

Introduction to both volumes

“This is not a book, this is an experience, this is an invitation to a deep inner renewal and prayer” a Welsh nun wrote of the first book in the series “Meditations on the Eucharist”. And she continued: “it is not like other books on the Eucharist at all, it is interactive or should be... it is quite a revelation... but to grow in truth is such a wonderful thing...”.

When we start reading “Amazed by this love” or “God’s Loving Presence” (except the first part of the first book of the volume), we get the impression that these are the author's confessions. However, this is not the case. It's just a literary form. The author as spiritual guide could know numerous souls and now accurately guesses the reader's spiritual experiences and inspires dialogue. In this way, the reader begins to listen and to talk to himself and to God. Completely new insights rise in the reader, which vitalize faith and give new cognition of God and human life.

First of all, in these books we will encounter a fire that will be able to ignite our love for God hidden in the Eucharist. This fervor can make us willingly accept simple insights concerning our everyday lives that may lead to a new nearness with God. Upon talking about our everyday experiences, the books reveal supernatural meaning of them.

Fr. T. Dajczer was an outstanding scholar in religious studies. He studied at the Gregorian University in Rome. However, it was his stay at the University of Chicago in 1971–1972 that was decisive. There he met his scientific master Mircea Eliade and then continued his work in Poland in the field of phenomenology of religion. He came to know *homo religiosus* (Eliade's term) on the example of the culture of Californian indigenous people. In this way, he acquired deep knowledge about man, which he also used in his service as the spiritual guide.

He worked at the university (present name: Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw) in the years 1973–2001, obtaining all scientific degrees and titles.

His book „The Gift of Faith” achieved great impact all over the world. It was issued in 30 languages and in 36 countries in a total of hundreds of thousands of copies. It has a logical structure and a critical apparatus unparalleled in the literature on spiritual life. At the same time, it is written in the language of experience using metaphors, symbolic expressions and rhetoric means typical of homiletics or pastoral texts. They create a unique synthesis of spiritual life written in the language of experience. Fr. Dajczer, who puts everything into structures with his outstanding scientific mind, created a work that proposes a new paradigm of practical theology

and theology of spiritual life. It is also noticeable with the present books “Meditations on the Eucharist”.

Each chapter of both volumes constitutes a whole, so they can be read separately and not in order. Sometimes it is enough to read one paragraph to receive the needed impulse for spiritual life.

In short forewords to both volumes, we have pointed out just a few of the most characteristic themes that the reader can discover in them. Both volumes of meditations in the context of the Eucharist touch probably all important issues on the way to God. However, they are unfinished, because they open many paths along which the reader can go towards God and write further chapters with his life.

The distinctive form of the English text in the current publication is due to Father Bryan Storey. At the first stage of preparation, the distinguished Polish linguist Artur Polit (living now in Scotland) prepared an English philological translation of each book. Then Fr Storey was interpreting the translation in his inner language and lived by the content of the texts. In the same time he dedicated himself to assist people in their spiritual lives. This also was helpful to clearly express what was taken from the books and he lived by. In this way the final English text of the books expresses also his spiritual life. He loved terse style, enabling to express much by modest means. And this is the style of the books “Meditations on the Eucharist”. It is already confirmed that they appeal to native speakers of English. More than five years after his departure we dedicate this edition also to him. In this way, we express our gratitude to the deceased interpreter. We also devote a lot of space to him in the appendices placed in the end of each volume.

A series of six books, “Meditations on the Eucharist”, is being successively published in eight languages and in ten countries. The entire series has already been published in Poland, Italy, Spain and Hungary. This edition offers the entire series in English for the first time.

We express our sincere thanks to the authorities of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, which was the *alma mater* of Fr. T. Dajczer. We would especially like to thank prof. Tomasz Wielebski – director of the Institute of Theological Sciences – for directing the publication to the University's publishing plans. We would also like to thank the dean of the Faculty of Theology, prof. Piotr Tomasik for supporting the project. We would like to express our gratitude to Joanna Dziurzyńska – director of Scientific Publisher – for carefully implementing the project.

Editors