



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...

