

O. Dariusz Kasprzak OFMCap

THE IDEA OF POVERTY IN THE 1ST–3RD CENTURY CHURCH

S u m m a r y

Neither contemporary historical-critical analysis nor theological biases of the New Testaments allowed us to regard the Consecrated Life as a revealed one. Jesus is not named directl “poor” in the Gospel. The Christian institution of consecrated poverty is an theological creation constituted by ascetic analysis of some Jesus words and attitudes. According to the NT the “poor” are those which receive freely given salvation and live in community of Redeemer disciples. In the early Church didn’t exist unambiguous model of poverty yet. It caused different ascetic interpretations of the possession and use of material goods: the naturalistic approach, begging in the name of God, the existence thanks to apostolic work, apostolate and paid work, renunciation of private possession and life in the Christian community. The idea of radical renunciation of possession didn’t exist in that early patristic period of the Church. The majority of people converted to Christianity originated from poor social class. The only distinction was that Christians believed in the Kingdom of God and hoped of better eternal life. Since the 4th century the passage of the Cor. 8, 9 had been referred to the idea of Christ’s perfect poverty in its soteriological interpretation. God in His Incarnated Son humbled Himself so that the man may receive God and return to God.