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The Convent of Premonstratensians in Imbramowice: Pedagogical Activity in the 20th Century

Klasztor Norbertanek w Imbramowicach: działalność pedagogiczna w XX wieku

Abstract: During the several hundred years of its history, The Convent of Norbertine Sisters in Imbramowice has become a permanent part of Polish culture. A cloistered order, seemingly cut off from the outside world, is a place where a rich social culture is created. Educational activity was among many areas of the Norbertine sisters' activity. The Norbertine nuns ran the Institute for girls from landed gentry many years before the partitions of Poland. Zofia Grothówna mentioned this many times in the convent chronicle. However, the institute was closed due to the repressions caused by the outbreak of the January Uprising in 1864. Many years later, Maria Nidecka, the abbess of the convent from 1897 to 1917, opened a so-called Non-resident School for Village Children. Her idea was continued by the abbess Anzelma Wiśnicka, thanks to whom the Household School for Girls was established. Its shape was influenced by the School of Household Works for Women, founded by Jadwiga Zamoyska in Kórnik near Poznań in 1882, and transferred to Kuźnice near Zakopane. The Household School for Girls in Imbramowice was officially opened on 15 November 1919 and was then named the Norbertine Girls Lower School of Agriculture, and from 1939 the Private Female Agricultural School of St. Norbert's Sisters in Imbramowice. The main goal of the Norbertine sisters when organising the school was to prepare Polish girls for a decent life in the independent Poland, reborn after many years of partitions. Unfortunately, with the advent of the Polish People's Republic, the school in Imbramowice was closed.

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Streszczenie: Klasztor sióstr norbertanek w Imbramowicach w czasie swojej kilkusetletniej historii wpisał się na trwałe w kulturę Polską. Zakon klauzurowy, wydawać by się mogło, że odcięty od świata zewnętrznego jest miejscem tworzenia bogatej kultury społecznej. Jedną z wielu dziedzin działalności sióstr norbertanek, była działalność oświatowa. Norbertanki zajmowały się prowadzeniem Instytutu dla dziewcząt z rodzin ziemiańskich, jeszcze wiele lat przed zaborami. Wielokrotnie wspominała o tym Zofia Grothówna w kronice klasztornej. Jednak w związku z represjami spowodowanymi wybuchem powstania styczniowego w 1864 r. Instytut zamknięto. Wiele lat później Maria Nidecka, ksieni klasztoru w latach 1897–1917, założyła tzw. Przychodnię Szkołę dla Dzieci Wiejskich. Kontynuatorką jej pomysłu był ksieni Anzelma Wiśnicka dzięki której powstała Szkoła Gospodarstwa dla Dziewcząt. Na jej kształt wpłynęła założona przez Jadwigę Zamoyską w 1882 r. w Kórniku pod Poznaniem, a przeniesiona do Kuźnic pod Zakopanem Szkoła Pracy Domowej dla Kobiet. W Imbramowicach Szkołę Gospodarstwa otwarto oficjalnie 15 listopada 1919 r. i nosiła wówczas nazwę Niższa Szkoła Rolnicza Żeńska Norbertanek a od 1939 r. Prywatna Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Głównym celem, który przyświecał norbertankom, przy organizowaniu szkoły, było przygotowanie polskich dziewcząt do godnego funkcjonowania w odrodzonej po wielu latach zaborów niepodległej Polsce. Niestety wraz z nastaniem Polski Ludowej szkołę w Imbramowicach zamknięto.

Słowa kluczowe: Imbramowice, norbertanki, Maria Nidecka, Anzelma Wiśnicka, szkolnictwo zakonne w XX wieku.

To ensure a profound insight into the history of the Imbramowice monastery, in 1999 the Norbertine sisters asked Prof Rev Marek Zahajkiewicz, the then director of the Institute of Church Archives, Libraries and Museums of the Catholic University of Lublin, to conduct such studies. The works began with the systematisation and microfilming of archival records.¹ Frequent visits to the monastery gave an opportunity to learn its history. The knowledge was sourced by searching through the archives and studying the works of art collected

1 M. Dębowska, Katalog mikrofilmów Ośrodka Archiwów, Bibliotek i Muzeów Kościelnych Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne 84 (2005), pp. 5–72.

on the site, but also in frequent discussions with the abbess Mother Antonina Zaczyńska. Reading chronicles hitherto unavailable, we were surprised to discover that the enclosed contemplative order, seemingly detached from the outside world, is a place rich in the socio-cultural sense. The nuns not only introduced the convent and its church to the freshest art of the time, but for many years engaged in educational activities, as discussed in this paper; they brought up girls from landlord families and opened a nursery for village children and a household school.² They organised courses for housewives, which were conducted by teachers from the household school, and together with schoolgirls they prepared occasional performances for local people. The Norbertine sisters – nuns separated from the outside world within a papal enclosure – became active participants of a social, extramonastic life. And thus, the contemplative enclosed convent gained the status of a cultural centre open to local communities.³

Beginning of educational activities

The fact that the Norbertine sisters had run an institute for girls from landowning families long before the partitions of Poland already becomes apparent after reading the first monastery chronicle.⁴ However, in 1864 the institute was closed as a result of repressions brought about by the January Uprising.⁵ For many

- 2 B. Skrzydlewska, Realizacja pedagogiki społecznej Norbertanek imbramowickich na przykładzie Prywatnej Żeńskiej Szkoły Rolniczej w latach 1919–1949, in: Pedagogika społeczna w służbie rodzinie, in: Pedagogika społeczna w służbie rodzinie. Aspekt pomocowy, kulturowy i wychowawczy, pod red. K. Gąsior, T. Sakowicz, ed. Akademia Świętokrzyska. Centrum Profilaktyki i Edukacji, Kielce 2005, pp. 245–254.
- 3 B. Skrzydlewska, Kroniki imbramowickie jako źródło wiedzy o wielopłaszczyznowej działalności zakonu Norbertanek w Imbramowicach, in: Materiały pokonferencyjne z ogólnopolskiej konferencji naukowej Książka ponad podziałami, in: Z książką przez życie, ed. A. Krawczyk, Lublin 2008, pp.179–190.
- 4 *Historja domowa klasztoru imbramowskiego Zakonu Premonstratenskiego odemnie Zofii Grothowny xieni ręką własną pisana, i sobie dla pamięci y successorom dla informacji dalszey zostawiona, a w roku Pańskim 1703 zaczęta*, Imbramowice, 1703–1741, file ref. A 27.
- 5 *Sprawozdania z działalności szkoły z lat 1919–1921*, in: *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, Imbramowice ms., B 22, pp. 2 and 37; M. Dębowska, Walka o przetrwanie. Klasztor sióstr norbertanek w Imbramowicach w okresie zaborów, *Między Wisłą a Pilicą. Studia i Materiały Historyczne*, ed. B. Wojciechowska, L. Michalska-Bracha, Kielce 2007, vol. VIII, pp. 137–154.

years, the nuns were forbidden to run any school, even the novitiate. An opportunity to undertake educational activities anew arose in 1905. Only then, after a break of many years, did the nuns reopen the novitiate. On 13 November 1905 this was written in the chronicle: “a candidate Miss Klara Szymborska, aged 24, has come, so the novitiate has been reopened after 41 years, under the supervision of Miss Tekla Siedlecka”.⁶

Several years later, the abbess Maria Nidecka (1897–1917) opened a so-called non-resident school for village children, which ran continuously until 1923 when the elementary school in Imbramowice was established.⁷ Maria Nidecka intended to found a boarding house for teenage girls or a household school for girls. In order to do that, she gathered the necessary documents with the assistance, apparently approved by the bishop, of Revs Canons Bogumił Czerkiewicz and Antoni Bożek; these two attempted to obtain the funds required to establish the school by regaining the land from the parcelled former monastic property.

Unfortunately, the abbess Maria Nidecka died quite unexpectedly on 16 May 1917, but her successor Anzelma Wiśnicka (the abbess between 1917 and 1924) progressed with the plan and finally concluded the opening of the household school for girls.⁸ It was possible only after the monastery had been granted the right to purchase a plot of over 88 acres and a concession from the Ministry of Agriculture to run such an institution. The opening of the school was considered an urgent issue by the Norbertine sisters as, together with Poland regaining sovereignty, they wished to participate in the shaping of a new rural generation.

To obtain sufficient information about how to run such a school, the abbess Wiśnicka, together with one of the sisters, having gained permission from Rome to leave the monastery, visited household schools in Pędzichów, Ruszcza and Szynwald near Tarnów. She prolonged her visit to the School of Household Works for Women in Kuźnice near Zakopane, which was founded by Jadwiga Zamoyska in 1882 in Kórnik near Poznań and moved to Kuźnice in 1891.⁹ A few

6 . *Kronika retrospektywana za lata 1823–1917 spisana w 1924 r. przez s. Marię Łukaszevska*, Imbramowice ms., ANI, file ref. A. 30, pp. 171.

7 *Sprawozdania z działalności szkoły z lat 1919–1921*, in: *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Sprawozdania (1919–1948)*, ms. ANI, file ref. B. 653.

8 *Księga Profesji. Katalog Sióstr Zmarłych od r.p. 1555 Klasztoru ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach pow. Olkuskiego*, ms. ANI (no file ref.), Imbramowice, pp. 80.

9 M. Dębowska, *Rękopis*, in: J. Zamoyska, *Zapiski z rekolekcji*, Lublin 2004, pp. 23.

years later Anastazja Bińczycka, a schoolgirl from Imbramowice, described the school in Kuźnice in these words: "It is a household school run on (a large – an author's insertion) scale with every amenity. The post there is housed in a large multi-floor building surrounded with smaller ones, each erected for a specific purpose. Hard to describe in detail, yet it is nice to see the rush and how everything is ordered there, as in a fairy tale, schoolgirls bustling about busily, agile and silent, and while in their work, they are singing to their comfort instead of talking."¹⁰

The centre in Kuźnice became a model for the newly established school in Imbramowice. In September 1919, the superioress of the school in Kuźnice had already visited Imbramowice with one of the teachers to check the site intended for the school's location and to discuss the issues concerning its functioning. Moreover, the nuns needed a person suitably qualified and experienced to manage the school as well as qualified teachers. Therefore, at the beginning of November three teachers came to Imbramowice, one of whom was Julia Łukaszewska, a person held in a high esteem by Mrs General Jadwiga Zamoyska, who became a director of the Imbramowice school and occupied the position until 30 January 1923, when she took monastic vows.¹¹

The official opening of the school took place in the presence of Rev Mitrata Bogumił Czerkiewicz, Rev Canon Antoni Bożek and local parsons. The classes began on 15 November 1919. The school was then named the Norbertine Girls Lower School of Agriculture, yet in 1939 the school board for the Cracow School District decided to change the name to the Private Female Agricultural School of St Norbert's Sisters in Imbramowice.

Although it is assumed that the official founders were Rev Mitrata Bogumił Czerkiewicz and Rev Canon Antoni Bożek, who helped in solving many

10 A. Bińczycka, *Pamiętnik uczennicy Żeńskiej Szkoły Rolniczej ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach, spisywany w ciągu roku szkolnego 1919/1920*, Imbramowice 1919–1920, ms. ANI (no file ref.), pp. 25–26.

11 Julia Łukaszewska was born in 1886 in Jassy, Romania, and in 1907 she concluded a teachers' seminar. Together with Maria Sebald, they assumed habit on 8 December 1921 from the hands of Rev Canon Antoni Bożek. They took simple vows on 30 January 1924 from the hands of Rev Jan Białecki, the canon of the Kielce Cathedral. They professed perpetual vows on 30 January 1926 from the hands of Ignacy Mieloch SJ, see: *Księga Profesji. Katalog Sióstr Zmarłych od r.p. 1555*, pp. 85–88.

organisational matters to establish the schools, it was the subsequent abbesses who put the greatest effort and enterprise into the plan; starting with Maria Nidecka whose initiative it was, Anzelma Wiśnicka, assigned from Zwierzyniec to manage the monastery in Imbramowice, who made the idea real, Stefania Czerkiewicz, Maria Łukaszewska, and finishing with abbess Konstancja Łukowicz, during whose governance the school was closed down by the authorities of People's Poland.¹²

The first years of the school's existence appeared very difficult. The problem was the lack of suitable accommodation. This could be organised by regaining the former monastery land, which unfortunately resulted in critical rumours circulating among the Imbramowice villagers and an apparent boycott by local people, who took their daughters away from the school in the first year of its existence.

School rooms and buildings

During the first years, due to the shortage of space, the school was accommodated in three rooms on the first floor of the monastery; this part was separated from the enclosure by closed fencing. In 1923, during the land parcellation, the monastery regained a building erected between 1758 and 1769, but badly damaged during World War I. It could, however, be adapted for school purposes. After a thorough renovation conducted by the abbess Stefania Czerkiewicz, the school was accommodated in the renovated rooms and both students and teachers were separated from the monastery.¹³ A multi-floor school building housed classrooms and the dormitory, next to it was a farm building and a granary with a meeting room; the school also utilised a hen-house and a 7887 m² garden.

From a report written in 1933 it can be concluded that some time afterwards the school complex included the school proper – an 18th century double-floor

12 *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Sprawozdania (1919–1948): 1. Sprawozdania z działalności szkoły z lat 1919–1921, 1933–1938, 1946, 2. formularze statystyczne z lat 1931, 1933, 1936–1939, 1946, 1948, 3. ankieta dotycząca szkoły z 1931 r.*, ms. ANI, file ref. B 36, p.47.

13 M. Łukaszewska, *Dzieje Szkoły Rolniczej ss. Norbertanek w pierwszym dziesięcioleciu jej istnienia*, Imbramowice 1930, ms. ANI (no file ref.), pp. 5.

school building. The first floor housed a day room, dining room, kitchen, bakery, pantry, dairy and laundry, whereas the second floor comprised four bedrooms, a cloakroom, infirmary, teachers' room and one classroom. The school complex also utilised the former granary, built at the same time as the actual school building, where a cellar, woodshed and coal and oil cellars were located. A performance hall was organised there, yet due to the lack of a ceiling and windows it was available for use only in the summer, while in the winter it served as a garden shed. The buildings, which were renovated inside and furnished better from year to year, required plastering on the outside. The school complex also included hen-houses and farm buildings, which were newly erected thanks to subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture. The buildings belonged to the school until 1949, when it was closed down and became a communal property. Years of improper use and a lack of restoration works led to the 17th century buildings becoming completely dilapidated; now, following a huge effort by the Norbertine sisters, they are being renovated and adapted as a retreat house.

Educational activity

The main objective borne in mind by the Norbertine sisters when establishing the school was to prepare Polish girls for undertaking civic obligations in the new reality of an independent Poland, reborn after years of partition. The idea behind the school's creation, as formulated in the *School Statutes* by the sisters themselves, was to enlighten young girls' minds with "sound notions of the world, mother country and national past, teach them to run a household and shape their attitudes to prepare them for the oncoming duties of marriage, motherhood and bringing up new generations".¹⁴

The criteria for deciding that a candidate was to be admitted included: at least 16 years of age, a health certificate, a certificate of good conduct, as well as the ability to read and write, best confirmed by a certificate for completing four years of elementary school. Over the course of time, it was decided that completion of all years of elementary school was required; as reported after

14 Ibid, p. 1.

the first year of the school's operation, the intellectual level of the girls admitted varied considerably and some of them did not demonstrate satisfactory reading and writing abilities.¹⁵

The greatest number of schoolgirls attending came from the districts of Miechów, Olkusz and Pińczów, but there were also girls from other voivodships.

The course participants consisted of poor and plain girls, mainly from farm backgrounds. This largest group amounted to 80 % of the total number of students. Over 10 % of the students were girls from clerks' families, and the remaining 10 % of the student population comprised craftsmen's daughters.¹⁶

The syllabus of the school in Imbramowice was mainly based on the curriculum of the Ministry of Agriculture for lower and one-year course agricultural schools. According to a school board document for the Cracow School District of 1 January 1939, the curriculum had to include *The Syllabus for One-Year Agricultural Schools for Girls*, issued in Lviv in 1938. However, in the Imbramowice school special attention was paid to practical skills (Dzieje-Łukaszewska).

After final approval of all organisational matters related to running the school, the school year began on 15 October, to finish on 15 September. The course lasted 11 months and was divided into two semesters: the winter, semester I – five months – and the summer, semester II – six months.

In the winter semester, five thematic groups were formed:

1st group: meal preparation, pie and bread bakery, meat salting and preserving

2nd group: the farm household

3rd group: laundry, ironing and household cleaning

4th group: weaving

5th group: underwear cut and sewing, clothes.

Every schoolgirl had to pass every group after attending each for one month.

In the summer semester, the schoolgirls were divided into four groups: this time in a one-week cycle. They also repeated the classes from winter semester 1st, 2nd and 3rd groups, while the classes from groups 4th and 5th included gardening. The school's founders were driven by the intention that the classes "apart

15 *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Programy i zestawienia (1919–1938)*, pp. 3.

16 *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Sprawozdania (1919–1948)*, ms. ANI, file ref. B 65, pp. 11–12.

from giving the students solid necessary skills, would transfer to them the passion for work, order, conscientiousness, honesty and justice, which we see rarely in our country and which are the foundation of all culture".¹⁷ (B. 22, p. 9).

General education classes were introduced as well, to which 18 hours weekly were devoted. These covered: religion, ethical talks, hygiene, environment, animal breeding and veterinary care, but also the Polish language, in particular studying the oldest literary works, Polish history with an emphasis on the post-partition time, and issues of the country with elements of the geography of Poland and the world. Girls learnt to read musical scores, to sing from a score and they trained in one- and two-part choir singing.

A day at the school was scheduled as follows:

05.00:	wake-up, morning prayers
05.45–07.00:	cleaning
07.00–07.50:	getting ready for classes, breakfast
08.00–09.00:	lessons
09.00–12.00:	practical classes
12.00–13.00:	lunch break
13.00–15.15:	practical classes
15.15–15.30:	afternoon snack
15.30–17.30:	lessons
17.30–18.00:	free time
18.00–20.00:	supper, cleaning, practical classes
20.00:	evening prayers, sleep

Sundays were devoted to prayer and rest; blackberry picking excursions to the forest, a common pastime, and visits to local schoolgirls' houses were also organised.

The girls had to strictly observe the regulations, read out loud on the first day of the school year. They were to:

1. Obey the directions as to behaviour, order and learning
2. Stay silent from evening until morning prayers
3. Direct the letters to the Mother Director: sealed if addressed to their parents, for other addressees, unsealed

17 *Żeńska Szkoła Rolnicza ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach. Programy i zestawienia (1919–1938)*, p. 9.

4. Accept visits only on Sundays and holy days, subject to the superioress' permission, besides mass time, and in a special visiting space
5. Use only own belongings and take care of school property
6. When allowed, the girls could:
 - leave the school premises
 - guide their visitors around the school and school garden
 - bring books and newspapers in from outside, etc.¹⁸

To learn about Poland and unravel its most precious monuments, in time, summer travels around the country were added to the yearly syllabus. As a part of the curriculum, they were arranged almost every year. Such a trip was already included in the first school year. Anastazja Bińczycka, in the above cited *Diary*, described the trip in 1920. She recalls the arrival to Cracow and visits to the most famous churches, the Wawel Castle, the National Museum, the Matejko House and the Kościuszko Mound. A part of this school trip was sightseeing at the Mydliniki model household, where house interior furnishings, nursery-gardens and a cattle farm could be seen.¹⁹ And next there was a trip to the mother school in Zakopane.

Former students had warm memories of the time spent in Imbramowice, which was confirmed by the regular mail sent to the monastery for many years. They not only wrote about their present life, but recalled their school years.

The students describe their first encounter with and their first days at school either in their diaries or in the school chronicles. Maria Urbańska enters such a note explaining what motivated her to undertake the course at the Imbramowice school: “when I was at elementary school I heard from my siblings of a far-away school at a high level. I then imagined being a student of such a school.”²⁰ The first days at school were especially difficult for young girls who had not left their homes before for so long. And it took time to get used to the new environment. Anna Widłakówna describes her first day at school in the following words: “Finally I’m at the spot, my eyes wander around the walls of the school, I get anxious inside; I’m touched by the cold and empty bedrooms, all the more

18 *Kronika uczennic Szkoły Rolniczej w Imbramowicach. Rok 1946*, ms. ANI, file ref. B 61, pp. 16–17.

19 A. Bińczycka, *Pamiętnik uczennicy*, pp. 25.

20 *Kronika uczennic Szkoły Rolniczej w Imbramowicach. Rok 1946*, pp. 5–7.

that I'm almost alone, with one companion only. The second day, after a sleepless night, we wake up, comfort each other – things will work out – and then we get down to work: me at the kitchen, cleaning, my friend bustling about in the bedrooms, lighting fires in the stoves and sweeping, etc. The following days, other girls start arriving to stay. Thus, my first impression changed very quickly: empty and silent bedrooms became bustling and loud, even the dining table, which seemed not to end, was entirely occupied.”²¹

After arrival, on their first day at school, new school year students sat an exam in writing and counting; they wrote their curriculum vitas and solved arithmetic exercises. Then girls were assigned to particular groups, depending on their level. The school year began with a mass, followed by breakfast and a meeting with the directress.

The schoolgirls participated in school ceremonies, commemorating important events such as May 3rd, November 11th, the President's birthday and, later, the anniversary of the death of Marshal Piłsudski. Theatre plays were performed for local people and the money collected was devoted for the mother country.

Students had the students' council at their availability; when gathered for meetings, they presented papers on various subjects, and they also ran a small cooperative shop and the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Easter was preceded by exams, followed by a period of retreat and then a fortnight's holiday.

In some cases, when a girl came from a distance, she could not spend this time at home and had to stay at school. Sisters and lay tutoresses tried to make the holiday time far away from home more enjoyable. Even in the first year of the school's existence several students were forced to stay at school for Christmas but spent it in a friendly atmosphere. Anastazja Bińczycka, then a student of the school, described in her diary the Christmas of 1919: “We have spent the time pleasantly, especially Christmas Eve. We had a Christmas tree, crib, many sweets, and of course we sang carols to the infant Jesus... For Christmas, me and my friends that stayed here got a beautiful gift – Lord Jesus, and I also got a book explaining monastic studies.” The following days she described

21 Ibid, pp. 10–11.

in a letter to a friend: "New Year's Day, however, we began with confession. After breakfast, both joyous and anxious, we wished Happy New Year to the directress and the abbess and her companions, then we visited the Popiel's Palace in Ściborzyce, returning to the monastery for an afternoon snack."²²

From the beginning of its existence, the school aimed to provide upbringing and character training in the spirit of Christianity. Every year a survey was conducted among the students who were to leave the school to inquire what was it that the school had given them. Answering the question, they wrote words such as: "I better know my character and my vices, the school let me broaden my knowledge and learn to pray better." Teachers also noted their observations concerning their schoolgirls' progress and negligence. The most frequent objections addressed to many of the girls were neglected order and hygiene and a lack of concentration. In their "Notes", teachers wrote such remarks as: "she is untidy: she washed her personal things in a dairy bowl... always with her hair disorderly and her clothes filthy" (in a note of 4 July 1936); "it can be spotted that she is keen, but thinks not, is unpractical and knows little" (a note of 11 November 1936); "she did not learn much in sewing classes... is prone to wasting time talking and doing all sorts of things but sewing, thinks... too much of her looks and too little what is to be done. She is sometimes careless in her hygiene" (a note of 28 February 1937). It happened sometimes that students had to be expelled from the school, because of "the troubles in training in general and personal order, especially in personal hygiene, which is why after a month's attendance two students from Pilica had to be sent away as they could not accept the regime of personal cleanliness and school order". Yet, the number of candidates was increasing from year to year; after the first recruitment, 20 students were accepted, whereas in 1936, 111 candidates applied, not all of whom were admitted. As a result of the sisters' and other workers' initiatives, the teachers organised courses for the local people; for instance, in 1935 a course for housewives was organised twice, as well as training in children's health, sewing and cutting of children's linen, a cooking course and an autumn gardening course.

The school's tenth anniversary became a perfect opportunity for the sisters to summarise and draw conclusions from their work. The school developed

22 A. Bińczycka, *Pamiętnik uczennicy*, p. 3.

dynamically and the number of students was growing, therefore it was decided to celebrate the jubilee.

The official ceremonies took place on 24 and 25 August 1929. Rev Bishop Augustyn Łosiński, one of the most important guests, arrived on the Saturday, a day before the main festivities.²³

An exhibition was held in six rooms on the second floor of the school building. On the first floor a day room decorated with needlework, knitting and cut-outs waited for guests. In a sewing room a presentation of various products was prepared, these included fruit and vegetable preserves, pies, bakery, pastries, jellies and, in a corner, dairy products – different kinds of cheese and butter. In the knitting room, guests could admire notebooks with cuts and designs. Many prominent visitors, in addition to Bishop Augustyn Łosiński, viewed the exhibition; for instance, Mr J Stamirowski, the Starost of Olkusz came to see the works. The congress assembled a total of 115 people. Many food and textile products were sold as well.

After a grand dinner, all the guests gathered in front of the gate for a commemorative group photograph. In the evening a ceremony was held in the granary performance hall, where a report about the ten years of the school's existence was read out. Monday began with a High Mass and afterwards a meeting of the Society of Female and Male Youths with the Imbramowice schoolgirls took place. Before dusk the members of the Society of Imbramowicie Schoolgirls assembled for another meeting, at which one of them presented a paper on the society's motto "Do good".²⁴

The school's graduates

Until the beginning of the 1930s, most of the schoolgirls who had successfully completed the course returned home to run households (approx 81 %). Over time, however, owing to the knowledge and skills gained at school, most

23 *Sprawozdanie z przebiegu uroczystości dziesięciolecia Żeńskiej Szkoły Rolniczej ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach i ze zjazdu „Imbramowiczankę”, spisane 27 VIII 1930 r. przez F. K.*, ms. ANI, file ref. B 33.

24 *„Imbramowiczanka”. Jednodniówka Związku b. Uczennic Szkoły Rolniczej ss. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach 1 (1930/31) no. 1–4, pp. 3–4.*

girls decided to undertake a job. Some of them, after completing the course at Imbramowice school, went on to other courses to obtain a household teacher certificate. In the initial period of the school's existence, some girls decided to stay another year to review and consolidate their knowledge. Moreover, there were some who stayed for three or four years to work as auxiliary personnel.

Former schoolgirls, or graduates, stayed in contact both with their fellow students and the teachers from the Imbramowice school. To facilitate contact with the school, they established the Society of Imbramowice Schoolgirls (Związek Imbramowiczaniek), whose main motto was "Do good".

The society organised conventions once a year in Imbramowice. The first such meeting took place on 29 and 30 July 1927.

"Imbramowice Schoolgirls" were socially active and organised different campaigns, including anti-alcohol movements. They adopted a project that former Imbramowice schoolgirls from local villages would meet on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 2 p.m. to sew altar linen, which they also did for the poor churches in Volhynia. During the meetings, one of the gathering would read an interesting book, present a paper or they would sing holy songs together.

To keep in touch with former students, a bulletin entitled "Imbramowice One-daily" (Jednodniówka Imbramowiczanka) was issued. The originator of this idea was Sister Maria Łukaszewska. The aim of the idea was to circulate news about former students by publishing letters, advice, suggestions and words of comfort. The bulletin was funded from the membership fees and the amount collected determined the frequency of the issues.²⁵

The Congregation of Imbramowice Schoolgirls was active within the society.

Letters received from graduates until the 1970s confirm very strong relations with the school. In these letters, they shared happy moments, problems and tragedies that touched them. For most of the Imbramowice schoolgirls the time spent within the walls of St Norbert's monastery was a carefree and happy period, which did not repeat itself anymore. Most probably, when recollecting the school years, they sang a song written especially for them:

25 Ibid

„Na zawsze w sercach naszych” [Forever in our hearts]:

I. Na zawsze w sercach naszych /Forever in our hearts/
 Szkoła wryła ślad /The school has embedded the seal/
 Jej wzniosłe ideały /And its noble ideas/
 niesiemy z sobą w świat /We'll carry with us into life/

Ref.: Niech każda z nas pamięta /May every one of us remember/
 Imbramowiczanką być /To be the girl from Imbramowice/
 Jej wzniosłe ideały /The noble ideas/
 Będziemy zawsze czcić /Dwelling in our hearts /
 Miłością świat ogarnąć /To spread love around/
 Pracę w ofierze dać /To work for the common good/
 A nowym poczynaniom niech błogostawi Bóg.
 /And may God bless the new deeds./

II. A kiedy przyjdą chwile /And when moments of/
 Obłudy, ludzki fałsz /Unkindness and falsehood come/
 To niech wspomnienie szkoły /The memories of school/
 Osłodzą gorzki czas /Will comfort us/

Ref.: Niech każda z nas pamięta /May every one of us remember/²⁶

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²⁶ *Kronika uczennic Szkoły Rolniczej w Imbramowicach. Rok 1946*, pp. 14–15.

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