



“Family Upbringing” vol. XXXII (3/2025)

„Wychowanie w Rodzinie” t. XXXII (3/2025)

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Priest DPA Edward Walewander (1947–2025). From The Diary of Memories

Profesor Edward Walewander (1947–2025). Z pamiętnika wspomnień

Submitted: March 27, 2025 – Accepted: August 8, 2025

Abstract

Introduction. This article presents the educational path and academic degrees and titles obtained by father Edward Walewander. It outlines his professional career path along with places of employment, as well as a characterisation of his academic and pastoral activities. Additionally, information about his most significant publications and scientific research is included.

Aim. The aim of this study was to present the figure of one of the more well-known educators, historians of education, and researchers of church history.

Methods and materials. A comparative and retrospective method was used, allowing for the presentation of father Edward Walewander’s academic achievements as a historian of education and educator.

Results and conclusion. The content highlights the professor as an educator and author

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of numerous scientific publications both in Poland and abroad, associated with the Catholic University of Lublin.

Keywords: professor, clergyman, pedagogy, patriotism, history

Abstrakt

Wprowadzenie. Artykuł przedstawia ścieżkę edukacyjną oraz stopnie i tytuły naukowe uzyskane przez ojca Edwarda Walewandra. Prezentuje jego ścieżkę kariery zawodowej wraz z miejscami zatrudnienia, a także charakterystykę jego działalności naukowej i duszpasterskiej. Dodatkowo zawiera informacje o najważniejszych publikacjach i badaniach naukowych.

Cel. Celem niniejszego studium było ukazanie postaci jednego z bardziej znanych wychowawców, historyków edukacji oraz badaczy historii Kościoła.

Metody i materiały. Zastosowano metodę porównawczą i retrospektywną, co pozwoliło na przedstawienie osiągnięć naukowych ojca Edwarda Walewandra jako historyka edukacji i pedagoga.

Wyniki i wnioski. Treść ukazuje profesora jako wychowawcę i autora licznych publikacji naukowych zarówno w Polsce, jak i za granicą, oraz jako człowieka związanego z Katolickim Uniwersytetem Lubelskim.

Słowa kluczowe: profesor, duchowny, pedagogika, patriotyzm, historia

Introduction

Edward Walewander was an honorary canon of the Lublin archcathedral chapter, chaplain to His Holiness, a Professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, and a promoter of numerous doctoral and master's theses. In his scientific work, he became a researcher of the history of the church and the educational legacy of the interwar period and the entire 19th century. During his professional career, he served as an editor of scientific journals and a member of various councils and scientific associations.

Everything Began in Niemirówek

He was born on December 6, 1947, in Niemirówek near Tomaszów Lubelski, in the home of Józef and Apolonia Semczuk (Walewander, 2014). His parents made every effort to ensure that their son received a good Catholic and patriotic upbringing. He grew up in an environment of strong interpersonal relationships, mutual kindness, and nobility within the local community, where daily life was simple, modest, and re-

ligious, yet open to the fate of others (Walewander, 2020). Remembering his childhood years, he wrote: “I grew up in a deeply religious and patriotic family, attached to tradition, hardworking, and respected”¹ (Walewander, 2022, p. 10).

Not so long ago, I used to run to school, avoiding puddles along the dirt path—now paved, almost “urbanised” [...] yet still close to my heart, as if I had only just left it yesterday. Or perhaps such a farewell never truly happened and never will, for one does not say goodbye to their homeland, no matter how long they leave it. In the end, we always return to what is familiar and dear, because only there is a person truly themselves and at home. Those who do not understand this have no place on earth—and today, there is hardly anything worse for a man. (Walewander, 2022, p. 42)²

Education and the Beginning of the Pastoral Path

Walewander started his education in a primary school in Niemirówek. There, during Polish language lessons taught by Józef Grabka, he awakened his interest in the history of Poland and the history of his small homeland (Walewander, 2022). From the tiny village, Walewander moved to Tomaszów Lubelski, where he studied at the Vocational School of Agricultural Mechanisation (Walewander, 2016). At that time, he became acquainted with the richness of the church’s teachings, which he experienced during catechism lessons conducted by father Eugeniusz Tatarczak. Years later, reflecting on the school and his own experiences, he wrote: “[...] it gave its students a lot, contributed to their further development. It shaped the foundations of our lives. It provided a good understanding of contemporary reality”³ (Walewander, 2022, p. 88). In 1964, he became a student at the four-year Industrial and Pedagogical Technical School in Lublin, which was focused on training future teachers for vocational schools. Among the teaching staff of this school, those deserving special mention included mathematician Jerzy Rozmeja, Zbigniew Lewacki (technical subjects), and Polish language teacher Euzebiusz Gruszecki, as well as the school’s director, Dr Zygmunt Bownik, a passionate educator and author of publications in the field of education. In his memoirs, Walewander also devoted a significant amount of space to Emilia Józefacka, who taught history, Anna Krzymowska, who led the school historical circle (Walewander, 2011), and Urszula Zgodzińska, who focused on pedagogy (Rutkowska, 2014). He wrote about their work and commitment; they engaged in various spheres of social

¹ Authors’ own translation.

² Authors’ own translation.

³ Authors’ own translation.

life. Perfect in their work, responsible, and diligent, they served Poland by teaching and educating a young generation in entirely different political conditions of the post-war era reality than before 1939. They did not change their attitude, despite the fact that during the war and immediately after its end, almost each of them personally experienced traumatic events. After graduating from high school in 1968, Walewander entered the Major Seminary in Lublin (he studied philosophy for two years and theology for one year), while also studying at the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University of Lublin (master's degree in 1971). Since 1971, he continued his studies in Innsbruck at the Leopold-Franzens-University, where he obtained a master's degree in theology based on the thesis *Die Tiroler Presse und der polnische Aufstand 1863/64 mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Lage der polnischen Kirche unter der russischen Herrschaft* [The Tyrolean press and the Polish uprising of 1863/64 with special consideration of the situation of the Polish church under Russian rule].

In Austria, he undertook doctoral studies, which were completed with a dissertation on *Das Echo in Österreich auf die Lage der Kirche im Königreich Polen während des Aufstandes 1863/64 im Spiegel der österreichischen Presse* [The echo in Austria on the state of the church in the Kingdom of Poland during the uprising of 1863/64 as reflected in the Austrian press]. He described his stay abroad in this way: "My time in Austria was like opening a window to the world for me"⁴ (Walewander, 2022, p. 23). During his seven-year stay in that country, he travelled a lot. After obtaining a master's degree in church history, he immediately began doctoral studies, obtaining a doctorate in 1978.

The knowledge and experiences gained in Austria resulted in publications in German, among which it is worth mentioning: *Zum ersten Jahrestag des Heimgangs von Dr. Helmut Holzapfel. Ein Leben für die Versöhnung* [On the first anniversary of the passing of Dr. Helmut Holzapfel. A life dedicated to reconciliation] (1985), *Bayrisch-polnische Begegnung in Lublin* [Bavarian-Polish encounters in Lublin] (1986), *Die Rolle des Priesters in der polnischen Gesellschaft* [The role of the priest in Polish society] (1988), and *Homo sovieticus. Probleme der kirchlichen Seelsorge auf dem Gebiet der ehemaligen UdSSR* [Homo Sovieticus. Problems of church pastoral care in the territory of the former USSR] (1994).

There, he also established many international contacts that helped Walewander in his scientific development and professional work. He returned from Austria to Lublin, where he began his pastoral and academic activities. He was a vicar in the cathedral parish and the prefect of studies at the Higher Theological Seminary (1979–1983). From 1979 to 1982, he served as the referent for missions in the Lublin diocese, and from 1982 for four years, as the referent for ecumenism. Additionally, Walewander held the position of diocesan pastoral caretaker for families (1984–1986) as well as secretary

⁴ Authors' own translation.

to the bishop of Lublin for foreign contacts (since 1984). In October 1980, Walewander began his scientific and teaching work at the Catholic University of Lublin, and in 1995 he obtained his habilitation based on his dissertation: *Edukacja chrześcijańska w nauczaniu i praktyce Kościoła katolickiego na ziemiach polskich w drugiej połowie XIX wieku* [Christian education in the teaching and practice of the Catholic church in Polish lands in the second half of the 19th century]. Two years later, he became a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, while in 2009, he received the academic title of professor of humanities (Szulakiewicz, 2017). During this time, father prelate systematically enriched his knowledge and skills in the fields of humanities, theology, and social sciences. By participating in numerous lectures, seminars, and scientific symposia, of which he was a co-organiser, his attitudes as a person, scholar, and clergyman were also shaped. His parents and the accompanying pedagogical staff played a significant role in this regard, which he summarized: “they instilled in us the necessity of permanent self-improvement and encouraged us to continue our education”⁵ (Walewander, 2022, p. 88).

In the Service of School and Science

The real adventure with science and the ministry of father Walewander began after his return from Austria. His commitment to work at the Catholic University of Lublin is best captured by the words: “the professor is a priest in his subject, he gives it honours with seriousness and in concentration”⁶ (Amiel, 1997, p. 237; see also Walewander, 1999). The professor priest conducted lectures for the seminarians at the theological seminary on the history of the modern church, specialised lectures for PhD students on the history of spirituality, as well as lectures on the history of the church at the Institute of Higher Religious Culture at the Catholic University of Lublin. Additionally, he held elective lectures for pedagogy students, during which he addressed topics such as Catholic education in Polish lands in the second half of the 19th century, spiritual education in Christianity, and the pedagogical heritage of the 19th century and the inter-war period, as well as the child care system in the European Union. At the theological seminary, he taught anyone interested the German language and translated texts from German to Polish and *vice versa*. In Germany, he conducted various lectures dedicated to Polish-German themes, which he also wrote about in the book *Życie dla pojednania* [Life for reconciliation] (1997). He invited singing groups to the country and organised Polish-German seminars for young people. He actively participated in numerous meetings addressing issues related to the relations between Poland and German-speaking

⁵ Authors' own translation.

⁶ Authors' own translation.

countries, including a lecture on “Poles in Germany up close” for the Association of Polish Journalists in Warsaw, a presentation in German for students of the Catholic University in Eichstätt on “Polish Catholicism yesterday and today,” and participation in the IV International Symposium on Polish Diaspora Biographies in Vienna—a paper titled “Blessed Marcelina Darowska against the background of the women’s religious movement in Polish lands in the 19th and early 20th centuries,” as well as participation in a symposium at the Lublin Tribunal where he presented a paper “Austrians in Poland and Poles in Austria—yesterday and today.” Since 1997, Walewander headed the Department of Comparative Pedagogy at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Lublin. The main research directions focused on the pedagogical process encompassing cultural phenomena in the social sphere and presenting a common ground between traditional pedagogy and cultural issues, while also paying attention to the delineation of values and the shaping of human attitudes. Following his return to Poland, Walewander engaged in Polish diaspora issues (Walewander, 2000b). In 1983, he became a senior assistant at the Institute for Polish Studies and Polish Diaspora Pastoral Care at the Catholic University of Lublin. For fifteen years (September 1990 – March 2005), he served as the director of the Inter-Faculty Institute for Polish Studies and Polish Diaspora Pastoral Care at the Catholic University of Lublin. At his initiative, international symposia and scientific conferences were organised on Poles living in all countries that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thanks to this cooperation, monographs were created dedicated to Poles in Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Crimea (Walewander, 1998a, 1998b). An important event was the establishment of the Irena and Franciszek Skowrya Diaspora Award, which was awarded to individuals who contributed significantly to diaspora activities. The actions taken were documented in the pages of „Studia Polonijne” [Polonia Studies].

Walewander was the author of over 600 publications, which included articles, reviews, reports and announcements, biographical notes, translations in the fields of pedagogy, the history of the church, and Polonia, as well as a dozen books. Among them, it is worth mentioning the following titles: *Kapłani Zamojszczyzny okresu okupacji: Szkice do historii regionu i Kościoła* [Priests of Zamość during the occupation. Outlines of the history of the region and the church] (1996a), *Religijność w perspektywie dziejowej. Studia i szkice* [Religiosity in Historical Perspective. Studies and Sketches] (1996b), as well as *Pedagogia katolicka w diecezji lubelskiej 1918–1939* [The need for education on values, Christian education, and Catholic pedagogy in the Lublin diocese 1918–1939] (2007), *Działalność wychowawcza Kościoła Lubelskiego 1939–1945* [Educational Activities in the Lublin church 1939–1945] (2009). Father Professor was a co-author and editor of collective works such as *Katolicka i liberalna myśl oświatowa w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* [Catholic and liberal educational thought in Poland in the years 1918–1939] (2000a), and *Ideologiczne oblicze polskiej*

szkoły 1944–1956 [The Ideological Face of the Polish School 1944–1956] (2002). Father Walewander operated within three main areas of scientific interest. He richly and extensively documented the history of Christian pedagogy. He related the analysed issues to the overall tasks of the church's pedagogy using the example of the Lublin diocese. He understood Christian and ecclesiastical pedagogy as shaping external attitudes and empirical behaviours that influence spiritual attitudes, the human spirit, and the depth of personality. In the second stream of research, namely concerning the Polish community abroad, he dealt with studies within Polish immigration, both voluntary and forced, as well as refugees and deportations, primarily to the East. Father Walewander operated within three main areas of scientific interest.

In 1997, he initiated the publication *Biblioteka Pedagogiczna* [Pedagogical Library] (Series A, Studies) and *Materiały i Dokumenty* [Materials and Documents] (Series B), whose main goal was to popularise, among others, Polish classical pedagogy. He served as the editor-in-chief of *Wiadomości Diecezjalne Lubelskie* [Diocesan News of Lublin] (1990–1991), *Rocznik Wydziału Nauk Społecznych KUL – Pedagogika* [Yearbook of the Faculty of Social Sciences KUL – Pedagogy] (1997–2002), and was a member of the Editorial Board of *Przegląd Historyczno-Edukacyjny* [Historical-Educational Review], the Program Committee of the journal *Polonicus. Revista de reflexao Brasil-Polonia* [Polonicus. Journal of Reflection Brazil-Poland], and the Scientific Council of *Przegląd Polska-Polonia* [The Poland – Polonia Review]. It should be noted that father professor was a member of numerous scientific organizations, such as the Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego [Scientific Society of the Catholic University of Lublin], Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt [Scientific Book Society Darmstadt], Towarzystwo Polsko-Austriackie w Lublinie [The Polish-Austrian Society in Lublin], and Catholica Unio Internationalis [International Catholic Union].

It Has Passed in the Blink of an Eye... Selected Images from Spiritual Life

Love for God was born in his family home, as he wrote:

My piety has various sources, but certainly the most important was the family home, especially the simple, sincere, and deep piety of my Mom. She taught me the first words of prayer and the sign of the cross. I constantly follow her example in any way. (Walewander, 2022, p. 58)⁷

He was ordained a priest on January 25, 1974, in Innsbruck by Opilio Rossi, who was then archbishop and later cardinal apostolic nuncio in Austria. He did not

⁷ Authors' own translation.

forget that on the path of priesthood he met many important people who tried to bring the beauty of faith closer to him. Among them, he mentioned the parish priest of Tarnawatka, father Tadeusz Bogut, the parish priest of Krasnobród, father Ludwik Liwerski, the vicar of the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Tomaszów Lubelski, and father Eugeniusz Tatarczak. Following their example, he himself became a role model for others, guided by simple behaviour. Every time he passed the House of God, he would stop for a short prayer. After retiring, he continued to help with pastoral work, heard confessions, and maintained contacts with his listeners and students.

In the work of Walewander as a pastoral caregiver, it is worth noting his participation in lectures, symposia, and sermons, as well as their organisation. It is worth mentioning a few, including: a lecture delivered to the clergy of the Lublin diocese on “The significance of pilgrimage in the religious life of Catholics,” a lecture at the UMCS Polonia Centre on “The January Uprising in Austrian press,” a lecture at the UMCS Polonia Centre entitled “For and against Poland in the Austrian Monarchy during the January Uprising,” and a lecture in Eisenstadt (Austria) on “Acting from Christian responsibility in today’s secularized society,” as well as readings in Naumburg, Zeitz, and Leipzig on “The outbreak of war in 1939 and the fate of Poland and Poles,” and also a sermon at the first solemn mass of father Leszek Przybyła in Tarnawatka and at the first solemn mass of father Marek Gmyz in Krasnobród. In summary, father Walewander believed that the priest’s ministry in the modern world is essentially no different from that of priests centuries ago, as well as in the near past. The constant elements remained unchanged. He shared his thoughts on priesthood, among which it is worth mentioning: One must offer oneself in accordance with the personality encountered, and support words with one’s authentic attitude and actions. It does not always have to be the embodiment of an ideal. What is important is for the priest to present himself in his true, untainted form. He should not attempt to deny through his actions the fact that he is the same kind of person as others (Walewander, 2022). Walewander embarked on the path of priesthood at a time when the universal church was undergoing post-conciliar changes. Throughout his work, his love for the Eucharist played an important role, which translated into relationships with the faithful and active participation in the holy mass. His pastoral ministry was guided by the word of God, prayer, and the sign of the cross.

I am grateful to God that my life has taken such a course and meaning. It has been exceptionally rich and has brought me many experiences and lessons [...]. I regret many stumbles that resulted primarily from my stubbornness, but if it weren’t for perseverance, I might not have reached my designated goal. (Walewander, 2022, p. 37)⁸

⁸ Authors’ own translation.

While already retired, he summarised his life with these words, which from childhood taught him respect and acceptance towards others. These words built within him a sense of identity that answered the question of where he came from, how he fulfilled his dreams, and where he was heading.

Instead of Conclusion

He has been awarded numerous times for his scientific, organisational, and pastoral work. In his rich collection, he gathered, among others: a commemorative medal with a diploma awarded by the Ministry of Culture and Art as well as the Faculty of Culture and Art of the University of Warsaw and also the Henryk Wieniawski Music Society in Lublin, the scientific award named after Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski for editing and co-authoring the book *Polacy w Kościele katolickim w ZSRR* [Poles in the Catholic church in the USSR], the Jubilee Medal of the Century “Strzecha” 1894–1994 for scientific and social activity in support of the Polish community in Austria, as well as the Medal of 80 Years of Estonian Independence from the Polish Estonia Association in recognition of Polish-Estonian rapprochement, and the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta—awarded by the President of the Republic of Poland.

On January 13, 2025, father Walewander passed away. A funeral mass was held on January 15, 2025, at 5:00 PM at the Home of Retired Priests at Bernardyńska 7 in Lublin. The following day, on January 16, 2025, after the funeral mass at the Lublin archcathedral, the body of the reverend prelate was laid to rest at the cemetery on Lipowa Street in Lublin.

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