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Introduction

The graphic design of this issue of *The Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook* front cover includes the entrance gate to the Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow. The gate itself is transformed into a triumphal arch opening towards the road recognizable to every person who feels a bond with the cultural heritage of the Western world. This road is the via Appia, once built by the will of Appius Claudius Caecus, and considered one of the oldest Roman tracts. Called “the queen of all roads” by the Romans themselves, it is inseparable from the Eternal City for everyone raised on the values of Western civilization. Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński wrote about it in his famous epitaph: “today in Rome defeated, Rome invincible,” expressing this way the overwhelming awareness of connecting the past with what we experience as the present. It was on this road that the legendary scene recalled by Henryk Sienkiewicz took place, in which the question: *quo vadis, Domine?* is asked by the apostle Peter, fleeing from the Eternal City, to Christ he meets on the Appian Way. The power of this question

is understood by anyone who is able to see in the roots of Classical and Christian culture all that is the most important for the Western culture not only in terms of its past, but also in terms of its future.

In the history of Poland, the journey to Rome took on a particular significance, going far beyond a mere pilgrimage to the heart of the Christian West. It was not only a matter of direction, but also of the nature of the path taken. These questions have become especially important since the reforms of the Church opened up other paths to salvation. For centuries, the ones to take this path were the knights, with unambiguous vision of earning the eternal happiness, so characteristic of their time and space, they sanctified it with their commitment and, often, by sacrificing their own lives. They recognized this road as the only true way to heaven. On this path, they often drew inspiration from the passage of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: *Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?* (Romans 8:31b), best known in the following variant: *Si Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos?*, which is engraved on the above-mentioned gate as the motto of the Jagiellonian family. This rhetorical question is easily juxtaposed with the Psalmist's phrase: *Dominus mecum, non timebo, quid faciat mihi homo* (Psalm 118:6), so often cited by the soldiers facing loss of life. The latter are given special attention in the texts presented in this volume of studies.

The world of knightly values is referred to in Mirosław Lenart's first article treating the border as a hermeneutical key to thinking about Polish history. Considerations on the borderline between spirit and faith are supplemented by the author's observations on the rituals of blessing weapons and on the disappearance of references to combat in the language of modern teleology, which significantly reduces the clarity of the issues related to spiritual warfare, so characteristic of Christianity. Another study, by Tadeusz Zych, is part of his research on the meaning of personal role models in the education of Polish elites. In this case, the director of the Historical Museum of Tarnobrzeg, located in the castle of the Tarnowski family in Dzików, who is well acquainted with the subject, presents an interesting issue as exemplified by the family whose knightly spirit is reflected in the memorabilia under his care. In the next article, Karol Łopatecki presents another installment of his long-standing research on discipline in the armies of the Republic of Poland, which is very much based on religious ideas. The result of these analyses is an article found in this volume on the idea of the fear of God and the causal role of God in the Polish and Lithuanian armies in the early modern era. Maciej Trąbski is another author referring to military discipline, presenting the topic of cavalry *esprit de corps* in the military units of the Kingdom of Poland (1815-1831), which is recognizable primarily in the

cultivation and promotion of the memory of events from the Napoleonic era. Leszek Cichobłaziński devoted his article to the juxtaposition of the knight and the burgher in the context of ethical models represented by people assigned to these social classes. The conclusions he draws allow for an in-depth reflection on the importance of roles in society and the values ascribed to them, reflected in the personal models mentioned above.

The opening text of the second part of the issue, by Jerzy Brzozowski, focuses on the strife over the translation of the *Liturgiam Authenticam* instruction, allowing the reader to trace several decades of the practice of biblical translation in the post-conciliar spirit, with its successes and failures. The extremely weighty conclusions of this article emphasize, in fact, the seldom realized fact that human understanding is always done in a particular language, hence the importance of translations is extremely important for human sensitivity to the sacred and meaningful for the transmission of the content of faith. In the following article, Henryk Sławinski analyzes the speeches of the US presidents: George Walker Bush and Donald John Trump. The author highlighted those elements in the speeches of these non-Catholic leaders which emphasized the impact faith in God has on political and social change in the world and the survival of Western civilization based on faith in God, on top of the preservation of family and freedom. The main research hypothesis put forward by Teresa Grabińska is the finding of correspondence between a high degree of personal security (especially its ontic-cultural layer) and personalistic anthropology, the most general interpretation of which is the standard accepting the personalistic norm formulated explicitly by Karol Wojtyła. This norm, according to the author of the study, is the condition for the sanctity of the human person. Paweł Taranczewski, analyzing the art of Józef Czapski, confronts the reader with an attempt to formulate key questions about the sense of experiencing a work of art as a window onto the OTHER, where this OTHER is not only an artist, but also a writer, soldier, and a man dedicated to public affairs. The last text, by Tomasz Homa S.J., analyzes two fundamentally important ideas developed by Jean Monnet: the idea of a federally united Europe and its sovereignty. The author attempts to capture some of the essential assumptions of the life philosophy and activity of this French politician and economist, showing that they can also be understood as a certain phenomenology of the community in its becoming.

All the above-mentioned texts constituting the issue are connected by the images and ideas indicated at the beginning, so characteristic of the people who once created European culture. It is about the common path and the boundaries of spirit and faith. Without the first one,

the triumphant crossing of the gate separating the limited life of this world from the perfect existence after death as the end of human endeavor, would be illegible. Without the latter, it would be difficult to imagine the realization of personal models perpetuated as the *miles christianus* and the Christian heroine, guarding values from the threshold of the family home to the borders delineated by political treaties and sanctified by the blood of heroes who defend them. Europe, being for a long time self-defined through Christianity, is now losing its spiritual dimension. Without these models and paradigms, which consists of attitudes of people who think, fight, create, study, or, in general, are involved in their subjective existence in the world. It is the wish of the authors of these words that the thought-provoking adventure shared by the contributors to this issue and those involved in its preparation for publication, will also be shared by our Readers. We are convinced that reading these studies will bring to mind other texts that will perhaps allow you to find the answer to the culturally and literarily perpetuated question asked by St. Peter to Jesus on the Appian Way: *Quo vadis, Domine?*