Honoratus (Honorat) Koźmiński was born on 16 October 1826 in Biała Podlaska. In 1848 he joined the Order of Capuchins in Warsaw and in 1852 he was ordained. He was a famous preacher, and a sought-after confessor and spiritual director, as well as a popular religious writer. He founded a number of congregations, primarily in which members did not wear habits. Throughout his life he endeavoured to show people God’s love for man. He died in Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą on 16 December 1926.

Common of Pastors.

OFFICE OF READINGS

SECOND READING

From the work by Blesses Honoratus “Of Congregations Hidden From the World”

(Kraków 1901, pp. 2-9)

*Life Hidden from the World Is the Most Perfect Means to Spread the Kingdom of God*

The Saviour led the life hidden from the world. He was not known to nearly anyone for his Divine mission, origin and devotion to God and the aim of salvation. He seemed to be an ordinary worker, a carpenter. Thus, when he later started to quote the Scriptures, people were surprised and said: “How so? We know his as a carpenter and his relatives.” Later, when he had begun proclaiming the Gospel, he would often hide in order to avoid glorification or persecution until the right moment would come. For the souls that hide from the world their higher yearnings and devotion to God and the matter of souls’ salvation, do so because of either humility, not wanting to be known to the world and be praised by it, or to avoid persecution and dedicate to neighbours more safely, imitating the model of the highest sanctity.

The Most Blessed Virgin served God in great secret and, even though she surpassed all nuns from around the world, she did not stand out from her peers by wearing different clothes or living in solitude. Nor did she reveal the mysteries of her heart or her vows, or her great vocation to anyone she lived close to. No one knew from her that she was a virgin. Hence, she acted like an ordinary woman during all celebrations or weddings, and life together with her relatives. That is why, she became a perfect example of such life and rightly the souls that wish to lead such a life, ought to look up to her hidden life.

Monastic life is a Divine institution and cannot cease to exists for without it the Gospel would not be fulfilled. Therefore, the Holy Spirit continues to inspire vocations to such life even during persecution. Hence, when the souls called to this do not stand a chance to devote themselves to God openly, due to the lack of monasteries, they need to come up with ways of serving God in secret.

Without them, there would be no souls that for God’s love would leave fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, children, houses and fields to keep to Evangelical counsels. There would be no souls that would live in chastity and deny themselves, living obediently and leaving the world and all that is in the world; that would live in poverty, seeking solely the Kingdom of God and justice and the rest would be given to them thanks to Providence as the Gospel teaches; all of this can be found only in congregations.

The main aim of hidden congregations is keeping the vocation in the greatest secret from the world, to give oneself up as a sacrifice but in such a way that it is not known to anyone. For if it is good to hide God’s gifts, should this grace above graces, i.e. vocation, not be a secret between ourselves and God so that the praises of men would not stain this sacrifice and it would remain clean and immaculate until the end. For “a king's secret it is prudent to keep.”

Hiding from the world is a silent and busy life, and oftentimes courageous dedication to God, known to no one but God, very often encountering laughter and disdain from all places; it is the highest pride of such congregations, the beauty, charm and fragrance of these violets planted with the Most Blessed Mary’s hand to
comfort Jesus hidden in the Host; it is the best honouring and unity of their lives with the lives of Jesus and Mary, as well as the Apostles and the first disciples of Christ.

Being hidden from the world is the most perfect means to attain the influence upon others, to spread the Kingdom of God in all places and to seek lost souls, to cast Christ’s nets of salvation around the world, to light the darkness, to make room for God’s light and to scatter fires of God’s love everywhere.¹

RESPONSORY Colossians 3:2-3; Philippians 1:27

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.
– For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.
– For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God,
you showed your grace by giving Blessed Honoratus, presbyter, the spirit of tender love so that he might unite many souls with you,
grant that through his intercession we may be given the grace of your forgiveness and be united with you in perfect love.
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.

¹ Translated by DChojnacki (2014).