

News & Views

Assumption Province, Canada

Celebrating Fr. Rudy Nowakowski's 50 anniversary of Priesthood



It was a beautiful sunny day on October 31st at St. Henry's Parish in Melville, SK. where many Oblates, laity, guests and parishioners gathered to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination to the Priesthood of Fr. Rudy Nowakowski, OMI. Fr. Rudy served as Pastor in Melville for many years and in some way, this was like coming home again for him. This also provided a wonderful opportunity to meet with the Oblates working in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Parishes are separated by great distances and such meetings are not always possible.

The Eucharistic Celebration was celebrated by Fr. Rudy and homily delivered by Very Rev. Fr. Janusz

Blazejak, OMI; Provincial of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The following were also in attendance: Fr. Maciej Pajak, OMI, District Superior and Pastor of Holy Ghost Church, Winnipeg, MB.; Fr. Antoni Degutis, OMI, Pastor of St. Henry's Parish; Sr. Bernadette Feist, OSU, Native Ministry, Lebret, SK. It was with regret that Fr. Wojciech Wojtkowiak, OMI, Pastor of Mary Queen of All Hearts Church, Lestock, SK., and Fr. Casimir Krystkowiak, OMI in residence at St. Henry's Parish in Melville, SK. were not able to attend due to health reasons, however, we know that they were with us in spirit.

During the Eucharistic Celebration, Fr. Rudy was greeted with enthusiasm by former parishioners. Following the Celebration, the entire community was invited to the parish hall for a presentation to our Jubilarian and a reception following. Many parishioners warmly expressed their immense gratitude and appreciation to Fr. Rudy for his many years of wonderful priestly ministry. Following the gathering, a meeting was held at which time, Fr. Marcin Mironiuk, OMI, Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Sturgis, SK was able to attend.



Fr. Rudy is a man who always has a smile on his face and he ministers his priesthood and experience with an open heart to anyone who asks for it. He is well respected by many parishioners and his Oblate brothers. This 50th Anniversary Celebration was for us as well a small retreat, an opportunity to recall the essence of the priestly vocation and thanksgiving for this great gift. We wish Fr. Rudy many divine graces and blessings for many years to come.

Fr. Rudy was born in and spent his first few years in the farming area of Rama, Saskatchewan. During his teen years he

and his family lived in Kuroki, SK. During his high school years: 1949 to 1954; he resided at the Oblate House of Studies and attended classes at St. Michael's College School in Toronto. This was followed by a year at the Oblate Novitiate in St. Norbert, MB and first vows in 1955. Fr. Rudy studied philosophy and theology at St. Charles Scholasticate in Battleford, SK and was ordained in 1960. Upon completing his theology in 1961, Fr. Rudy went to Ottawa for Pastoral studies at Sedes Sapientiae (now St. Paul's University) and courses in Education at the University of Ottawa.

He served as Assistant Pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in St. Catharines, ON from 1962 to 1965 and later at Holy Rosary Parish in Edmonton, AB from 1965 to 1967. From 1967 to 1982, Fr. Rudy taught at Michael Power/St. Joseph's High School in Toronto, ON and for several summers during this time he continued courses in Education in Toronto and Ottawa. Fr. Rudy returned to parish work from 1982 to 1997 as Pastor of St. Henry's Parish in Melville, SK where he also ministered to St. Henry's School and St. Peter's Hospital. For several years he was also a member on the Pastoral Committee and Parish Home Ministry Committee of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan. This term in Melville was followed by a sabbatical year in 1997-98 at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem and Vatican II Institute in Menlo Park, CA.

Fr. Rudy served as Assistant Pastor at the Oblate Novitiate in Godfrey, IL., from 1998 to 1999 and also from 2000 to 2003; in the interim year, 1999 to 2000, he was an Assistant Pastor at Holy Ghost Parish in Winnipeg, MB. In 2003, Father was assigned as Director of Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, ON. Presently, Fr. Rudy is serving at the Novitiate in Godfrey, IL where he has been since the year 2006.

During his years of ministry, Fr. Rudy also served on the Assumption Provincial Council from 1977 to 1980 and from 1990 to 2005.

Fr. Maciej Pajak OMI

CROCUS meets in Halifax, NS



The Canada-US region meeting took place in Halifax from November 10 to 14. The meeting was attended by all the provincials of the regions, vice-provincials or their delegates, as well as the departing General Councillor Fr. Marcel Dumais OMI and the new councillor for the region, Fr. Warren Brown, OMI.

The main topic of the meeting was the recent Chapter and its final document. The participants discussed how we, as a Region,

might implement the resolutions of the Chapter and respond to the challenges to which the Chapter calls us. Of course, every province has already begun to put into practice the Chapter's call to conversion in every area of our life and missionary activity but what can we as a Region do together to answer this call?

We also discussed what projects we could undertake as a Region on the occasions of the 150th anniversary of the death of our Founder next year, as well as the 200th anniversary of the founding of our Congregation in 1916. The next Regional meeting will take place in mid-March in Vancouver.

Holy Angels 50th Anniversary Celebration Sunday, October 17th, 2010



During the latter half of the 1950's there was an increase in the Catholic population in the area of Islington and Queensway. Fr. Michael J. Smith OMI saw the need for another Catholic parish and petitioned Cardinal McGuigan to establish a new parish to be called Holy Angels. Permission was granted and the first Mass was celebrated in

Holy Angels School on November 20, 1960 with Fr. Smith.

Fr. S. Misiag OMI became pastor and led the campaign to raise money for the hall and rectory. Fr. Misiag's health failed and Fr. S. Putniak OMI became pastor in the summer of 1961. By Christmas construction of the hall was completed and Midnight Mass 1961 was the first Mass celebrated there.

In August 1963, Fr. Frank Kosakiewicz OMI was appointed pastor. The large growth of the Italian community led to the appointment of the first Italian speaking pastor, Fr. Carmelo Iuculano OMI in October 1967.



Planning for a new church building proceeded under Fr. Carmelo. The cornerstone was laid in 1969 and the first Mass in the new church was held on Palm Sunday, 1970.

Fr. Benito Framarin OMI became pastor in July 1971. Fr. Peter Gioppato OMI became pastor in 1976 and stayed until 1983. Fr. Benito returned as pastor in the fall of 1983 and stayed until 1986. On Feb. 17, 1987 Fr. Edward Swiatek was appointed pastor of

Holy Angels and stayed until his death.

The present pastor is Fr. Peter Gioppato. Holy Angels Church has been blessed with a succession of dedicated and caring Oblate priests.

The 50th Anniversary Mass was celebrated by Most Rev. Bishop William McGrattan on Sunday, October 17, 2010. Concelebrants were Rev. Janusz Blazejak, Rev. Peter Gioppato, Rev. Mariusz Wilk & Rev. Peter Reginato. St. Michaels' Choir School boys, under the direction of Edward McCall, provided the music for this special day. The mass was well attended.

Following the mass a Thanksgiving Luncheon was held at La Treport Restaurant for approximately 500 people. Many different cultures living, working and worshipping together enjoyed an afternoon of camaraderie and fine cuisine.

Looking forward to the next 50 years under the spiritual guidance of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Our Lady Queen of Poland sings for 20 years

November 15, 2010



Archbishop Richard Smith celebrated Mass marking Our Lady Queen of Poland's 20 yrs.

BY ZYGMUNT CYNAR

EDMONTON – The Polish parish of Our Lady Queen of Poland on the south side of Edmonton is now 20 years old. This occasion was celebrated with a special Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Richard Smith, and a banquet on Oct. 23.

Holy Rosary Parish in the north of Edmonton had met the needs of the faithful, but after the great immigration wave of the 1980s, there was a need to create a second Polish parish on the south side.

Poles, who in the 1980s came from Poland and settled in south Edmonton, were mostly young, educated and put great emphasis on their faith.

The south side parish began to take shape in 1987 with the involvement of Father Teofil Szendzielarz. Szendzielarz understood the spiritual needs of new immigrants and the need for a new parish.

LOOKING FOR A HOME

Pastor Wladyslaw Karciarz was helpful in the final stage of the parish establishment. The first Mass took place in the spring of 1987 in the J.H. Picard School gym. Masses were held there irregularly in modest, non-standard conditions, so they stopped in the autumn of the same year.

Regular Masses resumed in the hospitable St. Michael's Church on 101st Avenue. It was a temporary solution, as the location of the church was not favourable and soon the quarters were too small.

A decision was made to look for a building that would meet the requirements of the new parish. In early 1989 the Southside Pentecostal Assembly at 99th Street and 83rd Avenue was put up for sale and the Polish parish decided to buy the building. The church required thorough renovation of the interior, especially the sanctuary area.

The first Mass in the church was celebrated Nov. 5, 1989. A makeshift altar was set up on the podium. On the back wall behind the altar hung a painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

Adapting the interior of the building to the needs of the Catholic Church required a lot of effort and funding. The commitment and generosity of the parishioners was admirable. After several months, a new sanctuary emerged - brightly lit, symbolizing the path of salvation through the cross.

In March 1990, Archbishop Joseph MacNeil named Oblate Father Mieczyslaw Fidyka as the parish priest.

On Oct. 21, 1990, MacNeil consecrated the church. At the ceremony many parishioners did not hide their tears of joy.

In 1991, Fidyka was appointed the first pastor of the parish dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Poland. Later, retired priest Oblate Father Jan Sajewicz assisted with parish work. Sajewicz worked in the parish until his death in 1994.

The parish soon flourished. New organizations formed, such as the Living Rosary Society, Families of Nazareth Movement and later the Friends of the Mission, and youth catechesis started.

Many parishioners have joined to work with youth. Romuald Bobkowski, a talented musician, taught young parishioners from the newly formed the Hallelujah choir to play guitar and sing. Stefania Sliwinska conducted the children's choir, Hosanna.

The Salve Regina parish choir in the care of Barbara Pruski was also formed. Mr. and Mrs. Surmacz also enriched the liturgies with their guitar accompaniment and singing.

GIFT OF YOUTH



Youth enriched the spiritual life of the parish. Many young parishioners took part in the festivals of song and sacred music. One was a team Magnificat, which represented the parish at the Sacrosong festival in Toronto. Recordings of Magnificat's sacred songs hit the radio waves of Father Justin Rosary Hour broadcast from Buffalo, N.Y.

On Oct. 24, 1993, the church held a great festival of religious song, titled To You Mary We Sing. Under this heading, 12 choirs from different parishes in Edmonton honoured the Virgin Mary, queen of the holy rosary.

Father Fidyka inspired and encouraged young people to participate in parish life. Through his personality and organizational skills he won over many people, including many new immigrants.

The church became a place where people could meet, get to know each other and make lasting friendships. Older immigrants helped new immigrants find jobs and adapt to new living conditions. Many distinguished guests, not just clergy, visited the parish.

Many people became actively involved, offering their skills and talents. One was Bruno Stasiak, who created a sculpture of Christ on the cross, and, on behalf of his family, gave it to the parish, as a wonderful Christmas gift in 1990.

An artistic Way of the Cross, located on the side walls of the church, was created by Robert Bober.

Mariann Sheptycki, friendly and helpful, led the parish office. For Mariann, specific work hours were irrelevant; she was always there when needed. The first organist was Jurek Cieslik, who serves the parish faithfully to this day.

The Living Rosary Society, chaired first by Jadwiga ukomska and now by Mila Batowska, began to play an important role in charitable activities of the parish providing assistance to people in need. The society was instrumental in furnishing and modernizing the church kitchen and the parish hall took care of the liturgical needs of the parish.

MISSIONS SUPPORTED



The activities of the Friends of Mission, in the protective care of the late Irena Kostecka and now Elizabieta Banach, glorifies the name of this parish, by providing ongoing support to missions, not only financially, but also in prayer.

In October 1996, the church bell, made on special order in Poland, was blessed and dedicated.

The Sisters of the Name of Jesus joined the work in the parish. New organizations also formed: Little Knights of the Merciful Heart of Jesus, the Living Rosary Padre Pio, the Knights of Columbus, Parish Club.

In September 1997 Fidyka was moved to the mission in Bashaw and Father Slawomir Trzasko came to serve the parish.

At that time, the biggest project in the parish was the construction of the priests' residence. He looked after the demolition of an old house and building of the new residence.

An experienced missionary in Paraguay, Trzasko supported the activities of Friends of Mission and was wholeheartedly engaged in the parish.

In December 1998, the parish experienced a joyful moment when all its debts were paid.

The parish welcomed the new millennium with Mass and all-night adoration.

In the spring of 2002, Trzasko left for Toronto and Father Janusz Jajeniak took over as pastor.

POLISH TRADITIONS

Jajeniak introduced Polish ecclesiastical traditions. He led the first Corpus Christi procession through the streets near the church and engaged the youth.

Jajeniak initiated a mission to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the parish. The event was led by a Polish missionary and culminated with the Mass celebrated by Archbishop Thomas Collins. The mission was a big event and a profound religious experience for the parish.

In mid-2008, Father Jajeniak was transferred to a parish in Ottawa and Oblate Father Slawomir Oblak took over.

The new pastor, with passion and enthusiasm, continues the work with young people and took over the spiritual care of the children's choir and a youth team who are the joy and pride of the parish.

Thanks to youth work of Agata Guzik and Cezary Zmyslowski, the church held many beautiful charitable concerts, helped and technically supported by Piotr Guzik providing perfect sound, lighting and other effects.

There is the tradition of Christmas concerts. Concerts under the slogan: Let's Sing a Carol to Jesus Today enjoyed a great success.

The church also hosted concerts on the Polish national holidays.

CHARITY CONCERT

In March 2009, Our Lady Queen of Poland held a charity concert with the participation of young people from the Polish Saturday Maria Chrzanowska School and our Polish guest artists. The evening of music and poetry was an incredible experience.

Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish is the singing parish because people are concerned about singing and want to praise God with all their heart.

Young people continue to enrich the spiritual life. The future of this parish belongs to young parishioners who during these 20 years have received the sacraments in the parish as well as to parishioners and new arrivals to our city. Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish's 20 years represent a success story, not only for its founders and parishioners, but also for the entire Polish community.

Worth noting on your calendar:

December 6th -10th

Provincial Council Meeting, Toronto

December 8th, 11:00 AM

Immaculate Conception Celebration, Mississauga

December 28, 2010 at 11:30 AM

Toronto District: Christmas Dinner at Holy Angels.

January 4, 2011 at 12:00 PM

Christmas Dinner, Polish Priests Associations, St. Casimir's Parish

January 17 – 21, 2011

Assumption Province Study Days

Feb. 28 – March 1, 2011

Provincial Council Meeting

May 2 – 6, 2011

Provincial Council Meeting

June 13 – 17, 2011

Assumption Province Retreat