

A CONCISE HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF THE HOLY ROSARY PARISH IN BALTIMORE

There are very few written records regarding the first Polish settlers in Baltimore, but it is known through oral tradition that a Polish community was established here around the year 1870. It consisted mainly of immigrants from Poznan, who came to Washington's free country, seeking the opportunity to nurture their Polish language and faith, something that Bismark's Prussian laws severely forbade.

The fate of these first settlers in a foreign land was by no means rosy. One can only surmise from the reminiscences of the few surviving pioneers still among us, that those settlers had to contend with tremendous hardships, and allow intuition to fill in the rest.

From oral tales we know that this first small band of pioneers congregated in the port area, working in packing houses or as seasonal farm hands. Their spiritual needs had to be met by Catholic churches of other nationalities, as for example the German parishes or the more sympathetic, Czech parish.

As their numbers grew to include 50 families, they formed Polish religious organizations. So it was that about the year 1877, the Society of St. Stanislaw Kostka was founded, whose main goal was to gather funds for erecting a Polish church in Baltimore. It is not clear who founded this Society, but Toezkowski, Welzant, and the still living Milanecz were some of the most active members of those pioneers, to name a few. After collecting modest funds, the Society invited the Rev. Konec to come to Baltimore and thus established the first Polish church of St. Stanislaw Kostka.

The following years witnessed a marked increase of Polish immigrants, not only swelling numbers but introducing new causes, new truths and concomitant with that, certain conflicts and misunderstanding within the community. The Society of St. Stanislaw Kostka withdraws from the church of the same name, leaving it in the care of other fellow countrymen and joins for a short time the

Czech church. The longing need to hear the mother tongue when seeking spiritual refreshment, created in a short time the incentive to once again organize a Polish parish.

In 1886 enterprising members of the Society diligently begin to work towards establishing a new parish. Among those were Sluzewski, Zacharski, Molis, Molerski, Chylewicz, Brzozowski, Chichocki, Wachowiak, Kosiak, Jarzynski, Welzant, Jaworski and others. Some of these have since passed away, others are still with us. Having collected nearly 20 thousand dollars, they purchased an old Protestant church on Eastern Avenue and founded in its place a Polish church -- Our Lady of the Holy Rosary.

Rev. Piotr Chowaniec, the first pastor, celebrated the first mass in the new church on December 8, 1887. The only historical information regarding him is found in the first issue of the "Polonia" dated Dec. 31, 1891, which included a photograph of Father Chowaniec and the following text:

"Rev. Piotr Chowaniec was born on January 17, 1856 in Posada Zarszynska of the Sanock province in Galicia. After finishing his schooling in Jasle, he began theological studies in Przemysl, where he later received minor orders. He came to America in 1881, settling in Buffalo, N.Y. where he was ordained in 1882. Subsequently he moved to Brown Co., Wis. where he served seven parishes of various nationalities: Poles, Czech, Germans and Americans. After a while he became the administrator of six parishes in Minnesota: Pelham, Stephen, Aven, Browns, Brookway and Swan River, where he built churches and founded parishes. Since his arrival here in 1887, he has been pastor of Holy Rosary Church in Baltimore, which was founded under his leadership."

In 1892 death tragically ended his fruitful and ambitious labors and Rev. Chowaniec was succeeded by a man of extraordinary talents and character, Rev. Dr. Mieczyslaw Barabasz. As the continual flow of immigrants from all three partitioned sectors of Poland increased, the parish expanded so greatly under his administration, that the church had to be enlarged to its present dimensions.

The school which had been built by Rev. Chowanice was also enlarged. The third floor was remodeled and additional classes formed so that there were now 8 classes, comparable to the public school system, thus giving Polish children the opportunity to complete their elementary education in a Polish school. In his pastoral duties, Rev. Barabasz was assisted by each of the following in turn: Rev. Jozef Dulski, Rev. F. Mard, Rev. S. Cynalewski, Rev. Bronislaw Gebert and Rev. Jozef Rojewski.

Aside from his pastoral responsibilities, Rev. Barabasz diligently pursued patriotic commitments. He took an active part in all of the organized endeavors of the Polish Colony, even issuing a weekly entitled "Friend of the Home". In the only remaining issue in existence, dated April 20, 1899 we find that Rev. Barabasz planned to send a memorial to the Peace Commission in the Hague on behalf of Poland, stating in effect that as long as Poland is not a free country, the world cannot dream of Peace. Rev. Barabasz left behind a plentiful estate of verses and poems, which unfortunately were not properly gathered and preserved for posterity as were the works of other, perhaps even lesser poets. His untimely death on Dec. 9, 1914 was ^{it}mourned by his parishioners and all of Polonia.

Immediately following the death of Rev. Barabasz, Rev. Bronislaw Gebert administered the parish for a short time before leaving Baltimore. He was succeeded by the young, energetic and zealous Rev. Stanislaw Wachowiak.

Parishioners of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary parish. prudently foresaw that their immigration would soon lack spiritual leaders, and that they must train their own young people. Consequently, many Polish families provided their children with higher education, despite tremendous hardships, and many of these young people chose the priesthood.

One of these was Rev. Stanislaw Wachowiak. Born Nov. 10, 1885 in Baltimore of Polish immigrant parents from Poznan, he grew up within the Polish community in America. From childhood he shared in their joys and trials, understanding their inherent needs, and thus was better prepared to become their pastoral leader.

To date his work has been most fruitful. Since his labors are so fresh in our minds, we must leave the task of evaluating his achievements to future historians. We will take the liberty however, to name a few of these accomplishments.

In 1917 the church was painted for \$4000; a new chapel was erected at the cemetery for \$10,000; in 1921 a new convent was built for the teaching Sisters for \$53,000; the following year a new school was erected with modern equipment, for \$200,000; 46 buildings were purchased in 1926 for \$230,000, in order that a new church building could be built and in 1927 a magnificent church edifice and rectory were built for \$600,000 (including furnishings).

The total material cost of these material achievements is one million ninety seven thousand dollars. This is ample evidence of the young pastor's diligence and administrative courage, as well as the outstanding generosity of the parishioners. When we add that the annual cost of supporting the priests and sisters and maintaining the school and church is 30 thousand dollars, then the generosity of Holy Rosary parishioners is incredible and deserves much acclaim!

The energetic pastoral care of Rev. Wachowiak was properly noted by the church hierarchy and in November 1924, Pope Pius XI honored him with the title of monsignor. Archbishop Michael J. Curley officially presided over the investiture, attended by numerous clergy and faithful.

Aside from his priestly work, we must mention Monsignor Wachowiak's civic and patriotic work. Memorable is his zealous activity during the World War, not only on behalf of his native country, Poland, but also on behalf of his adopted country, America. Through his encouragement, the parish of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary sent 480 volunteers to the U.S. Army, and 1,200 volunteers to the Polish Army in France, facts which speak eloquently of the patriotism not only of the young pastor, but of the parishioners as well. Besides this, the parishioners purchased American bonds for \$150,000 and Polish bonds for \$125,000, sending also large transports of food and clothing overseas. Few parishes could boast of such a record.

Father monsignor is assisted in his pastoral work by other priests, also sons of the parish. Rev. Stanislaw Wikarski, currently pastor of another parish in Graceland Park was a long term assistant; Rev. Piotr Rakowski, Rev. Jan Cysz and Rev. Tadeusz Skrzynski. The recently deceased Rev. Stanislaw Wegnerowicz, a zealous priest and patriot and worthy literary successor of Rev. Barabasz was also an assistant.

Because of the zealous labors of Monsignor Wachowiak and his assistants, the parish of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, evolving from tiny beginnings 40 years ago, has grown in numbers and material wealth. Presently it has 2,300 families and is the largest Catholic parish not just in the city of Baltimore, but in the entire Baltimore archdiocese. The parish buildings are best testimony of its material wealth -- their crowning piece being the newly consecrated church -- the largest Catholic church in Baltimore, both in terms of the interior and exterior.

To conclude this brief parish history, we must note that the material achievements are secondary -- of much greater importance is the moral and spiritual growth of the parish. We sincerely hope that just as in the past we have not weakened in this respect, so too, we will not succumb to weakness in the future. The new church building shall become the spring from which flow the truly refreshing waters that will ease our trek down life's tortuous paths, and transform our lives so that they may be indeed meaningful for us and our neighbors and give glory to Our Father who is in heaven.

The idea of building a new Holy Rosary Church emerged from the pressing need for a larger place of worship in view of the growing parish. Following lengthy negotiations, 47 homes were purchased in the area of Chester and Bank Streets for the total amount of \$23,000 and construction was begun. Architectural plans for the church and rectory were drawn up by Frank Baldwin and Konstanty Radziszewski and construction was entrusted to Fraine Bros. & Haigley.

On the 24th of April, 1927, Archbishop Michael J. Curley blessed the cornerstone with numerous clergy and faithful in attendance, and Rev. A. Kurzeja, S.S.J.

delivered a commemorative sermon. That very same year Rt. Rev. Monsignor S. Wachowiak celebrated Christmas Eve Midnight Mass in the new church. Approximately 8,000 faithful worshipped with him, their hearts filled with joy that that which they only dared dream of, had become a reality, and a magnificent one at that. We can all look with pride at this achievement.

Archbishop M. Curley, assisted by Bishop Plagens from Detroit will perform the solemn consecration -- Sunday April 15, 1928. In honor of that celebration, this concise history of the parish has been prepared.

HOLY ROSARY SCHOOL

"Youth is the sculptor
that shapes our entire life" Krasinski

The foundation of a living and deep faith, and incidentally of good manners and principles is unquestionably a good school, because it is the school that trains future members of the Church and society. It is the school that shapes the lives of the younger generation, and although the actual length of schooling is not that great, its effects last for a lifetime.

The Church quickly recognized the importance of education and in a motherly fashion firmly supported schools and other institutions that trained and educated, both in other countries and in the United States, where the government permitted the development of private schools of various denominations.

Consequently the first priests and parishioners of Holy Rosary, fully understanding the value of a Catholic school, strove to establish such a school from the very beginning. The first such school was formed by the first pastor, Rev. Chowaniec already in the year 1887. At that time it consisted of barely 50 children, but that number grew, and already during the administration of Rev. Barabasz, the school had to be enlarged to accommodate nearly 900 children.

That enlarged school, however, did not suffice for long. Rev. Barabasz's successor, Rev. Wachowiak soon realized that with the continually growing number of Polish children, the parish was in dire need of a larger and better equipped school.

He appeals to his parishioners for support and they respond with great generosity so that within a short time, a magnificent building is constructed, costing 200 thousand dollars. In October of 1922 Archbishop Curley blessed the new school with numerous clergy and city and state officials present, and Rev. Victor Bielecki, S.S.J. delivered a rousing sermon to commemorate the celebration.

The new school, a beautiful 4 story building with 22 classrooms, meets modern standards in terms of lighting, ventilation and hygiene. It also has a large auditorium and well equipped stage, suitable for plays, meetings etc.

The curriculum includes 8 grades and covers all the material found in the public school curriculum, with the addition of Polish subjects. 1700 children attend this school, taught by the Felician Sisters. Proof that this curriculum is equal to that of the public schools is the fact that an eighth grade graduate can pass right on to high school with no additional examinations required. In addition to having the same subjects as in public school, a child trained at Holy Rosary school receives a valuable religious education, and learns the Polish language and the history of his fathers -- something our generous fellow Poles can expect of our school in return for their tremendous generosity in supporting this goal.

HOLY ROSARY CEMETARY

It is the deepest desire of every Pole, wanderer, to someday return to his beloved country and there be finally laid to rest. Not everyone however, can return to the Motherland. Many of our first pioneers died here and had to be buried on foreign soil, and so it will be with others. To satisfy this need at least in part, Holy Rosary parish obtained a cemetery in its early history. True, it is located on foreign soil, but it was dearly bought for Polish sweat and blood, and Polish tombstones implore God's mercy for the souls of Poles, wanderers whose earthly remains rest here. Holy Rosary cemetery is located about 6 miles beyond the city limits and covers a large area of land which should suffice for a long time. It is well maintained resembling rather a beautiful park than a place for

the dead. Its most beautiful ornament is a lovely chapel, erected for 10 thousand dollars. Every year a special service for the dead is offered in that chapel on the first Sunday following All Saints Day. Numerous faithful participate in this service.

ORGANIZATIONS IN HOLY ROSARY PARISH

Holy Rosary parish came into existence thanks to an organization whose slogan was "in unity, strength", therefore, little wonder that to this day, organizations flourish and grow in the parish. They are supported by outstanding parishioners who know the importance of organizational unity and come together to mutually offer material and moral support.

These organizations are enormously significant not only to their membership and to those who receive aid from them in times of misfortune, but particularly because they offer material and moral support to the parish and Church with which they are united. Currently, Holy Rosary parish has the following organizations and societies:

1. Holy Trinity Society
2. St. Dominic Society
3. St. Adalbert Society
4. St. Martin's Cadets
5. Knights of St. Adalbert
6. Pulaski Brigade
7. Society of St. Stanislaw Kostka (Polish Roman Catholic Alliance)
8. St. Casimir Society (National Polish Alliance)
9. St. Hedwig Society
10. Children of Our Lady of Czestochowa
11. Heart of Mary Society
12. Altar society
13. Girl's Sodality of the Immaculate Conception
14. Rosary Society

Several alliance groups have formed within the parish, so that almost without exception, every Holy Rosary parishioner belongs to some Polish organization and enjoys its material and moral benefits.

CHURCH CHOIRS IN THE HOLY ROSARY PARISH

"Fire will devour painted deeds
Treasures, thieves will with a sword plunder --
Song, alone will survive ..." Mickiewicz

To evoke a religious or patriotic atmosphere, nothing is quite as effective as a hymn or a song. Within the church, the maxim, "He that sings, prays twice" has long held, while with respect to patriotic songs, the cry, "As long as there is a song in life, so will the Motherland endure" is particularly true because Polish culture in America will last only as long as the Polish song prevails.

Thus motivated, choirs have sprung up within Holy Rosary from the very beginning. despite the fact that organizing them always presented complex problems. Presently the parish has 3 choirs, led by the organist and choir director Stanislaw Skibinski.

The largest and oldest choir is the St. Cecilia's Choir, a mixed chorus with 40 members. Next is the female choir called the Maidens' Chorus with 30 members, and finally the Children's Choir which is also a well represented singing group.

Despite the fact that these choirs consist mainly of young people born and raised here, consequently less attached to Polish song, they perform very well not only within the liturgical scope, but likewise in the secular field.

Our parish choirs take part in almost every major celebration in Baltimore. Credit for this is mainly due the director, who along with his extremely busy church schedule, extends every effort to foster Polish songs and hymns through these choirs, because he clearly understands that "as long as there is a song in life, so will the Polish culture endure in America."

CHARITABLE SOCIETY WITHIN HOLY ROSARY PARISH

"Whatever you have done for the least of these,
you have done to Me."

Due to the initiative of Rt. Rev. Monsignor Wachowiak, a few years ago a Charitable Society was formed within the parish for the purpose of helping needy Polish families in Baltimore. Presently under the leadership of Rev. P. Rakowski, the Society draws its funds from volunteer offerings, proceeds from skits, and donations from other Societies that recognize their brother's need and wish to offer some respite. Unfortunately there are many needy, particularly in the recent times of unemployment, and the funds which the Society has available do not satisfy the needs by half.

Nevertheless, Holy Rosary parish can be proud of the fact that there is a Society within the parish that cares for the poor and offers Christian relief to those most in need.

HOLY ROSARY DRAMA CLUB

Following the Church and school, the next most important factor in training society is the theater. Just as the school makes a lasting impression on children and youth, so the theater influences the views of adults, often improving their behaviour and manners. Good theater therefore, always earned societal support. In his time Bismark declared that the theater is the best means of "Germanizing" and ordered that only top notch dramatic actors be sent as often as possible to perform in Poznan theaters.

Here as immigrants we feel the painful lack of Polish theater; this lack can be filled to some extent by amateur drama groups, one of which is always active within our parish and is known as the Drama Club, originally called the Henryk Sienkiewicz Drama Club.

The Club has approximately 25 members who under the tutelage of Rev.

Rakowski offer not only entertainment, but informative performances with a strong moral. Some presentations are major productions, that must be repeated several times in order to give every one an opportunity to enjoy it. One such production was the 4 act tragedy "Prussians in Poland", in which our youth performed superbly.

The list of officers include the following: Karol Mazan, president, Antoni Margolewski, vice president, Maria Mruk, treasurer, Tekla Dyks, recording secretary, Adam Markiewicz, director's assistant, Agnieszka Trawinska, prompter. Other members of the Drama Club are: Jadwiga Barabasz, Bronislawa Kowalewska, J. Broezkowska, J. Cialkowska, Helena Dyks, J. Drgosc, Romuald Bonczek, Maksymiljan Markiewicz, Ludwik Bonczek, J. Czyza, J. Janocha, E. Kalodek, J. Kasprak, M. Pijanowski, Czeslaw Krasniewski, Piotr Ichniowski, I. Kaliczynska and Bronislawa Szwarc.

History of the Parish of Our Lady
of the Rosary in Baltimore, Md.

"How long a time, o mortal,
Fifty years seem in your life;
But for God, even whole ages
Are the blinking of an eye "

On this, the fifty-year Golden Anniversary, we wish to offer in our Commemorative Book a concise outline of the annals of the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, today the largest Polish parish in this Archdiocese and the largest within the extended radius of Polonia in this and the surrounding States.

In the Commemorative Book of the City of Baltimore published in 1929 on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the city of Baltimore, it says that the first Poles arrived here some seventy-five years before. If we accept that statement, then today it would be over eighty years since the first Poles settled in this city . . . Who knows, who remembers? . . . There are no records that old: one would have to check the dates against old tombstones and monuments . . . One can assume that in the 1860's there were already some of us here. Certainly at first not many, mostly from the Poznań area and Eastern Prussia; but every year increased the number of us in exile, for whom here, as in every place of exile, it was at first very difficult.

In one of his speeches X. Prelate Wachowiak, our illustrious pastor, reminisced beautifully and plaintively about those, our first years here: we quote his words:

With afflicted heart and tears in his eye our emigrant left his native land, left everything he had learned to love in his youth, his thatched cottage and those dearest to him, his father and mother, his whole family, because inimical forces have fettered his whole people in bondage, seized his land and his means of support, deprived him of bread, and dispossessed him of rights, freedom, and happiness. He went into unknown places, to a foreign land, to which Polish heroes and exiles had shown the way. He followed in their steps, seeking bread. The merciful swaying waves of the enormous Ocean

brought the Polish emigrant by good fortune to a country of love and brotherhood -- and there he settled. Then this son of Poland, with a pure and ardent heart and with love of all that was to him holy and native, turned his thoughts to establishing a parish which would be a mainstay, where his ideals religious, moral, and ethnic, might shine on for him and his children with unextinguishable ardor.

Little is known about the first Polish settlers in Baltimore: we do know that there was a Polish settlement here by 1870 . . . possibly there were one or two Confraternities, but we know nothing certain about that. These immigrants lived in the area of Curtis Bay and Locust Point, in the dock areas, and they worked when and where they could, perhaps as pakarni or on neighboring farms. They came primarily from the Poznań area, as we mentioned above, although natives of other parts of Poland would sometimes come across compatriots as well . . . An evil political and economic lot had driven them all from their fatherland: the terrible persecution of polskość and Catholicism under the Prussian was what, most of all, had led our emigrants here.

It was difficult for them at first, very difficult. It's hard for us today even to imagine the sort of hardships and depression those people had to endure! Ill-informed, unschooled, ignorant of the native language, unfamiliar with connections or living conditions so thoroughly alien and different from those in which they had lived hitherto, in which they grew up shoved around and despised, horribly exploited, and in general treated miserably, it is obvious that here they were as if ship-wrecked or orphaned, expelled from their patrimony to face exile, need, and ruin. Many of them died. On this subject read Sienkiewicz's story "Za Chlebem" and you will get a real taste of the lot of our immigrants here during the years under discussion.

What's more, for those in Baltimore it was not really the worst; in

other port cities, e. g., in New York, things were incomparably worse! Here the Poles began relatively early to assemble, deliberate, and find ways to help each other. It was so much better if one could have a chance to meet someone, if an exile could come across a kindred soul and could chatter with him and get some advice . . . They provided for their spiritual needs at that time as best they could: by attending German churches, for instance, or even better by agreement with Czechs, with whom it was like dealing with brothers

Around 1877 a group of Poles numbering several score families founded the first local Polish society, with St. Stanisław as its patron: it was a religious confraternity, the main goal of which was the collection of funds for the founding of a parish and the construction of their own Polish church. Who was the initiator, who the founder, is unknown: may God grant that nameless one heaven as a reward, for he made a great contribution to our future here. It is known that the following were among the first members: the late Mr. Toczkowski, the late Mr. Welzant -- a socially active citizen of no small merit -- as well as the late Mr. Milanowicz and several others. The Society of St. Stanisław, having accumulated some money, brought to Baltimore in 1880 the late Fr. P. Koniecz and with him introduced the first church in Baltimore.

From year to year our numbers increased, and so the Polish parish grew also and became well established: even a Polish kindergarden arose, founded by Fr. Koniecz next to the church: it was conducted by a teacher brought in specifically for that purpose. But as our numbers grew and the church presumably must have become too small, there arose certain misunderstandings, which were solved when the Society of St. Stanisław separated itself from the parish it had founded -- leaving its compatriots

the church, to avoid further quarrels and arguments -- and resolved to establish a second Polish parish in Baltimore. That they could consider such a bold undertaking is enough to show us that it must have been necessary.

Around 1886-87 it came to pass that the second Polish parish here -- the subject of our celebration, the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary -- came into being. Before this could happen, however, the active and prudent leaders busied themselves long and thriftily, bringing together their peers, gathering money and preparing everything to be able to start off in a sure and orderly manner. In the meantime they attended a Czech Catholic church:

(That's as far as these two pages go.)

Hardly was the work begun when God called back his faithful servant. Father Chowaniec died and was laid to rest in Holy Rosary Cemetery in 1892. His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, appointed Father Melvin Barabasz, Ph.D., educated and ordained in Poland, to be the new pastor of the parish.



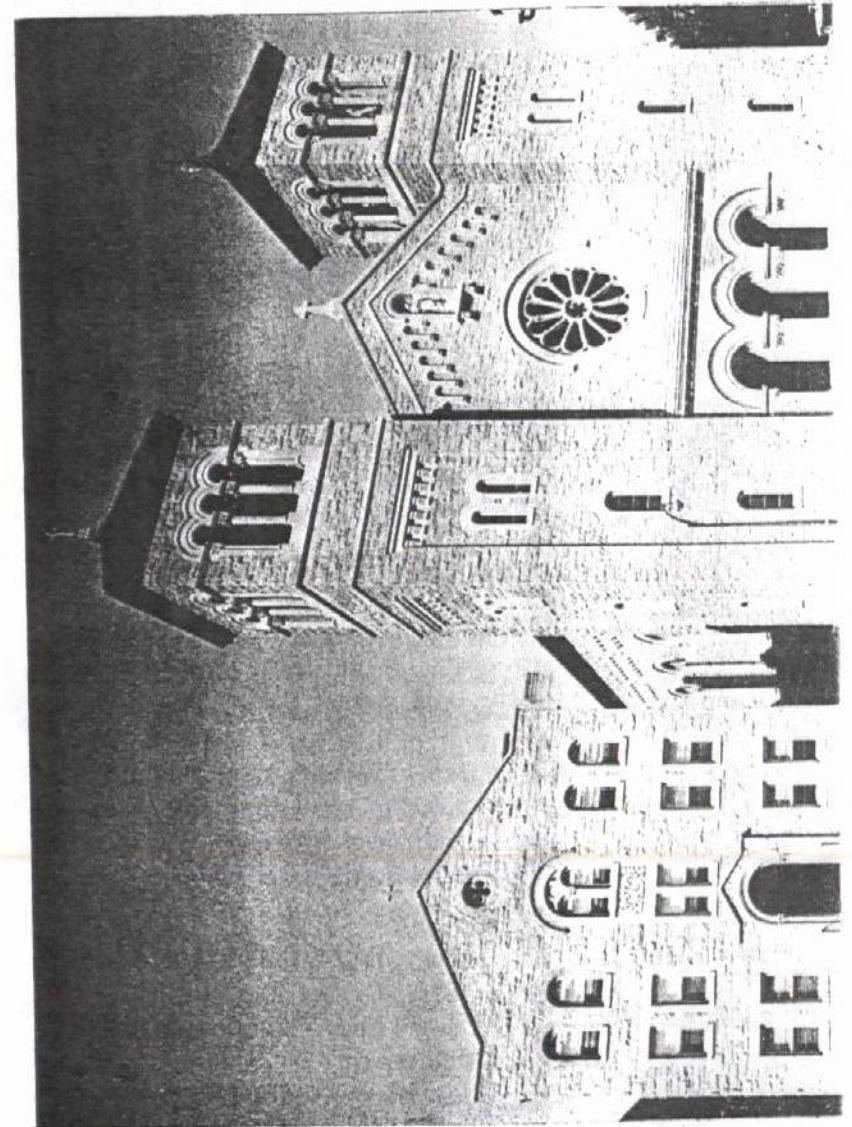
Rev. Melvin C. Barabasz,
Second Pastor

organizations were formed, some of which exist to this very day, e.g. the Third Order of St. Francis. The following Assistant Priests, from Poland, in succession helped Father Barabasz in his pastoral work:

Reverend Joseph Dulski
Reverend Francis Mard
Reverend Stanislaus Cynalewski
Reverend Joseph Rojewski
Reverend Bernard Gebert

Father Barabasz's life was cut short on December 9, 1914. He was then only fifty-one years old. Mournful parishioners buried their second pastor in the Holy Rosary Cemetery. For a short time after the passing of Father Barabasz, Father Bernard Gebert administered the affairs of the parish. In March 1916, His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, appointed Monsignor Wachowiak

Father Barabasz was a generous and industrious man, compassionate and zealous priest, as well as a great patriot, skilled public speaker, and well known writer equally successful in verse and prose. During the twenty-two years of his pastorate the Holy Rosary parish expanded rapidly. The church was enlarged by a structural extension of the Sanctuary. The school had its third floor added to the existing structure so that it could accommodate its 900 students enrolled in eight elementary grades. Under Father Barabasz's guidance several parish or-



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THE HISTORY OF THE PARISH

The Diamond Jubilee of the birth of Holy Rosary parish of Baltimore, Maryland, is not only a solemn and at the same time joyous commemoration of a purely local interest, but it also speaks of the achievement and contribution of the Polish-American community to the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. This Jubilee gives credit to the vitality and organizational skill of people who were able to develop nationality parishes at the time when they were most urgently needed and which magnificently fulfilled their purpose.

The first of the Polish people to arrive in the United States were a handful of highly skilled glass-blowing and pitch-making craftsmen invited to Jamestown, Virginia, by the famous Captain Smith himself. However an immigration of real consequence did not start until after the unfortunate partitions of Poland in the 18th century and the subsequent unsuccessful uprisings in 1830 and 1863. The influx from Poland to our hospitable and generous country still continues, although at a much slower pace. Kosciuszkos, Pulaskis, and Krzyzanowskis came, and endeared themselves equally to Poles and Americans, as well as lesser known families. All were fleeing

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oppression and persecution; all were seeking personal and religious freedom. Many times also economic reasons played a significant role since the opportunity of personal gain and improvement was greater here than elsewhere.

The growth of Polish-American community necessitated the organization of Polish parishes, schools, societies, and press. According to the statistics given in the sixth volume of the Sacrum Poloniae Millenium, Rome 1959, the Polish-American community approaches nine million members who are organized in 10,000 various associations. The community maintains 800 parishes and supports 785 Catholic elementary and secondary schools administered by 4800 nuns of Polish descent who teach about 271,700 students. The community contributed 1600 priests to the Catholic Church in America.

The history of the Polish-American community in Baltimore begins in 1870. Curtis Bay, Locust Point, and East Baltimore became the new home of the immigrants. A special St. Stanislaus Society was formed by the community with the explicit purpose of laying ground for a Polish parish, where the members could learn God's truths, sing, pray and confess their sins in their native tongue.

In 1880, when a sufficient amount of funds was secured, and the approval of His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons obtained, the group began the building of the first Polish-American church, St. Stanislaus Kostka, at 700 South Ann Street. Father P. Koncz, a priest from Poland, was the first pastor of the parish.

The Baltimore Polish-American community grew by leaps and bounds and it became evident very soon that St. Stanislaus parish was too small to meet the needs of the entire group. The same St. Stanislaus Society, which brought about the formation of St. Stanislaus parish, took upon itself the founding of a second Polish parish. Father Peter Chowaniec, a priest from Poland, like Father Koncz, was the main spring of this inspiration.

A former protestant church, at Eastern Avenue and Bethel Street, was acquired for \$20,000 and rebuilt to meet the specifications of Catholic liturgy. In 1887 His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, officially founded the second Polish parish in Baltimore to be known under the name of Holy Rosary. Father Peter Chowaniec, who was appointed its first pastor, celebrated the first Mass in the church on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus, December 8, 1887 is the beginning of the Holy Rosary parish of Baltimore.

The pastor of the parish was quick to establish a school in the same year and procured housing for the Felician Sisters, whose successors ever since guide and teach our youth. Two years later, in 1889, grounds for a parish cemetery were acquired. Thus the Church and the people went about their way to lay foundations for the vigorous and successful parish of today.

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During the pastorate of Monsignor Wachowiak the parish reached the peak of its growth and development. The largest in East Baltimore, it served at one point the needs of 2500 families, opening its school doors to 17,000 students. The ever-increasing membership of the parish made the expansion of the physical facilities imperative. Monsignor Wachowiak's outstanding administrative skill and the generosity of

The parishioners made a relocation and building of a new parish a possibility and a reality.

A long listing of the continuous program of building and improvements will help us to comprehend the enormity of effort and achievement:

1917 REDECORATION OF THE OLD CHURCH AT EASTERN AVENUE AND BETHEL STREET	\$4,000
1917 ERECTION OF THE CEMETERY CHAPEL	\$10,000
1922 EXTENSIVE RETIDELLING AND REFURNISHING OF THE FORMER CONVENT AT EASTERN AVENUE	\$53,000
1924 CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORMER PAROCHIAL SCHOOL WITH ITS FURNISHINGS	\$200,000
1926 PURCHASE OF 47 HOUSES TO SECURE GROUNDS FOR THE NEW CHURCH AT SOUTH CHESTER AND BANK STREETS	\$230,000
1927 BUILDING AND EQUIPPING OF THE NEW CHURCH AND RECTORY	\$600,000
1937 FIRST DECORATING OF THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH	\$12,650
1937 PURCHASE OF SEVEN ADDITIONAL ACRES OF GROUNDS FOR THE CEMETERY, BRINGING ITS TOTAL ACREAGE TO TWENTY-FOUR	\$10,000
1951 ADDITIONAL DECORATING AND REDECORATING OF THE CHURCH INTERIOR	\$16,500
1953 BUILDING OF A NEW SCHOOL (WITH THE CAPACITY FOR 1,000 STUDENTS) AND A CONVENT, WITH THEIR FURNISHINGS	\$1,100,000
1956 REBUILDING AND CLEANING OF THE CEMETERY AND ERECTION OF CARETAKER'S HOME	\$11,000
1962 PARTIAL REPAINTING AND RETOUCHING OF THE CHURCH INTERIOR	\$16,000
1962 ORGAN REPAIRING AND REBUILDING	\$22,000
1964 REBUILDING OF THE TOWER BELLS' ELECTRIC RINGING EQUIPMENT	\$1,800

The successful completion of the building program is undoubtedly a great tribute to the leadership of Monsignor Wachowiak and the tremendous cooperation of the people of the parish. The fruits of this accomplishment will be enjoyed not only by the present generation, but also by those of the future.

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God has granted us today, on September 6, 1964, the grace to celebrate two happy anniversaries, the Golden Jubilee of Monsignor Wachowiak's priesthood and the Diamond Jubilee of the existence of the Holy Rosary parish. The last fifty years of Monsignor's life and the history of the parish are inseparable, and pointedly speak of one man's service to his God, and to the flock, which willingly and confidently followed him in his footsteps. The Clergy, the Sisters, and the laity join together in expressing their deep gratitude for his spiritual leadership, for his work and effort, which only God will be able to repay. We can only add our prayers, pledge our loyalty, and fullheartedly wish him many more years of valiant leadership. Truly our parish has been blessed. May God continue to protect our beloved Monsignor Wachowiak and his parishioners.

Holy Rosary Church, Bank and Chester Streets, will mark its 75th anniversary this year, having been established December 8, 1887.

The original church was located on Eastern Avenue near Broadway. In 1924 a school accommodating 2,000 pupils was constructed and a convent for the Felician Sisters was built.

Reverend Peter Chowaniec was the first pastor and remained in this capacity until his death in 1892. From 1892 to 1915 the Reverend Doctor Miecislaus Barabasz was pastor.

In 1916, Rt. Rev. Stanislaus A. Wachowiak, P.A. became pastor and until the present day retains this position.

Because the Polish population shifted eastward towards Patterson Park in 1926, and the fact that the old Church was overcrowded, Monsignor Wachowiak requested and received permission to build a new Church.

In 1927 the new Holy Rosary Church and rectory was built at Bank and Chester Streets by Monsignor S. A. Wachowiak. It was dedicated in 1928 by the late Archbishop Michael J. Curley.

The new million dollar school and convent was started at this location in 1952 and was dedicated by Archbishop Lawrence J. Shehan on November 29, 1953. This was the last official act of Bishop Shehan who was appointed Bishop of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Rt. Rev. S. A. Wachowiak has been assigned to Holy Rosary Church since his ordination in 1914. He and his family were early members of the parish.