

Resurrectionist Spirituality Center

Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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Servant of God **Fr. Peter Semenenko, CR** **(29 VI 1814 – 18 XI 1886)**

Co-founder and superior general of the Resurrectionists. Philosopher and theologian. Creator of the main spiritual ideas of the Congregation (Resurrectionist School of Spirituality). Author of many philosophical and theological works, as well as on the interior life. He left massive correspondence and as well as a personal diary. He founded (1865) and was the first rector (president) of the Polish Pontifical College in Rome. Many alumni of the College (1865-1938) accepted and adopted Resurrectionist spirituality and became outstanding: priests, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, some have been beatified and even canonized.

Peter Semenenko was born on 29th June 1814 in Dzieciołów (north-east Poland). In 1830 he started his studies at the University of Wilno (Department of Philosophy), but soon interrupted them because he decided to join the November Uprising against Russian invaders. He emigrated to France in 1832, where, in Paris, he met Bogdan Jański in 1833, who soon became his spiritual director and master. Under his influence, Semenenko returned to the Catholic faith and became the first member of the “Jański House” in 1836, which was the beginning of the Congregation of the Resurrection.

After the early death of Bogdan Jański in 1840 in Rome, Peter Semenenko was elected the first superior and spiritual leader of the new community. When he finished his theological studies (Collegium Romanum, 1837-41), he was ordained to the priesthood on 5th December 1841 (not without difficulties from Russian authorities). As a main co-founder of the order, he wrote the rule of 1842 and was the principal editor of the (1850 - 1880) rules. He also was superior general of the Congregation for a good number of years (1842-1845, 1873-1886).



Peter Semenenko

*Young Fr. Peter with the Rule
of the Resurrectionist written
by himself (1842)*



Prayer is your only strength. In prayer we gather the strength to conquer difficulties, to accomplish good works, to increase the perfection of our virtue, to achieve total union with God, and this is our true life. Prayer is a Christian's defense. He must keep this weapon in hand at all times.

Fr. Peter Semenenko, CR



Fr. Peter Semenenko actively collaborated with the Holy See. He was an expert on Polish and Eastern matters and was regarded as one of the most scholar members of the Church in the second part of the XIX Century. Because of his knowledge, he was held in high esteem by popes. He worked as a consultor for the Sacred Congregations: of the Index (since 1857) and the Holy Office (since 1873) [Doctrine of Faith]. His work was highly praised, and his statements were taken as final on a regular basis. He was a member of the prestigious Papal Academies: Accademia della Religione Cattolica (since 1859), and Accademia degli Arcadi (since 1874). He was an outstanding erudite and freely able to discuss even the most subtle problems.

He was a highly respected priest, confessor and spiritual leader of many lay and religious persons, i.a.: blessed Celine Borzęcka and Hedwig, Blessed Francis Siedliska, Blessed Marceline Darowska. He was a co-founder or helped to found many women's religious congregations, e.g.: Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of the Resurrection, Felician Sisters, Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Consolers of the Sacred Heart (Belgium), Sisters of Adoration Réparatrice (France). He preached in various churches in Poland, France, Belgium, Bulgaria and Rome.

Much of his attention went towards the youth. He desired to inspire their devotion to science and holiness. He laid the foundation for the Resurrectionist system of education.

Fr. Peter Semenenko, CR died on 18th November 1886 in Paris, France in the odor of sanctity. His remains rest in the Resurrectionist's church in Rome (via San Sebastianello 11). Beatification process was started shortly after World War II.

Pope Leo XIII, upon hearing of Fr. Peter's death, stated: "Father Semenenko was so esteemed in the whole city of Rome for his virtues. He was the soul of your Congregation and sacrificed his life for its welfare."



Cover of the clock
given to Fr. Peter
by renown
watchmaker
A. Patek

Fr. Semenenko's books published in English:

- *The Interior Life*, Rome 1969 (translated by F.J. Grzechowiak CR);
- *The "Our Father" – A Commentary*, Rome 1986;
- *Letters*, vols. I-VI.



Peter Semenenko
Prop. Gen. Cong. a Resurr. D. N. J. Christ.



*God's works happen
slowly, in silence, with
great patience and
difficulties.*

Fr. Peter Semenenko, CR

