Michael (Michał) Sopoćko was born on 1 November 1888 in the Vilnius region. After ordination, he worked diligently in the parochial and military chaplaincy, simultaneously performing educational and social duties. He was a professor and tutor in seminaries in Vilnius and Białystok. Living by the ideals of the sacerdotal life, he showed concern for the formation of priests. As sister Faustina Kowalska’s confessor and spiritual director, he became an apostle of the Divine Mercy, he strove for the official approval of the devotion. He founded the Congregation of Sisters of Merciful Jesus. He died on 15 February 1975 in Białystok.

Common of Pastors.

OFFICE OF READINGS

SECOND READING

From works by Blessed Michael Sopoćko, presbyter

(The mercy of God in His works, Paris 1967, vol. 4, pp. 217-218)

Divine Mercy in Chaplaincy

The most dangerous spiritual threat of our times is the secularisation of human souls. The atmosphere of laicism is pushed into less resistant souls from all directions. It does not attack in the way the previous heresies of particular dogmas of faith did, but it undermines the whole supernatural view of life, attempting to make the internal life senseless, to belittle it, and to deprive contemporary man of all otherworldly aspirations and desires.

We live in the times of the hectic pace of technology, surrounded by still braver inventions of human brain, in the fever of big cities where every nerve and every muscle head for a better way of making use of everything: an earthly paradise is to oust supposedly vain dreams of otherworldly values from human souls. This triggers aversion to religious books, fear of sermons, shallowness of religious practices reduced to a minimum, accompanied by deepened ignorance of the principles of faith and relaxation of individual and family ethics, and selfish instincts of use. In the face of this new mood, which poisons and uncompromisingly shackles contemporary man to the ground, the calling of the Church is heard, “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” This calling seems to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

However, even today the Saviour’s command, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations (...) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,” is as valid as it used to be. Even more so, a chaplain today ought to realise with his word and action the principle of Sursum corda, lifting hearts up, not attaching himself to temporal goods, which moths corrupt and thieves steal, but seeking, above all, the Kingdom of God, for the eternal happiness, prepared for us by the Divine mercy, is far more important than gold and platinum, knowledge and career, honours and use.

Therefore, simultaneously with the effort of the immemorial enemy of mankind to secularise human souls and to drown them in the vertiginous vortex of external life, a chaplain is supposed to develop and deepen the values of supernatural life, to educate saints by means of appropriate direction and under the influence of the Divine mercy, both inside and outside a confessional.¹

RESPONSORY Wisdom 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:10

Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love:

– Because grace and mercy are with the elect.

¹ Translated by DChojnacki (2014).
For this we toil and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God.
– Because grace and mercy are with the elect.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O Almighty and Merciful God,
you chose Blessed Michael, presbyter, to preach the message of your mercy to the world,
grant, we beseech you, that his faithful service may bring forth abundant fruit of conversion
and holiness to all people.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
– Amen.

Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum. Probatum seu confirmatum, die 25 iulii 2008, Prot. 122/08/L.