

### Welcome—New Members—Witamy

**Bert & Virginia Tomon**, interested in surnames;  
 7062 Greenbriar Dr.  
 Parma Hts. Ohio 44130  
**Dan Ostrowski**, interested in surnames:  
 12402 Granger Rd.  
 Garfield Hts., Ohio 44125  
 dfo12402@aol.com

KACAJ, KOCAJ, KOCOIJ, KOCOJ, KOEOIJ,  
 NAWOJ, NAWUJ, ROCOJ, SEMON, SKWARLO,  
 SZYOM, TOMON  
 GRACZYKOWSKI, KRUSHINSKI, MORANSKI,  
 OSTROWSKI, PINCOSKI

### Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

- June: **Judith Cetina**, County Archivist, Cuyahoga County Archives will speak on the topic:  
 "What's New at the Cuyahoga County Archives—Records, Naturalization, etc."  
 July & August: No meetings—Vacation Time—Plant tomatoes and enjoy BLT's with garden grown tomatoes.  
 September: Member's Participation and Discussion on the topic:  
 "Computer-Aided Genealogy."  
 October: **Patricia Karlon**, Executive Vice President, Union of Poles of America  
 Topic to be determined.  
 November: Member **Sonia Chapnick** will speak on the topic:  
 "Poland, Then and Now—1976-2004."  
 December: Officer Elections and Christmas Party

### What's Happening

**Sick Bay**—Father **Ralph Bodziony** recently spent a week at St. Vincent's Hospital in Cleveland. He is now convalescing at home. **Joe Hadbavny** underwent a surgical procedure recently and is recuperating. **Ed Jambrozy** is feeling poorly these days. We wish them all a speedy and complete recovery. Remember them in your prayers.

**Thank You**—To all our members who bring all those good things to eat at our meetings; **Martha Bergman**, **Mary Lou Brower**, **Joan Chermely**, **Lucia Dominak**, **Joan Green**, **Gloria Hadbavny**, **Richarda Jambrozy**, **Frank Kaminski**, **Elaine Marec**, **Helen Palshook**, **Dorothy Rollins**, **Joan Stahlhut** and **Connie Zelek**. Rest assured, that even though we don't mention it often enough, your contributions to making our meetings more sociable and enjoyable are appreciated.

**And another Thank You**—To pastor of St. Hedwig's Parish of Lakewood, Ohio, **Father John Bryk**, for a monetary contribution to our group. Last year, Father John celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Congratulations and best wishes to you Father. Next year, St. Hedwig's will be celebrating their 100th anniversary of existence, quite a milestone. If per chance, any of our members have any memorabilia which they've collected over the years concerning St. Hedwig's, please let **Richarda Jambrozy** or Father John know. They're thinking of publishing a memorial book and they would greatly appreciate any such items.

**Congratulations**—To **Father Dennis Bogusz**, a native son of St. John Cantius Parish, who will be celebrating his 25th anniversary of elevation to the priesthood with a Mass of Thanksgiving at 11:30 AM at St. John Cantius on May 16, 2004. Best Wishes to you Father.

**Condolences**—To member **Ray Pianka** whose mother passed away in March. Remember her in your prayers.

# History of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish—1894-1994\*

by

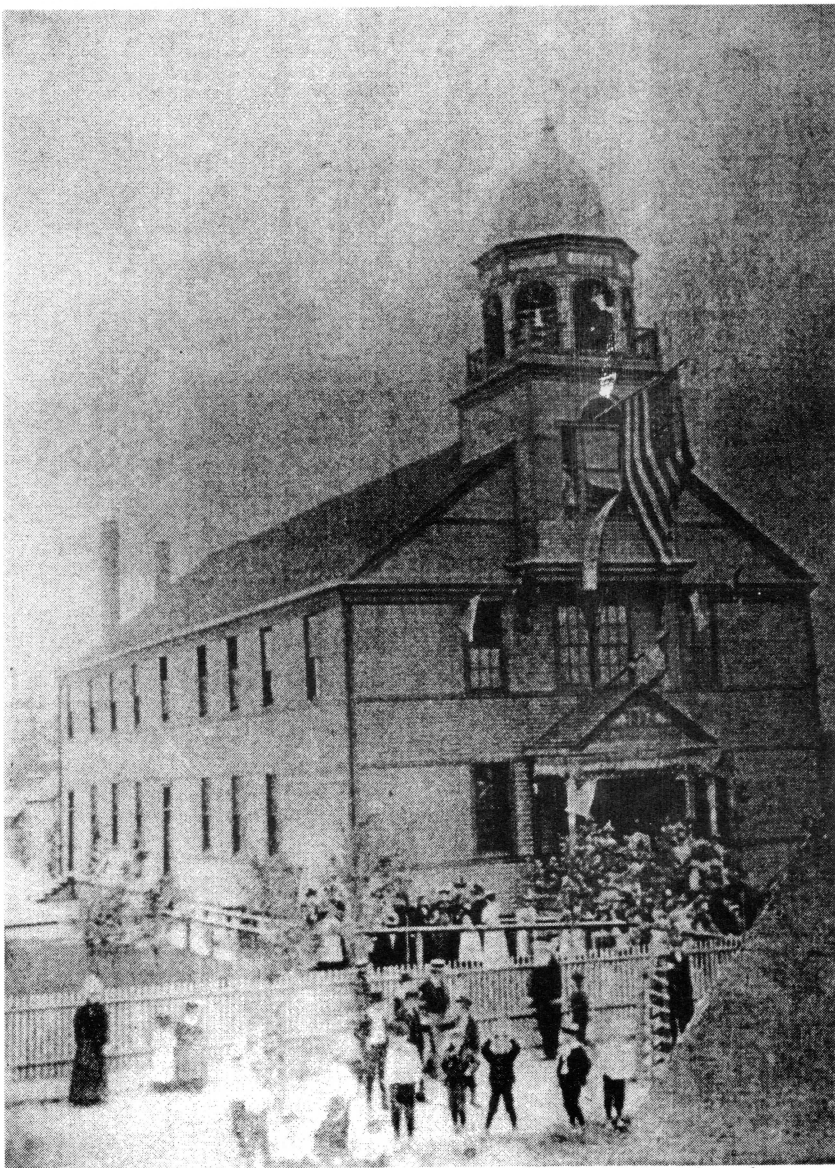
William Radeker & Glenn Sobola

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## BACKGROUND

Yearlong celebration honoring the approaching centennial anniversary of The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish (its original name) are a far cry from the hostile reception to its organization in 1894. That event was marked with public denunciation, accusations of forming a schismatic church, excommunication and attack by a mob.



*The frame church/school of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, dedicated August 19, 1894.*

Such uncharacteristically violent reactions to a new church were due to its unorthodox founding and a chain of events that began in the early 1880's. A familiarity with this background and the personalities involved is necessary to understand this turbulent reception. The stage was set for future confrontations in 1882 when new arrivals from Poland were hired in New York to work in the Cleveland Rolling Mills. The Poles, not realizing they were pawns in a scheme to drive out competition and crush a bitter labor dispute, eagerly took advantage of the job offers.

By the time they discovered their wage of \$7.50 for a 14-hour, six-day week was \$4.50 below the prevailing rate and that they were employed to take away the livelihood of others, it was too late. Many of them, and other countrymen who came later, had no other marketable skills or money to return to their native land. Trapped in a situation they unwittingly helped create, the new immigrants were forced to endure the contempt and scorn of workers they replaced and the rancor of other ethnic groups.

In this inhospitable environment, these newcomers, isolated by language and cultural differences, depended upon each other and those among them who understood English and American ways for

survival. Translators often took advantage of this situation to gain their own ends by distorting facts in Polish versions of important issues.

It was also difficult for these people, whose nation and their own conduct were controlled by alternating German and Russian overlords, to grasp the meaning of freedom. A number of them confused liberty with license to defy lawful authority, especially episcopal rule.

*\*Reprinted with permission from the One Hundredth Anniversary Book of this parish, published in 1994.*





*Immaculate Heart of Mary Church as it appears today.*

In their zeal to cast off all things European, a significant minority of Poles living in midwestern states began to form parishioner-owned, independent American Catholic churches, free from foreign and papal domination. The majority were outraged by this schism and remained loyal to the Pope. Reactions to the movement accomplished something no outsider could have ever achieved, dividing the close-knit Poles into separate camps. At the center of this controversy was the founder of our parish, a leading religious figure of his day who was also active in the independent church movement, Rev. Anton Francis Kolaszewski. Born in Elzbietow, Poland, on September 5, 1851, he was brought to our country at about the age of eight where he received a lifelong source of pride, an American education. After completing studies at the Franciscan College in Teutopolis, Illinois and St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland, he was ordained at the seminary by Bishop Gilmour on July 1, 1883. His involvement in the community began on August 5, 1883 when he was named pastor of St. Stanislaus, where he immediately set about making improvements. A rectory was built in the fall and the frame church was enlarged in early 1884. However, this latter expansion soon proved to be inadequate. Increasing membership turned his attention toward replacing the temporary church located on the second floor of a wood building with a large brick and stone structure. Bishop Gilmour gave permission for this project when financial statements and estimates of future revenues submitted by Rev. Kolaszewski and parish leaders appeared sufficient to proceed with the undertaking. Consent inspired action and the foundation was laid during August, 1886. The resourceful pastor used every possible method to retire the debt on the church that the press referred to as the "Temple on Tod (East 65th) Street" and "the finest house of worship in the Catholic Diocese." He augmented income from pledges and benefits by personally seeking donations from workers as they left their jobs on payday. However, even this imposing structure soon became too small to accommodate the growing population of the area. By the late 1880's over 200 families settled in the Brecksville Road (East 71st St.), Harvard Avenue district and elected to form their own parish. Rev. Kolaszewski asked for and received permission to purchase land for Sacred Heart Parish and offered the

first Mass there on Christmas Day, 1889. Although his assistants at St. Stanislaus conducted the majority of religious services, he was technically pastor of the new church until Rev. Felix Orzechowski was appointed to that post in 1891.

Despite such accomplishments and the forging of a strong bond between himself and many members of his congregation, temperament and circumstances conspired against this well-intentioned pastor. Dissenters accused him of favoring parishioners from certain Polish districts and his own assistant, Rev. Motulewski, accused his superior of various improprieties, including selling tickets to go to confession. These allegations were in response to Rev. Kolaszewski's request that his assistant be removed for undermining pastoral authority.

It is evident from a reply dated November 4, 1890 that the bishop had expressed dissatisfaction with Rev. Kolaszewski. In his letter the pastor answers,

*"I am working for four priests and not for me. I have more people to care for than the Pastor of the Cathedral and I am for the greater part alone...My time is occupied with my good people. With everything they come to me. I am their advisor, contractor, lawyer, doctor, father, brother, friend and very often their judge. I work at this 18 hours a day. I am never at rest. What do you want of me? Do I not work enough?"*

It was actually the bishop's long illness rather than this eloquent defense that prevented corrective measures being taken sooner. After the bishop's death, Vice-General and Administrator of the diocese, Msgr. Felix Boff,

did consult the Bishop of Cincinnati about the matter but no action was taken until the appointment of Bishop Horstmann in 1892. Constant bickering between the pastor and his assistant, complaints from certain parishioners, and an allegation that Rev. Kolaszewski kept in contact with Rev. Kolasinski, an ex-priest who had established an independent church in Detroit, prompted Bishop Horstmann to investigate the problems. During this inquiry an undisclosed condition relating to a near crisis surfaced.

A close call that occurred in 1878 was the basis for the most serious charge leveled against Rev. Kolaszewski. At the time the Cincinnati Diocese went bankrupt which gave creditors the option to call in loans by claiming church property as payment. Urgent negotiations averted that calamity but the possibility of such a catastrophe so alarmed Ohio bishops that they set strict limits on the amount of debt a parish could incur.

The finances of St. Stanislaus were in a shambles. The estimated costs of between \$37,000 and \$41,000 submitted to Bishop Gilmour in 1886 reached \$150,000. Constructing what was, and remains, the second largest Gothic style church in the United States (St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City holds that honor) was too ambitious for the resources of its working class congregation, resulting in a \$100,000 debt that had been concealed from the diocese.



*Rev. Anton Kolaszewski, founding pastor of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish.*



No doubt, receipt of all promised pledges would not have prevented this financial disaster but the shocking deficit was increased because of economic conditions. The price of silver had plummeted bringing on a world-wide depression. By 1892 many Cleveland banks closed and there was widespread unemployment. This created a situation where many pledges made in good faith could not be honored because donors were out of work. The results of the bishop's investigation made a meeting with Rev. Kolaszewski mandatory. About a week after this meeting the pastor agreed to voluntarily resign his position without notifying parishioners. After the last Mass on June 8, 1892, he was to permanently leave Cleveland and accept an assignment in Syracuse, New York. In exchange for cooperating, he was promised reimbursement of personal funds given for the upkeep of St. Stanislaus and toward the purchase of land for Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

The departure of Rev. Kolaszewski failed to quell the turmoil at St. Stanislaus. Friction not only arose between the pro-Kolaszewski faction and the new pastor, Rev. Benedict Rosinski, but also among other parish members. Although many championed the new pastor, some among them suggested he be replaced with another pastor both factions would accept; those striving for the return of the former pastor continued to press their demands. Two delegates attempted to force the issue through a meeting with the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Archbishop Satolli of Washington, D.C., and later claimed that he promised them Rev. Kolaszewski's reinstatement. He denied the allegation, instructed the dissenters to obey their bishop, but privately advised Bishop Horstmann to consider appointing a different pastor. Fearing it would weaken his authority, the bishop rejected the proposal.

Other than a number of unconfirmed reports and scandalous insinuations, there is little reliable information about Rev. Kolaszewski's activities in Syracuse. It is known that he was immediately appointed founding pastor of the city's first Polish church, Sacred Heart Parish, and on April 1, 1894, was officially relieved of all priestly duties, supposedly for involvement in the independent church movement.

Meanwhile, word had reached Cleveland of his impending dismissal, intensifying the drive for his reinstatement as pastor of St. Stanislaus. Promoters had petitioned Archbishop Satolli as early as February, and March. Bishop Horstmann, the archbishop, some parishioners, and Rev. Kolaszewski all exchanged letters about the situation. The ex-pastor personally pleaded his case before the Apostolic Delegate on April 5th, which, according to his version, resulted in the prelate endorsing his work despite the latter's public and private support of the bishop. The Kolaszewski faction intensified their efforts by presenting an April 20th, 600-signature petition restating their demands to the bishop. When he tested their sincerity by asking would they form another church if he did not comply, they indecisively replied, "That is a hard question."

Meanwhile, Rev. Kolaszewski had decided to visit his friend in Detroit, Rev. Dominic Kolasinski, a priest who incurred the wrath of church authorities by establishing the first independent Catholic church in the United States. Even though this errant pastor had returned to the fold, parishioners were allowed to retain title to church properties until all debts were paid.

### THE CHURCH IS ORGANIZED

Someone telegraphed Cleveland friends that their former pastor was in Detroit. A committee went there to persuade him to return to his people, but, at first he was reluctant to accept their invitation. However, further coaxing weakened his resolve and he eventually gave in to their pleas.

It is certain that he, the delegates and, no doubt, Rev. Kolasinski made initial plans to establish an independent church if the bishop denied his reinstatement as pastor. This is evident from the rapid, yet well-organized manner of its being put into operation and Rev. Kolasinski's final admonition, "Do nothing till you see the bishop. If he receives you, well. If not, better."

He took his friends' advice. He and some members of his party called on the bishop the day he arrived in Cleveland. He later described this stormy May 2, 1894 encounter,

*We were ushered into his room and I was the last to enter. He had not the slightest idea that I was anywhere near Cleveland, and when he saw me he said, 'Mr. Kolaszewski, I do not care to talk to you.'*

*I waited until he was through and then I bowed low and said, 'Good morning reverend bishop.' 'I do not want to talk to you,' he cried. 'I have nothing to say to you.' 'But I have to you most reverend bishop,' said I. 'I wish you to leave this house,' he cried in the same loud tones. 'I have a right in this house,' I said. 'It is my house.'*

*My people helped to build it.' 'I do not want to have anything to say to you,' he declared again. 'In the name of justice,' I said, 'give me my church for which my people paid and which they own.' 'Never,' he said. 'Then permit me to build another church' I said. 'Never,' he said again. 'Then reverend bishop,' I said respectfully, 'we will build our own church and keep it in our own name and ever look to you as its spiritual head. If you impose a tax we will cheerfully pay it but we will keep our own property in our own name,' 'I forbid you to build a church,' he cried. 'We wish you a good morning reverend bishop,' I said and we withdrew.*

Aware that his hopes for reinstatement as pastor were dashed, Rev. Kolaszewski and his eager congregation proceeded to establish their own church. The outcome of the Rev. Kolasinski case convinced him that once the church was built and had the congregation's support, it would be admitted into the diocese.

The following morning, May 3rd and Polish Constitution Day, Rev. Kolaszewski rode in a closed carriage that was escorted by three honor guards from his temporary residence at 75 Union Street (6607-09 Union Avenue) to Szach's, 136 Fleet Street (southeast corner of Fleet Avenue and East 54th Street). Hundreds of well-wishers lined the sidewalks to welcome his return with cheers and waving hands as he passed the open doors of St. Stanislaus and the homes of Polish families along the way.

When he arrived at the hall he spoke for two hours justifying his actions by explaining they were motivated by concern for the welfare of his people. When the hectic, overcrowded meeting finally began, his followers wanted to elect him pastor for life, but legal constraints limited his term to 99 years.

Other business completed at the meeting pertained to the church's organization. A tentative name, the Church of the Sacred Heart of St. Mary, was chosen, a constitution was ratified, trustees were elected, plans for soliciting funds approved, and authorization was given to purchase land on Fremont Street (Lansing Avenue).

A St. Francis Society was formed the afternoon of Sunday, May 6th, but Mass had been postponed until a more suitable location could be found. The hall, being over a saloon, was not considered an appropriate place to conduct this sacred service.

Rev. Rosinski, pastor of St. Stanislaus, took advantage of the delay to influence revolting parishioners who fulfilled their Sunday obligation at his church. He warned the congregation to have nothing to do with the new church and denounced everyone involved with its formation of being guilty of schism of the most pronounced kind.

His eloquent sermon so stirred his audience that all, including the dissenting faction, swore "never to belong to any but a true Roman Catholic Church." However, that group interpreted the oath in a different light. They viewed themselves as true Catholics who would choose their own pastor and would retain stewardship of their church properties.

The seceding faction, hoping the bishop would be forced to officially recognize their unsanctioned church once it was in operation, immediately began turning aspirations into realities. *Articles of Incorporation* under the church's finalized title, the Church of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, were filed in Cuyahoga County on May 10th and with the State of Ohio on the 11th.

The deed was not processed until June but the Ruggles Estate permitted church construction to begin on May 19th. About 100 unemployed workers began preparing the land for a frame church that, according to the contractor, would be completed by August.

Although Rev. Kolaszewski had moved to 42 Poland Street (3926 East 66th Street), the first Mass was offered on May 20th in a larger home at 59 Poland Street (3945 East 66th Street). This residence served as their church until the impatient congregation began attending Mass in the partially constructed church on June 17th.

There was speculation that the new church of about 300 families would affiliate with the National Polish Alliance and, later, when Archbishop Vilatte of the Independent Catholic Church conducted dedication services there were fears that they would join that group. Neither supposition materialized because Rev. Kolaszewski, rejecting certain tenets of both organizations, chose to adhere to traditional Catholic dogma and ritual.

On Wednesday, June 6th, the pastor's Poland Street home was acquired in the name of Rev. A. F. Kolaszewski, trustee, et al. for \$1,100 from Jacob and Waronika Noch. On that same day 16 of the 18 lots comprising our present church properties were purchased in the name of the parish trustees from the Ruggles Estate for \$7,000. On or near this same date, Rev. Kolaszewski entered into a land contract agreement with William and Mary



Wood for the slightly-over 14 acre St. Mary Cemetery plot. The \$6,200 note was redeemed on October 7, 1897 and title to the property was transferred to the Church of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Everyone was anxiously awaiting the bishop's reaction to the establishment of an independent church and on Wednesday, June 20th their curiosity was satisfied. A notice of major excommunication was pronounced against Rev. Kolaszewski and was published in all churches of the diocese on Sunday, the 24th. In addition, parishioners were ordered to cease membership in, and support of, the non-affiliated church. Trustees were warned to immediately resign their positions or incur *ipso facto* excommunication.

Bishop Horstmann used every means at his disposal to avoid taking this drastic and painful step. He had a near weekly exchange of letters with Archbishop Satolli and the prelate's secretary, Dr. Papi, about the situation. Attempts to communicate with Rev. Kolaszewski proved futile and the actions of the renegade church and its obstinate leader made any compromise impossible.

The defection could have been averted by reinstating Rev. Kolaszewski as pastor of St. Stanislaus, but this would only revive the problems and animosities of the past. Furthermore, the ex-pastor's conduct was so suspect during that period that Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect of Propaganda in Rome, had summoned him there to answer charges in 1892. However, due to the Syracuse transfer, the letter was not delivered until May, 1894.

Accepting the independent church into the diocese was also unthinkable. To prevent a schism, parishioner ownership may have been tolerated, but, barring other obstacles, the first sentence of Article XX in its own constitution provided grounds for excommunication. "As we who have adopted the above articles do not believe any human being can be infallible, even if he call himself a pope of Rome"...denied a fundamental doctrine of Roman Catholicism.

His sanction of this heresy and contempt for ecclesiastical authority by ignoring the bishop's orders not to form a church and a directive forbidding him to say Mass or exercise other priestly functions under threat of excommunication provided further grounds. Failure to appear before a Wednesday, June 20th ecclesiastical court exhausted the patient bishop's options to avert the unpleasant outcome.

At June 24th services, Rev. Kolaszewski said the bishop had no jurisdiction over him so the edict was invalid. He further cited that not committing a serious crime, receiving no trial, neither he nor his attorney being present when sentence was pronounced, and that he had answered both letters the bishop claimed were ignored, as further proof of his innocence.

A meeting of the St. Joseph Society of St. Stanislaus Church was held that same evening. By the meeting's end a scuffle broke out and the Society split into two groups when members of our church were expelled. One of these, the treasurer, took the \$500 in the treasury for his group prompting *The Cleveland Leader* to quip, "One faction has the cash and the other the flags."

Despite statements by Archbishop Satolli to the contrary, Rev. Kolaszewski claimed that at their April meeting the prelate offered him justice and protection. In a frantic effort to overrule Bishop Horstmann he wrote the archbishop a letter on July 2nd requesting him to come to Cleveland and give him justice. He added that the church and cemetery must soon be dedicated and if His Excellency could not perform the rite they would be forced to use a Syrian, independent bishop, a veiled threat not dignified with an answer. Instead Archbishop Satolli directed his reply to the bishop which also included the arrogant letter and a most unflattering assessment of Rev. Kolaszewski.

Loyal members of St. Stanislaus were grieved by the defection of fellow parishioners, lifelong friends, and even family members to the illicit church. Daily newspaper accounts of the exploits of this group and their defiant pastor only increased tensions. A minority of over-zealous militants tried to remove this embarrassing and resented blot on the neighborhood's reputation by shaming and intimidating these fallen-away brethren into abandoning their schism.

An expression of this disdain occurred on July 15th as 48 children made their First Holy Communion. During these services some men from St. Stanislaus threw a boisterous beer party on vacant land next to our church, putting Rev. Kolaszewski's promise that his group would commit no violence to the test. To their credit, the congregation remained indifferent to these noisy revelers and made no effort to retaliate.

On Sunday, August 19th, Archbishop Vilatte of Green Bay, Wisconsin dedicated the church and then, in the

company of Rev. Kolaszewski led a procession to consecrate the cemetery. Accompanied by three mounted policemen, the pair rode in the first of two carriages with the congregation following on foot in orderly fashion. When the marchers approached the corners of Marceline (East 71st Street) and Deveny they were met by an angry mob made up of misguided members of St. Stanislaus. This boisterous gang yelled insults and derided the non-violent parade and one of the troublemakers hurled a huge stone at them. As no one was injured the group proceeded on to the cemetery.

Upon their return from the cemetery the procession was greeted by a larger crowd of hecklers, many of whom eyewitnesses claimed were motivated more by alcohol than religious zeal, who renewed their vicious verbal attacks. For some unknown reason a melee suddenly erupted with two members of the procession being wounded. One man received a nasty scalp wound and an elderly gentleman was shot in the calf of his leg. At the sound of the gun both sides quickly scattered.

When they were safely back in church Archbishop Vilatte bolstered the congregation's shaken confidence. He made the point that theirs was a truly Catholic church and they were Catholics who would leave this precious heritage to their children. He continued, "Yes, we are all Catholics. Let us ever remain so, never relinquishing one iota of our Catholic dogma, even though we insist on our right to own our property in our own name." Sunday's scandalous assault stemmed from the outcast church timing its convention to form a national independent Catholic church for Poles to coincide with the 21st annual convention of the *Roman Catholic National Polish Union* hosted by St. Stanislaus. Fortunately during the gathering of these two opposing organizations peace was maintained, the only battles being verbal.

The eight-state independent movement had lent moral and financial support to Rev Kolaszewski's cause since early May and Buffalo sympathizers so admired the pastor that they sent him a large, handsomely illustrated bible as a token of their esteem. As our church did not veer from its course of flouting episcopal authority, it was the preferred location to launch their Polish diocese.

The convention began on Tuesday the 21st. Our church constitution, modeled after that of the United States, was presented as an example for the projected national church. The delegates found it particularly significant, especially the notorious article XX. The convention concluded on Friday the 24th, with the ordination of a Rev. Kaminski.

While the bishop was making his mandatory visit to Rome, Rev. Kolaszewski made an overture toward reconciliation to acting Diocesan Administrator, Msgr. Felix Boff. He took advantage of this absence to enlist help from the sometimes-friend who sat next to him at the November 15, 1891 St. Stanislaus dedication banquet, to arrange his church's return to the fold. Not only did this and other attempts to return come to nothing, but an opposite reaction to his conduct was already in progress.

Rev. Kolaszewski's contention that since he was not accepted into the diocese only the pope had the power to excommunicate him, initiated further action. After the bishop returned from Rome he was notified by Cardinal Ledochowski that on January 30, 1895, The Inquisitors, approved by the pope on the 31st, had issued a formal declaration of excommunication of Rev. Kolaszewski.

However, it was not this dire decree which could be and eventually was rescinded that prevented acceptance into the diocese. The pastor's refusal to offer any concessions or reconsider parishioner ownership created an impasse between the two churchmen that would not be resolved during the bishop's lifetime.

That same year the parish rectory, which remained in use until 1965, was built, and on February 11, 1896 church properties were redeeded to the pastor. This transfer was probably made because a loan would soon be required and could be more easily secured if title was in a pastor's name.

It was a common practice during the nineteenth century for American parishes to seek loans in Europe. Money was readily available and the risk of foreclosure was minimized. It was also recognized that the parish's independent status made the prospect of obtaining a mortgage in this country almost nil, so an overseas creditor was sought out. This plan succeeded when John Billsboro, Bishop of the small Diocese of Salford, County Lancaster, England granted a loan of \$25,000. Terms of the agreement, dated October 5, 1897, called for repayment of principal plus an added 5.5% interest charge in annual installments. These payments were to be made in gold at the Archbishop's house in Montreal, Canada.



Active resistance to the parishioner-owned church had almost died out by 1898. Other than a constant financial struggle to keep the fledgling church in operation, only three other events stand out in its 14-year history. On Sunday May 5, 1901, the community marked the 110th anniversary of Polish Independence Day with banners, parades, bands, religious, and social events. Rev. Kolaszewski used this occasion to celebrate the seventh anniversary of his church's founding. Festivities began with a 7:00 AM parade to welcome independent Armenian Bishop Kozlowski of Chicago, confirmation of 70 children plus an unknown number of adults, and concluded with a grand program in the evening attended by over 100 guests. The pastor also procured the services of an assistant, Rev Andrew Ryczek, in 1905, but neither of these events compares to the near disastrous fire of Tuesday, May 12, 1905.

The destructive blaze, blamed on a smoldering censer left under the altar after a funeral service, razed the steeple, consumed a large section of the roof, and charred most of the church and school interior. A \$1,935.40 claim paid by *The German Allied Insurance Company* confirmed the extensive structural damage but gave no clue to the catastrophic loss of life that was averted by two brave men.

At the first sign of fire, a fast thinking teacher, Anthony Matuszewski, calmly called an unscheduled recess and, with the aid of the sexton, John Gosurnski, marched the 60 children out of the school to safety. The sexton also rescued and revived Rev. Kolaszewski who was overcome by smoke attempting to save church vestments. Rapid response by firemen summoned by a telephone lineman working across the street prevented the fire from spreading to nearby homes. After three quarters of an hour and a close call for fire fighters when the steeple crashed to the ground, the blaze was finally extinguished.

The fire would force students to finish the school year in a private home and an unforeseen change in parish status would make them attend public schools the following year. However, the mood of that disastrous day was best expressed by the tears streaming down the pastor's face as he helplessly watched darting flames trying to consume his beloved church.

**To be continued in our next newsletter:**

**“The Prodigal Church Returns” & “A New Brginning”**

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### **St. Stanislaus Church of Cleveland, Ohio Designated “Shrine Church”**

On Saturday, May 8, 2004, the oldest Polish-American church in the city of Cleveland, received the high honor and distinction of receiving the designation of “shrine church” dedicated to the honor of St. Stanislaus. At 5:00 PM on a beautiful spring day, the procession formed outside the church and then proceeded into the church with a fanfare of brass and percussion instruments from the choir.

Pastor Michael Surufka OFM, his associate pastors, parishioners and all who took part in the planning of this great spiritual event, did themselves and all of Polonia proud. There were many groups represented at this “happening”; among them were the Knights of Columbus, little girls dressed in native “Krakowianki” costumes, visiting bishops and clergy from the Cleveland Diocese, altar boys, a fine choir singing both in English and in Polish to the accompaniment of a great brass and percussion section, representatives of all the political figures from the governor on down, parishioners and visitors and a distinguished bishop from Poland.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Lublin, the Most Rev. Ryszard Karpinski, Episcopal Delegate to Polonia, came to Cleveland specifically for this great spiritual uplifting event. He was the principle celebrant at the High Mass and his homily was given in both, Polish and English. His English was very good and many in the “full-to-capacity-church,” who didn't understand Polish, were flattered that he would address them in English.

Prior to the homily, a proclamation was read from the Bishop of Cleveland, the Rt. Rev. Anthony Pilla, who could not be present for this ceremony, officially designating St. Stanislaus as a shrine church. According to Canon Law, this designation recognizes this sacred place as a worthy destination for the faithful to come on pilgrimage. It was truly a magnificent, spiritually-uplifting event, a once in a lifetime happening.

In whatever heaven our ancestors are in, on this day they must have been looking down and were proud of their progeny who still lived by the values they tried to inculcate in them.

To anyone who has not yet visited this newly refurbished church, this is yet another reason for you to do so.

At the conclusion of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonization of Saint Stanislaus, the status of Saint Stanislaus Church will be elevated to the designation as the Shrine Church of Saint Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr.

*The People of Saint Stanislaus Church  
Cordially invite you to join with them at the Mass of Thanksgiving  
Honoring our patron saint and the designation of  
The Shrine Church of Saint Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr  
Celebrated by Bishop Ryszard Karpinski, Auxiliary Bishop of Lublin,  
Delegate of the Polish Episcopate to World Polonia.*

Saturday, May 8, 2004

5:00 P.M.

Saint Stanislaus Church

3649 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44105

216-341-9091

Reception with light refreshments will immediately follow the  
Mass at the Parish Social Center



*Lining up to go inside the church.*

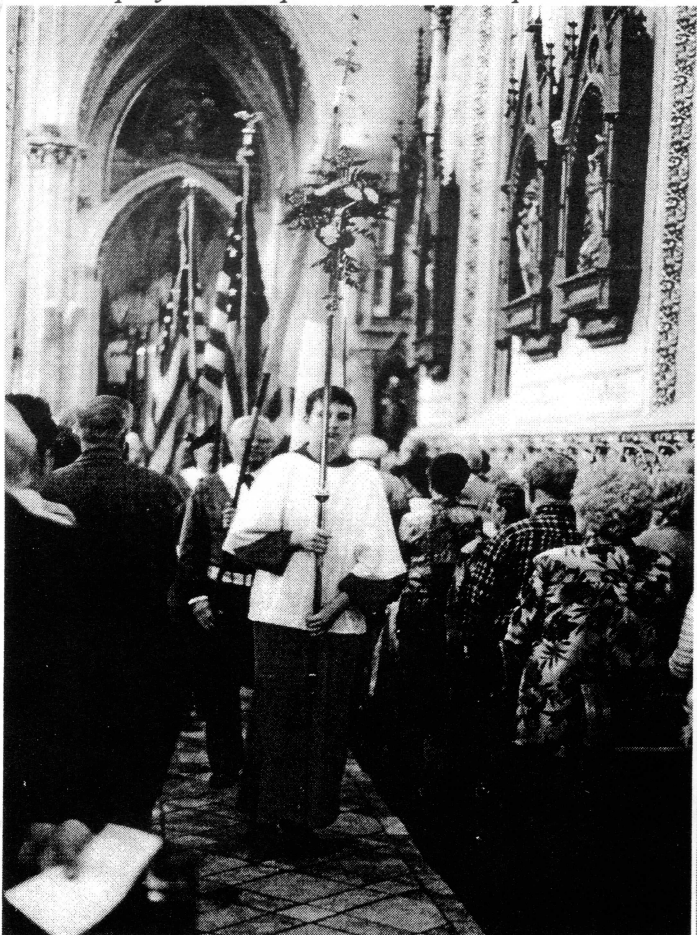




*Bishop Ryszard Karpinski with relic in procession.*



*Our little "Krakowianki" in the procession.*



*Altar boy leading the procession.*



*Bishop and clergy leaving the school for the church.*

THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND  
c/o ST. MARY'S PNC CHURCH  
1901 WEXFORD AVE.  
PARMA, OHIO 44134

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Everyone who is interested in Genealogy, and more specifically Polish Genealogy, is welcome to join our group. We meet the first Tuesday of the month from September thru June at St. Mary's PNC Church; 5375 Broadview Rd. (corner of Broadview & Wexford); Parma, Ohio. Parking is available in the parish lot, the entrance of which is on Marietta Ave. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and usually end at 9:30-10:00 PM.

Membership dues are \$20.00 a year.

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