



## THE BLACK BOX TREASURES

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings. This theory is used in almost every field of science and philosophy and it can be explained in a very easy way: “The child who tries to open a door has to manipulate the handle (the input) so as to produce the desired movement at the latch (the output); and he has to learn how to control the one by the other without being able to see the internal mechanism that links them. In our daily lives we are confronted at every turn with systems whose internal mechanisms are not fully open to inspection, and which must be treated by the methods appropriate to the Black Box.” (Ashby, W. Ross, *An Introduction to Cybernetics*, 86).

Many of us probably don't know that in our Archives here in Rome we have more than 200 black boxes. The boxes where we keep the treasures of our Congregation: letters, writings, reports from the time when our Community was born up to, and including, those of the latest XXXIII General Chapter. Some of those treasures have seen the light of day in many publications, but there are still others waiting to be seen.

It's a great privilege to be able to see and touch (of course using gloves) such treasures as the Diary of the Elder Brother Bogdan Janski, the notes of Peter Semenenko, the letters of Jerome Kajsiewicz or thousands of other documents from our past. The privilege which, as archivist, I would like to share with you, otherwise the “internal mechanisms” of those black boxes “will remain not fully open to inspection” for many of you.

So in this newsletter from the Archives I want to present to you some treasures from the black boxes. Many of those can be found in publications, but others haven't been published yet. Above all, just a few Resurrectionists have had the chance to see its “original version”. I will be doing it gradually taking just one interesting letter at a time and showing its original look and then its printed content. I hope that it will be a source of inspiration for all!

The first black box contains some letters of Fr. Peter Semenenko CR from different years during the period of 1835-1885. There is an envelope number 20 in which can be found the letters to Bogdan Janski. There is a letter numbered 1210 from September 26th, 1835. Fr. Peter wrote it a few days before he and Fr. Jerome arrived at the Benedictine Abbey in Solesmes, France. They wanted to become Benedictine monks, but God prepared a different plan for them. The letter was written in a tavern and it speaks about Versailles, the beauty of the country side and short prayer recited along the way... it speaks also about a certain funny delight of Fr. Jerome...

1514

Monsieur B. Janski.

à Paris, rue de Surenne, 14.

kończył Borsini, który w Anglii był...  
niech & 181

Edward ci powie, że pewnie...  
coś tam robili - po jego wyjeździe (o godz 3) jechaliśmy do...  
wili do 6. albo w...  
Wypiliśmy z Wersalu: 2 kawy...  
jest sam niewiasty gdzie -...  
głównie w...  
wielkim rad...  
moim powie...  
Paryż...  
Paryż...  
głównie z niewiast...  
paryż...  
- Ja ludzie na świecie...

wie Zwiast...  
na ulicy...  
wzrobił mi 40...  
nawrócić...  
nie gniewać...  
Zeznam...  
Chartrus, 27. południe, -

Przybyliśmy tu o 10<sup>4</sup> - byliśmy w...  
my nasz...  
w trzy -

Nawracaliśmy...  
Hieronim...  
Cezary...  
Dien a crée tout de rien -

"Dear Bogdan,

Where would you find ink in a tavern? And so, let a pencil do the work. You must forgive me.

Edward has undoubtedly told you of our arrival in Versailles and what we did there. After he left at 3 o'clock we stayed on until 6 o'clock because Hlusniewicz invited us for dinner. We left Versailles at 6, and travelled two more leagues until we arrived here - we ourselves don't know exactly where. The weather was perfect, especially yesterday evening. It was quiet at eventide - it was 7 o'clock - as we walked along lost in thought, already far from Versailles, up to which, one can say, Paris dominates. Then we finally left Paris behind us, and were now entirely in the country. After the brilliance of a Paris evening with all its noise, we found ourselves in complete darkness and quiet; when suddenly, from some unseen church off to the right, the Angelus sounded. We took off our caps, crossed ourselves and recited the greeting.

There are people on this earth I find difficult to describe. Louis Zwierkowski is such a person. We had dinner together. After dinner, when we had gone out onto the street, he ran after us, and taking Jerome off to a side, he shoved 40 sous into his pocket "for tobacco". Isn't that silly? Jerome asked me to write this to you. His first reaction was to be angry; but later the incident was a source of endless delight to him. I'll say good-bye. We're leaving" (ACRR 1210)