 1960.

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