

# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

ST. MARY'S POLISH  
"WITH PRAISE AND

CHURCH SYDNEY, N.S.  
THANKSGIVING"

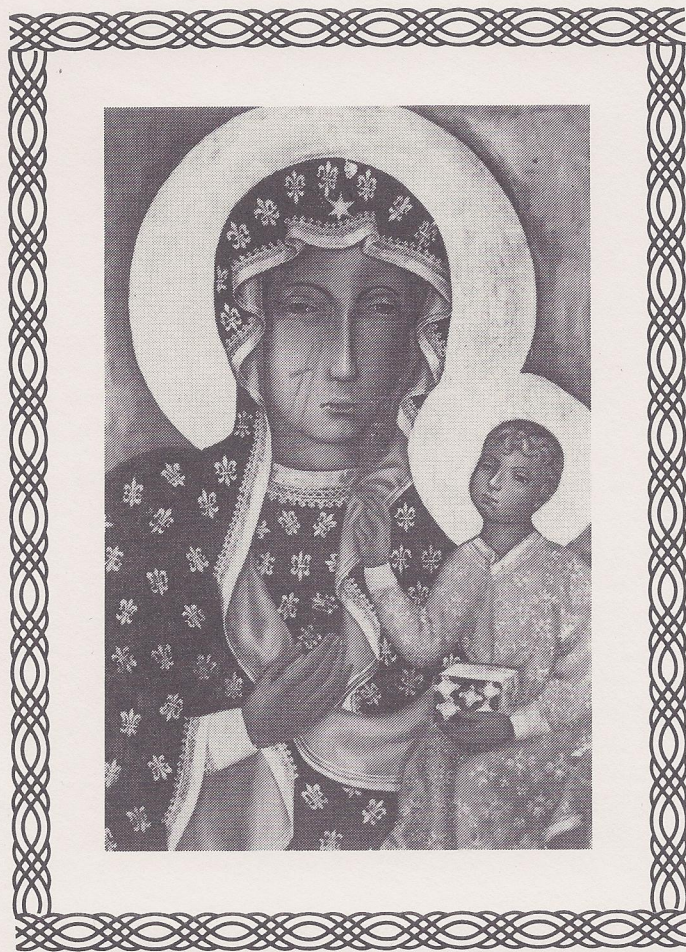


• 1913

1988 •

KOŚCIÓŁ NARODZENIA NAJŚW. MARYI PANNY



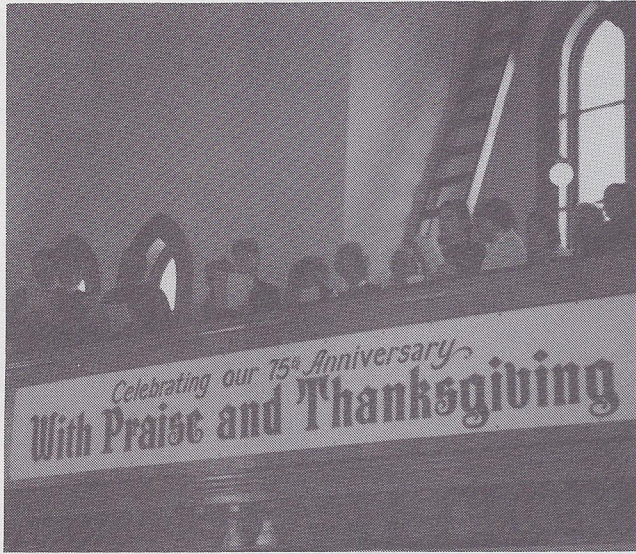


*Our Lady of Czestochowa  
The Black Madonna  
Queen of Poland*





## DEDICATION



We begin "With Praise and Thanksgiving" to God our Father who created us by his Love, blessed us with Faith through Jesus Christ, and sustains us in His service with the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

We offer praise and thanksgiving to our Blessed Mother Mary, patroness of our parish, who guided us from its beginning, and watches over the members of The Polish Church of the Nativity of Mary.

Praise and thanks are due to our pastors who instructed us so devotedly in spiritual matters, encouraged us to practice our Faith through Religious Celebrations and in our daily lives, and provided an international flavor to our parish by their Polish, Irish, and Scotch backgrounds.

We also give praise and thanks to everyone who belongs to St. Mary's Polish Parish. First we honor the memory of our courageous pioneers who made many personal sacrifices to build our church and parish. They preserved their strong faith brought from Poland, and handed on to their descendants a deep faith in God and love for our Blessed Mother Mary. We also thank all who are now actively preserving our spiritual, social and cultural heritage.

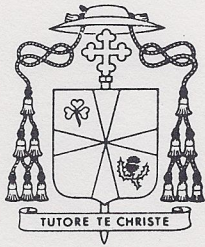
This Anniversary Booklet is dedicated to all our parishioners, past and present, to our clergy, to parish organizations and workers, to choirs and organists, altar boys, sacristans, lectors, caretakers and housekeepers, to Polish language teachers, cultural activity leaders, and to all who have helped in any way to build, support and maintain St. Mary's Polish Parish for three-quarters of a century.

We acknowledge that the generosity of God and the work of His good people have made it possible for St. Mary's Parish to reach its joyful Seventy-Fifth Anniversary. For this memorable occasion we invite and welcome all former parishioners, relatives and friends to come and share our celebration "With Praise and Thanksgiving", which is our anniversary theme.









## Office of the Bishop

P.O. Box 1330  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
B2G 2L7

March 21, 1988

*The Reverend James MacLean, P.P.  
The Parishioners  
Saint Mary's Parish  
11 Wesley Street  
Sydney, Nova Scotia B1N 2M5*

*Dear Friends:*

*It is with great pleasure that I greet you as diocesan bishop on the 75th anniversary of the Parish. May it be a real time of celebration in the Lord. I do hope that the marking of the anniversary will itself be a time to reach out to the members of the faith community.*

*Saint Mary's Parish has been one of the real landmarks of our diocese. Since coming as bishop, I have heard many stories of the dedicated and holy priests who have served the parish. I have heard of the determination and loyalty that has marked the lay leaders over the years. With my own eyes, I have seen the careful attention that you have given to the buildings and all those things that help to form and keep a lively community of faith.*

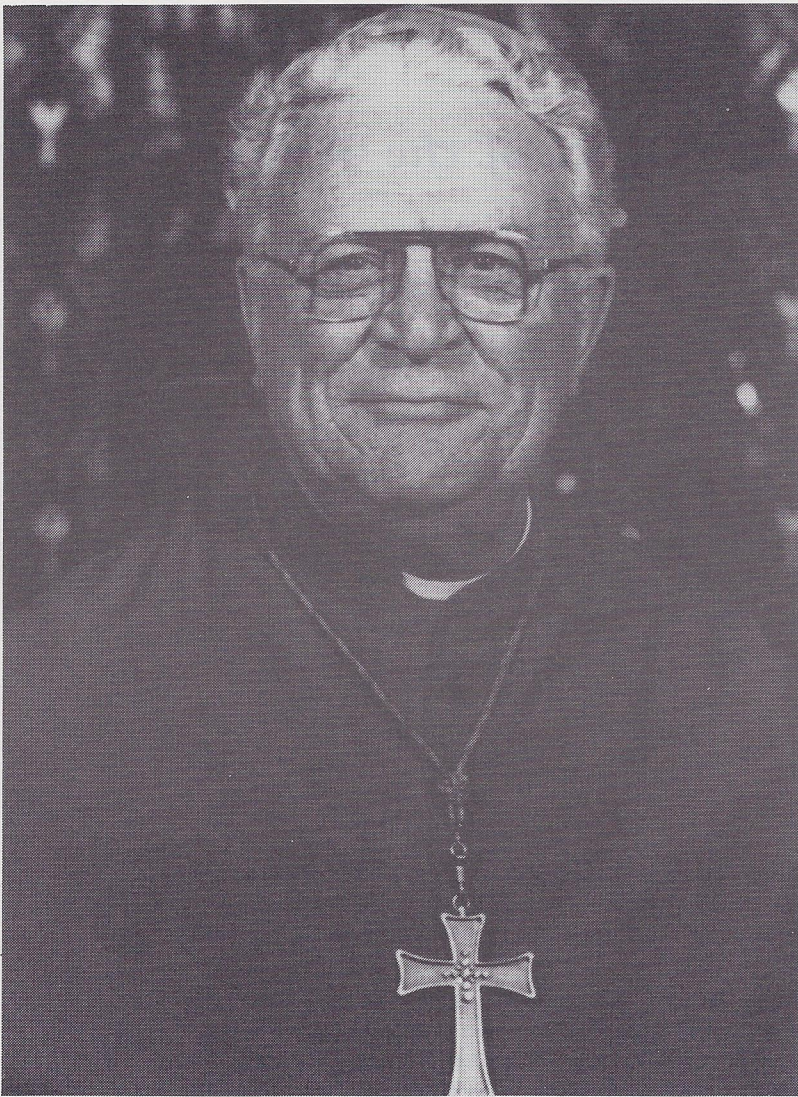
*With you, I am hoping and praying that we will be able to have a bilingual priest who can serve the people in Polish and English. I want to thank you for your faithfulness to the Gospel and the Eucharist. In your name, I want to thank the dedicated and devoted service of Father Jim MacLean, your present pastor.*

*May God lead you from strength to strength and may the Mother of Jesus, your Patron, bring you all closer to Her Son. God love you all.*

*Your servant in Jesus Christ,*

*The Most Rev. Colin Campbell, D.D., Litt. D.,  
Bishop of Antigonish*





*St. Francis Xavier University  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia*

*My Dear Friends:*

*I am pleased to have the opportunity to express my best wishes on the occasion of St. Mary's 75th anniversary.*

*May the celebration be an occasion of remembering all those who preceded us and played their part in the life of the Church. May it also move us to thank the Lord and His Blessed Mother for all we have received.*

*May those who follow you have the pleasure of being grateful for your contribution to the life of St. Mary's.*

*Sincerely in Our Lord,*

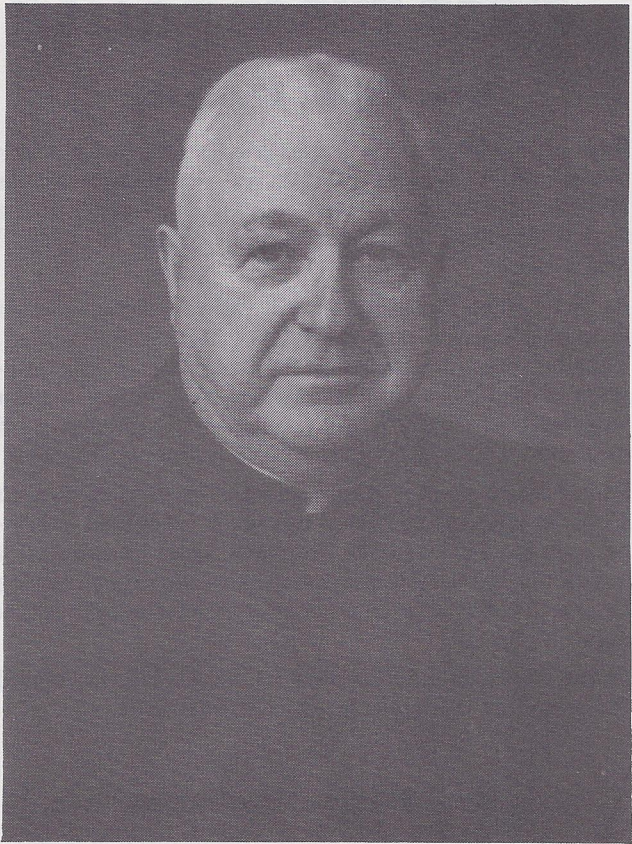
*William E. Power  
Bishop Emeritus of Antigonish*



PRESTERS AT ST. MARY'S

Rev. Camillus Gushalski

Rev. Camillus Gushalski was appointed third Polish Pastor of St. Mary's. He had been ordained October 16, 1902. Before coming to Sydney he served as pastor of various missions about 30 miles north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Father Gushalski is an expert at coming to St. Mary's in January 1916, but his first entry to the Pastor was dated January 1917. During 1916 several masses were held. Father Gushalski worked zealously with the Polish people. Through the generous cooperation of the self-sacrificing parishioners, their church was completed in 1918. The house next door was bought and arranged to serve as a school. Due to ill health, Father Gushalski left St. Mary's in October 1920. Later he was Chaplain of the Provincial House in the State of the Holy Family in Toronto, Ontario. He died in 1923 and is buried on February 10, 1924.



Rev. Camillus Gushalski became the second Polish Pastor of St. Mary's in August 1914. He had been ordained June 29, 1902. Father Gushalski was devoted to his parishioners during his stay of less than two years. After leaving Sydney in January 1916, Father Gushalski was Chaplain of the Polish Regiment in Boston from 1917 to 1919. He was also the pastor of a Polish parish in New York City from 1922 to 1924.

Dear Parishioners:

*With a prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving in our hearts we celebrate with joy and gladness this 75th Anniversary of Saint Mary's Polish Parish. What beautiful thoughts serve to refreshen the memories of parishioners, young and old, as stories of the years gone by are exchanged and related in familiar ways!*

*WE thank our Blessed Lord for the gift of faith, the bonds of Charity and the example of dedicated service, which serve as a legacy left to this parish-community by the pioneers, whose names we cherish. We pray that their efforts for good may continue to bear a rich harvest in the hearts of successive generations for many years to come.*

*We remember with gratitude the good support of all parishioners during this year of celebration, and in a special way we are grateful to the Committee charged with the task of developing and carrying out our 75th Anniversary activities.*

*May this year of Celebration remind us all of the goodness of our Lord and the loving care of our Lady of Czestochowa for this, our beloved parish.*

Sincerely in the Lord,

J.A. MacLean  
Pastor



# FIRST THREE POLISH PRIESTS AT ST. MARY'S

## Rev. Antoni Plucinski

Rev. Antoni Plucinski was appointed pastor of the Polish community in Sydney by the late Archbishop James Morrison. He had been ordained on July 15, 1890. Three sources give three different dates for his arrival, 1911, 1912 and 1913.

At first Father Plucinski worked with the Polish people through Holy Redeemer Church which they attended. Then he served his parish, as the first pastor, in the basement of St. Mary's Church. His first entry in the Register was made on April 20, 1913, but he had made a record on January 22, 1913, in the Holy Redeemer Register.

Father Plucinski was pastor of St. Mary's until August 1914. In the year 1915 and following, he served in Winnipeg in the Diocese of St. Boniface. Later he was pastor in Polonia, in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He helped to build a church and rectory for the people of that area.

Father Plucinski died October 13, 1930. He was buried in the church cemetery in Polonia, Manitoba.

## Rev. Marian Godlewski

Rev. Marian Godlewski became the second Polish Pastor of St. Mary's in August 1914. He had been ordained June 29, 1899.

Father Godlewski was dedicated to his parishioners during his stay of less than two years. After leaving Sydney in January 1916, Father Godlewski was Chaplain of the Polish Regiment in Boston from 1917 to 1919. He was also the pastor of a Polish parish in Nashua, New Hampshire from 1922 to 1924.



Rev. Camillus Grzybala.

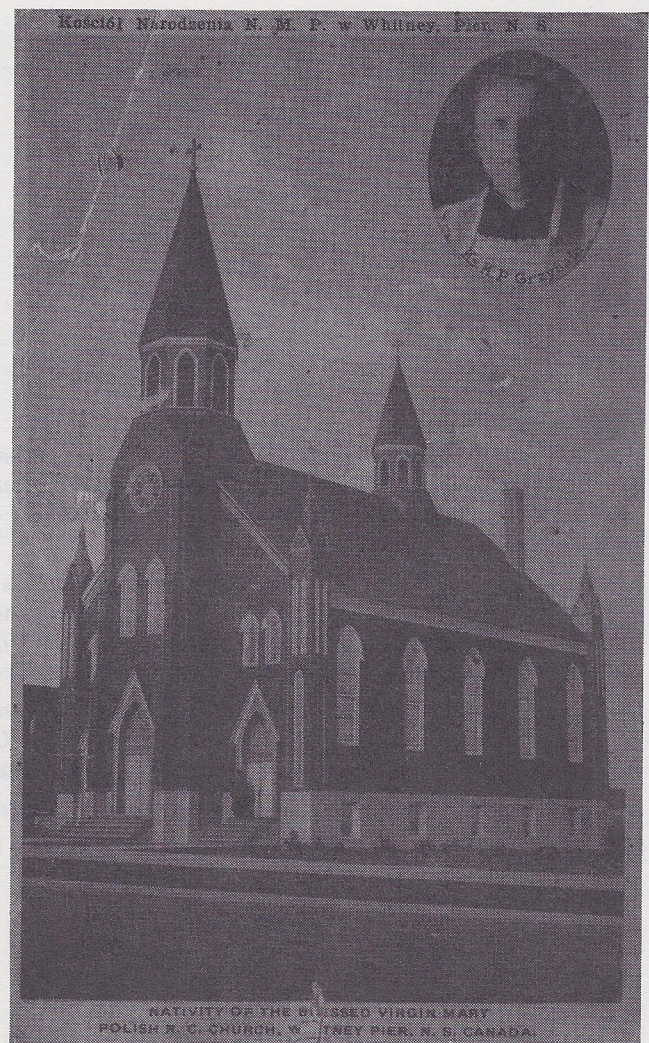
## Rev. Camillus Grzybala

Rev. Camillus Grzybala was appointed third Polish Pastor of St. Mary's. He had been ordained October 10, 1902. Before coming to Sydney he served as pastor of outlying missions about 90 miles north of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Father Grzybala is on record as coming to St. Mary's in January 1916, but his first entry in the Register was dated January 1917. During 1916 several priests signed the Register.

Father Grzybala worked zealously with the Polish people. Through the generous cooperation of the self-sacrificing pioneers, their church was completed in 1918. The house next door was bought and enlarged to serve as a rectory.

Due to ill health, Father Grzybala left St. Mary's in October, 1920. Later he was Chaplain of the Provincial House of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Torresdale, Pennsylvania, from 1923 until his death on February 10, 1924.



(Most of the above information came from the Diocesan Archives, as found in Father A.A. Johnston's volume: "Antigonish Diocese - Thumbnail Biographies.")



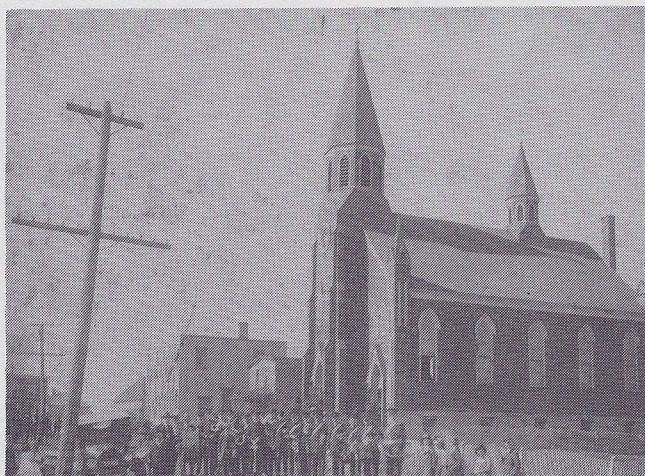
## Mission of Holy Redeemer

From September 1920 to September 1929, St. Mary's Church was administered by the late Rev. James M. Kiely, pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish. Mass was said in the church on Sundays and Holydays.

One of the priests who served St. Mary's at that time was the young curate, Rev. M.L. O'Connell. He was destined to make a special impact on the Polish Parish.

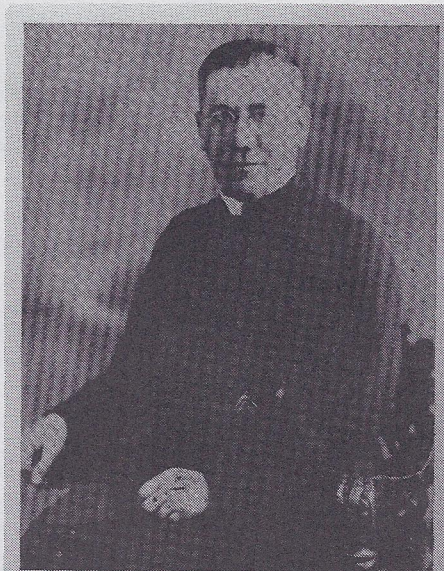
During these years, a Polish or Polish-speaking priest was brought to St. Mary's regularly to preach a mission and to help the Polish people prepare for their Easter or Christmas celebrations.

Also during this time the C.N.D. Sisters of Holy Redeemer Convent prepared the Polish children for their First Communion and Confirmation. They continued their generous help through the 1930's.



St. Mary's Polish Church, 1921.

## Rev. Michael Kolbuch La Salette Missionary



Ks. Michał Kolbuch MS, pierwszy polski prowincjał.

Rev. Michael Kolbuch was one of the missionaries of La Salette who preached missions at St. Mary's during the 1920's.

He was born in Poland on November 14, 1889 and was ordained in Rome on December 2, 1917. Father Kolbuch was the first Polish Priest of the La Salette Order and also the first Polish Provincial of the Order.

He was remarkable for his dedication and hard work. He had the La Salette Magazine published in Polish and wrote spiritual booklets, one of which was "Living With God."

He also taught in the seminaries of the Order. He was serving as a councillor in Rome when he died December 13, 1957. He is buried in Rome. The life story of Fr. Kolbuch can be found in the La Salette Magazine, July to September, 1987.

St. Mary's was fortunate to have Father Kolbuch as a Mission Priest. He promoted devotion to Our Lady of La Salette. In 1924 he organized the first Altar Society called "Towarzystwo Matki Boskiej Saletyńskiej." The members subscribed to the La Salette Magazine which some still receive.

On the 19th of each month the members attended Mass in honor of Our Lady who appeared to two children on September 19, 1846, in the French Alps, near the village of La Salette. The missionaries celebrate a Novena of Masses from the 11th to the 19th of each month at the shrine of Our Lady in Twin Lakes, Wisconsin.

Through the encouragement of Father Kolbuch, the members of the Altar Society worked together for their spiritual good and to help St. Mary's Church. During processions they carried the statue of Our Lady of La Salette. The religious practices started by Father Kolbuch were maintained for many years.





*St. Michael's Society with a Mission Priest and Rev. M.L. O'Connell, assistant at Holy Redeemer Parish, early 1920's.*



*A procession around St. Mary's Church in honor of the Holy Eucharist with a Mission Priest, early 1920's.*



# REV. MICHAEL LEO O'CONNELL

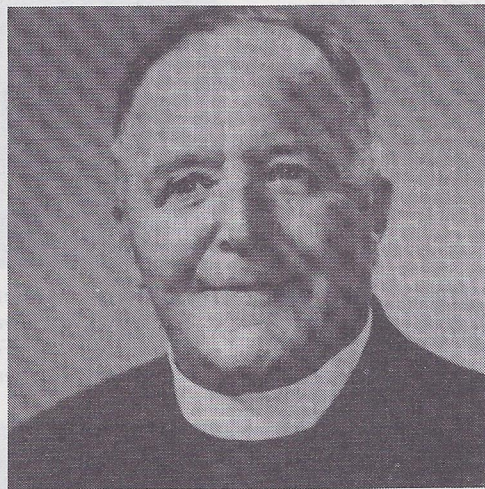
September 8, 1929 - June 30, 1969

## Polish Oblate Missionaries

Before introducing Rev. M.L. O'Connell, it is well to say that during the 1930's the Polish Oblate Fathers, O.M.I. from Manitoba directed the Missions at St. Mary's. Some of the priests who came were: Rev. J. Smith, Rev. P.J. Klita, Rev. Anthony Rabiega, Rev. Felix Kwiatkowski, Rev.

Stanley Baderski, Rev. Stanley Misiag. (Names given by Sr. M. Caroline).

Rev. J. Smith was special guest at the 50th anniversary of St. Mary's Church on September 8, 1963. Rev. Felix Kwiatkowski was a special guest at Father O'Connell's Golden Jubilee of Holy Priesthood, November 30, 1968.



Rev. Michael Leo O'Connell was born in Sydney on August 8, 1891. He was the son of Patrick and Margaret (Ormond) O'Connell.

Father O'Connell received his early education in Sydney. He graduated from St. Francis Xavier University in 1915 and entered Grand Seminary in Montreal.

Soon after his ordination to the priesthood on November 30, 1918, Father O'Connell was named assistant at Holy Redeemer Parish on December 10, 1918. He served there for eleven years, and during this time also served St. Mary's.

Father O'Connell took a special interest in the welfare of the Polish people. He said Mass for them and encouraged them to practice their Polish customs.

Father O'Connell was appointed Pastor of St. Mary's Polish Church by the late Archbishop James Morrison, on September 8, 1929. He remained there for forty years until his retirement on June 30, 1969. He celebrated his Golden Jubilee on November 30, 1968. Father O'Connell died on February 16, 1971.

The simple greatness of this prayerful priest is recorded in the following excerpt from a eulogy to Father O'Connell by Monsignor William Gallivan.

*"He was a man of unique charity. Only God and the recipients of his benefactions can piece together that secret part of his life.*

*Father O'Connell's tastes were simple. His demands were few. He loved the Pier and its people. No one could fault him for reserving a special part of his priestly heart for his beloved Polish congregation, their Liturgy, their language, which he willingly learned and their culture.*

*His one great desire in life was to remain with them as long as he could carry on. God and his bishop granted him this desire. He enjoyed it for more than 40 years.*

*For recreation it pleased him to take a little walk daily around the perimeter of his parish, greeting every man, woman and child along the way.*

*He didn't labor for fame or fortune or esteem. He just wanted to be a good priest and pastor."*

That was Father O'Connell.

Indeed, the kindness and charity of Father O'Connell were well known far beyond the boundaries of his parish. He was an inspiration to all who met him, especially the people of St. Mary's Polish Church.

Submitted by John Tynski



## FOUR POLISH FRANCISCAN PRIESTS

From July 1, 1969 until June 25, 1980, St. Mary's Church was served by four Polish priests of the Franciscan Order from the United States. Before Rev. M.L. O'Connell retired, the Very Rev. Edmund Szymkiewicz, Minister Provincial of St. Anthony of Padua's Province in North America had been approached with a petition to supply St. Mary's with a Polish priest to serve the members of the parish.

The first priest was **Rev. Andrew Skiba**, O.F.M., Conv. who came to St. Mary's on July 1, 1969. He was born March 22, 1921 in Chicopee, Mass. He was ordained June 22, 1947.

Father Skiba remained for three months and left St. Mary's on September 28, 1969. He was appointed Pastor of St. Stephen's Church in Shamokin, Penn. At present he is Pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in South Boston, Mass.

**Rev. Rayner Ziemski**, O.F.M., Conv., became Parish Priest of St. Mary's Church on September 28, 1969. He was born October 16, 1921 in Baltimore, Maryland. He was ordained July 31, 1938.

During his pastorage several major renovations were carried out in the church. Father Ziemski was recalled to the States due to ill health on October 22, 1972. He died June 3, 1983.



*St. Mary's choir entertained at MacGillivray Guest Home, October, 1969. Director: Mary Pierrynowski, Accordionist: John K. Paruch. Father O'Connell meets the new Parish Priest Rev. Rayner Ziemski.*



*Children of the parish meeting the new priest, Father Andrew Skiba, in St. Michael's Hall, July, 1969.*





In October 1972, St. Mary's parish made presentations to Rev. Rayner Ziemiński prior to his departure from St. Mary's. Participants are: Walter Wojick, president of St. Michael's Society; Julia Ann Tynski representing the Choir; and Anne MacNeil, president of the Altar Society.

**Rev. Herbert Skurski**, O.F.M., Conv. came to St. Mary's as Pastor on October 23, 1972. He was the son of Joseph and Barbara (Slawinska) Skurski. He was born in Glen Lyon, Penn., on February 21, 1917.

Father Skurski attended the Franciscan Novitiate and spent six years at St. Hyacinth's Seminary in Granby, Mass. He was ordained there May 1, 1944 by the Most Rev. Thomas M. O'Leary, Bishop of Springfield, Mass.

Before coming to St. Mary's as Pastor, Father Skurski was Assistant at nine different parishes. During his stay many renovations were accomplished.

Since leaving Sydney on August 7, 1979, Father Skurski has been Pastor of St. Joseph's in Peabody, Mass., of St. Mary's Parish in West Leyden, N.Y., and is now Pastor of St. Mary's in Constableville, N.Y. In each parish he carried out major improvements.



Prior to leaving St. Mary's Church in August, 1979, Rev. Herbert Skurski was presented with cheques from the parishioners. From the left: Rev. Stanley Moronczyk, the new pastor; Dominic Gniewek, president of St. Michael's Society; Rev. Herbert Skurski; Lorna Pierrynowski from the Choir; Anne (Cholock) MacNeil from the parishioners.

**Rev. Stanley Moronczyk**, O.F.M., Conv., came as Pastor to St. Mary's on August 7, 1979. He was born August 30, 1912 in Buffalo, N.Y. He was ordained July 9, 1939.

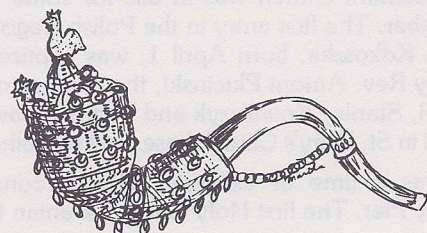
Father Stanley served his parishioners well with kindness and humour. He left St. Mary's on June 25, 1980. He died June 21, 1981.



Presentation to Rev. Stanley Moronczyk before he left St. Mary's Parish in June 1980. From left: Ursula Melski, vice-president of Altar Society; Chester Siepierski, vice-president of St. Michael's Society; Delores Starzomski, treasurer; Dominic Gniewek, president; Peggy Ryba, secretary.

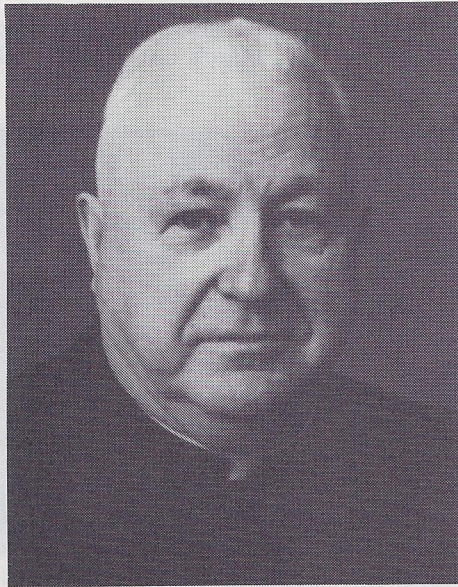


Children danced for Father Stanley prior to his departure. Rear from left: Michael Hamper, Cora Lee Starzomski, Pat Petruskavich, Stephanie Tynski, Michael Ardelli, Leanne Boutilier, Krista Ann Starzomski. Front: Janice Melski, Paul Wludyka, Tracy Snow, Dana Tynski, Michelle Melski, Shawn Joseph and Denise Sokol.





## MONSIGNOR JAMES A. MacLEAN



Father MacLean became Pastor of St. Mary's Polish Parish on June 25, 1980. Guided by his love of God and his fellowman, he has given the parish a new vigour of simplicity and joy.

Father MacLean was born on February 19, 1918, in the small and picturesque village of Bay St. Lawrence. He attended local schools and in 1934 he began his post-

secondary education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. Upon graduation in 1938, he enrolled in Holy Heart Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood on June 3, 1943.

Father Jim recalls that his decision to enter the priesthood was facilitated by the example of those that surrounded him, his family, friends and pastors. It is this same sense of spirituality, vocation and mission that Father MacLean seeks to promote in all his parishioners.

In 1943, Father MacLean was appointed Curate to St. Peter's Parish in Cheticamp. Persistent and successful attempts to study the French Language served to deepen the growing respect for Reverend MacLean.

In 1950, he was transferred to Georgeville and Pomquet in Antigonish County.

In 1951 he was appointed Chaplain in the Royal Canadian Navy. The contrast from the quiet shore of Bay St. Lawrence was startling. Within a short period of time, he found himself overseas serving in the Korean War. For 24 years, Father MacLean served both man and God as chaplain in the Navy.

In 1975 he was appointed pastor at Grand Mira. From here, he was transferred to St. Mary's in 1980.

Father Jim has enriched the religious life of his parishioners by exemplifying his commitment to faith, love and the ideals of Christianity. He has encouraged the continuance of Polish customs and traditions and has himself studied the Polish language.

In this the year of our 75th anniversary, we thank Father MacLean for his contribution to the spiritual and cultural life of our parish. *(Submitted by Michael Pierrynowski)*



## HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

The Official Seal of St. Mary's Church in Latin reads: R.C. PAROCHIA POLONICA ST. MARIAE NATIVITATIS. Sydney, N.S. 1913 A.D. The English translation is Roman Catholic Polish Parish of St. Mary's Nativity or of the Nativity of St. Mary. For brevity the usual title is St. Mary's Polish Church.

The birthday of Mary, Mother of Jesus, is observed on September 8th. It was on September 8, 1913 that the cornerstone was blessed and the Polish Church of the Nativity of St. Mary, as yet just a covered basement, was officially opened by the late Archbishop James Morrison.

The basement church was in use for some time before September. The first entry in the Polish Register tells that Matilda Kokoszka, born April 1, was baptized April 20, 1913 by Rev. Antoni Plucinski, the first pastor. On June 4, 1913, Stanley Kowalczyk and Victoria Gawenda were married in St. Mary's Church basement by Father Plucinski.

This was a time of extensive church construction in Whitney Pier. The first Holy Ghost Ukrainian Church was

under construction in 1912. St. Nicholas Italian Church was built in 1911. In the midst of active church development, an awful disaster occurred. The first Holy Redeemer Church which the Polish and other ethnic people had been attending, burned with the Convent and most buildings on James St. in June, 1913. (Details of these events are in John Huk's, "The Ukrainian Presence in Cape Breton".)

The land that belongs to St. Mary's Church was obtained from several sources. Lots 118 and 121, bordering on Wesley St., were bought on April 8, 1913 from Elias and Tekla Szalak (Schella) for one dollar. Lots 119 and 120 bordering on Harvard St. were bought from H.A. Frowde and J.E. Burchell respectively. In 1973, through the work of Stanley Paruch, Eugene Deturbide and Teofil Pierrynowski, a lot of land was purchased from the city for one dollar, when a house adjoining church land was demolished.

For many years the spacious, grassy area around the church was the locale of successful annual bazaars, organiz-



ed and managed by the men of the parish. These fund-raising events provided entertainment and social activity for parishioners and all who attended.

When St. Michael's Benefit Society was founded on April 9, 1909, the leaders held long range views of organizing and helping the Polish people, and raising money to build a Polish Church. In 1911 the members built the first St. Michael's Hall on the south side of Wesley St. Many concerts, dances, dinners, weddings and other fund-raising affairs were held in the hall. It was the center of social and cultural life in the parish.

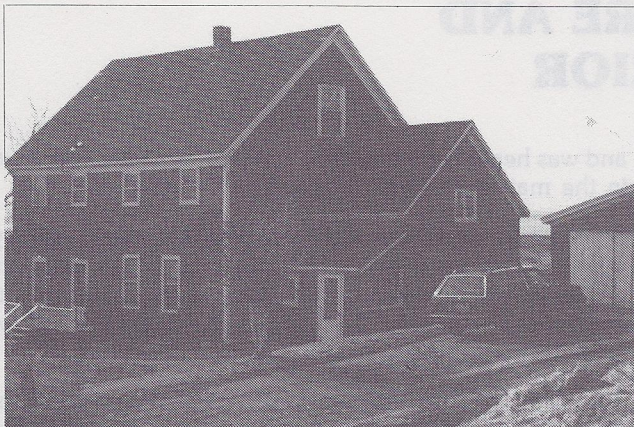
The leaders met periodically at the Wojick house on the corner of Jameison and Brow Sts. This was the former Bonneyview Hotel with many rooms and plenty of space for meetings. Such a meeting took place in the afternoon of the last Sunday in May, 1913, to finalize plans for the church.

The only record of this meeting available at this time, is a short account told by Mrs. Anna Kiec to her grandson, Michael Ratushny in 1982. It gives the names of seven men who attended: Michael Kiec, Michael Paruch, Stanley Kowalczyk, Stanley Gwozdz, Adam Trojan, Walenty Wojick and John Stryczyk. Each man contributed one dollar towards the fund.

Many men helped to dig the excavation for the basement of the church by hand. They used picks, shovels, scoops, and their own horses. Very likely they employed skilled workers to build the forms for the basement walls, but they mixed and poured the cement themselves.

They built a roof on the basement and used it for their church because they lacked the funds to build further. Fund-raising activities went on. Parishioners continued to give their time and money with self-sacrificing generosity for their church. Father Godlewski worked with the people for about two years and encouraged their great efforts.

A few years later the contract to draw up plans and construct the upper church was given to Chappell's Ltd. During the building of the church, all the pioneers helped in one way or another. Among the workers were carpenters, plasterers, plumbers, pipefitters, electricians and other artisans, and all their skills and volunteer labour were used.



*Wojick house where meetings were held to make plans for a Polish Church.*

In 1918, during the pastorate of Rev. C. Grzybala, the Parish Church of the Nativity of St. Mary was completed. It is still the only Polish Church in Canada east of Montreal. The building was and is a noble tribute to the zeal and effort of priests and people. The house next to the church, built by John Chrobak for himself in 1914, was bought at this time for a parish Glebe House. It was enlarged in the back.

The task of paying the heavy mortgage on the church continued during the nine years of administration by Rev. J.M. Kiely of Holy Redeemer Church. It was gradually diminished by the proceeds from numerous fund-raising events and regular donations from each family, collected by church workers, later called wardens.

When Rev. M.L. O'Connell became pastor in 1929, the parish owed the amount of \$10,000. His main priority was to rid St. Mary's Church of the mortgage. However, the depression of the 1930's made the collection of funds very difficult. Money was scarce and dimes and nickles made up the donations. In time the mortgage was paid off through the help of all parishioners, especially the men of St. Michael's Society, and the economical use of parish money. When Father O'Connell retired on July 1, 1969, the parish had a surplus of funds in preparation for needed improvements.

During the pastorate of the Franciscan Priests and Monsignor MacLean, extensive renovations and improvements were carried out in the church and glebe house. Stanley Paruch was elected in a meeting of the parish to manage and supervise all renovations and he did it successfully for several years. The basement of the church was changed into a fine church hall with a well equipped kitchen and washrooms. Many parish functions take place there.

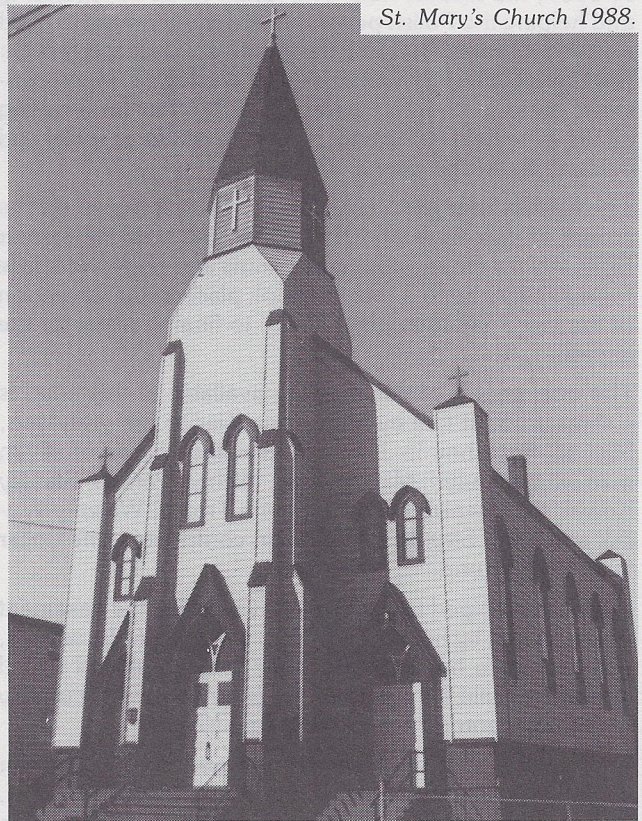
The church got a new roof. Oil fired heating systems were installed in both buildings. New wiring and light fixtures were added, but the central chandelier in the church was strengthened and left in. The interior of the glebe house was completely renovated. Both buildings received new windows and were covered in light beige siding. The interiors were painted.

The church floor was covered. Insulation and panelling took the place of wainscotting. Ceiling fans and moveable padded kneelers were installed. One set of stairs to the choir was removed. The center aisle was widened in the front. New doors were installed and concrete steps with railings were put up. The grounds, church and glebe house were enclosed with a wire link fence. When all the renovations were completed, the parish had no debt to repay. Everyone will agree with Father Skurski who said, "Thanks be to God and the good parishioners for their splendid cooperation."

Indeed the Polish men deserve great praise. They did much gratuitous hard work in collecting pledges of money, digging out old structures, tearing down and rebuilding, and making their church serviceable and beautiful. Their work today can favorably be compared to that of the pioneers who gave of their time and strength so generously.



## ST. MARY'S GETS A CROSS



For the first time in 20 years a cross will look down on Victoria Road from the steeple of St. Mary's Polish Church in Sydney. Father J.S. MacLean (centre), the pastor of St. Mary's, and Parishioners Eugene Deturbide (right) and contractor Charles Barrington (left) were happily on hand as crane operators Donnie MacNeil and Ivan Mullins erected a shining new copper cross atop the steeple, replacing one that was destroyed by a storm in the early sixties.



## STRUCTURE AND INTERIOR

The modified Gothic design of St. Mary's Church was modelled on the style of a Polish Church in Quebec. The overall size is 66 ft. long and 44 ft. wide with a spire 65 ft. high. It is situated on Wesley St. near Victoria Road in Whitney Pier. (For a detailed description see an article by Elizabeth Beaton-Planetta in Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1984, at Beaton Institute, U.C.C.B.)

The original wooden structure included two belfries. The one in the high spire above the main door held a large bell with a loud, deep chime. It was rung from the choir before principal church services. The bell in the shorter belfry at the rear of the church was rung from the vestry

and was heard before evening services. Both bells are now in the main belfry but not used as formerly.

Some parishioners remember that a bell-blessing ceremony was held before it was lifted into place. The bell was displayed on the ground with many streamers of ribbon attached to its handle. The people could ring the bell for a fee to help finance its cost.

The main spire was struck and split by lightning in the summer of 1928. It was repaired and mounted with a wooden cross. This was destroyed by a storm in the early 1960's. Not until November 25, 1981, was the present large cop-



per cross erected. Parishioner Eugene Deturbide and Contractor Charles Barrington did the work from an aerial bucket.

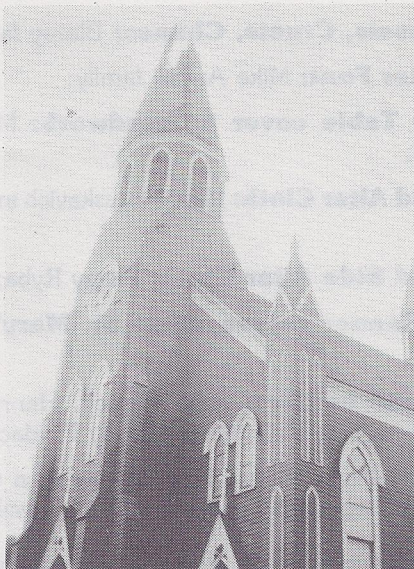
Several noticeable changes were made in the original structure of the church. The main spire was closed in because the louvered sides had been open to the weather. The rear belfry was taken down. Four high spires that marked the corners of the roof were almost levelled. Two narrow windows in the back wall, one on each side of the altar were removed. The traditional Rose Windows, of which there are two, were covered on the outside when the siding was applied.

The interior of St. Mary's Church, like the exterior, is simple and dignified. It repeats the Gothic influence in the high Altar, Pulpit, Baptismal Font and Communion Rail, all in white with pillars of simulated marble. The same theme is continued in the arched ceiling and the unique Stations of the Cross, which represents the means of Salvation for all peoples.

The tall translucent glass windows and high ceiling provide an atmosphere of light and openness in the small church which has a seating capacity of about 230.

The church furnishings were purchased from a source in Quebec. The altar, sacred vessels, vestments, pulpit, baptismal font, stations, communion rail, candle holders and organ were paid for by pioneer individuals, families or groups. The pews were numbered at first and families paid a stipend for their use.

Today also, St. Mary's Church receives donations of vestments and other church necessities from individuals and groups. The generosity of the Polish people to their church, as shown in the pioneer days, is still alive and active, and will remain so as long as St. Mary's Church lives.



*St. Mary's spire struck by lightning in summer of 1928. For this picture thanks to Irma Duchek, friend and neighbor of the Polish people.*



*Sanctuary of St. Mary's Church showing the high altar, rose window, communion rail, pulpit, and stations. Our Lady's altar, the small altar now used, the central chandelier, and baptismal font.*



## *Our Church*

Our Church is not big, nor famous, but small,  
 Yet the whole of our parish is proud of it all.  
 From its tall brown building that reaches up high,  
 To the people who worship our Lord in the sky.

And when one is to enter he sees with delight,  
 The peach and cream walls and the altar so bright.  
 The fine lamps a hanging, the booklets of prayer,  
 And the Good Virgin's Statue so stately in there.

Her Immaculate Heart will always intercede,  
 Our whispering prayers and small good deed.  
 So when we enter our church to pray,  
 We feel much better, we wish we could stay.

Although going to church by law is a must,  
 It does not seem so, for in God we trust.  
 We learn His works, His words, His teaching,  
 When during Mass, our priest is preaching.

So even if to some people it's odd,  
 We really love our house of God.  
 If all the world round I did search,  
 I'd never find so warm a place as  
 St. Mary's Polish Church.

Lorraine Kiech, Age 13, 1975  
 Egan Avenue  
 South Bar, N.S.



# WARDENS OF ST. MARY'S PARISH

Peter Durkacz  
Joseph Paruch  
Marian Ardelli  
Joseph Miecznik  
Joe Wojick  
Alonzo Jockemeck  
Stanley Tynski  
Peter Planetta

Stanley Paruch  
Peter Stephenson  
Dominic Gniewek  
Teofil Pierrynowski  
Eugene Dithurbide  
Edward Rozicki  
Walter Ryba  
John J. Paruch

The early wardens visited the homes of parishioners twice a month to collect church dues to pay off the mortgage on the church. They went in pairs to different sections of the Pier. They also collected in Glace Bay and New Waterford, because Father O'Connell visited these towns to hear confessions before Holy Days.

The wardens carried out the necessary work around the church and glebe house, looked after the business requirements and were faithfully on hand whenever the Pastor needed assistance.



## Helen Blazey

This booklet would be remiss in its purpose if it did not include a thank you note to Helen Blazey. Helen was the dedicated housekeeper for Father O'Connell for 37 years from 1932 to 1969.

Besides managing the Glebe House so well, Helen also acted as sacristan for 25 years. She polished the Sacred Vessels, cleaned the candle sticks, and dusted every spot that could be reached.

She took care of the altar and linens. Anyone who has been brave enough to tackle the linens, knows that the altar cloths and pleated communion cloths were long and difficult to press without wrinkles.

Helen often shopped at the florists with Mrs. Frances Durkacz. On Holy Days the main altar and side altar reflected the beauty and color of their choice in flowers.

Helen's helpfulness and generosity were extended to everyone she met. If a person lost an article in Church or visited the Glebe House for a Mass Card, Helen was there to help.

If Father O'Connell was in the Church nearby, where he spent much time in prayer, and if rain or snow began to fall, Helen would take his rubbers and raincoat to him for protection on the way back.

The thoughtfulness and loving care that Helen showered on Father O'Connell, helped him to stay well and active for 40 years in the service of St. Mary's Parish.

Father O'Connell retired at the end of June, 1969. On July 2, Helen helped to move his belongings to his new residence at the MacGillivray Guest Home. She visited Father O'Connell every day, and brought him news from the parish and portions of tasty food that she knew he liked.

All the parishioners of St. Mary's Polish Church thank you, Helen, for your long and dedicated service to our beloved Pastor and Parish. Sto Lat! Sto Lat!

## Gifts to St. Mary's Church From Parishioners

**Painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa (by John Tynski):** from Ryba family in memory of father, Joseph;

**2 Chasubles:** Krasowski family in memory of parents;

**1 Chasuble:** Malinowski family in memory of deceased members;

**1 Chasuble:** Blazey family in memory of parents;

**1 Chasuble:** Mroz family in memory of deceased members;

**1 Chasuble:** Mroz family for St. Mary's 50th anniversary.

**Altar Vessels, Cruets, Chimes:** Blazey family;

**Holy Water Font:** Mike Ardelli family;

**Offertory Table cover in handwork:** Mrs. Alex Malinowski;

**Crocheted Altar Cloth:** Mary Petruskavich in memory of mother;

**Crocheted Side Altar Cloth:** Peggy Ryba;

**Quilted Banner representing St. Mary's:** Irene Melnick;

**Four candle holders:** John Paruch, Henry St., in memory of his wife Flo's father Mickey F. MacNeil;

**Portrait of Pope John Paul II (by Jan Gyorfi):** from Agnes Stephenson and Mary Pierrynowski;

**1 Chasuble:** Alex Kiech in memory of parents.

**Painting of St. Michael (by Jan Gyorfi):** from Peggy Ryba and Betty Breski in memory of Walter Ryba and Frank Breski.



# SPECIAL FEAST DAYS AND OBSERVANCES

Submitted by Mrs. Antonina Ryba and daughter  
Rose Frances McKay

The history of Poland is steeped with legends and rituals, many of which have survived the passage of generations and are still observed, especially on various Christian feast days.

**May 3**, is for us Poles scattered around the world, a symbol of unity in religion and nationalism. May 3rd is firstly the feast day of our most Holy Mary, Queen of Poland, together with the day the Poles remember the Constitution of May 3, 1791. We, Poles, here in Sydney join with Poles all over the world, maintaining our spiritual unity with our fellow countrymen in Poland.

Over 1000 years ago, the Poles chose Mary, the Mother of God, as their protector. In 1655, King Jan Kazimierz in the Cathedral of Lwow proclaimed Mary, Queen of Poland. Due to her legendary role in the deliverance of Poland from the hands of invading Swedes at Jasna Gora in 1655, Mary, the Black Madonna, has become a symbol of national survival.

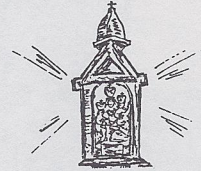
Almost 200 years ago, hostile enemies and neighbouring countries prepared to partition and distribute Poland, thus erasing it from the map of Europe (an eradication which lasted for the next 123 years). Poland's own Sejm (parlia-

ment) voted in favour of this First Partition of Poland. Finally, a group of gentry realized that their squabbling was dismembering Poland as a nation. On May 3, 1791, through careful maneuvering, the liberal members of the Sejm voted through a new constitution, the first written constitution in Europe and second in the world after the United States. It limited the power of the monarchy; all unfair class distinctions were done away with; individual townships were given the power of self government as well as parliamentary representation; townsmen were given the privilege to own land and access to office in the state and in the church; the peasants were protected by law and their serfdom was lessened with future hopes of entire abolition. Also established was absolute religious toleration.

This constitution was quashed only a short year later. On May 18, 1792, Catherine the Great of Russia, fearing for her autocratic governmental system, ordered her troops into Poland and the reforms were destroyed forcefully. The ensuing 120 years (from Poland's 3rd Partition in 1795 to its regained independence in 1918) were dark times for Poland and her people but, their dreams of a reborn Poland were kept alive by their anthem which is still sung today -- "**Jeszcze Polska Nie Zginela Poki My Zyjemy**" (Poland is not lost while Poles still live)!



## EASTER TRADITIONS



The Pole prepared for Easter with six weeks of Lent - a period of fasting and foregoing of simple pleasures, symbolic of the suffering and death of the Saviour. The only festivities that occurred during this period were those which took place on St. Joseph's Day, when many Poles celebrated their name day. Often, instead of birthdays, Poles celebrated "**Imieniny**" or name days. These days were feast days for the saints who shared the same name as they did. Popular saints such as Joseph, Mary and the Archangel Michael meant that many people celebrated their name day at the same time.

Throughout the entire season of Lent, evening devotions in the form of the Stations of the Cross and "**Gorzkie Zale**" (the Passion of Christ) were enacted in the church. For many years in Sydney, the old time reader during this special service was Mr. Jozef Miecznik, who did the readings from the choir loft while the entire congregation took part in the singing.

A custom of Palm Sunday was to bring the blessed palms home from church and fashion them into crosses which were then placed behind religious pictures and in various corners of the home to serve as a protection from lightning.

On Holy Saturday, the ceremony of the blessing of fire and water took place. Each member of the family partook of a sip of the holy water to prevent sore throats and some was sprinkled on the farm animals to ensure their good health. Lastly, the fields and orchards were sprinkled to ensure bountiful crops.

Another ritual on Holy Saturday afternoon is the blessing of all the food "**Swiecone**" for the Easter Sunday meal. Formerly, this blessing took place in the homes. The table was laden with an abundant assortment of food and the priest brought the blessing to the homes. In more scattered areas, the people brought their baskets of food in the wayside chapels for the blessing. These chapels are still very much in evidence around the countryside of Poland today. They also serve as a gathering place for May and October evening devotions - or indeed any time. The people simply bring an offering of flowers and together they pray and sing, usually on their own, without the services of a priest.

The blessing of the Easter food is still carried on in Sydney today. A basket of food containing a symbolic piece of **kielbasa**, ham, bread such as **paska** or **babka**, **cwikla**



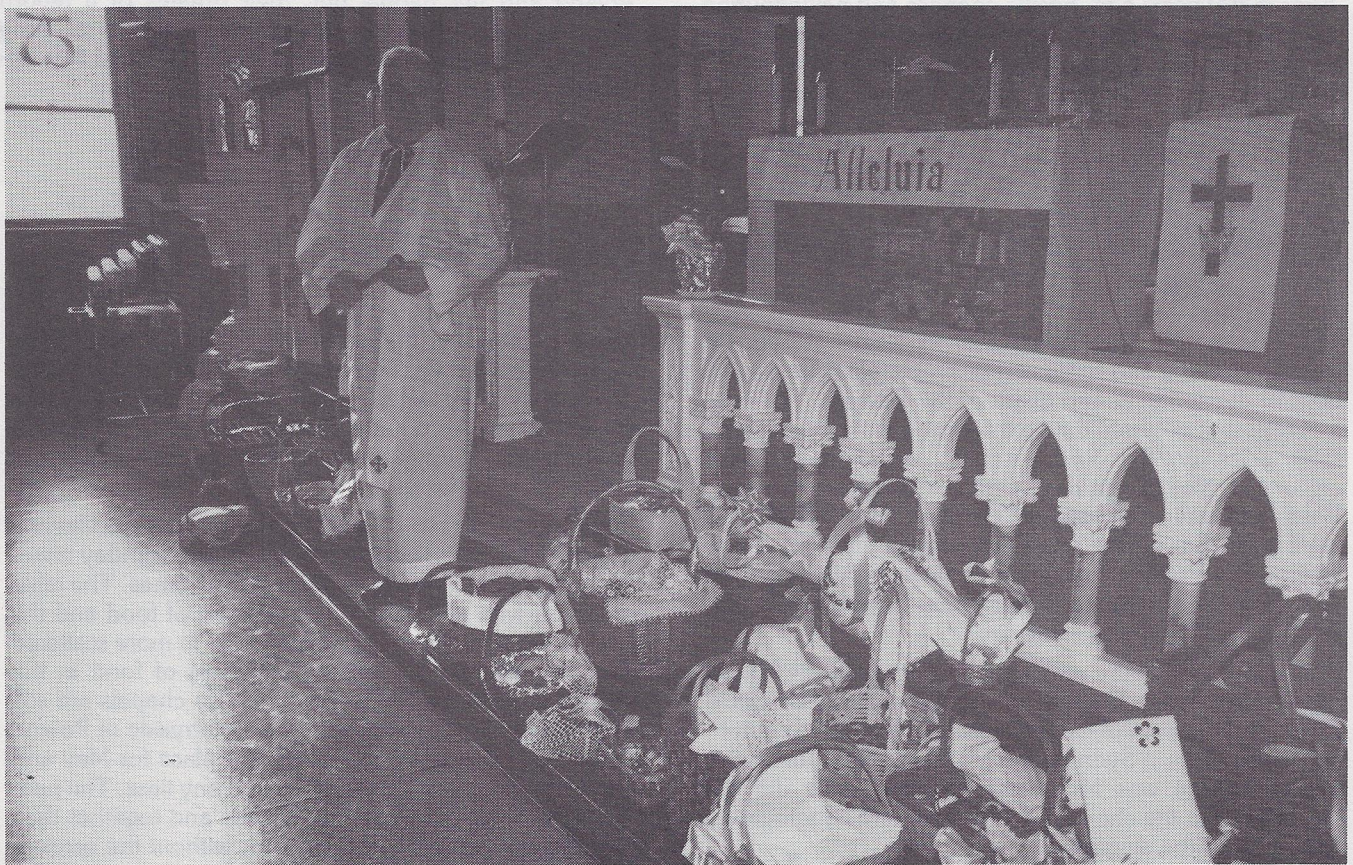
(beets with horseradish) salt, butter and an egg or **pisanka** (which has been colourfully decorated to represent a region of Poland), together with the Pascal Lamb (made out of marzipan or bread and carrying a red and white flag) is brought to the church to be blessed by the priest.

The Easter Sunday Resurrection Mass was heralded with a grand procession, both inside and outside the church, and involved all present. Father Leo O'Connell, as did the priests before him, carried the monstrance with the Sacred Host. He walked beneath an elaborate canopy which was supported on four poles and was borne by four male parishioners; two others carried the banner of the Virgin Mary. The altar servers flanked the procession carrying the cross, candles and censer, while the entire congregation participated in prayerful song.

Then, as today, the family gathered for breakfast after the Easter morning mass. They begin the Easter meal by sharing the blessed egg, extending to each other wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous year.



April 1956, Father O'Connell blesses the Easter baskets of food. Mary Gnievek, son Larry and Tommy Manley look on.



Swieconka blessings of baskets of food for Easter. Monsignor James MacLean ready to bless the baskets containing portions of everything that will be eaten by the family on Easter Sunday. 1988.



# THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS



*A group of carolers with a star.*

All festivities preceding the season of Advent ceased on November 25, St. Katherine's Day. In the earlier years of our Polish Community in Sydney, this was a fun filled evening of music and dance at St. Michael's Hall. This was followed by four weeks of quiet preparation for the birth of Christ, with no parties or dancing and frequent attendance at early morning masses. The only special day during Advent was St. Nicholas's Day on December 6, when the saintly bishop brought gifts to the children.

**Wigilia**, or Christmas Eve dinner, is a family tradition dating back hundreds of years. The absence of family members is felt deeply at this time. A place is set at the table for family members who have passed away or who are unable to attend, or for a stranger who might come by. A lighted candle is placed in the window as a beacon for strangers in the night. When the first star of the east appears, the family gathers to celebrate the birth of the Christ child. Hay is strewn under the white tablecloth (or sometimes under the table) to remind us that Christ was born in a manger. In farm houses, sheaves of grain are placed in the corners of the room as a symbol of hope for a good harvest in the coming year.

Before the Christmas Eve meal is served, the eldest member of the family distributes the peace wafer "**Oplatek**". Each member shares the wafer with every other person at the table as a token of friendship and love, and as a symbol of peace on earth. The wafers are sent by mail to absent members of the family. The evening meal usually consists of twelve courses, symbolic of the twelve apostles. According to superstition, an odd number is bad luck. It is a meatless meal, consisting of a variety of fish, mushroom and vegetable dishes. The traditional soup is "**barszcz z uszkami**" (beet soup with dumplings) or mushroom soup, pickled herring, **pierogi**, sauerkraut with mushrooms, meatless cabbage rolls, cheese dishes, often ending with a prune compote. Alternate desserts could be "**makowiec**" (poppy seed cake), apple strudel, honey cakes and a variety of nuts, dates, figs and fruits. Sometimes the compote is made with twelve different fruits, symbolizing the 12 apostles.

The typical Christmas tree was adorned with home made decorations of straw, tissue paper cut outs "**wycinanki**", candies, cookies, nuts, fruits, candles and later lights. The trees were never decorated before December 24th.

Polish carols "**kolendy**" are numerous and exquisitely beautiful, ranging from the deeply religious carols sung at Midnight Mass, to the humorous folk tunes - many of which are set to traditional dances and are enjoyed throughout the long season of Christmas which ends on February 2. There is an ancient Polish belief that, while the faithful pray at Midnight Mass "**Pasterka**" (Shepherds' Watch), the domestic animals assume voices and speak among themselves. Indeed, there are those who claimed to have heard them.

Christmas dinner was a gourmet meal usually featuring roast goose or duck - not turkey. The day was spent at home with family and friends. The awaited highlight of the day was a visit by the church carolers who went from home to home in the parish, bringing their joyous music and song. An offering was received at each home. Our long time accordion accompanist in Sydney was Mr. Peter Planetta.

In earlier years in Poland, many of the Christmas customs centered around their everyday farm lives. On St. Stephen's Day, December 26, they would take some of the hay that had lined the dinner table and feed it to the farm animals so they would keep healthy during the coming year. Another custom was to make a garland from the hay and tie it around the trees in the orchard so there would be an abundance of fruit. At the **Wigilia**, the **Oplatek** was placed under the serving dishes on the table (under the potatoes, cabbage, whatever), to ensure a bountiful harvest of that particular crop.

From Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6, "**Kolednicy z Gwiazda**" (Carolers with a Star), went from home to home in the villages, bearing a "**Szopka**" (Creche). It was usually quite ornate and was styled like a small house with towers. The front had many openings and contained a crib and numerous marionettes. Some of the performers or carolers dressed as characters from the Nativity while others might represent animals or other characters of folklore. These performers would sing carols and give special theatrical performances, sometimes humorous, and they received treats in return.

On the feast of the Epiphany or Three Kings, January 6, the parish priest visited the homes to bless them and write over the front door with a piece of white chalk that has been blessed, the letters **K \* M \* B**, the initials of the Three Wise Men, in the belief that this would spare those who dwell within from misfortune -- a beautiful custom which is still carried on in Sydney today.

February 2 is the feast of "**Matki Boskiej Gromnicznej**", or Candlemas Day. On this day, people carried candles to church to have them blessed for future use in their homes during times of storms, sickness or death. Thus ended the season of Christmas.



# ST. MICHAEL'S BENEFIT SOCIETY

Submitted by Edmund Durkacz

As production at the Dominion Iron & Steel Co., Sydney Works rose, more and more workers arrived from Europe. Among these were many Poles who were recruited from the various parts of mainly rural Poland.

They were very hard workers but few, if any, could speak or understand English so they were directed to the labour intensive Open Hearth and Blast Furnace Depts.

Soon these workers began to realize that they should have someone to look after their welfare, especially during illness and recuperation from accidents. The problems they encountered were discussed at the work place and anywhere they gathered in their off hours.

A few like W. Wojick, A. Szelak, S. Gwozdz, A. Trojan and others met at W. Wojick's house, the former Bonneyview Hotel. From meetings like these it was decided to form a benevolent society. When incorporated, it became "**Towarzystwo Pod Imieniem St. Michala**", known today as St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society.

A constitution was needed for the new organization. One was acquired from Polish sources in Montreal. This con-

stitution, although amended from time to time, still exists. St. Michael's is the oldest continuing Polish Society in Canada. As recorded in the original nominal roll, 1909, the society included not only Poles but Ukrainians, Lithuanians and other nationalities.

Members were required to pay an initiation fee of \$1.00 and dues of .50 (fifty cents) per month. Sick benefits (to a maximum of \$10.00 per week for thirteen weeks) could be paid to a member losing work due to illness or injury on the job. A doctor's certificate was required.

The Charter President was Stanislaw Gwozdz. He was an astute businessman and owned a store with an adjoining hall on Victoria Road where dances and wedding celebrations were held. No doubt some of the first society meetings were held there. In 1909, the first year, the society had 70 members.

Meetings were held every two weeks enabling members (who were on shift work, night or day) to attend at least one meeting per month to pay their dues.

Mr. Gwozdz organized an orchestra in which he played a clarinet. This band played for dances and other social



The president accepts a gift on the 47th anniversary of St. Michael's Society in 1956. From left: Peter Durkacz, Joseph Paruch #2, Joseph Miecznik, Joseph Bereta, Michael Pierrynowski and Joseph Wojick.





Members of St. Michael's Benefit Society, 1988.



Present at the burning of the mortgage on St. Michael's Hall in 1953 were: Mr. C.N. Earle, Manager of the Royal Bank, Whitney Pier; Mr. Joseph Miecznik, president of St. Michael's Society; Rev. M.L. O'Connell, pastor; Mr. Tony Gallagher, Mayor of Sydney; Rev. Constantine Zarski, pastor of Holy Ghost Parish.



functions. Other members of the band included M. Zak, S. Kowalczyk, J. Dziubek, A. Jockemeck, W. Piech and T. Orkish.

The need of a larger hall soon became apparent. A new hall would be built on acquired land on Wesley St. S. Kowalczyk was carpenter in charge of construction. M. Paruch hauled in the lumber from the lumber yard. The hall was completed within a year.

It soon became the center of activities for the whole Pier district. St. Michael's Hall was rented out for weddings and dances and was also used as a meeting place for the various other ethnic groups. The Blacks, Ukrainians, Italians, etc., rented the hall.

Polish concerts were attended not only by members but also by Poles from Glace Bay and New Waterford. Some from New Waterford actually joined the society. However, travel conditions being what they were in those early days, made it difficult for them to participate fully in all the activities. They soon let their membership lapse.

St. Michael's Hall on Wesley St. was well utilized during both World War I and World War II. Personnel of the armed forces and merchant marine from many nations attended dances regularly held. It was the place to go for a really good time.

Throughout the years the society had many presidents. S. Gwozdz was president for 14 of the first 16 years. The early presidents included Joseph Mikado, Joseph Bereta, Antoni Melski, Joseph Miecznik and Joseph Paruch. Mr.

Miecznik was president for 28 terms. He was president during the building of the present St. Michael's hall, now commonly known as the Polish Village.

After getting along quite well for a few years a rift developed in 1913. The Ukrainian speaking members



Mr. Lawrence Gniewek, only surviving Charter Member makes a presentation to Rev. M.L. O'Connell on the 50th anniversary of St. Michael's Society. Vice-president Stanley Tynski looks on, April, 1959.



In 1962 members of St. Michael's Society attended a presentation banquet in honor of recent retirees. Front from left: Roman Siwak, Joseph Miecznik, Rev. M.L. O'Connell, Joseph Paruch, Joseph Bereta, Dominic Gniewek (sitting in for his father Lawrence (Waurzyniec) who was absent. Row 2: Donald MacDonald, Stephen Pierryowski,

Kazimir Durkacz, Marian Ardelli, Teofil Pierryowski, Stanley Paruch, Stanley Tynski Jr., Bernie Kokocki. Row 3: Joseph Mroz, Ray Tynski, Alex Kokoska, Joseph Wojick, Walter Clarke, Walter Wojick, John Tynski, Tony Gniewek and Steve Melnick.



became dissatisfied and after litigation were paid out of the organization.

Over the years St. Michael's lost quite a few members. After the 1923 Steel Plant strike, some left to work at a new steel mill opening up in Gary, Indiana. About this time Detroit beckoned some to its automobile plants. Poles from Sydney went to work in Hamilton, Ontario, while others from Hamilton came to work in Sydney.

St. Michael's Society persevered and today continues to function with a cosmopolitan membership but all have a relationship with Polish culture.

The present hall on Victoria Road was completed in February 1950. It was constructed almost entirely by its own members with some financial help from non-member Poles in the community. Upon entering the hall, one may see a framed remembrance listing the hours of work and money contributed towards its construction.

The Polish Singers and Dancers call the hall their home. They have two dressing rooms which contain their costumes for the various dance routines, in the basement. The Altar Society and St. Mary's Church have use of the hall for their various functions. The basement also includes a lounge with a small dance floor, for use by St. Michael's Club members and their guests.

St. Michael's Society, through the years, has sponsored softball, baseball and hockey teams, mostly composed of Polish personnel. Every year it offers scholarships to students of Polish descent.

During the Tall Ships visit to Sydney, hundreds of Polish student sailors were entertained. They were pleasantly sur-

prised to see such a large Polish community here. Members of St. Michael's Society work for good fellowship and the good of the community.



*William Rozicki, financial secretary, presents a gift to Joseph Miecznik, president of St. Michael's Society, on the occasion of the burning of the mortgage, 1953.*



*In February, 1951, St. Michael's Society held a banquet in the New Hall on Victoria Road. Front from left: Rev. C. Zarski, Rev. M.L. O'Connell, Mayor Tony Gallagher, Joseph Miecznik, Peter Azarkiewicz. Rear: Joseph Mroz, Donald MacDonald, Stephen Pierrynowski, Teofil Pierrynowski, John K. Paruch, William Rozicki, Michael Pierrynowski, John Morykot and Donald Payn.*



## 1909 Membership St. Michael's Benefit Society

Adam Trojan	Jan Trzusto
Wojciech Kozera	Piotr Sobosz
Michael Ardelli	Julio Offman
Jan Ryniasz	Roman Wolski
Elias Szelak	Stanislaw Offman
Dm. Zywo tarto	Jan Sotly
Kar. Dzirko	Josef Pierzynowski
Stefan Kinet	Mikolaj Madrinski
Mykita Lukow	Frank Zdobylak
Antoch Baczynski	Jan Mroz
Matwig Markow	Jan Sobol
Juz Palacnycki	Walenty Piech
J. Mazarek	Josef Firek
Stanislaw Gwozdz	Michal Mirowski
Mike Fedora	Jan Drabik
Marcin Zak	Jan Wujick
Walenty Kokoszka	Antoni Melski
Francisek Gawad	Anrze Kokoska
Walenty Wujick	Daniel Klimek
Jendr. Trojan	Stanislaw Ropek
Antoni Nowak	Stanislaw Kowalczyk
Marciej Rzepa	Jan Hrobek
Marcien Bereta	Walenty Staszko
Jan Papuja	Tomasz Sigut
Jan Klisz	Jan Zamorski
Michael Fedora	Stanislaw Planeta
Jan Lazio	Michael Burdurko
Josef Kutny	Mikolaj Komer
Josef Stys	Wasył Antoszkow
Teodor Miezgalo	Nikolo Zagurski
Jendr. Wrublewski	Karol Blazey
Bar Dobrucki	Marjan Szymal
Marcin Matek	H. Prytulak
Jan Zielinski	Fran Forki
Josef Rojek	Jan Kozera

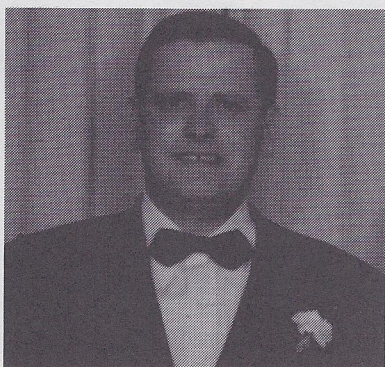
## Presidents of St. Michael's Benefit Society from 1909

Stanislaw Gwozdz	1909-1916
Jozef Mikoda	1917
Stanislaw Gwozdz	1918-1920
Antoni Melski	1921
Stanislaw Gwozdz	1922-1924
Jozef Mikoda	1925-1926
Antoni Melski	1927
Jozef Miecznik	1928-1930
Jozef Bereta	1931-1932
Jozef Miecznik	1933-1942
Jozef Paruch	1943-1944
Jozef Bereta	1945
Jozef Miecznik	1946-1960
Dominic Gniewek	1961
Jozef Wojick	1962-1963
Raymond Tynski	1964-1965
Dominic Gniewek	1966
Marian Ardelli	1967
Stanley Paruch	1968-1970
Edmund Durkacz	1971
Walter (Wally) Wojick	1972-1974
Stanley Paruch	1975
Wayne Joseph	1976-1978
Dominic Gniewek	1979
Frank Breski	1980-1981
Wayne Joseph	1982
Walter Ryba	1983-1984
Wayne Joseph	1985
Frank Starzomski	1986
Stanley Paruch	1987-1988

## Altar Boys and Lectors



Pictured here are altar boys and seasonal and regular readers. Front row, left to right: Michael Cook, Kevin Ratushny, Jeffrey Ratushny, Matthew Cook, David Melski and Raymond Melski. Second row, left to right: Tommy Melski, Dawn Ardelli, Elaine Tynski and Stephen Joseph. Third row, left to right: Agnes Stephenson, Patrick Petruskavich, Stephanie Black, Monsignor MacLean, Maria Pierrynowski Morrison and Michael Ardelli Jr. Missing when the photo was taken was reader Paul Tynski.



In memory of Rudy Reppa who gave kind and generous service to St. Mary's Church for many years.



# THE ALTAR SOCIETY

We assume the Altar Society was formed in 1924 as, we have in our possession, a ledger with the date October 19, 1924. But the first page of the ledger begins with a financial statement and brief minutes for the date March 6, 1949. The inset of names was taken from a record kept by Mrs. Karolina Siwak of not only personal, touching events but of many parochial ones also ( I would like to thank Irene Siwak Melnick for giving me access to this information). The society was called "**Towarzystwa Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej.**" Translation is "Our Lady of LaSalette." October 19, 1924, the date of the first meeting, was a Sunday and to this day our meetings are still held on Sundays. Of the names registered in March 6, 1949, six are still active in the society today.

In 1949 the dues were .25¢ monthly and changed to .50¢ in 1959. The short minutes the secretary/treasurer recorded in those days were always the same: the meeting opened with a prayer, the treasury was opened and the sisters paid their dues. These minutes were written in Polish and until May 7, 1967, the meetings were so conducted. The changes that have taken place over the years have dealt mainly with the fund raising projects. What has been eliminated is the collecting from door to door for the Easter and Christmas flowers and the selling of tickets for socials, not only in the parish but to Poles in New Waterford and Glace Bay. When bingo became popular several games were held with prizes of homemade articles. Dinner dances and banquets were catered to at St. Michael's Polish Hall. The fall bake and craft sales were also carried on for quite a few years and were our main source of revenue. In the last two years we have concentrated our efforts on holding 2 pierogi sales a year - one in the fall replacing our bake and craft sale and one in the spring at which time we ap-

peal to the parishioners for cash donations in place of the baked goods and crafts they supplied in the past.

Last year the Altar Society had 2 of the altars marbelized, bought four frontals and lectern hangings to match, an alb to match the frontal, a new lectern and chairs for the altar. They have always provided the linens and cleaning supplies including vacuum cleaners. In the 1970's they bought major appliances for the rectory as well as those in the church hall. Carpeting and draperies/curtains were also bought for the rectory. The fresh and silk flowers for the altar year round are supplied by them and the weekly cleaning as well as the general church cleanings for Easter and Christmas is done by the society.

As in every society/organization, financial support is essential and important, but just as important is morale support, and for this we extend our heartfelt thanks to our pastor Monsignor James MacLean for his support, encouragement and good humor which makes us feel everything we do is worthwhile. (Thanks to Agnes Stephenson for this report!)

## Original Altar Society Members Cztonkinie Towarzystwa Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej

Jozefa Stryczek, Rozalia Gwozdz, Karolina Siwak, Wiktoria Gniewek, Marya Melska, Weronika Grochalska, Ewa Kudra, Michalina Paruch, Rozalia Kokoszka, Johanna Kozera, Marya Kokocka, Maria Rzepa, Ludwika Tynska, Franciszka Durkacz, Katarzyna Wludyka, Stefania Beretkova, Maria Wludyka, Marya Wojcik, Regina Trojan, Tekla Szela, Agata Planeta, Jozefa Pierynowska, Rozalia Musizewska, Weronika Dobrucka, Katarzyna Gura, Marcela Chmielowa, Marya Henrych, Ewdokia Barylukowa, Marya Rozycka, Malgorzata Rzepa.



PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE ALTAR SOCIETY - From the left: Louise (Kiec) Baker; Irene (Siwak) Melnick, Secretary; Mary (Rykunyk) Petruskavich, treasurer; Agnes (Wroblewski) Stephenson, president; Shirley (Musgrave) Ardelli, vice-president; Jennie (Kiec) Melski; Stella (Breski) Paruch; Annie (Chmiel) Melski.

Row 2: Valerie (Kiec) Deturbide, Hilda (Sigut) Kiech, Charlotte (Marmulak) Chmiel, Mary (Petrie) Gniewek, Margaret (Lawrence) Wojick, Jancia (Lubkowska) Mac-

Cormack, Mildred (MacInnis) Pierynowski, Nellie (Nowak) Tynski, Peggy (Cleary) Ryba.

Row 3: Monsignor James MacLean, Frances (Ryba) McKay, Antonina (Kozlowna) Ryba, Stephanie (Melnick) Black, Brenda (MacDonald) Joseph, Julia (Gniewak) Ardelli, Delores (MacCormack) Starzomski, Janet (Wojick) Hawthorne, Anna (Cholock) MacNeil, Annie (Baryluk) Schella, Ursula (Woloszyn) Melski, Stella (Mroz) Paruch, Mary (Wroblewska) Pierynowski, Maureen (Chiasson) Kokoska.



# THE CHOIR

From the beginning of St. Mary's there were always generous people willing to serve their church with music and voice. The pioneers gladly expressed their faith through their talents and knowledge of church music brought from Poland. Early Polish priests directed the parishioners in praising God through prayer and hymns.

Stanley Gwozdz, a clarinetist, directed the choir for some time before he left Sydney in 1925. It was usual on Feast Days to have a variety of musical instruments accompany the choir. The music of violin, clarinet, or trumpet helped to express the joy of Christmas Midnight Mass and the exaltation of Easter Sunday.

Choirs and styles of music change, but all through the years the Polish choir has performed a vital role in the religious and social events of St. Mary's. In the early days the choir and musicians often entertained at parish concerts. Recently, on September 13, 1984, the present choir, with special director Janet Sobol, was heard in all its splendour welcoming the Polish Pope, John Paul II to Nova Scotia.

In preparation for this great event, Father MacLean encouraged all parishioners who could sing to join the choir. A large group responded. When Rev. Zbigniew Zapasek gave a mission in 1983, he was asked to come back and assist the choir. He did return and taught them a selection of new hymns, as well as helping in directing and giving encouragement. The choir gained much from his expert help.

The choir, directed by Ursula Melski, contributed graciously to St. Theresa's Parish Ethnic Day in May, 1985, and received a fine introduction from Mr. T.L. Sullivan and a standing ovation from all present.

The choir has members in several age groups. A number of families regularly attend the choir together, thus insuring that the young people will enjoy the responsibility of serving in the choir. The Ryba family has active choir members of three generations.



*St. Cecelia's Choir, directed by Leona Ardelli. En route to sing at K.O.C. annual Christmas Concert, about 1956.*

*Top from left: Florie Tynski, Frances Kokocki, Leona Ardelli, Mary Jockemeck, Elsie (Ardelli) Manley, Dorothy (Ardelli) Rozeluk, Anita Durkacz and Teresa Blazey. Center: Josephine Wroblewski, Frances Kokoska, Irene Starzomski, Teresa Jockemeck, Jo-Anne MacDonald, Anne Marie Starzomski, Joan Pierrynowski. Front: Marilyn Baryluk, Margie Reppa and Leona Melski.*



*About 1957 - St. Cecelia's Junior Choir, directed by Leona Ardelli.*

*Top from left: Margie Reppa, Jo-Anne MacDonald, Frances Ryba, Dorothy Gronich and Theresa Anne Malinowski. Center: Julianne Wojick, Frances Tynski, Anne Yelovich and Audrey Wludyka. Front: Marilyn Baryluk, Frances Kokoska and Mary Petruskovich.*



## MEMBERS OF PRESENT CHOIR

*Front from left: Jean Annette (Baker) White, Sherry McKay, Janice Melski, Amy Kokoska, Mary Petruskovich, Shirley Ardelli, Jennie Melski, organist, Rita (Dziubek) MacDonald, Mary (Dziubek) MacMullin, Evelyn (Wojick) Cook, Annie Melski. Children are: Lindsay Kokoska and Ursula Melski.*

*Row 2: Frances McKay, Ursula Melski, director, Antonina Ryba, Shauna McKay, Brenda Joseph, Janice (Novak) LaRusic, Janet Hawthorne, Annie Schella, Nellie Tynski, Mary Pierrynowski, Maureen Kokoska and Wandzi Pierrynowski, absent when picture taken is in 1985 group. Row 3: Jennifer Kokoska, Bernie Kokoska Jr., Dominic Gniewek, Msgr. James MacLean, Henry Poswiata and Edmund Durkacz.*





*The choir with Rev. J.A. MacLean, pastor; Rev. D.A. Doyle, Vicar General; and Rev. D.A. MacInnis after Confirmation Ceremony, May 1985.*



*St. Cecelia's Choir - early 1950's: Rear from left: Elsie (Ardelli) Manley, Anne (Cholock) MacNeil, Rose Marie (Kunicki) Tweel, Mary (Rozicki) DiPenta, Wanda (Paruch) Huk, Mary (Wroblewski) Pierrynowski and Janet (Nowak) LaRusic.*

*Front: Dorothy (Ardelli) Rozeluk, Mary (Wojick) Podgurski, Rosaline Tynski, now in Order of St. Martha, Nellie (Novak) Tynski, Ann (Tynski) Redmond, Frances (Melski) Turnbull (organist), Mary (Dziubek) MacMullin, Reta (Dziubek) MacDonald and Anita (Durkacz) MacNeil.*



The church organist plays a very important part in the choir and sometimes has to direct the singers as well as take care of hymn books and song sheets. Most of the organists at St. Mary's were young women and some were very young when they took that difficult position.

There was one notable exception. Professor Jozef Graban came to St. Mary's in late 1938 from Manitoba, in response to an advertisement in the Winnipeg Polish newspaper. He became the organist and soon formed and directed an excellent choir. He also taught reading and writing in Polish to the young people, in the Club House behind the church. Due to lack of funds the parish could benefit from his services for only a few years.

The present capable organist is Mrs. Anthony Melski. She was organist in 1932 as Jennie Kiec. She returned in 1969 to help and continued as organist. This dedicated, gentle lady deserves the praise and thanks of all parishioners for her many years of devoted service to St. Mary's Church.

The list of organists as remembered are: Helen Planetta, Blanche Siwak, Jennie Kiec, Mary Miecznik, Professor

Graban, Teresa Siwak, Josephine Paruch, Francis Melski, Leona Ardelli, Janet Sobol, Carol Paruch, Adele Kokoska and Jennie Melski.

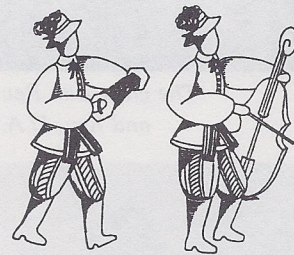
Several members have helped in directing the various choir groups. Some of them were: Helen Planetta, Professor Graban, Leona Ardelli, Janet Sobol and Mary Pierrynowski. The present capable director is Ursula (Woloszyn) Melski who is familiar with the hymns and style of Polish church music. Ursula started directing in 1976 when there was need for a director. She now works with a choir of about thirty women, men, young adults and children. On occasion she sings duet with Jean Annette (Baker) White, soloist.

Ursula arrived from the province of Opole, Poland in 1972. In 1975 she married Michael Melski and they have two girls, Janice, age 12 and Ursula, age 7. She is a professional hairdresser.

The choir has a substantial repertoire of hymns and songs for all occasions. One of the most devotional hymns heard at Sunday Mass is the Polish version of the "Our Father."



*St. Cecelia's Choir, 1949; Organist: Josephine Paruch. Front row: Caroline Mroz, Frances Melski, Joan Pierrynowski and Josephine Wroblewski. Second row: Wisia Durkacz, Wanda Paruch, Rose Marie Kunicki and Rose Tynski. Third row: Sonia Wroblewski, Dorothy Ardelli, Elsie Manley, Nellie Nowak, and Josephine Paruch. Fourth row: Blanche Nowak, Andzia Siwak, Mary Pierrynowski, Ann Cholock, Sophie Rozicki and Mary Paruch.*



*Choir in costume about 1959.*

*From left, rear: Veronica Planetta, Ann Marie Starzomski, Juli Ann Wojick, Judy Paruch, Janet Sobol, organist, Charlotte Paruch, Frances Ryba, Leona Melski, Donna MacDonald. Centre: Diane Kokoska, Margie Reppa, Valerie Payn, Elizabeth Kokocki, Theresa Jockemeck, Marilyn Baryluk. Front: Ann Melski, Brenda Manley, Donna Schella.*



## St. Mary's Church Clubs

St. Mary's Parish built a Club House on the grounds behind the church and it became an activity center for young and older people.

The St. Stanislaus Young Men's Club was started by Father O'Connell about the year 1930. The purpose of this active group was Polish Fellowship. The members held regular meetings, directed basketball, put on parish dances and organized bazaars to help the parish.

Father O'Connell, a strong baseball fan had a baseball team called St. Mary's White Eagles. They played in "St. Mary's" field, a large flat area between Bay and Ferris Streets near Steel Co. property. This field was also known as St. Mark's field. Many young people learned how to play ball there and they mastered the sport of hockey in the winter.

Father O'Connell organized the 20th Sydney Troup of Boy Scouts at St. Mary's. The troupe was active for many years. They held their meetings in the Club House. Tony Ostranski was Scout Leader for some time.

A Boxing Club was conducted by Joe Malinowski in the early 1930's. Boxing matches were held with contestants from around Sydney and further.

Father O'Connell's two sisters, Sister Mary Delores and Sister Prisca, C.N.D. nuns, held classes for girls in the Club House. They taught sewing, knitting, fancy work, prayers and good manners.

When the Siwak Sisters came home on vacation they also held classes for the children in the Club House.

A second St. Stanislaus Club for boys in grades 7 to 9 was directed by Father O'Connell and Kay Malinowski from 1955 to 1959. Michael Pierrynowski also assisted in the work. The members, about 20 boys held weekly meetings in the church basement. They wore the Club Crest on their jackets and on certain feast days they received Communion in a body. The members wrote reports and held debates on current and controversial topics. They played some basketball and also listened to Father O'Connell as he explained Christian principles.

Some of the members were: Bernie Kokoska, Donnie Payn, Steve Manley, Walter Schella, John Mroz, Peter Starzomski, Stanley Planetta, Michael Pierrynowski, Terry Baker, Bobby Tynski, John Paruch and Greg Ardelli.



## Praise For St. Mary's Ladies

Teresa (Paruch) MacQueen is a former parishioner of St. Mary's and still attends the parish activities. She was asked by St. Theresa's Committee to set up a Polish Display Booth for the Ethnic Day Celebration May 4, 1985. Teresa quickly contacted St. Mary's and was overwhelmed by the generous response of help and suggestions.

Her helpers were: Blanche Markotich, Peggy Ryba, Betty Breski, Yvonne Bereta, Julie Jockemeck, Marilyn (Baryluk) Gillis. Using the facilities of St. Theresa's Hall the ladies made a large quantity of Bigos, a very special Polish dish that everyone found delicious. They also brought their favorite baked goods for sampling along with Polish pastry, sausage, rye bread, pickles and homemade wine.

Peggy Ryba brought many precious artifacts to enhance the display, and also her book, *A Touch of Polish*. Nancy Paruch provided some lovely articles for the booth. St. Michael's Society sent their original Polish Flag. Rev. Msgr. MacLean loaned the precious banner of Our Lady of Czestochowa, which was displayed during the Holy Father's visit.

Mrs. Antonia Ryba was the Polish reader. Marilyn Gillis and son Joe carried the flag. St. Cecelia's Choir, directed by Ursula Melski entertained the audience and received a standing ovation. Flo Paruch and daughter Cathy looked after the booth so the others could attend the church activities. Teresa said, "The success and beauty of this project was due to the kind cooperation and generosity of St. Mary's Polish people."



With Rev. Donald MacGillivray of St. Theresa's are some of the Polish ladies. From the left: Teresa MacQueen, Betty Breski, Peggy Ryba, Marilyn Gillis. The boy is Joe Gillis.



# ST. MARY'S CHILDREN IN FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION CLASSES



First Communion Class with Father O'Connell and instructor Ann Tynski, 1938.



First Communion Class about 1950.



Confirmation class with sponsors, May 1985. Front from left: Raymond Melski, David Melski, Janice Melski, Jennifer Kokoska, Stephen Joseph, Frances Meagher, Donald

Melski. Rear: Joe Melski, Stella Paruch, Rev. J.A. MacLean, Rev. D.A. Doyle, Vicar General, Rev. D.A. MacInnis and Dennis Wall.





Rev. C. Grzybala with a large First Communion Class about 1917. Appears to be taken in front of the old St. Michael's Hall. Some faces recognized are: Mary Mroz, Annie Malinowski, Mary Tynski, Helen Wojick, Josephine Kokocki, Mary Reppa, Helen Planetta, Fanny Schella, Stella Strickey, Jennie Siwak, Mary Strickey, Frank Wojick. (Thanks to Helen Mroz for this picture.)



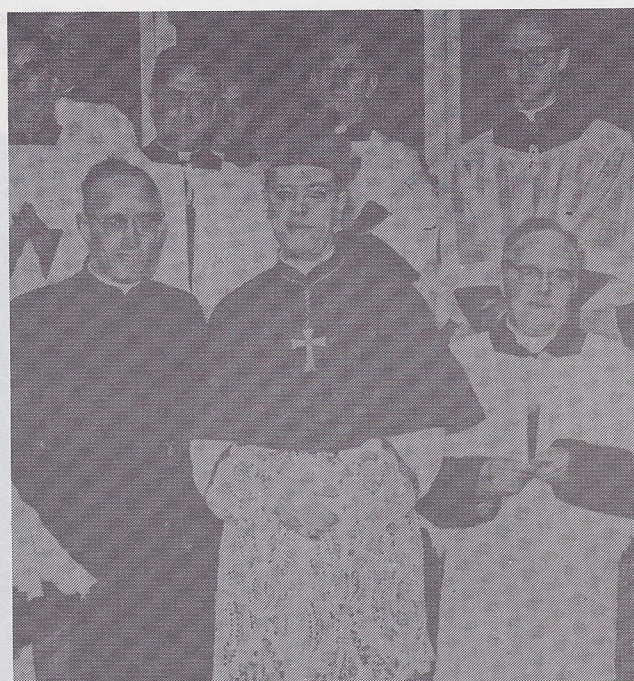
Blessing of St. Mary's Church, 1918.





## St. Mary's Polish Church ~ 50th Anniversary 1913 · 1963

During the celebration of the 50th anniversary of St. Mary's Polish Church on September 8, 1963, the pioneers were presented with small gold colored shovels in honor of their work in starting and maintaining the church. From left: Roman Siwak, Joseph Paruch, Joseph Bereta, Rev. J. Smith, Rev. M.L. O'Connell, Stanley Kowalczyk, Joseph Miecznik and Stephen Pierrynowski.



ANNIVERSARY SERVICES - Photographed at Sunday's special anniversary celebrations in St. Mary's Polish Church at Whitney Pier, are (left to right): Rev. Fr. J. Smith, Polish priest from Toronto who came to Sydney to attend the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of St. Mary's parish, Most Rev. W.E. Power, Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish, and Rev. M.L. O'Connell, the pastor of St. Mary's, who has served his parishioners as counsellor and spiritual leader since 1929 (September 8, 1963). Priests in the background are: Rev. E. D'Intino, Rev. L.B. Sears, Rev. E. MacNeil.



GOLDEN JUBILEE - Photographed at the Golden Jubilee banquet, one of the highlights of the recent anniversary celebrations in St. Mary's Polish Parish, are (left to right): Myron Ardelli, chairman of the Jubilee Committee; Rev. M.L. O'Connell, pastor of St. Mary's; Rev. J. Smith, a Polish priest from Toronto, who was a special guest, and Ray Tynski, master of ceremonies (September 8, 1963).





*St. Mary's Polish Parish marked the anniversary of Poland's millennium of Christianity with a special evening Mass on May 3, 1966. A parade to St. Michael's Hall for the banquet and festivities, included members of the Society, girls in Polish costumes, and Boy Scouts and Cubs. To mark the occasion, Mr. Ray Tynski, president of St. Michael's Society presented Rev. M.L. O'Connell with a bronze plaque. From left: Charlotte Paruch, Judy Paruch, Father O'Connell, Ray Tynski, and Most Rev. W.E. Power, Bishop of Antigonish, who made the dedication.*






From left: Michael Pierrynowski, Sam Cholock, Alex Kokoska, Dominic Gniewek, John Tynski and Stanley Paruch.



From left: Donald MacDonald, Teofil Pierrynowski.

SEMPER  FIDELIS  
 COMMEMORATING POLAND'S  
 MILLENIUM OF CHRISTIANITY  
 966 - 1966  
 PRESENTED TO  
 REV. M. L. O'CONNELL, P.P.  
 ST. MARY'S PARISH  
 BY  
 ST. MICHAEL'S POLISH BENEFIT SOCIETY  
 MAY 3, 1966  
 DEDICATION BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
 BISHOP WILLIAM E. POWER, D.D.





**POLISH PARISH CELEBRATES 60th YEAR**

*St. Mary's Polish Parish celebrated its diamond jubilee Sunday with a Mass of Thanksgiving and a dinner at St. Michael's Hall. Shown at the dinner are, seated left to right: Very Rev. Edmund Szymkiewicz, minister provincial of the Order of the Friars Minor Conventuals in the United States, Most. Rev. William E. Power, Bishop of Antigonish, Mayor Earle Tubrett and Rev. Herbert Skurski (rear), St. Mary's parish priest (Sept. 8, 1973).*



*From left: Stephanie Melnick, Brenda MacDonald, Ann Melski, Paula Jockemeck, Helen Tynski (Sis), Adele Kokoska, Sharon Mayich.*



**Unique Record**  
**AFFECTIONATE TRIBUTE**  
**PAID FATHER**  
**O'CONNELL**

**by Eleanor Huntington**

Affectionate tribute was paid Saturday night to a man with a unique record of service to church and community, when the congregation of St. Mary's Parish and other friends of the Rev. Michael Leo O'Connell met in St. Michael's Hall to honor him on his Golden Jubilee of Holy Priesthood.

The main speaker at the testimonial banquet was Dr. Clyde Nunn of Antigonish, a son of Holy Redeemer Parish, who had served as an altar boy when Fr. O'Connell was a curate in that parish.

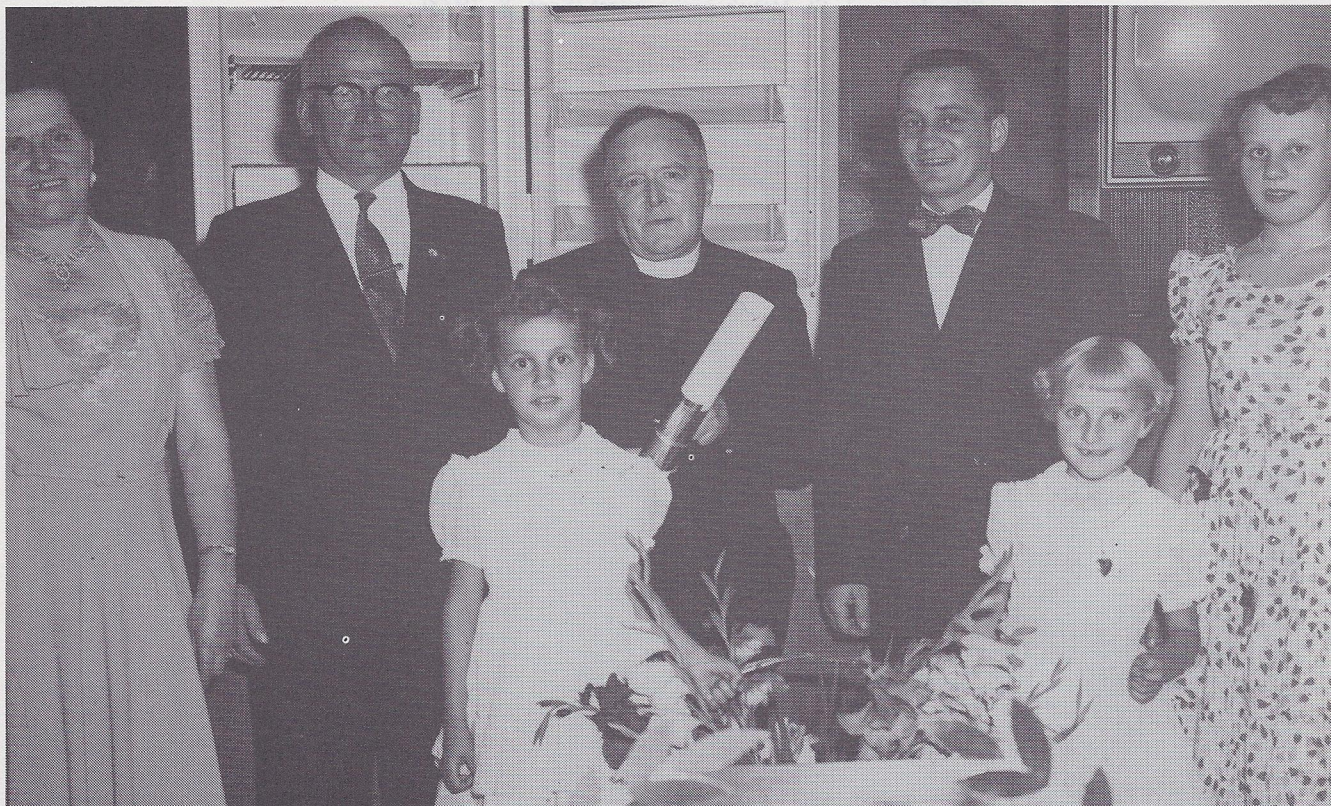
"When I was invited to speak here," Mr. Nunn said, "I decided to write the best speech I ever wrote in my life as a testimony to the best man I ever knew in my life. But I soon realized that Fr. O'Connell was not the sort of character that could adequately be described in any written biography. I am here to speak from my heart, in tribute to a man who is very dear to the hearts of all who have come to honor him tonight."

The speaker told a number of anecdotes to illustrate the endearing human qualities of the young priest of Irish background who so conscientiously fulfilled his clerical duties, and so loved people that he willingly learned the Polish language and 40 years ago became the pastor of St. Mary's.

"He was a man of God, but priest of the people. His love extended to all, and he was many years ahead of his time in the ecumenical movement."

Mr. Nunn said that Fr. O'Connell was a great champion of youth, and in addition to his compassionate ministry as the spiritual adviser and comforter of the afflicted, was a pioneer in Boys' Work in the community.

"He introduced the Boy Scout movement to his parish by organizing the first Roman Catholic troop in the city. As members of that troop, we fraternized with the boys of the Anglican, Presbyterian and other denominations."



On Wednesday, September 8, 1954, St. Mary's Parish celebrated with Fr. M. Leo O'Connell in honor of his 25th anniversary in serving the parish. Fr. O'Connell received several useful gifts. Presentations were made by: Mrs. Joseph Paruch, Altar Society; Joseph Miecznik, president

of St. Michael's Society; Dominic Gniewek, St. Mary's Mens Club; Leona Ardelli, St. Cecelia's Choir. The girls who presented flowers are: Charlotte Paruch and Valerie Payn.



"He was keenly interested in sports, particularly in baseball, and he did his best to encourage healthy sports activity among the young people of his parish and community. He established their first gymnasium and sport centre in the old Imperial Hall."

It was impossible, he said, to say all the things that could be said about Fr. Leo's career of unselfish service and outstanding personality that had won so many friends through the years.

"Father Michael Leo O'Connell, I congratulate you on your Golden Anniversary. May you live to be a hundred, and may your blessings be a thousand-fold."

### GUESTS

Among the distinguished guests at the celebration were The Most Rev. W.E. Power, Bishop of Antigonish, the Hon. Percy Gaum, Mayor Carl Neville, Rev. Constantine Zarsky of Holy Ghost Parish, and Rev. Felix Kwiatkowski, Oblate Father from Montreal.

Bishop Power said, "I feel that I speak for the whole church when I thank you for the privilege of attending this gathering tonight. Fr. O'Connell was distinguished for his humaneness, in that his concern was for everyone; he was interested in everyone, and desired to help everyone. His was true Christian love. I extend my congratulations on behalf of the diocese for what he has done for the people, and for the image of the Church which his life has presented to the people.

"Father O'Connell, I wish you many happy returns of your anniversary. May the Lord keep you with us for many years, that you may continue to be an inspiration to all of us."



*Rev. M.L. O'Connell was honored in St. Michael's Hall on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination, November 30, 1968. In the presence of his congregation and many other friends, including clergymen from other Roman Catholic Churches and Churches of various denominations, he was praised for his years of faithful service and for his kindly personality. From left are: Peter Planetta, president of St. Mary's Parish; Father O'Connell; Stanley Paruch, president of St. Michael's Society; Most Rev. W.E. Power, Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish; and Mrs. Teofil Pierrynowski, president of the Altar Society.*

Mayor Neville extended congratulations and wishes for a long and happy life to the guest of honor on behalf of the Sydney City Council and citizens.

### GRATEFUL

Fr. Kowiatkowski spoke for the Polish Oblates of Canada. There had, he said, been a very pleasant association with St. Mary's Parish in Sydney since the first visit of an Oblate priest here in the 1930s. "We are very grateful for the depth of his understanding of human need, as well as his devout concern for the spiritual welfare of his people."

Father Zarsky, also had warm words of praise for his colleague in the neighboring parish of St. Mary's. "He has not only been a faithful pastor to his own Polish congregation," he said, "but has willingly served the needs of my Ukrainian congregation when they were temporarily without a pastor of their own."

A telegram from Most Rev. Isidore Borecky, Bishop of the Ukrainian Church in Canada, conveying his congratulations and good wishes to Fr. O'Connell was read by Peter Stephenson, banquet chairman.

A few other messages of goodwill from among the great number received from relatives and friends from various parts of Canada, including one from the Hebrew congregation, were also read aloud during the program.

The Polish Parish Chorale, a group of young girls in colorful national costume, sang Polish and Irish songs under the direction of Sister Janet Sobol. They were accompanied on the accordion by John Paruch, who also played the processional for the incoming head table guests.

### PRESENTATION

Presentation of a color TV set and stand, desk, chair and lamp to the honoree, was made on behalf of St. Mary's Parish by parish president Peter Planetta.

A bronze plaque in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee, to hang in the church, and a miniature replica of it for his desk, were presented to him by Stan Paruch on behalf of St. Michael's Society.

Mrs. Teofil Pierrynowski, president of the Altar Society of St. Mary's, presented him with a "Lazy Boy" chair as a gift of that organization.

He was also presented with a painting from Sisters Buckley, Tynski and Melski, a portable radio from members of Branch 128 of the Royal Canadian Legion, and a gift from the Boy Scout Troop of his parish.

Greatly moved, Fr. O'Connell expressed his thanks in both Polish and English. "Your kindness and goodness to me and your beautiful gifts have overwhelmed me," he said. "May God bless you all, and give you years of happiness. God will remember your goodness always, and bless you a thousand times over."

The program ended with the showing of a series of slides, featuring sketches by John Tynski, who cleverly presented a pictorial review of the highlights of Father O'Connell's career, from his arrival in 1918 on the Sydney Whitney Pier streetcar to 1968.



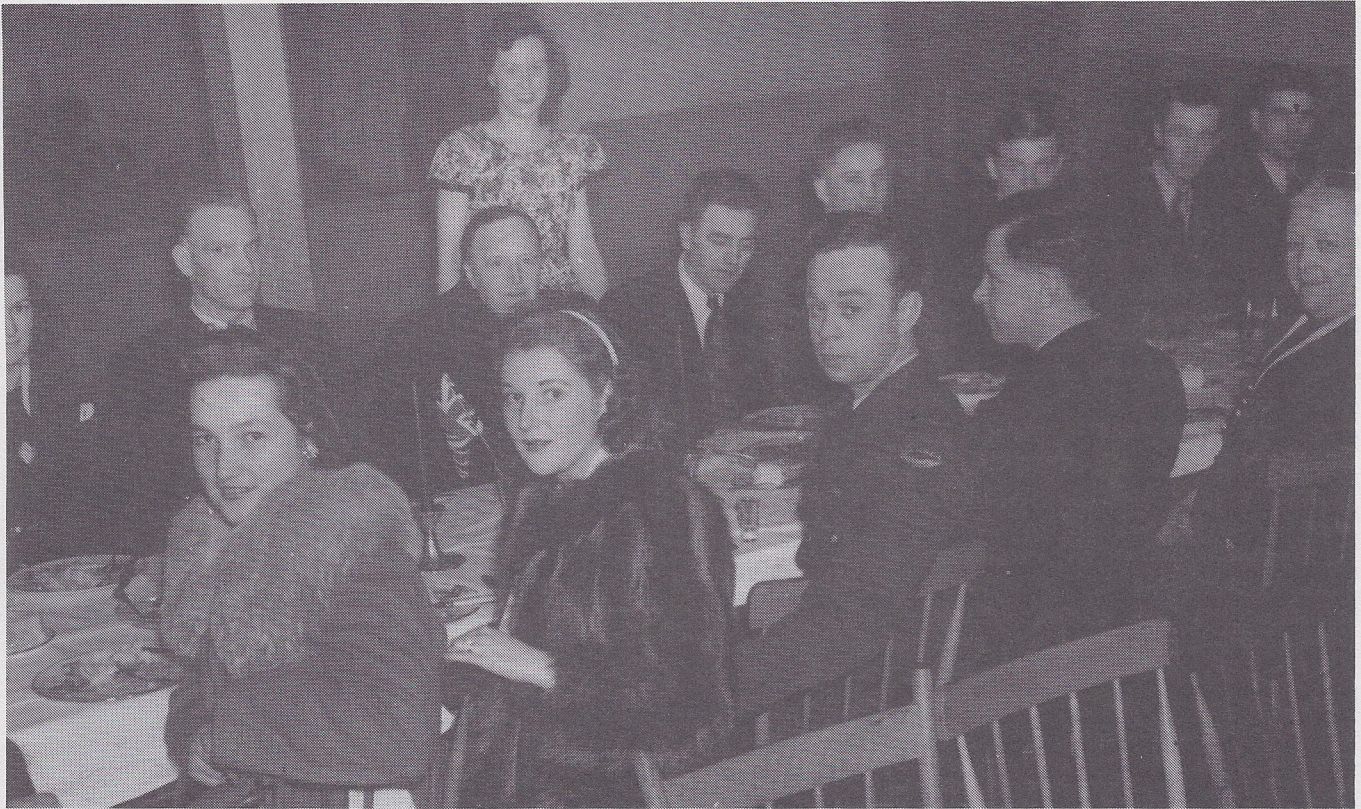
**YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF  
ST. MARY'S  
POLISH PARISH  
WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR  
ACTIVE SERVICE WITH  
CANADA'S FIGHTING  
FORCES W.W. II**

- |                                    |                                             |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Pte. Ardelli Stella C.W.A.C.    | 35. Pte. Melski Joseph                      |
| 2. Gnr. Ardelli Walter             | 36. F/Sgt. Melski Stanley R.C.A.F.          |
| 3. Pte. Azarkiewicz Joseph         | 37. Sgt. Mroz Anne C.W.A.C.                 |
| 4. Pte. Baryluk Anthony            | 38. Pte. Mroz Cecilia C.W.A.C.              |
| 5. Cfn. Blazey Joseph              | 39. Gdsm. Mroz William                      |
| 6. Sgt. Chermak Bomel R.C.A.F.     | 40. Novak Charles R.C.N.V.R.                |
| 7. Sgt. Chmiel Thomas              | 41. Pte. Ostrinski Michael                  |
| 8. Cholock Peter R.C.N.V.R.        | 42. Pte. Paruch Jennie W.A.A.C.             |
| 9. Pte. Cholock Sam                | 43. Cpl. Paruch John K., R.C.A.F.           |
| 10. Pte. Dobrucki Frank            | 44. L.A.C. Paruch Michael (Mickey) R.C.A.F. |
| 11. Pte. Dobrucki Joseph           | 45. Pte. Paruch Michael Anthony             |
| 12. Fus. Durkacz Edmund            | 46. Pte. Paruch Stanley                     |
| 13. Pte. Durkacz Stanley           | 47. Pte. Peinsznski Casimer                 |
| 14. Dziubek Walter R.C.N.V.R.      | 48. Pte. Rizok Michael                      |
| 15. Gniewek Dominic R.C.N.V.R.     | 49. Pte. Romanowicz Michael                 |
| 16. Pte. Hanko John                | 50. L.A.C. Romanowicz Peter R.C.A.F.        |
| 17. Sgt. Janega Martin R.C.A.F.    | 51. F/O Romanowicz Walter R.C.A.F.          |
| 18. L.A.C. Janega Matthew R.C.A.F. | 52. Siwak Anthony R.C.N.V.R.                |
| 19. Kiech Alexander R.C.N.V.R.     | 53. Pte. Siwak Elizabeth C.W.A.C.           |
| 20. Kiech Ted R.C.N.V.R.           | 54. Siwak Roman R.C.N.V.R.                  |
| 21. Pte. Kokocki Frank             | 55. Pte. Sobol Alex                         |
| 22. L.A.C. Kokocki Walter          | 56. Sgt. Tynski Anthony                     |
| 23. Pte. Krasowski Joseph          | 57. Sgt. Tynski John R.C.A.F.               |
| 24. Pte. Krszwda Stanley           | 58. Cpl. Tynski Peter                       |
| 25. Pte. Krszwda Joseph            | 59. Pte. Wludyka John                       |
| 26. Lachowicz Fred R.C.N.V.R.      | 60. Zagorski Joseph M.N.                    |
| 27. Pte. Mayich John               | 61. Sgt. Zak Joseph                         |
| 28. Pte. Mayich Stanley            |                                             |
| 29. Pte. Malinowski Charles E.     |                                             |
| 30. Malinowski Frank S., R.C.N.R.  |                                             |
| 31. Lieut. Malinowski Joseph P.    |                                             |
| 32. Pte. Markotich Frank           |                                             |
| 33. Cpl. Marusiak Michael          |                                             |
| 34. Melski Edward R.C.N.V.R.       |                                             |

**Died in Action:**

- Pte. Azarkiewicz Stanley  
Pte. Krszwda Frank





Members of St. Mary's Church who served in Army, Navy, Air Force and Merchant Marine during the war were guests of honor at a banquet in the Old Hall. Here are two banquet scenes: Front from left: Stella (Mroz) Paruch, Mrs. and Mr. Mickey

Paruch, Joseph Blazey, Mrs. J. Strickey. Rear from left: Kathleen and Charles Malinowski, Rev. M.L. O'Connell, Mary Durkacz, Peter Cholock, Dominic Gniewek, Edward Melski, Michael Rizok and John Mayich.



From left: Marian Ardelli, Joe Bereta, Ted Kiech, Stanley Durkacz, Mrs. Durkacz, Martin Wroblewski, Karol Wisnowski, Alonzo Jockemeck. Rear from left: Mary Gura, Helen Bereta, Mary Durkacz, Mary Wludyka, Julia Ardelli, Katherine Wludyka, Mrs. Miecznik, Julie Miecznik and Helen Blazey.



# THE PAPAL VISIT

*Submitted by Agnes W. Stephenson*

One cannot imagine the happiness we felt when we heard His Holiness Pope John Paul II was coming to Canada, to Nova Scotia and because we were the only Polish parish east of Montreal perhaps to Sydney? That was not to be so our papal committee proceeded with plans to go to Halifax. This committee, appointed from the parish at large, comprised of: Frania Ryba McKay, Edmund Durkacz, Bernard Kokoczka Jnr., Kenneth Paruch, Agnes Wroblewski Stephenson and our pastor Monsignor James MacLean. We met every Sunday after mass up until the Sunday before we left for Halifax.

The names of those who were going to Halifax were registered, reservations for transportation and accommodations were made and then correspondence initiated to determine what part we, as the only Polish parish in this province, would play in the Papal visit. We hoped at least to have a Polish hymn sung by our choir included in the Mass but we did not receive any consideration. It was suggested that if a song of welcome was written to greet our Polish Pope our request might be recognized. The words were written, the music composed and the choir rehearsed. We had no one to intercede for us but we persevered and shortly before the time of the papal visit we were informed the song of welcome could be sung at the airport.

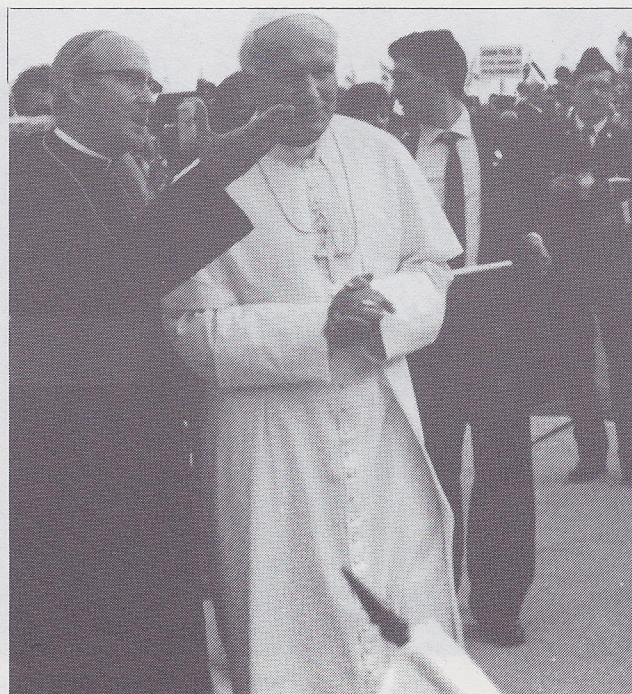
We left Sydney, by bus, on September 12. September 13 dawned sunny and warm. It was a promising beginning. When we got to the hangar at Shearwater the security people were most considerate of us. We milled around until it was time to get to our position to await the arrival of the pope. We were on risers, to the left of the plane as it landed. Before we knew it the plane was on the ground. The excitement mounted as we saw the door open. We waited with abated breath. His Holiness stepped through the door, the choir began their song of welcome, he stopped, turned to us and raised his hands in greeting. The descent down the stairs, meeting the dignitaries, the receiving line was presented, the choir was still singing, the formalities were over and it was time to depart for Halifax . . . Every eye was glued to His Holiness' back. Security were all around him . . . then he turned to face us and started walking towards us!

There are no words to express what we felt. We were singing, we were laughing, we were crying and how we were crying. We were so filled with love our hearts were bursting. He told us he waited for this, knew about us, knew we would be there. He said he would benefit greatly from coming to us and he was sending blessings and greetings to those who couldn't be there with us. As emotional as we all were there was a note of humour . . . The choir was so excited they kept on singing when His Holiness got to us and the pope said we'd have to stop singing or he won't be able to talk to us. Those warm and loving words he spoke to us will live with us always.

The Polish custom of offering bread and salt was presented to the Holy Father for his blessing. It was the first such presentation on Canadian soil. We were very happy this



*Pope John Paul II blesses the traditional "Welcome" offering of bread and salt held by Mrs. Antonina Ryba.*



*Accompanied by Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax, Pope John Paul II walks towards the people of St. Mary's Polish Parish at Shearwater Naval Base, Sept. 13, 1984.*



bread was baked by our Polish baker Bernie Kokoszka of Bernie's Bakery. Mrs. Antonina Ryba held the bread and salt as it was blessed.

Irene Siwak Melnick and Shirley Musgrave Ardelli were at St. Mary's Basilica where a celebration of The Liturgy was held. Nellie Novak Tynski and Dominic Gniewak Snr. were presented to His Holiness at the Archbishop's residence and Agnes Wroblewski Stephenson read the prayer of Intercession, in Polish, at the papal mass as well as having the honour of receiving Holy Communion from the pope.

Although the rain fell unmercifully during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that Friday morning, we, as Poles, felt and here I quote from my song of Welcome to His Holiness,

*"You are Poland's Sunshine Who Fills Us With Joy" . . . Yes, the sun was burning in our hearts for this pope who, to quote Cardinal John Cody of Chicago when he was talking to Father Lambert Greenan about this new pope said, "Lambert, you listen to me. This is going to be the greatest pope ever. You got that? EVER." Amen. (Taken from Gordon Thomas' and Max Morgan-Witts book Pontiff). Father Lambert is the editor of the English version of L'Osservatore Romano.*

The transposition of the words, notes and floral design of my song WE WELCOME YOU HOLY FATHER was done by artist John Tynski. The original, done in colour, was framed and sent to the pope. A special acknowledgment was received from the Vatican.

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## AN UNFORGETTABLE TEN MINUES

*Submitted by Nellie Tynski*

On Thursday, September 13, 1984 at 9:00 o'clock in the evening, Dominic Gniewek and I, Nellie Tynski, representing the Antigonish Diocese, had a private audience with our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. This audience was held at the residence of Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax. Also present were Mr. and Mrs. Wambolt representing the Yarmouth Diocese, Mr. and Mrs. G. Dennis representing the Halifax Diocese, Mr. and Mrs. Arsenault (70 years married) representing the Charlottetown Diocese and Senator and Mrs. Donahoe.

When we arrived we were ushered into a small study. We were served sherry and pate with fingers of toast. Bishop Power preceeded the arrival of our Holy Father. He asked us if we were going to greet him in Polish and we said yes. When the Holy Father arrived, we all applauded. As I watched him come down the stairs, I was overcome with such a feeling of love, I was completely overwhelmed. My eyes filled up with tears, I felt all choked up and I thought to myself this gentle and most loving man, 'He is ours'. He is one of us and oh how proud I was to be Polish.

One word describes him - LOVE! He is love, he radiates love, he generates love. You could sense it during his presence. He was introduced to each couple and said a few words. Dominic and I were the last couple. Our introduction by Bishop Power was, "These are some Polish people from my diocese." Dominic greeted him with, "Niech bedzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus" and he answered, "Na wieki wiekow Amen."

I then greeted him with, "Wimieniu parafii Narodzenia Najsw Maryi Panny razem z cala Polonia z Sydney, N.S. serdecznie witamy cie Ojcze Sw. Wmodlitwach jestes zawsze z nami." He said, "Dziekuje, dziekuje." He then asked, "Urodzone w Poisce?" We answered, "Nie". "Wkanadzie urodzone?" "Tak." "Drugie pokolenie." "Tak." At this point we were presented with rosaries. He then went to the desk and signed the register.

Upon leaving he gave us his blessing. As he was on his way up the stairs, I felt I just couldn't let him go without saying something else to him, so I touched him on the shoulder and said, "Sto lat". He turned around, smiled, and with the most beautiful twinkle in his eyes, he repeated, "Sto lat, Sto lat."



Whenever His Holiness, Pope John Paul II meets with people, he shows special care and love for children. On September 13, 1984, when the Holy Father met parishioners from St. Mary's Polish Church, he held the face of eight year old Janice Melski and kissed her. This painting captures the poignant and solemn scene of tender love between the Leader of the Roman Catholic Church and a young child. The other girl is Michelle Melski.

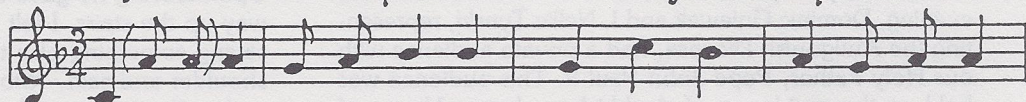




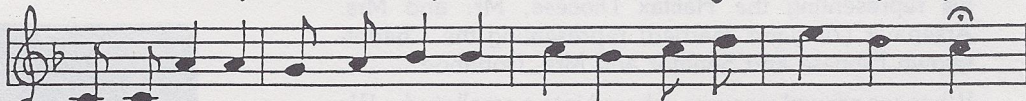
# Na Cześć Jana Pawła II Witamy

Słowa : A. Wróblewska Stephenson

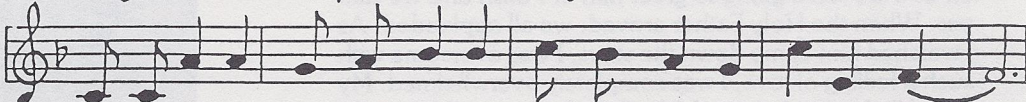
Muzyka : Z. Zapasek i J. Sobol



Wi ta my cię oj cze święty twa miłość o gar nia nas  
Więc każ dy Kochać cię chce i ka żdy dot knąć cię chce

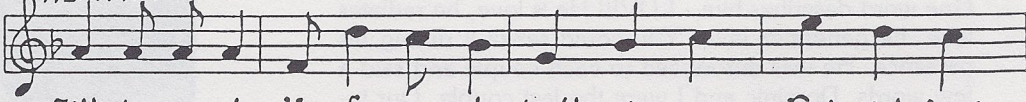


Tys jest nasze Pol skie słońce Ra dość co na Peł nia nas  
Bło go sław nam i pro wadz nas my za wsze dzie ci twe

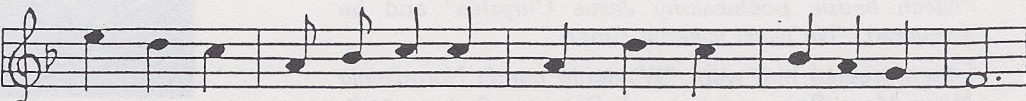


Tys jest nasze Pol skie słońce Ra dość co na Peł nia nas  
Bło go sław nam i pro wadz nas my za wsze dzie ci twe

REFRAIN



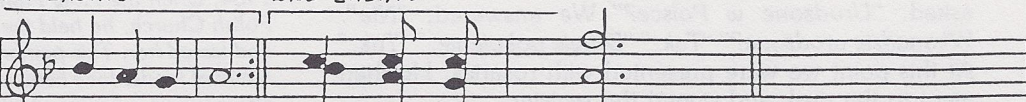
Wi ta my cię Ko cha my cię twój wier ny Pol ski lud



Ty za wsze dla nas bę dziesz wspa nia ły Bo - ski cud

1ST ENDING

2ND ENDING



Bo ski cud Bo ski cud



## PARISHIONERS IN RELIGIOUS ORDERS



Sister M. Bronislawa (Blanche) Siwak, O.S.B., was the first parishioner of St. Mary's Polish Parish to join a Religious Order. In 1932 she joined the Polish Benedictines in Arborg, Manitoba. Sister is a retired school teacher and qualified piano teacher. She received an L.L.C.M. in Piano from London, England, College of Music through an English Professor in Winnipeg, and graduated from Manitoba University in 1962. Sister celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 1984 and this year will celebrate her 75th birthday along with St. Mary's Parish. She resides at St. Benedict's Priory in Winnipeg.



Sister Mary Caroline Siwak, O.S.B., joined the Benedictines in Arborg, Manitoba, in 1935. She is a retired school teacher and noted artist. She received a B.Ed. from the University of Calgary, and a scholarship to study at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Her paintings are displayed in such places as the Harvie Theatre in Banff, the Educational Center in Winnipeg, and the Priory. She has taught school in Manitoba and Alberta. Sister celebrates her Golden Jubilee as a Benedictine on August 14, 1988. She resides at St. Benedict's Priory in Winnipeg, where she has been secretary to the Prioress since retiring.

The Siwak Sisters are daughters of Roman and the late Karolina (Gwozdz) Siwak.



Sister Mary Stanislaus, nee Sophie Ropek, entered the cloistered Order of the Visitation, in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1937. She received the Holy Habit on July 2, 1939, and made Final Profession on July 3, 1943, in the rank of associate sister.

Sister was assistant in the Novitiate for some time. She became ill and died January 18, 1948.

Sister was the adopted daughter of Stanley and Rozalia Gwozdz who were pioneers of St. Mary's Parish and moved to Detroit in 1925.



Sister Leonella, C.S.M., Albina Melski, joined the Order of St. Martha in Antigonish, N.S., in September 1935. She was the first Polish Sister to join an English Order. She is a daughter of the late Anthony and Mary Melski.

Sister was professed in 1940. She received her R.N. from St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish the same year. After serving in several missions across Canada, Sister is now semi-retired. She keeps busy nursing in the Infirmary and working in the Altar Bread Department.

In 1987 she celebrated her Golden Jubilee and many family members and friends met at Bethany to share her special day. Sister Leonella resides at Bethany, Antigonish.





Sister M. Johanna, O.S.F., Mary Paruch, is a daughter of Florence (MacNeil) Paruch and the late John J. Paruch of 201 Henry St.

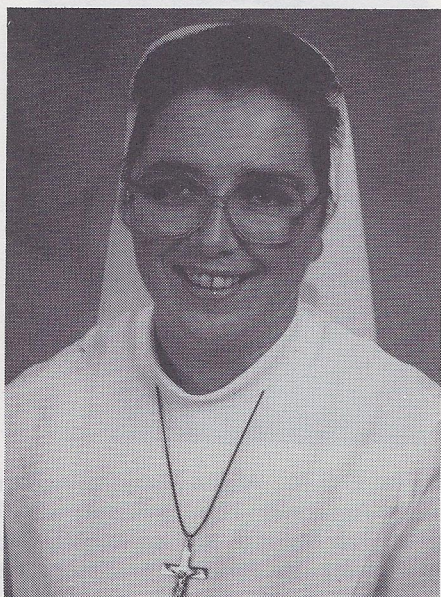
In August, 1973, she entered the Order of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, in Alton, Illinois and was professed in 1979. She has worked in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Sister received her B.A. in Theology from St. Louis University. At present she lives at St. Joseph's Convent in Lincoln, Nebraska. Sister teaches Theology and works with children who are impaired in sight, speech and hearing.



Sister M. Elaine, C.S.M., Rosaline Helen Tynski, joined the Order of St. Martha, Antigonish, in 1953. She made her First Profession in 1955, and Final Profession in 1958. She is a daughter of Helen (Wojick) and the late Stanley Tynski. Sister has a Diploma in Secretarial Arts from the Cape Breton Business College in Sydney. She is presently working in the Social Work Services Department at St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish.

Sister celebrated her Silver Jubilee in Religious Life in 1980.



Sister M. Clare, O.S.F., Anita MacNeil, is a daughter of Colin and Anne (Cholock) MacNeil. In August, 1975, she entered the Order of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, in Alton, Illinois, and was professed in 1981.

Sister received her B.Sc., in Nursing from St. Louis University in 1984. At present she is Supervisor of the Surgical Floor in St. Anthony's Hospital, Alton, Illinois.

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

### Fall Tea and Sale Enjoyed (about 1976)

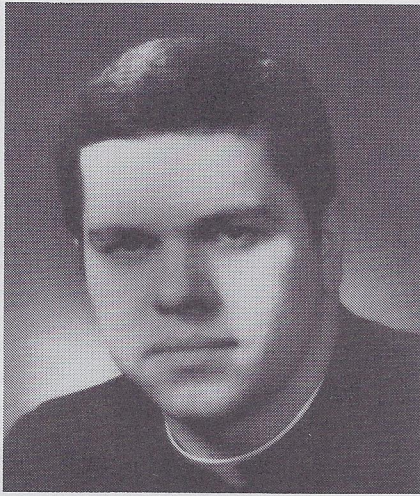
The recent Fall Tea and Sale sponsored by the ladies of St. Mary's Polish Church was deemed a successful affair. The preparation of lunch, including Polish foods, was capably handled by Mesdames Stella Pietraszki, Juli Rozicki, Anne MacNeil, Shirley Ardelli, Millie Pierrynowski, Hilda Kiech, Theresa MacQueen, Louise Baker, Mary Gniewek, and Stella Cholock.

The various tables were attended by Mesdames Theresa MacQueen, Sophie Barrington, Delores Starzomski, Anne MacNeil, Flori Paruch, Mary Baryluk, and Valerie Deturbide.

The individual tea tables were nicely appointed and covered with red and white checked cloths and tinsel centerpieces. Serviteurs included Julie Rozicki, Anita and Coleen MacNeil, Mary Anne Ratushny, Jeanette Baker, Lorraine Kiech, and Kathy Paruch.

Tickets were sold by Anne Deturbide and Linda MacNeil. Tickets and admissions were received by Rudy Reppa and Dominic Gniewek. Kitchen duties were performed by Mesdames Stella Pietraszki, Bernice Ratushny, and Mary Gniewek. (Stella Pietraszki will fondly be remembered as the sister of Father Skurski and his housekeeper.)

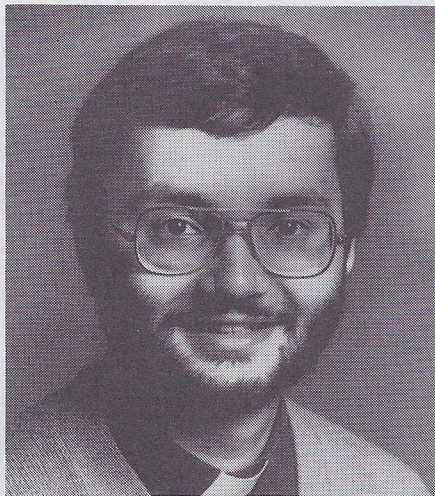




Rev. Joseph Gerard Durkacz is the son of a former parishioner of St. Mary's. His parents are Stanley and Jennie (Majkut) Durkacz of Hamilton, Ont. He is a grandson of the late Peter and Frances Durkacz of Sydney.

He graduated from McMaster University, Hamilton, in 1981. He entered St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario and completed his studies in 1984.

Father Durkacz was ordained on May 11, 1985, at the Cathedral of Christ The King, by Bishop Anthony F. Tonnos, for the Diocese of Hamilton. He has served as Assistant at Holy Rosary Parish in Milton, Ont. At present he is Assistant at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Hamilton, Ontario.



Joseph Mroz, S.J., Seminarian, son of Edward and Margaret Mroz, Coxheath, joined the Jesuit Order in August, 1982. He received a B.A. Degree from Dalhousie University, Halifax. Since entering he was awarded an M.A. Degree from Loyola University in Chicago.

At present Joseph is teaching at St. Paul's Jesuit High School in Winnipeg. In 1988 he will continue his studies at Regis College in Toronto.

Joseph has four more years to ordination. He is the grandson of the late Joe and Catherine Mroz, Webster Street.

## Coronation Mass

The people of St. Mary's Parish attended a special Coronation Mass on Sunday, October 22, 1978 in honor of the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland, as Pope John Paul II on October 16, 1978. Bishop Wojtyla had been named a Cardinal in 1967, and he became the first non-Italian to head the Roman Catholic Church.

Rev. J.H. MacEachen was serving St. Mary's Church in place of Rev. H. Skurski who was away for several weeks receiving medical care. Fr. MacEachen called a committee of parishioners to plan an appropriate celebration to mark this great honor for the Polish people. The whole parish was pleased to participate.

They contacted Fr. Skurski and explained their plans and he returned at once. Within a week the special Mass honoring the election of a Polish Pope was celebrated.

Rev. H. Skurski was celebrant assisted by Rev. J.H. MacEachen and Rev. D.A. Doyle, Vicar General of the Diocese and pastor of St. Theresa Parish. Visitors from various parts of Sydney also attended. Many parishioners were dressed in Polish costumes.

Mr. Bill Doyle of C.B.C. did a fine job of taping the celebration, and sections were shown the same evening on T.V. News.

After the Mass the people proceeded to the church hall in the basement and enjoyed a social hour.

## Tall Ships in Sydney

During the visit of the Tall Ships in Sydney, the Polish sailors were invited to St. Mary's Church. About one hundred men and officers took part in a special Mass on July 8, 1984. Later they attended a reception and buffet dinner at St. Michael's Hall.

## Battle of the Atlantic

On Sunday, May 3, 1987, an Ecumenical Celebration commemorating the "Battle of the Atlantic Sunday" was held at St. Mary's Polish Church at 3:00 p.m. Participants were: Rev. J.A. MacLean, pastor; Ron MacKay, organist; United Men's Choir, Sydney River; Evan Lloyd, reader; Rev. Donald Pierce, Psalm reader; Rev. Vincent Waterman, gospel and sermon; Earl Gray, reader of names; Executive Officer, H.M.C.S. Margaree, salute.

## Martial Law in Poland

When Martial Law was declared in Poland on December 12, 1981, St. Mary's Parish attended a special mass on December 22, to pray for a quick end to the terrible ordeal suffered by the people in Poland.

In the Sanctuary with Rev. J.A. MacLean were Rev. R.D. Smith, Rev. V. Boutilier and Rev. E. Yarema.





A large group of men from St. Mary's, St. Nicholas, and Holy Redeemer Parishes attended a retreat at Gardiner Centre, February 25-27, 1966.



Ladies from St. Mary's and three other parishes met at Gardiner Centre, Nov. 1967, to assist at a presentation on the Eucharist and some changes in format to be expected, by a Graymoor Priest. The evening was organized by Kay Malinowski.



## Polish Band, 1920



*This picture shows the only Polish Band formed in Sydney, Nova Scotia in the year 1920, under the direction of Bandmaster Teofil Orkish. This band played for weddings, funerals, and other functions. The majority of the members came from Poland at the turn of the century. Most of them studied music in Poland. From left to right, first row: Joseph Bereta, Alonzo Jockemeck, Joseph Dziubek, bandmaster Teofil Orkish, Stanley Gwozdz, Adolph Planetta, John*

*Melnick. Second row: Frank Orkish, Michael Pierrynowski, Joseph Melnick, Rico Giorno, Henry Pierrynowski, unidentified, Joseph Hennick. Third row: John Wludyka, Stephen Pierrynowski, John Fijolek, Albert Blazey, Peter Planeta. Fourth row: Frank Podrouzek, Matthew Adamus, Joseph Wludyka, Stanley Mocny and Joseph Pierrynowski.*

## St. Mary's Young People in the Pomorze Dance Group

Dominic Gniewek Jr., a pharmacist in Halifax, started with the Sydney Polish Dancers. He now directs the Polish Dance Group "Pomorze" which he started in 1983 in Halifax. Pomorze means "By The Sea" in reference to a province in Poland on the Baltic Sea. Several Polish people in Sydney came from that area.

The Pomorze Dancers celebrated their fifth anniversary in February, 1988. In honor of this occasion they gave two performances at the Dalhousie Art Center in the Dunn Theatre.

In August, 1986, the group of 22 dancers and one musician attended the World Polish Dance Festival in Poland for two weeks. Dominic's brother Tony and sisters Karen

and Vicki were in the group. They went to Warsaw, Krakow, and then to Rzeszow the Festival Center.

About fifty-five groups from over the world attended. Pomorze was the only Canadian group this year. Perhaps the Chernobyl accident was a deterrent.

The Pomorze Dancers performed at Center 200 in Sydney during the Jeux Canada Games in February, 1987. About ten or more Polish dancers from Sydney have performed with the Pomorze Group while attending university in Halifax. Dominic's place is a home away from home to Polish young people. He is married to Ann Moores and has one son Michael D.



## The Polish Dance at St. Mary's

Interest in the Polish Dance was stimulated during the 1950's by the work of Mrs. Dr. Uhma.

Mr. and Mrs. Dr. C.A. Uhma came from Poland to Sydney via the British Isles where Dr. Uhma had been head of the Gynecology Dept. in the Paderewski Medical School in

the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Mrs. Uhma had worked for the Polish Red Cross in London, England, during the war. Dr. Uhma set up practice in Sydney. Mrs. Uhma was generous in organizing and directing the parish dance groups, and helping with cultural events.

## VERY YOUNG DANCERS 1955 - 1958

This group of young dancers can be classed as very special in the history of Polish Dancing in Sydney. The four girls and four boys were only 5 to 7 years old. The girls were Paula Jockemeck, Emilia Radzikowski, Ann Melski and Brenda Manley. The boys were Dennis MacDonald, Ed-die Kokoska, Nicky Sobol and Michael Tynski.

They radiated an aura of charm, joy and enthusiasm, and captivated the hearts of all who saw them perform. The children did their delightful routine in several Polish concerts, and they appeared on C.J.C.B. Television during a program commemorating Polish Freedom on May 3, 1956.

Whenever the group sang the Friendship Song, Hotsi Tot-si, the audience felt specially entertained. This dance group was one of a number organized by Mrs. Dr. Uhma. It was directed by Kay Malinowski and Marilyn (Sobol) Morrison.

Under the direction of Mrs. Uhma, Julie Jockemeck helped the mothers make their children's colorful costumes. The mothers helped their children learn the dance steps at home.

The late John K. Paruch often played the accordion while the children practiced.

John Mroz, a Q.C. in Halifax, sometimes accompanied the dancers at concerts on his accordion.



*Dennis MacDonald bows with Paula. In rear are Michael Tynski and Brenda.*



*From left: Ann Melski, Brenda Manley, Paula Jockemeck and Emilia Radzikowski.*



*Group of young dancers, 1953, directed by Mrs. Dr. C.A. Uhma who generously organized and directed several early groups of Polish Dancers.*

*From left: Margie Reppa, John Morykot, Marilyn Sobol, Walter Wojick, Terry Melski, Josephine Wroblewski, Robert Tynski and Joanne MacDonald.*



# THE POLISH SINGERS AND DANCERS

*Submitted by Stephanie Black*

Throughout the history of St. Mary's Polish Parish there have been very many groups formed to participate in Polish singing and dancing. The early pioneers of the parish held musical concerts in the first St. Michael's Hall on Wesley Street. With the construction of the new St. Michael's Hall on Victoria Road, the tradition continued, to the enjoyment of the parishoners.

In 1973, the Sydney Polish Singers and Dancers group was formed with Stephanie (Melnick) Black as dance instructress and Mary (Wroblewski) Pierrynowski as singing instructress. There were two groups: eight young ladies who danced the graceful "Kujawiak" and younger boys and girls who performed a national Polish dance "the Krakowiak" and sang its accompanying melodies. Their primary performance was for the Sydney Polish Cultural Association when they held their "Day in Poland" festival in June 1973 and they received high praise for this show. Throughout the next two years there was much work and practice leading to a ten day workshop from April 24 to May 4, 1975 instructed by Mr. Paul Dubicki from Toronto. As choreographer for the "White Eagle Dance Group", his expertise was a definite asset for the local group, so they worked diligently to ensure success of this very special "Spring school break". Throughout the workshop's duration, the schedule consisted of dancing and singing daily from 8:15 a.m. to 12 noon, lunch, and more lessons from



*Practicing the "Warminskie".*

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. followed by more of the same from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or later. There was also included a series of instructions for the seamstress, Irene (Siwak) Melnick, so as to initiate the production of the group's dance costumes.

All the sessions were held in St. Michael's Hall through the generosity of the Society's membership who donated the facilities for practices and performances. The workshop was a complete success and a total labour of love by all concerned. It ended with the group having an expanded repertoire of song and dance and a much more polished ability to perform them.



*July 1981 - Sydney Polish Singers and Dancers under the direction of Stephanie Melnick and Mary Pierrynowski, prior to leaving for a six city tour of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.*

*Front row, L. to R.: Carolyn Ardelli, Joan Wludyka, Vicki Gniewek, Maria Pierrynowski, Wanda Pierrynowski,*

*Noreen Ardelli, Nancy Paruch, Karen Gniewek and Agnes Siller.*

*Back row, L. to R.: Joseph Menchevski, Greg Tynski, Dominic Gniewek, Bobby Kolanko, Gary Baker, Michael Poswiata, Stephen Siepierski, Tony Gniewek and Michael McComb.*



Following the workshop the group travelled to Oshawa to participate in the "First Polish Folklore Festival of Song and Dance" on March 26, 1976. Through the generous assistance and hospitality of Mr. Dubicki and his White Eagle Dance Ensemble, they not only performed successfully on stage, but also enjoyed the many highlights that Toronto had to offer. This was the group's first show out of the province and they did prove to be very competent ambassadors.

With their 5th Anniversary Concert in May of 1978, the group had grown to thirty-seven and the number of performances stood at sixty-seven. These took place at various Cape Breton sites and on the mainland. New regional dances were added from Lublin, Wielkopolskie, Stask, Opoczno, Rzeszow, and from the Highlands of Poland "Goralskie". This was a very extensive program that demanded great perseverance, dedication and discipline and the group successfully demonstrated all these attributes.

Quebec hosted them in the early summer of 1980 for "La Festival de St. Octave de L'avenir." This was an outdoor concert performed under the stars at night in a mountainous region and it was thrilling for the performers as well as for the audience. They returned home by bus in time to prepare for their trip to Massachusetts, as invited guests of Father H. Skurski, a former St. Mary's pastor. They were housed in an unused school on army cots and travelled with their faithful bus driver, Mr. Paul Logue of Louisbourg, to their concerts in Peabody, South Boston, Chicopee and Lawrence. All these performances were accorded standing ovations and the receptions after were equally warm. Along with the singers and dancers and instructresses, there was a dedicated number of parents who accompanied the group to U.S.A. Mrs. Louise Siepierski, Mrs. Lois Wludyka and Mrs. Mary Poswiata. These were the sewers, menders and washers especially after the night performances in 90° temperatures. Also present was Mrs. Agnes (Wroblewski) Stephenson, their faithful M.C., planning before, through, and after the events. Mr. Henry Poswiata was their capable soundman and he successfully brought music wherever they went. Father Herbert was a most genial and generous host, making their days fun-



*Greg Tynski performing the Goralski.*

filled before their evening shows. A weary but happy group returned to Sydney to rest for awhile, but only for a while.

In the summer of 1981, Father Herbert hosted the group for a return tour, this time adding his home town of Shamokin, Pa., as a performance site. These two United States trips were the highlights of the group's activities. There were many enduring memories garnered: the Boston Red Sox ballgame at Fenway Park, the J.F.K. Centre, the rollercoaster rides in Canobie Lake Park in Salem, New Hampshire, the shaving foam bottles, swimming at Jill's pool, the shopping, eating, jokes on the bus and early Mass attendance plus the extreme hospitality of their American hosts. But there was also a tragic memory to include and this was the destruction of their bus by fire on their return trip from the U.S. Very fortunately, no one was hurt but the bus was a total loss. Some of the costumes were burned and some of the equipment destroyed. It was a sad subdued group of singers and dancers who came back home.

Through the next three years, the practices continued for the occasional show, but the members were quickly reaching University age and gradually their numbers decreased. Their last performance was at the wedding reception of their dance instructress - Mrs. Black, in July 1984. This was their finale. Their many years of training in song and dance with the Sydney Polish Singers and Dancers enabled twelve of them to be a major part of the formation and continuation of the Halifax "Pomorze" Dance Group - some as short term participants and others as long term, up to the present day.

#### POLISH CULTURE



*Stephanie Melnick and Mary Pierrynowski, instructors for the Polish Singers and Dancers of Sydney, N.S. have been awarded plaques for their efforts to promote Polish culture in the area.*



Throughout their years of performances, there were many other dance groups in Nova Scotia but the Polish Singers and Dancers were unique in having all their dances performed with accompanying song. In total the group had over 125 shows, encompassing extensive travel. Their complete repertoire consisted of these dances or suites: Polonez, Mazur, Krakowiak, Wielkopolskie, Warminskie, Trojak, Opoczynskie, Rzeszowskie, Lubelskie and Goralskie, with their accompanying songs. A great accomplishment for the Singers and Dancers and for their Polish community.

**List of Dancers to Ontario:**

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Carolyn Ardelli    | Joan Wludyka   |
| Earlene Barrington | Gary Baker     |
| Katie Markotich    | Domo Gniewek   |
| Nancy Paruch       | Tony Gniewek   |
| Maria Pierrynowski | Bobby Kolanko  |
| Wanda Pierrynowski | Frankie Siller |
| Agnes Siller       | Greg Tynski    |
| Terrilynn Wojcik   |                |

**List of Dancers to U.S.A.**

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Carolyn Ardelli    | Domo Gniewek        |
| Noreen Ardelli     | Tony Gniewek        |
| Karen Gniewek      | Bobby Kolanko       |
| Vicky Gniewek      | Michael McComb      |
| Nancy Paruch       | Joseph Menchefski   |
| Maria Pierrynowski | Michael Poswiata    |
| Wanda Pierrynowski | Stephen Sierpierski |
| Agnes Siller       | Greg Tynski         |
| Joan Wludyka       | Francis Wludyka     |
| Gary Baker         |                     |

**Stephanie (Melnick) Black**

Stephanie Melnick Black has an extensive background in study in Polish dance and folklore. After a trip to Poland in the summer of 1973 on a student exchange program, she was encouraged by Mr. Paul Dubicki, a choreographer from Toronto to enlarge on her interest in Polish dance by enrolling in 1976 for study at Lublin University. This was a month long course (July 1st - 31st) over three consecutive years. Stephanie earned her certificate with distinction in 1978, in Polish ethnography and choreography. Studies included learning the five national dances, many regional dances, folksongs, folk customs and costumes, traditions, music theory, regional musical instruments, dancing techniques and teaching methods for a dance ensemble.

Besides lectures and classes, there were rehearsals at night and concerts, plays, meetings with folk artists and excursions to various areas of Poland. Studies end with a two-hour long oral examination by a team of judges. Certificates are awarded at a closing concert performed by the students.

Students come from all over the world to study in Lublin, many new lasting friendships are made, and Stephanie uses these experiences to enjoy her dance classes even more today.



**DO YOU REMEMBER?**



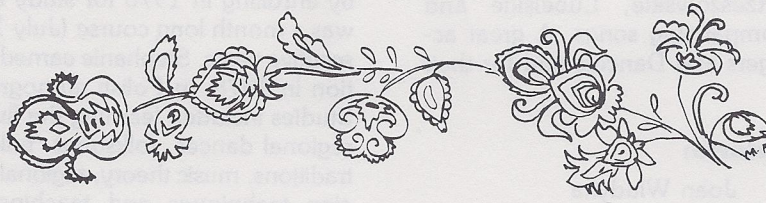
Polish Float 1935, Sydney's 150th anniversary. Holding the banner of St. Michael's Society, Carol Wisnowski, Queen, Jennie Kiec (Melski). From left, row 1: Mary Durkacz, Mary Wludyka, Louise Kiec, Sophie Borek.

Row 2: Mary Gniewek, Julie Gniewek, Annie Ardelli, Frances Zagorski, Sophie Blazey and Elsie Gniewek. Row 3: Helen Kokoska, Mary Miecznik, Mary Azarkiewicz and Annie Tynski.



# FAMILY HISTORIES

The parishioners were asked to submit histories of their families starting with our revered pioneers. A large number responded and the following pages contain their family records.



## THE JAN MROZ FAMILY

Jan Mroz was born on Sept. 8, 1878, in Wolzczyn, in the province of Galicia, a part of Poland, which at that time was under Austria. He arrived in Canada from Lwow, Poland, in 1907, settling in Sydney, N.S. Also arriving in Sydney that same year was Maria Piskorz, who was born on April 16, 1885 to Polish parents in Slask, Czechoslovakia, also under Austria at the time. They were married by Father R. MacInnis in Holy Redeemer Church in January, 1909.

This fruitful marriage was blessed with ten children: Mary, Felix, Helen, John, Frank, William, Anne, Cecilia, Agnes and Martina, as well as sixteen grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren.

Jan Mroz was an original member of St. Michael's Society which was formed in 1909. Through their efforts, this group and those who followed, worked tirelessly towards the building of St. Mary's Polish Church, which was completed in 1918. Jan Mroz became a naturalized citizen in October 1914. His skill as a bricklayer earned him a job in the Sydney Steel Plant, where he worked until his death in 1942. His wife Maria died in 1948. Young John predeceased them in 1926. Both Mary and Frank died in 1982 and Martina in 1986.

Felix and Frank, like their day, worked on the steel plant in Sydney, as did William on his return from service with the Army in Europe. Frank married Mamie Glasgow and they are survived by their son John and daughter Joan-Marie.

Helen married Joseph Topolniski in Montreal and they had six children: Edward, Stanley, Leo, Joseph, Gerry and Helen.

Anne married John Donovan in Montreal and they have five children: John, Rita, Martin, Dan and Dianne.

Cecilia also married in Montreal, to Arthur Stewart - and they had three daughters: Gloria, Linda and Angela.

Agnes married Bill Alexander in California, where they reside.

Jan and Maria Mroz are fondly remembered by their children for their tender loving care, for their deep faith, and for their devotion to their family and to each other.



Jan and Maria Mroz with daughter Mary, 1910.



## PIONEERS: JOHN AND MARY KOKOCKI

John Kokocki was born in Poland in 1882 and Mary Paruch was born in Poland in 1879. They were married in Poland and were blessed with three children, Josephine, Michael and Walter.

John came to Sydney and obtained work at the Steel Plant. Then he sent for his wife and three children. They had three more sons.

Albert (d.) married Sophie Bobyk and their daughter Frances married Charles Ardelli. Walter resides in Sydney. Frank (d.) married Lena DeMarco and their four children are: Frank, Carmen, Joe and Mary.

Michael married Martina Trojan (d.) and their four children are: Bernie, Eddie (d.), John and Betsy.

Joseph is deceased.

Josephine married Alonzo Jockemeck and had six children.

John Kokocki died in 1940 and Mary died in 1959.



*John and Mary Kokocki.*



*Wedding of Josephine Kokocki and Alonzo Jockemeck.*

### **Alonzo and Josephine Jockemeck**

Alonzo Jockemeck was born in Poland in 1901. Josephine Kokocki was born in 1907 in Poland. They were married in St. Mary's Polish Church on June 25, 1925, by Rev. James M. Kiely. Their attendants were Agnes Paruch and Paul Jockemeck.

Alonzo was active in St. Mary's Church and was a member of the Polish Orchestra. He was a crane operator at the Steel Plant. Josephine was a member of the Altar Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej and was very active in its affairs.

Their six children are as follows:

Annie is married to Greg Musial in New Waterford and they have a son David.

Sophie married Bill Neville, Sydney and they have five children.

Mary is married to Tony Marmon, Sydney and they have three children.

Teresa married Cal Kelly, North Bay, Ont., and they have two children.

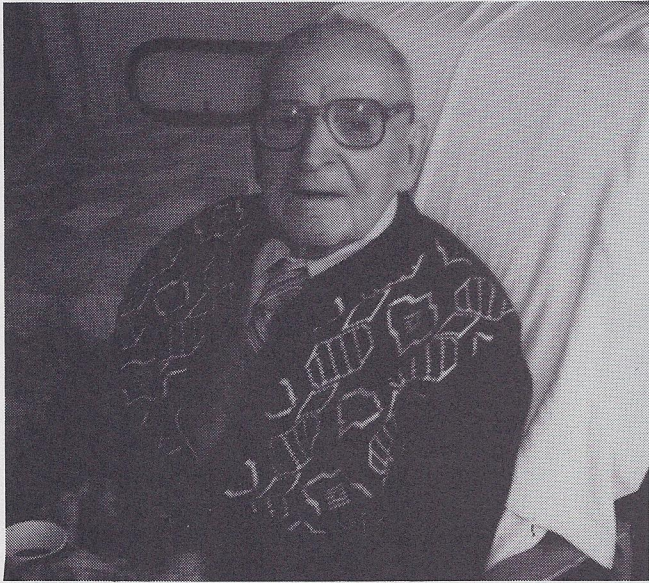
Stanley, Sydney, is married to Cecilia DeMarco and they have two girls.

Frank died in 1947 at the age of nineteen after an accident at the Steel Plant.

Josephine died in 1946 and Alonzo died in 1958.



## PIONEERS: ROMAN AND KAROLINA (GWOZDZ) SIWAK



*Mr. Roman Siwak, 98 years old.*

Roman was born in Wolczuchy, Lwow, Poland, on February 28, 1890. When he was sixteen his mother raised \$40 for his boat passage to Canada. After six long weeks he reached Sydney. The next day he began work in the Steel Plant where he worked until his retirement in 1960.

Karolina was born in Wadowice Gorne, Poland on August 14, 1891. After the death of her father, she and her

mother, Katarzyna Gwozdz, came to Sydney in 1905 to join Karolina's brother Stanley.

On October 17, 1910, Roman married Karolina in Holy Redeemer Church. In 1919 they moved to their own home on Ferris St. There were sixteen children born but four died in infancy. A son Anthony (Tosiu) died in 1946 after returning home from several years service in the Canadian Navy.

Roman and Karolina devoted their time and energies to St. Mary's Church and Parish. Roman performed many duties in the church and Karolina was active with the La Salette Society, as well as concerts and plays at St. Michael's Hall.

Karolina died on October 5, 1936, three years after the death of her mother on January 21, 1933.

Today Roman lives at MacGillivray Guest Home and has just celebrated his 98th birthday as our oldest parishioner. STO LAT! He has a brother Ludwik in Poland and a sister Aniela in Brazil.

Roman and Karolina's family: Jennie (Mrs. William Murphy), Amherstburg, Ont.; Sr. Blanche, O.S.B., Winnipeg, Man.; Casimir, Wolcott, Conn., U.S.A.; Sr. Mary Caroline, O.S.B., Winnipeg, Man.; Elsie (Mrs. J.T. Foster), Winnipeg, Man.; Roman, Sydney, N.S.; Teresa (Mrs. Dr. J.I. MacGillivray), Cornwall, Ont.; Ted, Scarborough, Ont.; Irene (Mrs. Steve Melnick) Sydney; Anne (Mrs. Angus Mombourquette) Sydney; Leo, Hamilton, Ont.

There are 32 living grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren.



*Roman and Karolina (Gwozdz) Siwak, Oct. 17, 1910.  
Attendants: Stanley and Rozalia Gwozda.*



## PIONEERS: STANLEY AND ROZALIA GWOZDZ

Stanley (Stanislaw) Gwozdz was born in Wadowice Gorne, Poland on July 23, 1883. He came to Canada in the early 1900's. After working for some time in the coal mines in Glace Bay, he came to Whitney Pier.

Stanley opened a grocery business on the corner of Victoria Road and Swan St. He also served as an interpreter in the Courts, was a life insurance agent, and travelled over Cape Breton selling wares from his business.

An avid musician, he directed the choir at St. Mary's Church in its first years. He also directed a band, holding practices at the old St. Michael's Hall off Wesley St. He played the clarinet but was proficient enough to teach the band members to play the different instruments. The band performed at various parish functions.

In 1905, he brought his mother, Katarzyna Gwozda, and his sister Karolina to Sydney. They lived with Stanley upstairs over his store. Karolina later married Roman Siwak.

Stanley Gwozdz was one of the group of pioneers who organized the planning and building of St. Mary's Polish

Church. He served the church and the Polish community faithfully through all his years in Sydney. He helped to organize St. Michael's Benefit Society and served as its first president in 1909. He was president for fourteen years from the start until 1924.

In July, 1910, Stanley married Rozalia Kolbuch, a native of Detroit, in Holy Redeemer Church. They made their home on Bay St., in Whitney Pier. They had one son Edward and an adopted daughter, Sophie. Sophie later joined a religious order in Kentucky, U.S.

In 1925, Stanley was advised to leave Sydney for a different climate because of a recurring problem with asthma. The family left in June, 1925, and settled eventually in Detroit, Michigan. There he operated a small confectionary store and sold life insurance.

Stanley died on March 16, 1940, from the complications of asthma. Rozalia died in Detroit in 1969. Edward died a few years after retiring, in 1971, from the General Motors Plant, Detroit. Sister Stanislaus died in 1948.



*Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Gwozdz and children, Edward and Sophie.*



## PIONEERS: ALEXANDER AND MARY MALINOWSKI

Alexander Malinowski was born in Lubotyn, Lomza, Poland on April 7, 1882. His parents were Ambrose and Katarzyna (Dobrowski) Malinowski. Early in the century he immigrated to England and worked in the mines. He arrived in Sydney about 1908 and was employed at the Steel Plant. In September, 1931 he became a Canadian citizen.

Mary Sakalauskas was born to Jan and Katarina (Shupinas) Sakalauskas on June 13, 1887, in Matelosky, Suvalsk, Lithuania. She came to Canada in 1905 and worked in Halifax. Then she came to Sydney and her sister and two brothers also arrived. Later, Frank went to the West and Anna and Anthony moved to the United States.

Alexander and Mary were married in Holy Redeemer Church by Rev. R. MacInnis in 1909. They had eleven children. Twins and a boy died in infancy.

Anne (d.) married Tom Browne (d.) in New York and had one child (d). Joseph married Molly Maher and their three daughters are: Louise, Mrs. D. MacNeil, Sydney; Patricia, Mrs. B. Cameron, Hamilton; and Theresa Anne, Mrs. B. McVittie, Hamilton.

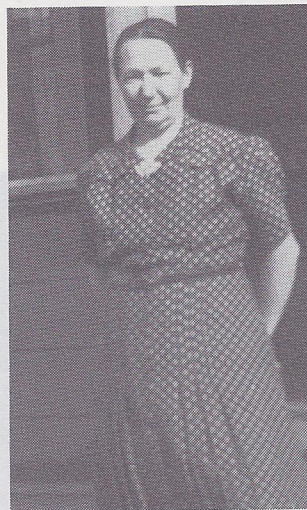
Kathleen and Veronica reside in Sydney. Charles, Sydney, married Kathleen Clarke. Their children are: Lorraine, Mrs. L. Irvin, Florida; Linda, Mrs. J. White, Hamilton; and Charles, Sydney, married to Sandra Lively. Frank married Sarah Gillis, Sydney Mines. Their children are: John Charles, married to Harriet Currie, Sussex, N.B.; Christine, Mrs. C. Smith, Labrador; and Derek married to Betty Hickey, Fort McMurray, Alberta. Frances died in infancy.

Pauline married John Olauson (both dec.) and had one son Werner (d.); Victoria, Sydney, married Vincent Radzikowski (d.). Their children are: Emilia, Mrs. J. Burchell, Halifax; Pauline, Halifax; Angela, Mrs. T. Radzikowski,

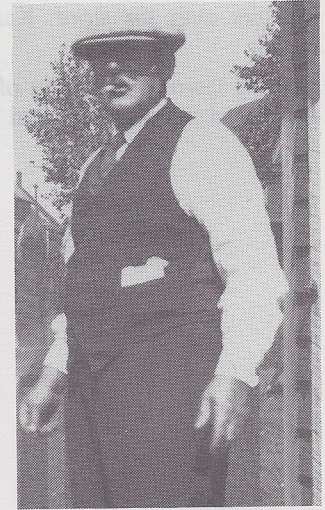
Florida; and Vincent married to Anna Whalen, Pickering, Ont. There were 17 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and 5 great-great grandchildren.

Alex and Mary were generous supporters of St. Mary's Church. Mary was a member of the Altar Society and received the La Salette Magazine. She was pleased that her hand-made tablecloth was used on the Offertory Table in the church for years. Alex tended the furnace at St. Mary's Church for some time after he retired from the Steel Plant. Charles had made some special articles for several churches including a Crosier for Bishop W.E. Power and one for a Bishop in Ontario. Charles died August 21, 1988.

Alex died December 26, 1956. Mary died January 24, 1959. They left a legacy of Justice, Integrity, and Generosity which are often not recognized in today's selfish world.



Mary



Alexander



Veronica, Victoria, Charles, Pauline, Kathleen and Frank.



Anne

Joe



## PIONEERS: STANLEY AND VICTORIA KOWALCZYK

Stanley Kowalczyk, one of a family of ten children, was born April 10, 1884, in Jasien, Brzesko, Galicia Poland. He came to Canada in 1907 and worked in the Caledonia Mines and the Steel Plant. He was one of the seven pioneers who met in May, 1913 to finalize plans for a Polish church.

Victoria Gawenda came from a family of twelve. She was born November 26, 1893 in the same place as Stanley, but they first met in Sydney. She arrived here in 1913 and resided with her sister who came earlier.

Stanley and Victoria were married June 4, 1913, in St. Mary's Church basement by Rev. Antoni Plucinski. They lived on Bryon St.

Their grocery store on Victoria Road burned down. Then they opened the "Big Ward Meat Market" on the corner of Victoria Road and Ferris St. They kept cows and sold milk, and raised pigs and had a vegetable garden. They worked very hard and brought up a large family.

Stanley was a member of St. Michael's Society. He was the carpenter in charge of construction of the first Hall. He also helped to build the church. Victoria was a member of the Altar Society. She looked after the altar linens, made flowers and helped to clean the church. She also cooked meals for the priest and her children delivered them.

When depression came they helped their customers by giving credit, but they lost everything, house, store and all.

They moved to a farm in Mira. Then in 1930 they settled on a farm on Meadows Road and resided there until their deaths. Victoria died February 26, 1970, and Stanley died July 9, 1973. They are buried in Resurrection Cemetery, Sydney Forks.

Stanley and Victoria had 14 children but three died in childhood. They brought up three of her sister's children. Their father had been killed in a mine explosion, and their mother died later of pneumonia. They also fostered three children aged 2, 5 and 13, who stayed until they were adults and working. They also took care of three elderly men.

Their children and number of offspring are: Mary, Mrs. Melvin Ross, Ontario (dec.), four; Florence, Mrs. Lemuel Hebb, Bridgewater, three; Sophie, Mrs. Guy Wamboldt, Halifax, six; Rose, Mrs. Joseph Marchand, Halifax, three; Stella, Mrs. Donald Cameron, North Sydney; Joseph (dec.), Meadows Rd., four; Isobel, Mrs. Lawrence Vassallo, Sydney Forks, nine; Victoria, Mrs. Terrance O'Hagan, Burlington, six; Jennie, Mrs. Levi Horne, Meadows Rd., three; John, Meadows Rd., nine; Cecelia, Mrs. Hugh MacInnis, Frenchvale, four.

The young relatives they reared are: Stephena, Mrs. Frank Stevens, Quebec, one; Caroline, Mrs. Hugh MacDonald, Kings Rd., five; Walter Wierbiecki (dec.), Kings Rd.; Their

foster children are: Mary, Mrs. Robert Murphy, Arlington, U.S.A., three; John Joseph McLean, Meadows Rd., two; Angus Hart, Sydney.

There are 50 grandchildren and 56 great-grandchildren. Stanley and Victoria were beautiful, kind, hard-working people. May They Rest In Peace.



Stanley and Victoria Kowalczyk, 50th Wedding Anniversary.



## PIONEERS: JOSEF AND KATHERINE MROZ

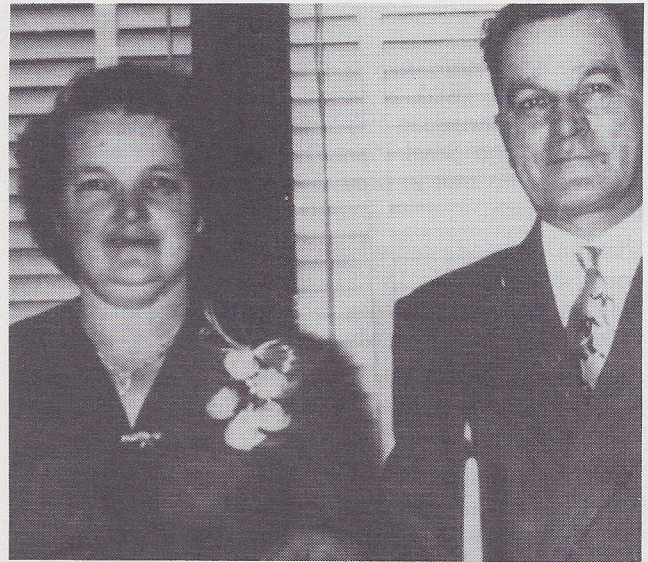
Josef Mroz was born December 24, 1903 and Katherine Jaszczur was born February 5, 1906 in the village of Wolczuchy in Poland. They were married there in 1927. The next year their first child, Stella, was born.

Living conditions were poor in their village, so in 1928 Josef came to Sydney to find work and a better life. He left his wife and daughter in Poland, intending to bring them over when he could pay their way.

The depression soon set in making it impossible to bring the family to Canada for some time. On March 26, 1936, Katherine and daughter Stella, who was eight years old, did arrive in Sydney.

Josef and Katherine were lifelong members of St. Mary's Polish Church. Katherine belonged to the Altar Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej for many years until her death in 1975. Josef was a longtime member of St. Michael's Society. In 1968 he retired from the Steel Company at age 65. Josef died August 10, 1988.

Joseph and Katherine were blessed with four children. Besides Stella, there are Edward, Karoline and Ted.



*Joseph and Katherine Mroz.  
25th Anniversary, 1952.*

## JOHN K. AND STELLA (MROZ) PARUCH

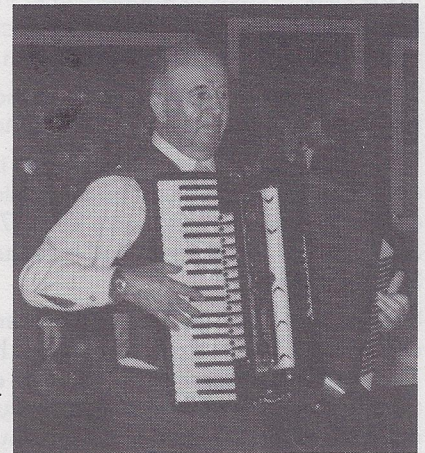
John was born in Sydney, and Stella was born in Poland. They were married September 13, 1944, by Father O'Connell in St. Mary's Polish Church. Their marriage was blessed with four sons, John, Richard, Ken and Alan.

Stella is a member of the Altar Society. John was a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society. He served in the R.C.A.F. He retired from the Steel Plant on July 1, 1978.

John helped to form Legion 128 at Whitney Pier, and was vice-president at the start. He was also instrumental in forming the Musicians Union and held an executive position for some time.

John will be remembered for his talent and generosity in entertaining with his accordion. In his retirement years he entertained often at Senior Citizens Homes in Sydney and nearby towns. He died on September 11, 1985.

May you lead the Angels Choir, John.



*John Paruch  
with his accordion.*

*Photo of Stella and the late John K. Paruch with four sons and families, 1983.*

*Rear from left: son Ken, wife Rosanne (Mollon), John, wife Iris (Arneil), Betty (Mader), husband Richard, Erin (Muldoon), husband Alan. Front: John K., grandchildren Andrew, Barbara, Katrina and Stella Paruch. Barbara is the daughter of Richard and Betty. Andrew and Katrina are children of John and Iris.*





## PIONEERS: LAWRENCE (WAWRZYNIEC) AND VICTORIA GNIEWEK

Lawrence Gniewek was born August 10, 1883, in Rzeszow, Poland. He came to Sydney in 1906. Victoria Adamczyk was born in May, 1886 and arrived in Sydney about 1909.

They had been friends in Poland before crossing the ocean to Canada. Lawrence and Victoria were married March 30, 1910, in Holy Redeemer Church by Rev. R. MacInnis.

Their marriage was blessed with seven children, namely: Helen (d.), Mary (d.), Julia (Ardelli), Tony (d.), Elizabeth (Sheppard), Dominic and Teresa (Siller). All of them except Victoria, Mrs. Gniewek, are shown in the wedding photo of Julia and Marian Ardelli.

Lawrence was a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society from the start. In 1959 when the Society celebrated its 50th anniversary, he was the only surviving Charter Member.

He worked in the Open Hearth Dept. as Pit Foreman until he retired in 1946 at the age of 63.

Victoria was an early president of the Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej. When she distributed the La Salette Magazine, her older daughters were willing helpers. Victoria died young, on Dec. 21, 1930, at age 44. Lawrence died on March 9, 1963, at age 79.



*Wedding picture of Lawrence and Victoria Gniewek.*

## DOMINIC AND MARY GNIEWEK

Dominic Gniewek and Mary Petrie were married August 3, 1949, in Immaculate Conception Church, Dominion, by Rev. R.J. Laffin. They were blessed with six children.

Larry lives in Sydney. Kevin, Sydney, married Rose Mugridge and has one boy and one girl. Dominic, Halifax, married Ann Moores and has one boy. Victoria lives in Halifax. Tony lives in Halifax. Karen lives in Thunder Bay.

Mary has been an active member of the Altar Society for many years. Dominic sings in St. Mary's Choir. He is a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society and was President for three terms. He was also a warden of the church for some years. As a youngster, Dominic was an altar boy with Father O'Connell for years. Dominic worked in the Open Hearth Dept. of the Steel Plant and retired November 25, 1982.



*Rear from left: Dominic (Domo), Larry, Dominic Sr., and Kevin. Front: Vickey, Mary (Mother), Tony and Karen.*



## PIONEERS: JOSEPH AND EMILY (TROJAN) MIECZNIK

Joseph Miecznik was born April 1, 1894 in the village of Rodatycz in Lwow, Poland. He came to Sydney in 1911, went to Hamilton, then returned to Sydney. Emily (Minnie) Trojan was born August 1, 1903 in Poland. She arrived in Sydney with her parents in 1905. Joseph and Minnie were married on September 29, 1919 by Rev. C. Grzybala in St. Mary's Polish Church. They had two daughters, Julie and Mary.

Joseph was president of St. Mary's Church Committee for a long time, and was president of St. Michael's Society for several terms. In 1950 he spearheaded the drive that resulted in the new St. Michael's hall on Victoria Road.

He directed concerts with children and adults during the late 20's and 30's. These were also staged in Glace Bay for the Polish people. Joseph worked with the Christmas Carolers who carried the Szopka Crib and received donations for the church. He was instrumental in bringing Professor Jozef Graban from Manitoba in 1938 to be organist and choir master.

Minnie was president of the Altar Society for a number of terms. She helped with the cleaning of the church and linens for several years. Together with Mrs. Joseph Paruch she canvassed for parish bazaars and other events.

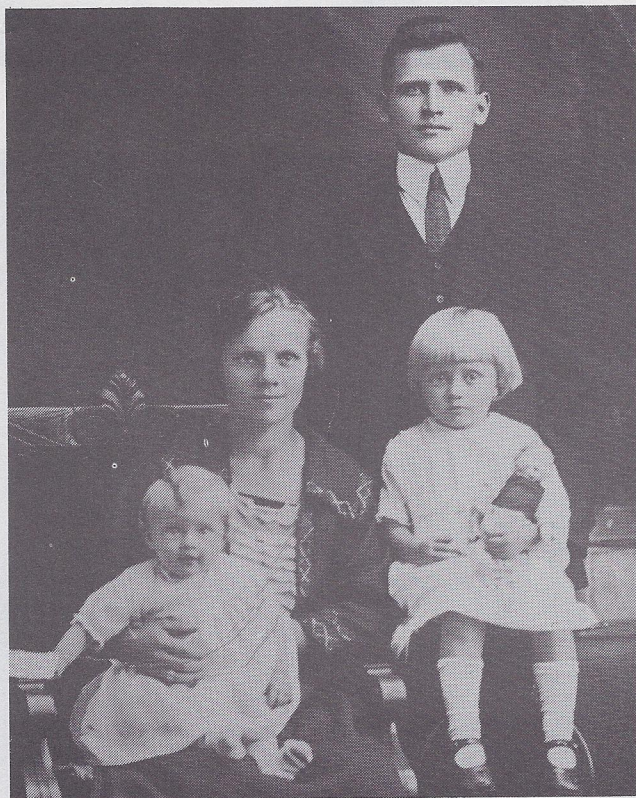
Mary was organist in the church for some time, and she assisted with Polish classes during the 1940's in the club house.

Julie's skill in sewing was useful to the parish. At her father's request, she sewed the first stage drapes and window curtains for the new St. Michael's Hall. She covered in red vinyl the seats of 50 chairs bought from the Isle Royale Hotel for the renovated church basement. She also sewed the first curtains there when asked by Mrs. Stella Sobol, president of the Altar Society.

Joseph accompanied by Julie, visited Poland in 1963 to attend his sister's Golden Jubilee as a nun in the Felician Order. He was a steelworker and retired in 1960. Joseph died on July 21, 1965. Minnie moved to Halifax and lived with daughter Mary. She died on May 30, 1987.

Julie was married to Paul Jockemeck on February 8, 1938 by Father O'Connell in St. Mary's Church. Their children are Joseph, Carol and Paula. Their twin babies Paul and Pauline, recorded as the first birth in Sydney in 1941, died within the month. Paul died February 9, 1988, one day after their 50th anniversary.

Mary was married to Donald Payn on May 17, 1944 by Father O'Connell in St. Mary's. Their children are Donnie, Valerie and Janice. Donald died July 6, 1966.



*Joseph and Minnie Miecznik with daughters Julie and Mary held by mother.*



*Miecznik extended family. From left, bottom: Janice, Valerie, Donnie and Paula. Center: Joseph, Minnie, Mary, Julie and Carol. Standing: Donald Payn, Joseph and Paul Jockemeck.*



## PIONEERS: PETER AND FRANCES DURKACZ

Peter Durkacz came to Sydney in 1913, at the age of 18, via New York to work at the Steel Plant. He also worked at Dofasco in Hamilton for a short time. He returned and worked at DOSCO until his death in 1958.

Francis Tynski arrived in Sydney with her parents via Halifax, at the age of 10 years in 1912. Being a good sailor she helped sick passengers on the voyage.

Peter and Frances were married November 11, 1919, at St. Mary's Polish Church by Rev. C. Grzybala.

Peter was active in St. Michael's Benefit Society. Over the years he held different executive positions. Frances was very active in the Altar Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej, and held various offices. She died October 4, 1982.

Their family of five sons and two daughters are: Edmund, Sydney; Mary (d.); Stanley, Hamilton; Kazimer (d.); Boleslaw (Walter), Hamilton; Henry, Hamilton; Wisia (Anita), Sydney.

There are 21 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. One grandson is a priest, Father Joseph Durkacz in Hamilton.

During World War II, Edmund served overseas with the Princess Louise Fusiliers and the Cape Breton Highlanders. Stanley saw active duty with the North Shore Regiment and was severely wounded at Caen.

Peter and Frances Durkacz loved their church and family.



### Wedding of Peter and Frances Durkacz

Attendants: Catherine Tynski, Joseph Bereta, Louise Strickey, Frank Wontur, Jennie Tetanish, Joseph Wludyka, Regina Alonzo Jockemeck, Fanny Schella, Mike Dilney and Mary Reppa,



## JOZEF AND ANTONINA RYBA

Jozef Ryba was born in Lubinka (near Tarnow, Poland) on December 15, 1902. He came to Sydney in June 1926 and worked in the steel plant for 42 years. He died on November 28, 1968, just two short months after his retirement. Antonina Koslowna was born in Rychwald (near

Tarnow, Poland) on February 4, 1910. She came to Sydney in November of 1929 and was married. Their children: Stella Granville, now of Ottawa, Walter Joseph (deceased on February 28, 1986), Rose Frances McKay, and Joseph Stanley, all of Sydney.



Pictured in the above photo on their wedding day are **Jozef Ryba** and **Antonina Koslowna** who were married in St. Mary's Polish Church by Rev. Leo O'Connell on November 11, 1929. The setting for the picture was the former Moxham's Castle. The wedding party, as accurately as one can recall, are:  
**FRONT ROW:** (left to right): Taxi Driver (name unknown), Mr. Jozef Zagurski, Mrs. Rozalia Zagurska, Miss Albina Wojick, Mr. Paul Jachymek - the best man, Antonina Koslowna - the bride, Jozef Ryba - the groom, Miss Frances Swartzack, the maid of honour, Miss Marja Stankowska, Mr. Marek Mroz, Mrs. Frank Kudra, Mr. Frank Kudra.

**SECOND ROW:** (left to right): Mr. Bratos - taxi driver, Mr. Antonin Orszczak, Mrs. Anastazia Orszczak, Mr. Ilko, Miss Helena Henrych, Miss Aniela Stryczek, Mrs. Marja Henrych, Mrs. Labata, Mr. Labata, Mr. Jozef Henrych, Mr. Filip Henrych.

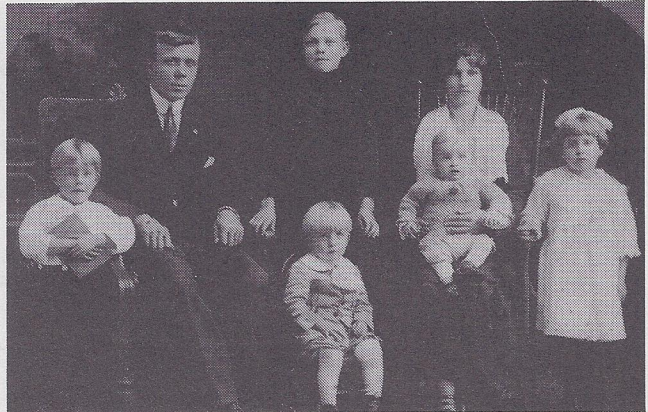
**BACK ROW** (left to right): Mr. Alfred Stanwick, Mr. Jozef Zajac, Miss Aniela Orszczak, Miss Labata, Mr. Stanislaw Wiwer, Mrs. Marja Planeta, Mr. Karol Henrych, Mr. Jozef Planeta and Mr. Jozef Kornicki.



## PIONEERS: ANTHONY and MARY MELSKI

Among the first Polish immigrants to come to Sydney were Anthony and Mary Melski. Like many of the other Poles, Anthony came to find work at Sydney Steel. He was born in Wolczuchac Grudek Jagell, Poland, the son of Thomas Melski and Katherine Sieromski. He married Maria Piszczek, the daughter of Casimir Piszczek and Katherine Bojda, on May 21, 1913.

Anthony was a devoted member of St. Mary's Parish, and belonged to St. Michael's Society. He was president in 1921 and 1927. His wife, Mary, who was born in Lysa Gora Brzesko, Krakow, Poland was an active parish member and belonged to the Altar Society.



*They are pictured here with five of their children, left to right, standing: Leo, Anthony Jr., Albina. Seated: Eddie and Joe.*



*Anthony and Jennie with 16 of their grandchildren, November 16, 1987. Anthony died July 9, 1988.*

Hard work and a strong dedication to church and family life were second nature to Anthony and Mary. So it was with all of the early Polish settlers. We, who follow behind are very proud and consider ourselves very fortunate to have shared in their lives and strong cultural heritage.

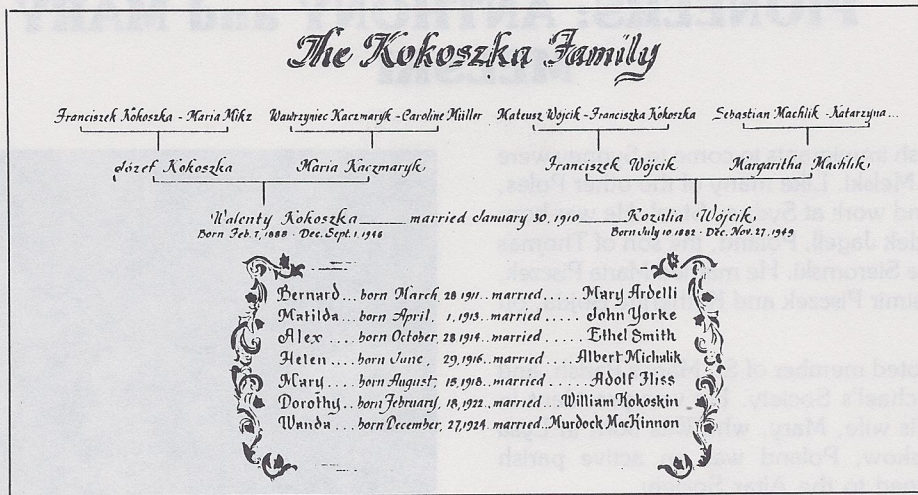
The Melski's were blessed with nine children - seven sons and 2 daughters: Anthony, Casimir, Edward (deceased), Joseph, Stanley, Raymond, Terrence, Albina and Rose (deceased).



*Anthony Melski Jr., married Jennie Kiec on Nov. 16, 1937 at St. Mary's. They are pictured here with their nine children on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Left to right: Mike, Anthony, Ronnie, Leona, Terry, Joseph, Anne, Robert and Donnie.*



## The Kokoszka Family



The Kokoszka family can trace its ancestry back three generations to the Bochnia region of Poland.

Walenty Kokoszka immigrated to Canada in 1905 at the age of 17 from the village of Stary Wisnicz. A shoemaker by trade, he settled in Sydney where he operated a shoe shop on Townsend Street for several years.

Rosalie Wojcik was born in the village of Nieszkwice Wielkie. She left Poland in 1907 to join her elder brother who had immigrated to Sydney some years earlier.

Walenty and Rosalia met through mutual friends and were married on January 30, 1910 in Holy Redeemer Church by Father MacInnis, attended by Walenty Wojcik and Rose Pijelski. They made their home at 27 Ferris Street where they raised seven children: Bernard, Edward (Alex), Matilda (Tillie), Helen, Mary, Dorothy and Wanda.

The Kokoszkas worked very hard to support their family. Walenty, after leaving the shoe trade, worked in the gas producers of the open hearth of the steel plant. They raised most of their own food, keeping small numbers of

livestock and poultry and tending a garden every summer. As their family grew and they required more produce than existing space could provide, they leased a small garden plot in the Coxheath area. Their neighbors fondly referred to them as the "gospodarzy", meaning hosts, or farmers. Although times were often hard, food was always plentiful.

The Kokoszkas were also active in the community. Walenty was one of the men who helped build St. Mary's Church and Rosalia served as a member of its altar society.

The long hours and adverse working conditions in the gas producers led to Walenty's untimely death on September 1, 1946, at the age of 58. Rosalia died three years later on November 27, 1949.

Walenty and Rosalia Kokoszka left a valuable legacy based on hard work and determination: their seven children, thirty grandchildren and sixty-seven great grandchildren who continue to prosper and contribute to their communities and to the country.



Kokoszka family at the marriage of Matilda and John Yorke, Oct. 26, 1935. Front: Rosalia, John, Matilda and Walenty. Back: Bernard, Mary, Wanda, Helen, Dorothy and Alex.



# FAMILY OF BERNARD KOKOSZKA

## Bernie the Baker

Bernie Kokoszka, eldest son of Walenty and Rozalia (Wojick) Kokoszka, married Mary Ardelli, second daughter of Jozef and Katarzyna (Wanut) Ardelli, on August 31, 1940, in St. Mary's Church with Rev. M.L. O'Connell officiating. Bernie and Mary gave their best to their religion, their family and their community. Their spirit of hard work and determination also motivated their four children who have successfully completed university. Frances, married to Alden Meagher has three children. Bernie, married to Maureen Chiasson has four children, Frank, married to Nancy LeDrew has three children. Adele, married to Roger Young has two children.

The "Bakery" was the focal point of the Kokoszka family. It was strongly interwoven with the religious activities and customs of the ethnic groups in Sydney. This industry started in the kitchen of Bernie's mother when he helped her prepare the family bread. Bernie advanced from a teenage helper at the Oriental Bakery, to head baker at Delvecchio's Bakery, to owner of Bernie's Bakery on Tupper St., before he was twenty.

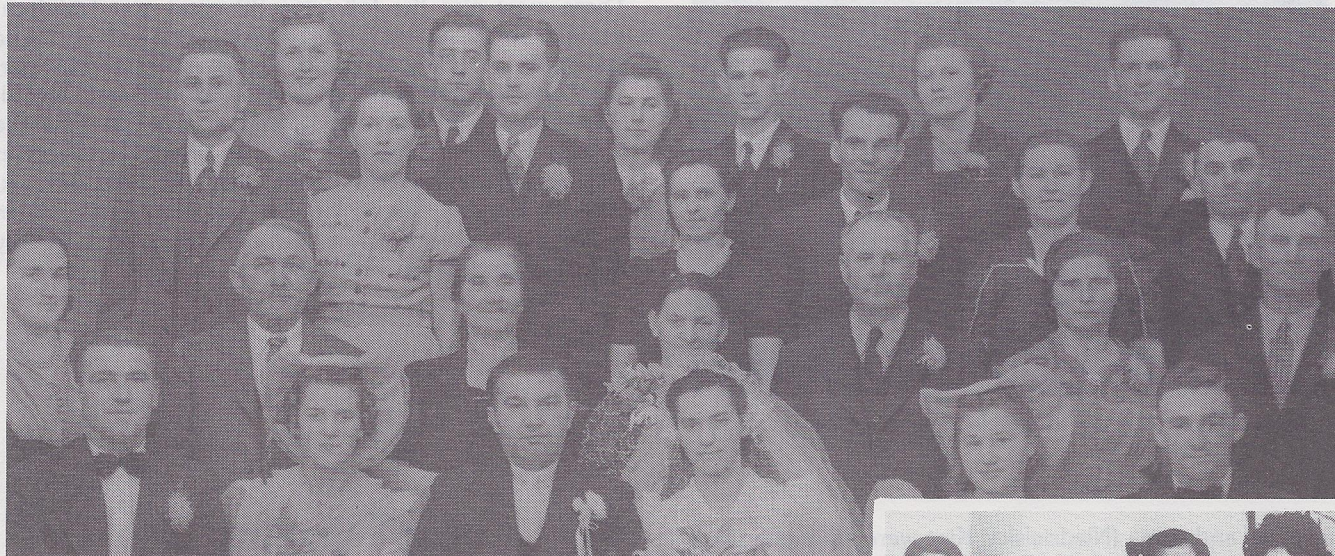
When Bernie's first bakery burned in 1957, it was rebuilt on Meadow St. His wife Mary worked with him in the new business, greeting and serving customers. Some of the

European breads baked here are: Easter Baba, Mak rolls, rye and sourdough breads. It was not uncommon to see the oven filled with roasting turkeys or sides of lamb.

Bernie always found time to enjoy the children of "Colonia" and on special occasions, you could always find a happy gathering at the KOKOSZKA household. On holidays and weekends, the Bakery delivery truck served as a "bus" for the neighbours of "Colonia". The bread shelves were removed, cardboard placed on the truck floor, and benches within, after which, everyone "packed in", and were off to one of the picnicing areas of Cape Breton.

In 1980, Bernie and Mary retired and passed the honorable art of breadmaking into the hands of their children. On the historic occasion of the Holy Father's visit to Nova Scotia, September 13, 1984, Bernie's Bakery was honored when its bread was blessed by Pope John Paul II in the traditional offering of "bread and salt". This presentation was the first of its kind in Canada.

The Kokoszka family is still active in the Polish community. Bernie Jr. and wife Maureen and their children sing in the Polish Choir. The children take part in the Christmas Pageant, and they and Maureen attend Polish classes.



WEDDING OF BERNIE AND MARY KOKOSZKA  
AUGUST 31, 1940

1st row: Alex Kokoszka, Stella Ardelli, Bernie and Mary, Wanda Kokoszka and Walter Ardelli.  
2nd row: Matilda Yorke, Walenty Kokoszka, Rozalia Kokoszka, Katarzyna Ardelli, Jozef Ardelli, Antonia Wojick and Walter Wojick.  
3rd row: John Yorke, Bessie Ardelli, Edward Ardelli, Julia Mroz, Peter Mroz, Helen Michalik and Albert Michalik.  
4th row: Mary Kokoszka, John Ardelli, Dorothy Kokoszka, Tony Ardelli, Julia Jockemeck and Paul Jockemeck.



Front: Mary and Bernie.  
Rear: Bernie Jr., Frances, Frank and Adele.



## PIONEERS: MICHAEL AND ANNA KIEC



*Michael Kiec and Anna (Niedzielska) Kiec - June 12, 1912.*

Michael and Anna (Niedzielska) Kiec were among the first pioneers of St. Mary's Polish Church. Michael came from Tarnow, Krakow, and Anna came from Brzesko, Krakow. They emigrated from Poland to Canada about the year 1909.

They met in Sydney and on June 12, 1912 they were married in Holy Redeemer Church by Father Roderick MacInnis.

Michael was one of the seven organizers who met in 1913 to finalize plans for the construction of the church. He was an active member of St. Michael's Benefit Society.

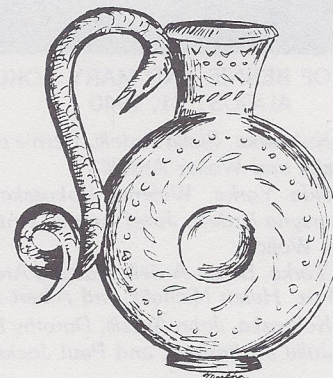
Anna was a longtime member of the Altar Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej. She received the magazine all her lifetime. In 1982 she dictated a short account of the early history of St. Mary's Polish Church to her grandson Michael Ratushny.

Michael Kiec was a steelworker. He died in 1940. Anna Kiec died in 1986.

They were blessed with a family of nine children, namely: Stanley (dec.), Cecilia (dec.), Jennie (husband Anthony Melski), Mary (husband Peter Baryluk, both deceased), Ted (wife Hilda Sigut), Louise (husband Terrance Baker), Alex, Bernice (husband Edmund Ratushny), Valerie (husband Eugene Deturbide).

They also have a family of thirty grandchildren, namely: Anthony Melski, Michael Melski, Terrance Melski, Leona Hamper, Donald Melski, Ronald Melski, Robert Melski, Anne Stephen, Joseph Melski, Peter Baryluk (dec.), Richard Baryluk, Marilyn Gillis, Michael Baryluk, (dec.), Tommy Baryluk, Terrance Baryluk (dec.), Loraine Kiech, Thomas Kiech, Gregory Kiech, Terrance Baker, Anne-Louise Baker (dec.), Gerald Baker, Jo-Anne Wall, Jean-Annette White, Gary Baker, Kenneth Ratushny, Michael Ratushny, Marianne Gillis, Robert Ratushny, Michael Deturbide, Anne Deturbide and Barry Deturbide.

There were also the following 30 great grandchildren, namely: Janice Melski, Ursula Melski, Glen Melski, Shane Melski, Robert Hamper, James Hamper, Michael Hamper, Tony Melski, Thomas Melski, David Melski, Petrina Melski, Robert Melski, Michelle Melski, Raymond Melski, Jo-Anne Melski, Leanne Stephen, Charles Stephen, Jennifer Stephen, Marianne Gillis, Joseph Gillis, Richard Baryluk, Matthew Baryluk, Terry-Lynn Baryluk, Mark Baker, Kevin Baker, Keith Baker, Leah Wall, Terrance Wall, Jeffrey Ratushny and Kevin Ratushny.





## IN MEMORY OF CATHERINE ARDELLI



*Catherine Ardelli.*

Catherine Ardelli was born Catherine Wanut in Rodotycze, Poland, October 18, 1893. She came to Canada in 1909. On May 30, 1911, she married Joseph Ardelli in the first Holy Redeemer Church. Joseph was born in Wolczuchy, Poland, February 6, 1885. He worked in the Blast Furnace Dept. of the Steel Plant. He died June 26, 1947. Catherine became a Canadian citizen on November 10, 1947. She died July 25, 1969. Catherine and Joseph were blessed with twelve children. One died in infancy.

Julie married the late Daniel Peter Mroz, and later married David Munshaw (dec.).

Edward married Bessie MacAskill (dec.). Their children were Nancy and Edward Jr.

Mary married Bernie Kokoska. Their four are Francis, Adele, Bernie and Frank.

Walter married Dolly Dalton (dec.).

Anthony married Phil Trabuco and their children are Barrie and Ann Marie.

Later, on July 25, 1987, he married Mary Fern in Penttinton, B.C.

Theresa married Ralph Dalesandro and have two girls, Helen and Rose Anne.

Stella married Ken Hamilton and their boys are Ken and Shannon.

Frank married Stella Savitzski and they had six children. They are Beverly, Christopher and Frank Jr. Deceased children are David, Sandra and Jeffrey.

Joseph married Mary Boone.

John (dec.) married Mary Spagnolatti and had eight children, Jerriot, Johnny, Jerome, Loretta, Dorothy, Julia Anne, Catherine and Laura.

Michael married Shirley Musgrave and have five children. They are Marjorie, Carolyn, Noreen, Dawn Marie and Michael Jr.

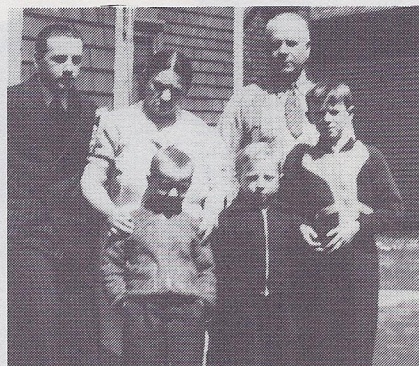
Francis died at the age of 9 months.

There are 31 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Mike and Shirley sing in St. Mary's Choir. Mike sings solo at special celebrations. Shirley is a member of the Altar Society, and the current vice-president.

Each of the four girls took her turn teaching Catechism to the parish children. Michael was an altar boy for several years.

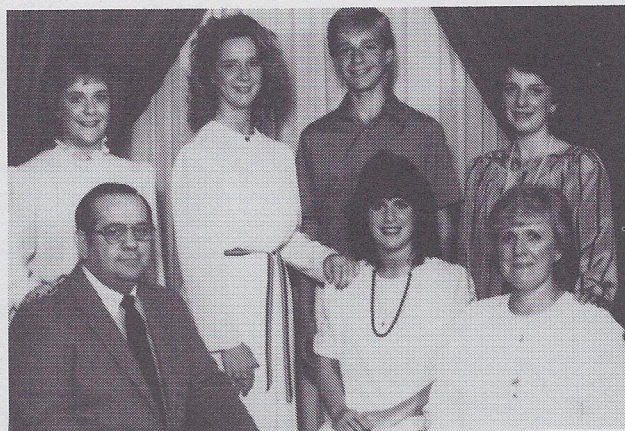
Pictures of most of Catherine's family are shown in the wedding picture of Mary (Ardelli) and Bernie Kokoska.



*Mr. and Mrs. Ardelli with, from left: Edward, Michael, Ed Jr., and Frank.*



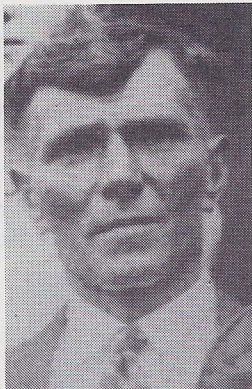
*Julia and Peter in their shop.*



*Photo of Mike Ardelli and family, 1983. Seated: Mike, Marjorie, Ph.C., wife Shirley. Standing: Dawn Marie, Noreen, C.D.S.A., Michael and Carolyn, R.N.*



## PIONEERS: ADAM AND REGINA TROJAN



**ADAM**

Adam Trojan (1876 - 1932) was born in Poland where, in his youth, he worked as a farmer and coal miner. In 1904 he immigrated to Canada and took up residence in Sydney where he found employment in the local steel plant.

Being among the first Polish immigrants in the area, he was instrumental in forming the St. Michael's Benefit Society in 1909, and in building the first St. Michael's Hall.

**REGINA**



In 1913, Adam was one of the original organizers in the establishment of St. Mary's Polish Church. Regina (Dziedzic) Trojan (1875 - 1951) was the wife of Adam and mother of six children. She was an active member of the first St. Mary's Altar Society.

Adam and Regina had five daughters: Mary (Mrs. Joseph Paika), Minnie (Mrs. Joseph Miecznik), Stella (Mrs. Joseph Bereta), Helen (Mrs. Michael Pierrynowski) and Tena (Mrs. Michael Kokocki). A son, Rudolph, died at infancy.

August 12, 1929.



The Trojan sisters - left to right: Tena, Minnie, Mary, Stella and Helen with their spouses directly behind them. (1954)



## MICHAEL AND HELEN PIERRYNOWSKI

Michael Pierrynowski (1909 - 1973) was born in Sydney, the second son of Joseph and Josephine Pierrynowski. He was employed by the Sydney Steel Plant, where he worked in various departments for nearly fifty years.

Mike helped construct the present day St. Michael's Hall and for many years he was a volunteer worker in the Men's Club. Besides being a member of the St. Michael's Society, he was a life-long parishioner of St. Mary's.

Helen Pierrynowski was born in Sydney, fourth daughter of Adam and Regina Trojan. Mike and Helen have four children: Edward, Sydney River; Raymond, Niagara Falls; Joan (McMahon), Halifax; and Michael, Sydney; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



*The above picture was taken at Mike and Helen's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary August 12, 1954.*



*Helen Pierrynowski and family at the Trojan Family Reunion, July, 1986.*



## PIONEERS: MICHAEL AND FRANCES PARUCH



*Michael and Frances Paruch, 201 Henry St., Sydney.*

Michael Paruch was born August 28, 1882 in Ostrow Ropczyce Skrzyzow, Poland. He came to Canada about 1900-1902. Frances Adamus was born May 11, 1882, in Bulowice, Kety, Poland. She came to Canada also about that time. On the boat coming over she met Mrs. Lighter, and worked for her in Glace Bay.

Michael and Frances met in Caledonia, Glace Bay where they were married by Rev. R. MacDonald at Holy Cross Church in 1904. Michael worked in the Caledonia Mines for a few years. They moved to Sydney where he worked at the Steel Plant for 37 years.

Michael and Frances were Proprietors of two stores. Their general store on Victoria Rd. in the 800 block burned

down. They moved to 201 Henry St. and built an attached grocery store. The family lived there about 74 years.

Michael was one of the seven pioneers who met in 1913 to finalize plans for a Polish Church. During the early building of the church, his horse and wagon were constantly used at the site, and had to be sent for to deliver groceries. He also hauled lumber for the Hall.

Michael and Frances were dedicated to St. Mary's Church. He was a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society, and served as Vice-President in 1915 and 1916. He was on the Sick Committee for years and served the members well. Frances was in the Altar Society for years and helped to keep the altar linens and church clean. Michael and Frances raised a large family. They were: Charlotte (Mrs. Chris Taseff), Agnes (Mrs. Emil Mikulas). Three children, Frank, Peter and Josephine died when they were young. Mary (Mrs. Norman Chappell. Incidentally, Norman is the son of the late Mr. M.R. Chappell whose firm completed the building of St. Mary's Church). Sophie (Mrs. James Walsh), John (married Florence MacNeil), Frances (married Geno Mei), Michael (married Pam Dawson), Teresa (Mrs. Arnold MacQueen), and Joseph (married Caroline Gromick).

Charlotte, Agnes and Mary sang in St. Mary's Choir, as John and daughter Nancy did later. There are 13 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and 15 great-great-grandchildren.

Michael's two sisters and brother arrived in Sydney later. They were Mrs. Mary Kokocki, Mrs. Victoria Blazey, and Joseph Paruch. Frances had one brother, Maciej Adamus who was a fine cabinet maker and plasterer. He also helped in building St. Mary's. He lived in Sydney for some time then moved to the United States.

The Paruch family remembers their parents' goodness. For instance, *"Our dear mother took in boarders for years. This was home away from home for many young Polish men who had left Poland, and other young men from European countries. Some of these men lived with us for twelve to twenty years.*

*We hope that we have made our parents as proud of us as we are of them."*





## PIONEERS: JOSEPH AND MICHALINA (LENA) PARUCH

Michalina came to Glace Bay with her parents. Francisek and Paulina (Medynska) Pizalski and other members of her family, as a very young girl and attended school in that town.

Joseph, a son of John and Josepha (Radecka) Paruch was born in Ropczyce-Skrzyzow-Ostrow, Poland, and came to Canada as a young man in 1910 to work at the Steel Mills in Sydney. He met and married Michalina and took up residence in Sydney to build a future for himself and his family.

Lena, as she was affectionately known, became involved in many activities of the community and in the Altar Society of St. Mary's Church, where she was a tireless worker and canvasser to help in the promotion of the affairs of the Society.

Joseph was part-time Janitor for the Church and was always on call to assist our beloved Pastor, Rev. Fr. Leo O'Connell, in the countless things that needed attention at the Glebe and the Church. He was a member of the St. Michael's Benefit Society and a life-long member of St. Mary's Church.

This union of Joseph and Michalina in marriage was blessed with the following children: John, Michael, Stanley, Edward, Walter, Mary and Josephine (twins).

The extended family reads as follows: John and Stella (Mroz) Paruch - family: John, Richard, Kenneth, Allan; Michael and Mary (Burke) Paruch - family: Robert, Margaret Clare, Mary Carmel; Stanley and Stella (Breski)

Paruch - family: Judith, Charlotte, Carol and Patricia; Edward and Margaret (MacDonald) Paruch - family: Raymond, Bernard, Lawrence, Paul, Kathleen, Joanne; Charles and Mary (Paruch) Enderle, family: Jocelyn, Allison, Paul and Gregory; Anthony and Josephine (Paruch) Shirola, family: Valerie and Stephen.



*Pictured in the above photo are Joseph and Michalina (Pizalski) Paruch on their wedding day. They were married on August 12, 1912, at Glace Bay, N.S.*



*Wedding of Mary Paruch and Charles Enderle.  
Front from left: Joseph Paruch, Mary, Charles and Michalina Paruch. Center: Mrs. Edward Paruch, Mrs. John K. Paruch, John K. (d.), Josephine Shirola and Mrs. Stanley Paruch. Back: Walter, Edward, Michael (d.) and Stanley.*



## PIONEERS: PETER AND LUDWIKA TYNSKI

Peter and Ludwika Tynski were born and married in Wolczuchy, Grodek Jagiellonski, Poland. In 1905, Mr. Tynski came to Sydney, N.S. seeking employment at the booming Sydney Steel Plant. He worked in various departments and finally chose to labor at the Blast Furnace Boiler Dept.

He returned to Poland to visit his family on three occasions. Rumours of an impending war prompted him to move his family in 1913.

He brought up a family of ten. Frances (married Peter Durkacz), Catherine (married Bill Peltz), Joseph (deceased), Stanley (married Helen Wojcik), Mary (married Joseph Wojcik), Frank (deceased), John (married Nellie Nowak), Anthony (married Sophie Pruski), Annie (married James Redmond), Peter (married Elsie Tracey).

The family settled in Whitney Pier in the area commonly referred to as the "KOLONIA". Most residents maintained gardens, growing various vegetables. The Tynski garden abounded with a multiplicity of beautiful flowers which was the envy of the community. Mr. Tynski, though primarily a steelworker, was also a part-time gardener. Numerous professional people in Sydney's residential area sought his services.

In 1982 the Tynski progeny held a family reunion where upwards of a hundred assembled for a grand celebration. This event coincided with the Nova Scotia Home Coming Festival.

Peter Tynski (Sr.) died on April 24, 1957, age 79. Ludwika died on June 9, 1943, age 65.



Mrs. and Mr. Peter Tynski with, from left: Frances, Catherine, Stanley, John on mother's lap and Mary, seated.





## PIONEERS: ANTONI AND JULIA NOWAK

Antoni Nowak was born in Jezierzany, Galicia on June 13th, 1885. He was one of two children. In his youth he searched for work in Germany and surrounding countries. He left his homeland around 1908 for the United States in search of one of his relatives where he was informed that the relative had passed away. After some time he left the U.S. and made his way on foot to Canada and eventually came to Sydney. Here he found employment at the steel plant.

Julia Miecznik was born in Rodatycze, Grodek Jagiellonski on July 14, 1902. She was the sixth of seven children, having 2 brothers and 4 sisters. She left Poland on April 24, 1929 from the port of Gdansk on the liner D.D. Nieuw-Amsterdam arriving at the port of Halifax on the morning of May 8, 1929. She was married to Antoni Nowak on June 19, 1929 in St. Mary's Polish Church by Reverend Leo O'Connell.



Wedding picture of Antoni and Julia Nowak.

**HOLLAND-AMERICA LINE**

S.S. ROTTERDAM.

**THIRD CLASS BILL OF FARE**  
S. S. "NIEUW AMSTERDAM" MAY 1st 1929

**BREAKFAST**  
Fresh Fruit  
Oatmeal with Milk  
Boiled or Fried Eggs with Bacon  
Bread and Butter  
Cheese Jam  
Coffee Tea

**LUNCHEON**  
Rice Soup  
Chopped Steak Sauté Potatoes  
Cold Meat Pickles  
Cheese Jam  
Cake  
Bread and Butter  
Coffee

**DINNER**  
Cream Derby  
Roast Round of Beef with Gravy  
Savoy Cabbage in Cream Boiled Potatoes  
Macaroni with Ham  
Bread and Butter  
Ice Cream  
Cake  
Coffee

4 P.M. Tea, Biscuits

Ocean liner that carried Julia Miecznik to Canada. Menu included.

Mr. Nowak worked for the Dominion Iron and Steel Corporation for approximately 40 years before retiring in 1949 due to illness. He was a member of St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society. He died on February 14, 1956. Julia Nowak died on November 11, 1983.

They had four daughters: Nellie married John Tynski. They have 7 children. Mary married Ray Ryan. They have 6 children. Blanche (Bronia) married John Markotich. They have 4 children. Janet (Jancia) married Bernie LaRusic. They have 4 children.

To this date, there are 21 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Although Julia and Antoni have passed on, their love and devotion to family, church and homeland lives in their children and their progeny. These strong ties were strengthened by a visit to Poland in 1985 by their children and 2 of their grandchildren.

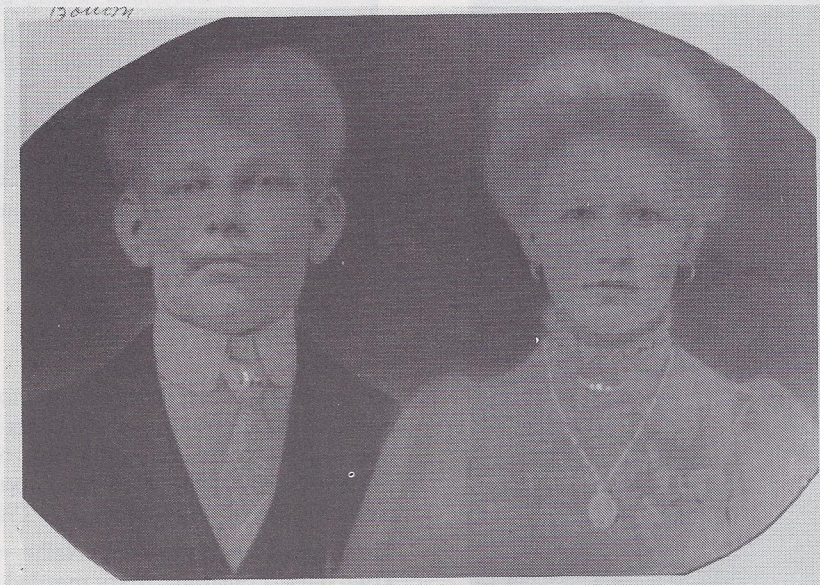


## PIONEERS: JACOB AND MARIA ORKISZ



Jacob Orkisz and Maria Ulczak were married in Poland in 1886. They had two daughters: Josephine (Pierzynowski) and Sophie (Goc) and one son Teofil. In the year 1909 they left for Canada on the ship "Corsican" to look for a better way of life. They settled in Sydney where Jacob was hired on at the Steel Plant.

Mr. and Mrs. Orkisz were among the pioneers of St. Mary's Polish Parish and were faithful and active members. Mrs. Orkisz was a trained mid-wife and delivered many babies in Sydney and surrounding areas. She travelled by horse and buggy, and very often was accompanied by her daughter Josephine. She died on April 11, 1927, and Mr. Orkisz on April 25, 1929.



Joseph Pierzynowski and Josephine Orkisz were married in Poland in 1903. The following year Joseph left for Canada to look for work. He arrived in Sydney and was hired on at the Steel Plant. In 1905 his wife and son Stephen joined him. They were active in the Polish community. Joseph helped to form St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society. He, along with his young son Stephen, helped with the building of St. Mary's Polish Church, where he was a faithful parishioner until his death August 6, 1937.

Mrs. Pierzynowski was an active member of the Altar Society and served on the executive for a number of years. She died July 4, 1942. They had six sons: Stephen, Michael, Henry, Walter, Teofil and Joseph; and four daughters: Mary (Mrs. Mario Tonellato), Victoria (Mrs. Frank Barrington), Anne (Mrs. Donald J. MacDonald) and Rose (Mrs. Harry Hodgson). Surviving also are thirty-two grandchildren, fifty-two great grandchildren, and several great great grandchildren.



# STEFAN AND MARIA WROBLEWSKI AND FAMILY



*Pictured are Mr. and Mrs. Stefan Wroblewski who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with Mass at St. Mary's Polish Church, followed by a reception at their home.*

Stefan Wroblewski was born in Grodek Jagiellonski, Lwow, in the village of Wolczuchy. Maria Bedryj was born in Grodek Jagiellonski, Lwow, in the village of Doliniany. Stefan and Maria were married on February 4, 1912, after he returned from serving three years in the Austrian Army with the rank of Sergeant. In 1914, Stefan left on the ship "Megantic" to start a new life in Canada. The ship landed in Halifax where he travelled on by train to Sydney.



After living here for a short time, he left for Ontario to join relatives and look for employment. Two years later he returned to Sydney where his wife joined him. He was hired on at the steel plant and here they settled.

They were faithful parishioners of St. Mary's Polish Parish. Mrs. Wroblewski died on September 2, 1963, and Mr. Wroblewski on March 18, 1975. Surviving them are two daughters: Mary, married to Teofil Pierrynowski and Agnes, married to Peter Stephenson, along with granddaughters Maria (Pierrynowski) Morrison and Wanda Pierrynowski.

Pictured are Mary Pierrynowski and Agnes Stephenson, daughters of Stefan and Maria Wróblewski. Mary and Agnes were involved in parish and cultural activities from childhood. They took part in choral singing, the old Polish tradition carolling, and Polish plays. These plays were directed by Mr. Józef Graban, professor of Polish classes, and Mr. Józef Miecznik. Both girls were among the last few students attending Polish school.

Mary directed a junior church choir for a number of years. This choir group also had a repertoire of Polish folk songs, and represented the parish at various cultural functions. A member of the Altar Society since 1945, she served as president for several years, as well as holding other offices on the executive. Agnes, a member of the Altar Society since 1948, is the current president and has been for the past five years.

Having been brought up in a home where every Polish tradition was practiced, we still carry on in the same manner, thanking God for our blessings as we share the "oplatek" at Wigilia, and our świecone jajko Easter morning.

On the left are shown the two daughters of Mary and Teofil Pierrynowski. Maria attended UCCB and has a Medical Secretary Diploma from C.B. Business College. Wanda received a BACS Degree from UCCB and a B.Ed. from St. F.X. University.



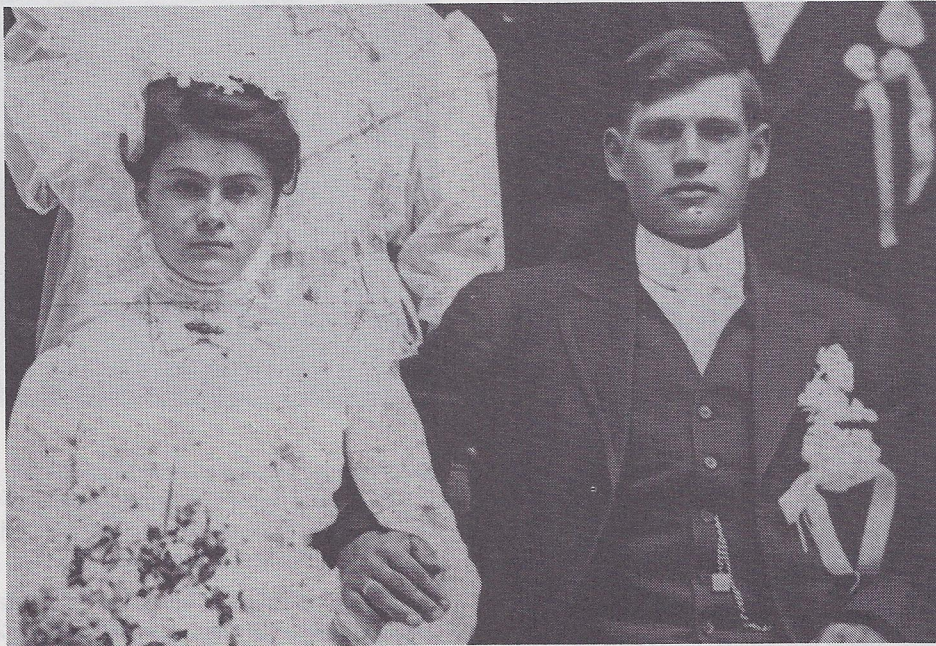
Wanda



Maria



## PIONEERS: THE ARDELLI FAMILY OF SWAN STREET



*Wedding photo of Michael and Anna (Piskorz) Ardelli.*

Michael Ardelli arrived in Sydney one day in 1908 with four friends all from the village of Rodatycz in Poland.

On June 7, 1910, Michael married Anna Piskorz at Holy Redeemer Church, not long after she arrived from Poland. Attendants for the wedding were: John and Marie (sister of the bride) Mroz, John and Stella Chrobak (cousins), and Roman and Caroline Siwak (great friends).

Michael spent the next forty-two years as a steelworker. For most of that time he was a ladle-liner constantly inhaling brick dust which eventually caused silicosis in his lungs and took his life at the age of 64.

During those years, Michael and Anna became lifelong members of St. Mary's Polish Church. They built a home on Swan Street and raised a large family of twelve children. The six boys and six girls were named Peter, Emilia, Victor, Anne, Zigmund, Mary, Agnes, Elizabeth, Michael, John, Dorothy and Charles.

The deceased family members are: Zigmund, 1925, age 2; Mother Anna, 1947, age 54; Father Michael, 1953, age 64; son Victor, 1977, age 60; daughter Anne (MacDonald), 1978, age 59; son Peter, 1982, age 71.

The living family members are Emilia Ardelli, Sydney, N.S.; Mary (Ardelli) Scott, Hamilton, Ont.; Agnes (Ardelli) Boucher, Hamilton, Ont.; Elsie (Ardelli) Quinn, Truro, N.S.; Michael Ardelli, London, Ont.; John Ardelli, Hamilton, Ont.; Dorothy (Ardelli) Roseluk, Coxheath, N.S.; Charles Ardelli, Sydney, N.S.

The descendants of Michael and Anna number 24 grandchildren, a large number of great-grandchildren, several great-great-grandchildren, and still counting!

Michael and Anna Ardelli will always be remembered as part of those early Polish pioneers who thought so much of their Religion and Polish culture that some of them worked hard and long hours to build St. Mary's Church before building their own homes.

In this 75th year of our Church, during our Anniversary celebrations, let us reflect now and then on pioneers like Michael and Anna who did their part to help make this year possible.





## GEORGE AND MARIA CHOLOCK AND FAMILY

George Cholock was born in Bukovina, Romania in 1878. He was the son of John and Marguerite (Ifetodi) Cholock. Maria Sporney was born in Poland in 1890. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Sporney.

Both immigrated to Canada and went to Sydney Mines. They were married at Immaculate Conception Church in Sydney Mines.

George and Maria were blessed with ten children. Two died in infancy. John, Stephanie, Michael, Dan, Sam and Peter are deceased. Joseph lives in Ottawa. Anne, Mrs. Colin MacNeil, resides in Sydney.

George Cholock died in 1935 at the age of 57. Marie married Paul Kancier and moved to Sydney in 1937. She was a faithful member of St. Mary's Polish Church. She died in 1942.

The Cholock family and spouses are:

John married Blanche Mills and had eleven children.

Michael married Dorothy Boutilier and had one child.

Dan married Stella Blazey and had two daughters.

Sam married Ann MacLellan and had two boys and two girls.

Peter married Jenny Stanley and had one child.

Joseph married Effie French and they have one child.

Anne married Colin MacNeil and they have four daughters.



Wedding picture of George and Maria Cholock.



Colin and Anne (Cholock) MacNeil and family. Sister M. Clare, Colin, Mary, Coleen (Mrs. Harold Shaheen). Seated: Linda and Anne.



Cholock family, from left: Stephanie, Sam, Mother, Dan, John (seated). Father, Michael, all deceased. Joe in insert. Peter on page 39.



## PIONEERS: WALENTY AND MARIA WOJICK

Walenty Wojick was born in Nieszkowice Wielkie, Poland, in 1872. He was a son of Franciszek and Margaritha (Machlik) Wojick. He married Maria Trojan who lived in a nearby village. They left Poland in 1904 to make their home in Sydney. Walenty worked in the Open Hearth Dept. of the Steel Plant. His sister, Rosalia (Kokoska), came to Sydney in 1907.

Walenty and Maria originally lived on Ferris St. Then they bought the Bonneyview Hotel on Brow St. This building had been used by visiting steel company officials. When the Polish leaders wished to discuss plans for building a hall and later a church, they met at the Wojick home. He was one of the seven pioneers who met in May, 1913 to finalize plans for St. Mary's Church. He was a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society from its founding in 1909 until his death in 1937.

Maria was a member of the Altar Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej and with other members maintained the church linens. She died in 1947. They had a family of five children: Mary, Joe, Frank, Walter and Helen (Tynski), the only surviving member.

Helen married Stanley Tynski on February 10, 1931, at St. Mary's Church. She was a member of St. Mary's Altar Society and also St. Cecelia's Polish Choir. Stanley was a warden of St. Mary's for years. With Joe Wojick, Helen's brother, he carried out door to door collections for the parish as well as doing Church and Glebe maintenance. He assisted in the building of St. Michael's Hall, served on the executive and was a member until his death on March 24, 1963.

Helen and Stanley had a family of 12 children. Mary and Joseph died in infancy. Stanley Jr. married Donna

Johnson; Sr. Rosaline, Congregation of St. Martha; Raymond married Anne MacKeen; Florie married Fred Currie; Robert married Sheila McCarron; Frances (Cookie d.) married Greg Nearing; Eddy married Doreen Trites; Michael married Lynne MacNeil; Helen married Greg Gouthro; Raylene married Bob MacAskill. There are 27 grandchildren.



*Walenty and Maria Wojick.*



*Rear from left: Ray, Helen, Stanley, Raylene and Stash.  
Front: Helen, Michael, Eddie, Frances, Florie and Robert.  
On piano, picture of Sr. Rosaline at graduation (1951).*



# STEPHEN AND MARGUERITE PIERRYNOWSKI



40th Wedding Anniversary. Rudy, Mother, Father, Vicki and Henry, May 2, 1971.

Stephen, eldest son of Joseph and Josephine Pierrynowski, was born in Brzeszczach, Oswiecim, Poland on August 12, 1904. He came to Sydney in 1905 with his mother to join his father. During the building of St. Mary's Church, Stephen served as a waterboy, and received a "Gold Shovel" at St. Mary's 50th Anniversary.

Stephen married Marguerite Podetz of Sydney Mines on May 2, 1931 in St. Mary's Polish Church. Their three children live in Sydney. Henry married Ann Dalesandro (d.). Rudolph married Mildred MacInnis. Victoria married Wilfred Aucoin (d.). Steve worked at the Steel Plant from 1918 to his retirement in August 1969. He died September 23, 1972. Mrs. Pierrynowski resides with daughter Vicki.

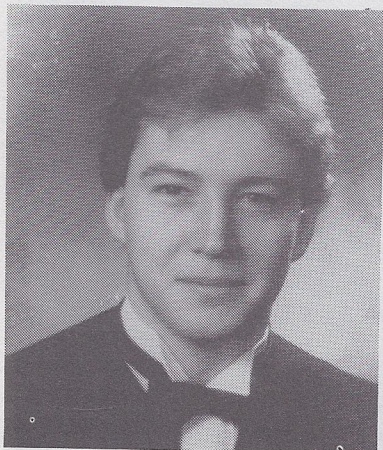
Rudy Pierrynowski was born November 29, 1933. He married Millie, daughter of the late John E. and Catherine (MacDonald) MacInnis, Glace Bay, in St. Anthony's Church on November 19, 1957. They reside at Howie



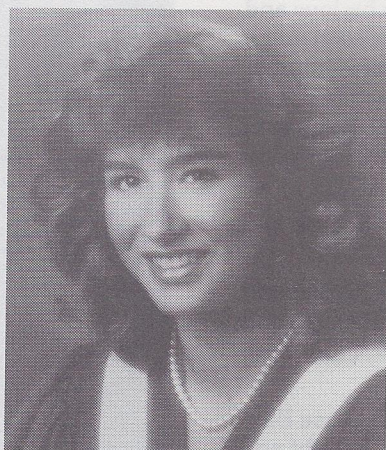
Rudy and Millie.

Centre. Rudy is an active member of St. Michael's Society, and Millie is a member of St. Mary's Altar Society.

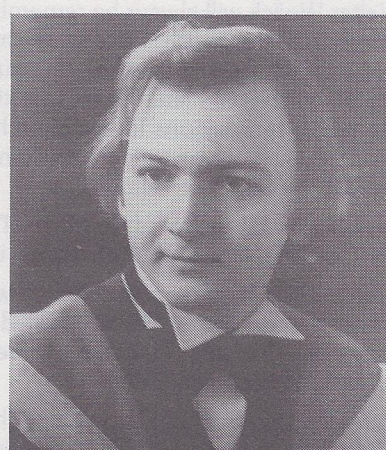
They were blessed with three children. Richard is a chemical engineer in New Brunswick. Keith is a mechanical technologist in Halifax. Lorna Lynn is completing a B.Sc. in Pharmacy at Dalhousie. Richard and Keith are former altar boys and Lorna was in St. Mary's Choir.



Keith.



Lorna Lynn.



Richard.



## WALTER AND MARGARET WOJICK AND FAMILY



*Wedding of Walter and Margaret.*

Walter Wojick was the youngest in the family of Walenty and Mary (Trojan) Wojick. The Polish leaders sometimes met in their home to discuss plans for their parish. Walter remained in the family home and raised his own family there.

Walter and Margaret (Lawrence) were married in St. Mary's Polish Church, January 11, 1939, by Rev. M.L. O'Connell. Margaret joined with Walter in becoming a lifelong member of St. Mary's. She is still a very active member of St. Mary's Altar Society.

Walter Wojick will always be remembered for his love and devotion to the parish. Following a tradition passed down by his father, he dedicated many hours of work to improving St. Michael's Hall. He was particularly active during the major renovations to the church and glebe house in the 1970's. Work he truly loved doing with and for his extended family of St. Mary's.

Walter was a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society and St. Cecelia's Choir until his death in 1980.

Walter and Margaret were blessed with four children and eleven grandchildren. Walter married Shirley (Penney) and they live in Sydney. They have three children, Mary Ellen (Shea), Michelle and Walter.

June married Sheldon Brown and they live in Glace Bay. Their four children are Janet, Shelley-Lynn, Dwight and Shawn.

Janet is married to Fred Hawthorne of St. Stephen, N.B. and have a daughter, Sherri.

Evelyn married Frank Cook from New Waterford. They live in Coxheath and have three children, Matthew, Michael and Laura.

The members of the Wojick family are very thankful for all those who have gone before us. Their hard work and strong faith have been their gifts to us. May God continue to bless us all.



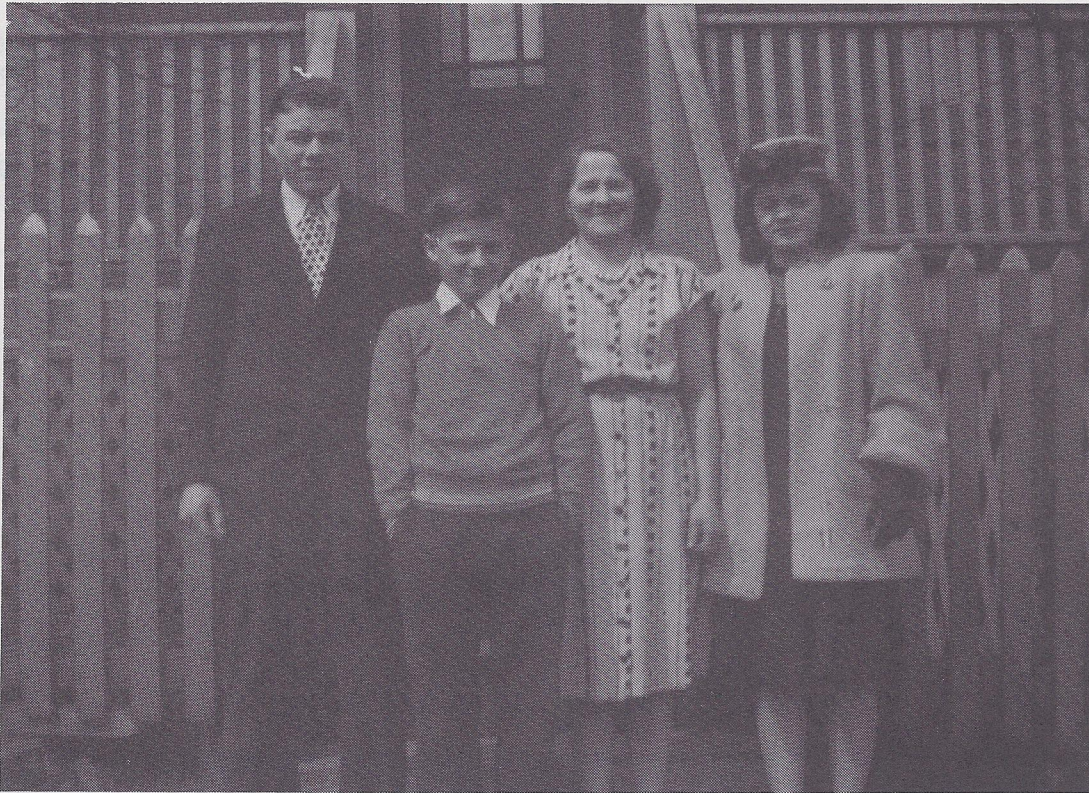
*WOJICK FAMILY - Seated: Walter and Margaret.  
Standing: Fred Hawthorne, Janet W., Walter W., Shirley,  
June W., Sheldon Brown, Evelyn W. and Fred Cook.*



*Walter and Mother.*



## WALTER AND KAROLINE SIEPIERSKI AND FAMILY



*Chester, Kazimer, Mrs. Siepierski and Mary.*

Karoline Kasprzyk was born in Rzeszow, Poland in 1906. Walter Siepierski was born in Poland in 1902. They were married in Poland in 1925. Lured by reports of a good life in Canada, Karoline came to Sydney on New Years Day in 1926. Walter arrived in 1927.

Karoline had two sisters in Sydney. Mary, Mrs. Joseph Paruch and Helen, Mrs. Walter Rozicki. Two brothers, Joe and Peter and two sisters, Sophie and Stella remained in Poland. Sophie is still living and Karoline corresponds with her and with nieces and nephews.

Karoline and Walter had three children all living in Sydney. Mary married Henry Poswaita and their four children are Christine, Wanda, Henry and Michael. Chester married Mona Jabalee from North Sydney.

Kazimer married Louise Dawe, Sydney, and they have two boys Gary and Stephen. Karoline has two grandsons in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Henry and Gary.

Walter worked in the Steel Plant for some years. After a long illness he died in June 1941 at age 39. Karoline worked in the bar mill of the Steel Plant from 1942 for nearly three years when women were hired to replace men in the services.

Chester was married to Mona Jabalee on November 19, 1952 at St. Mary's Polish Church by Father O'Connell. Chester has been a member of St. Michael's Benefit Society for 38 years. He was active in the renovation of St. Mary's Church, and he loves his Polish Church and culture. He worked at the Steel Plant since he was fifteen.

Mona is a member of St. Mary's Altar Society and has been president for two years.

Chester and Mona had six children: Carol, Janice, Diane, Nancy, Michael and one child who died in infancy.

Karoline Siepierski has eleven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Chester has one grandson, Peter David Siepierski.





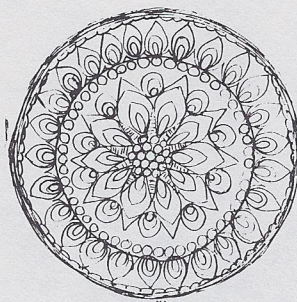
## PIONEERS: JOHN AND CATHERINE ARDELLI

When John Ardelli first came to Canada from Wolczuchy, Poland, he stayed in Winnipeg with relatives. After a few years he returned to Poland. In 1912 he arrived in Sydney and found work at the Steel Plant.

War broke out and correspondence and travel from his part of Poland was stopped. His wife Catherine (Petri) and sons John, Kazimer, and Marian could not be brought to

Canada. In 1929 permission was given, so Mrs. Ardelli and son Marian did arrive in Sydney. The older boys visited Canada much later, but returned to Poland to their families. John was a sergeant in both World Wars.

John and Catherine were lifelong supporters of St. Mary's Polish Church. Catherine died in 1950 and John died in 1952.



WEDDING OF MARIAN AND JULIA ARDELLI



*Rear from left: John Rizok, Frances Blazey, Tony Gniewek, Helen Gniewek (MacIntyre) and daughter Joan, Elsie Gniewek (Sheppard) and Mike Ardelli Sr.  
Center: Mike Hawrylak, Margaret Hawrylak, John Ardelli, Catherine Ardelli, Lawrence (Wawrzyniec) Gniewek and Mrs. Mike Ardelli.*

*Front: Walter Plewa, Helen Kokoska (Michalik), Marian Ardelli, Julia (Gniewek) Ardelli, Victor Ardelli, Mary Gniewek (Szczepanik) and Veronica Wludyka (O'Brien). Children are Teresa Gniewek (Siller) and Dominic Gniewek. One family member is absent. Mrs. Gniewek (Victoria) died December 21, 1930 at age 44.*



## PIONEERS: ELIAS AND THERESA SCHELLA (SZELA)

Elias Schella (Szela) from Sanok, Poland, and Theresa Kulik of Lisko, were married in Poland. Elias came to Sydney in 1901. Theresa arrived in 1902 with their two girls Josephine and Fannie. They were blessed with five more children.

Josephine married John Krszwda and had eight sons. Fannie married Dan Madinsky and had four children. Mary married Rudolph Hanusiak and had nine children. John married Annie Baryluk and have five children. Walter married Viola Dupreau and had three children. Frank married Barbara Synishin and had four children. Nellie married Ernest Mrazek and had four children.

Elias was a steelworker and coal hauler. His horse and wagon were used to excavate the church basement. He owned two of the four lots of land bought for St. Mary's Church. His family had a garden, cow, and fowl. They were lifelong members of St. Mary's Church. Elias died October 3, 1930 at age 53. Theresa died August 6, 1969 at age 97.



## PIONEERS: JOHN AND JOSEPHINE BARYLUK

John Baryluk was born in June, 1880, in Horodnica, Poland. He served in the Polish army. In 1910 he came to Sydney and became a steelworker.

Josephine Wasylsyn was born in Galicia, Austria, on January 21, 1892. She arrived November 22, 1911.

John and Josephine were married in Sydney at Holy Redeemer Church. Besides two children who died in infancy, they were blessed with six more. There are 24 grandchildren.

Joseph married Harriet Morris. Mary married Paul Lahanky, (both d.). Peter married Mary Kiec, (both d.). Tony married Frances Pino. Annie married John Schella. Paul married Marea Isabel Taylor.

John and Josephine were lifelong members of St. Mary's Polish Church. John died June 8, 1954, and Josephine died September 22, 1966.



*Theresa and Elias with, rear from left: Fanny, John and Mary. Front: Nellie, Walter and Frank. Josephine was away.*



*Josephine and John Baryluk.*



## MARIAN AND JULIA (GNIEWEK) ARDELLI

Marian Ardelli came to Sydney from Wolczechy, Poland in 1929 at age 17. He met Julia Gniewek of Sydney in St. Cecelia's Choir in St. Mary's Church. On August 25, 1936, they were married by Father O'Connell at St. Mary's Polish Church. Their wedding party was held at the old St. Michael's Hall on Wesley St.

Marian served as a Warden of the church for many years. He held the presidency and other executive positions in St. Michael's Benefit Society, and is now a senior member. He retired from the Steel Plant in November 1975. Julia has been an active member of the Altar Society for many years. Both were faithful to the Church Choir.

They were blessed with three children. Leona Whitburn lives in Calgary. Gregory is in Sydney and Stanley is in Vancouver. The five grandchildren are Julianne, Robert, Carolyn and Charles Whitburn and Michael Ardelli.

Julia and Marian celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on August 25, 1986. They enjoyed a month long trip to the West including Calgary and parts of Nevada and California as a gift from their children. A special event was a garden party hosted by daughter Leona, and attended by relatives and friends.



*Marian and Julia, 50th wedding anniversary.*

## JOHN AND ANNIE (BARYLUK) SCHELLA

John was born April 30, 1910. Annie was born January 30, 1922. They were married on June 1, 1938, in St. Mary's Church by Father O'Connell. Their marriage was blessed with five children.

John J. (dec.), married Elaine Robertson. Walter married Bernadette MacNeil and has three sons. Donna married

Jack Dalrymple and has one boy. Robert married Catherine MacDonald and has one boy, two girls. Frank married Norma MacKinnon and has one boy, one girl.

Annie is a member of St. Cecelia's Choir and of the Altar Society for years. John worked at the Steel Plant for 49 years, and retired May 1, 1975. He died November 3, 1987.



*Family group, June 1980, at Robert's wedding shows Donna, Walter, parents Annie and John, Frank and Robert. Missing is John J. (dec.).*



# JOSEPH AND MARIA PARUCH

Joseph and Maria (Kasprzyk) Paruch were both born in the village of Skrzyszowice in the District of Ropczyce in Poland where they were also married in 1919.

Joseph came to Sydney February 5, 1923, and when he earned enough money, he sent for his wife Maria and their two children who arrived November 16, 1923.

Joseph worked in the Sydney Steel Plant in different departments until he retired in 1961. Joseph and Maria celebrated their 50th anniversary February 4, 1969. They had six children: Stella (Mrs. Joseph Sobol), Minnie (Mrs. Richard Shelly), Jennie (Mrs. John Koroszi), Teddy (married Ruby Lutz), Adam (married Doreen MacKinnon) and Wanda (Mrs. John Huk).

Adam passed away in 1983 and Stella passed away in 1988. Joseph was an active member of St. Mary's Polish Church and Parish Council. He was also active in St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society where he held several offices.

Maria was involved in the church's Altar Society where she also held several offices. In 1971 Joseph was awarded a medal by the Polish Free Government in London, England for his services in the Polish Army in World War I.



MARIA  
1899 - 1975

JOSPEH  
1893 - 1975



Mr. Stefan Gawlik representing the Polish Embassy in London, England, pins the award medal on Joseph Paruch.

*Rzeczpospolita Polska*

PREZES RADY MINISTRÓW

STWIERDZA  
ŻE  
PREZYDENT RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ

NADAŁ

Tytuł JÓ-ńcowi PARUCH

SREBRNY KRZYŻ ZASŁUGI

PO RAZ pierwszy

Za zasługi dla Sprawy Polakcji.

PREZES RADY MINISTRÓW

LONDYN, dnia 11 listopada 1971 r.



## PIONEERS: WALTER AND MARGARET RZEPA



*Margaret and Walter Rzepa.*

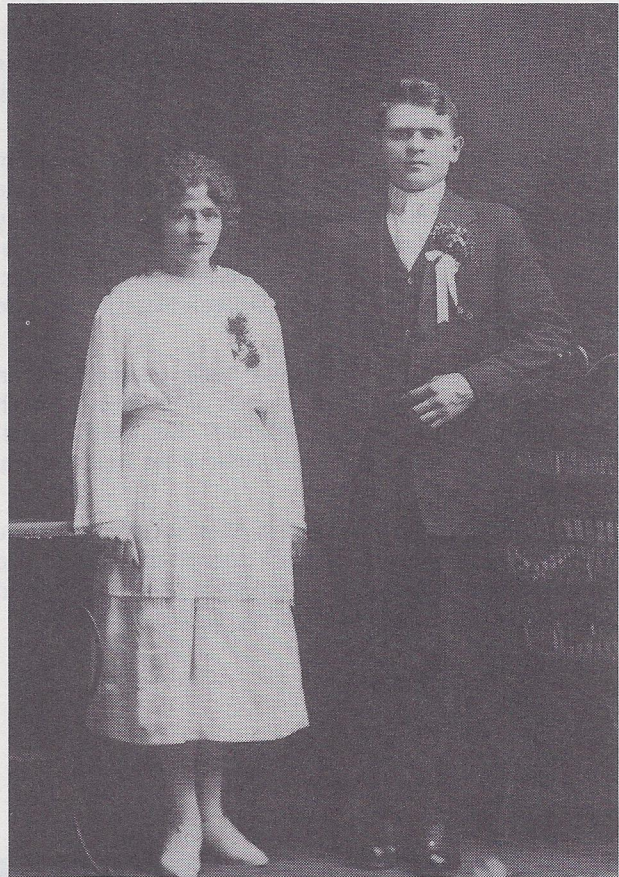
Walter Rzepa was born in Jabowsko, Poland in July, 1870. He came to Sydney in 1901. His wife Margaret Wrobel was born in Lysa Guro, Poland, on June 14, 1876. In 1903 Walter brought his wife and their two children, Stanley and Stella to Sydney. They came to live on Ferris St. where their youngest child, Mary, was born and still resides in the family home.

Walter was a member of St. Michael's Society, and was employed at the Steel Plant. He became ill and died April 4, 1929. Margaret was a member of the Society of Matki Boskiej Saletynskiej. She died on October 10, 1940.

Their son Stanley is married to Louise Strickek and they have four children: Rudy (dec.), Bernie, Stanley, and Marjorie (Johnson). Stella was married to George Rizok (dec.) and they had four children: Mary (Walsh), Ontario, Joe (dec.), Rose (Jessome) (dec.), and Jeni (Reeves), Sydney. Mary married Joseph P. Dziubek.



*Dziubek family - rear: Walter, Joseph Sr., Stan and Jeni.  
Front: Mother, Mary, Rita and Joseph.*



*Joseph and Mary Dziubek, 1923.*

### **Joseph P. and Mary Dziubek and Family**

Joseph Dziubek arrived in Sydney in 1912 with his friend Maciej Adamus. They lived with Michael and Frances (Adamus) Paruch on Ferris Street.

Joseph Dziubek and Mary Rzepa were married at St. Mary's Church on October 3, 1923 by Rev. James Kiely. Joe worked at the Steel Plant and retired after 46 years of service in 1956. He belonged to St. Michael's Society and was the recipient of a "Gold Shovel" for his part in building St. Mary's Church. Mary was a member of the Altar Society. Joe died at age 88 on December 24, 1982.

Joe and Mary Dziubek had six children: Walter and wife Lillian (Grant) live in Franklin, Mass., and have one child Robert. Stan lives at home. Jeni is married to Alf Jackson, Ithaca, N.Y., and their son is Ronald. Rita is Mrs. Vince MacDonald. They have a daughter Mary Paula and grandson Vincent Joseph. Mary and husband Hugh McMullin have three children: Raymond, Douglas (d.) and Vincent. Joseph and wife Carol (Stack), Sydney have three children: JoAnne, Ted and Peter.



# JOHN AND NEDELJKA VULETICH

John Vuletich came from Croatia, Yugoslavia, to Canada in 1928. He arrived in Sydney in 1936 and attended St. Mary's Polish Church.

Nedeljka (Neda) Kriste arrived in Sydney from Yugoslavia in 1956. Soon after, John and Neda were married in St. Mary's Church by Rev. M.L. O'Connell in April 1956. They were blessed with two children, Mary Ann and John Jr.

John worked at the Steel Plant for 29 years and retired in 1965. Neda regularly contributes to the fund raising activities of St. Mary's Altar Society. Mary Ann was a member of the St. Cecelia's Choir for a few years. John Jr. served as an altar boy when he was young.

The Vuletich family is proud to belong to St. Mary's Polish Church.

## Polish Business People

**Michael Ratushny** - store on corner of Prince and Townsend, later a store at Sydney River.

**Michael Paruch** - store on Victoria Road, then on Henry St.

**Stanley Kowalczyk** - grocery store on Victoria Rd.

**Stanley Gwozdz** - store on corner of Victoria Rd. and Swan St.

**Mary Orkish** - store on Lingan Rd.

**Peter & Julia (Ardelli) Mroz** - dairy store Henry St.

**Ernest Mrazek** - radio sales and repair shop

**Walenty Kokoszka** - shoemaker shop on Townsend St.

**Bernie Kokoszka** - Bernie's Bakery

**Joe Marusiak** - made kielbasa and candy, Joe's Deli

**John Krszwda** - Purity Bakery

**Tony Kolonko** - store on Fisher St.

**Mike Kolonko** - store at the Subway

**Peter Azarkiewicz** - had a sausage smoke house

**Charles Ardelli** - proprietor hardware store

**Charles Malinowski** - grandfather clock maker

**John Tynski** - commercial artist

**Mrs. Catherine Wludyka** - dressmaker and designer

**Walenty Piech** - had a forge on Jamieson St.

**Joseph Bereta** - had a forge

**Mrs. Stella Wiver** - store on corner of Henry & Fisher

**Mrs. Anna Borek** - seamstress

**Alfred Stanwick** - store on Charlotte St., then St. Peter's Rd.

**Xavier Mosiezewski** - forge on Frederick St.

**Frank Mosiezewski** - forge on Victoria Rd.

**Walter Krszwda** - shoemaker (made shoes) Victoria Rd. - had lunch room on Victoria Rd., Charlotte St.

**Michael Ardelli** - chimney builder

## Heritage Property

St. Mary's Polish Church was registered as a Provincial Heritage Property in 1984, under the Heritage Act of Nova Scotia. This recognition was given because of St. Mary's role in preserving the language, customs, and traditions of the people's native land, Poland.

## Polish Language Classes

Professor Jozef Graban taught reading and writing in Polish while he was at St. Mary's from 1938 to 1942. When he left interest declined.

In the 1970's Walter Ryba and others started a Polish Cultural Society. Aided by the Dept. of the Secretary of State, the Society was able, among other projects, to have Polish taught by Mr. and Mrs. Gawlik. At first classes were taught in St. Michael's Hall. Mary Pierrynowski taught children. In 1974 classes were offered through Xavier Junior College, and Mr. Gawlik taught adults for one winter. Then classes were continued in the Hall that year. When the Gawlick family moved away interest declined.

In 1987 interest was again revived and Polish classes started in the Church Hall with a large enrolment on three levels. The teachers were Anna Fuginski, who has an M.A. Degree from a Krakow University; Mary Pierrynowski, who is also a director of the Singers and Dancers; and Janina (Lubkowska) MacCormack who came from Poland in 1976. She married Colin MacCormack in 1985. She is a member of the Altar Society, and has been a reader at Mass and a member of the Choir.

In 1988 three classes were held. Mr. George Klinowski taught two adult groups, and Lucia Lozowski taught the children. Lucia came from Poland in 1965 with her husband Henry, daughter Ursula and son Gregory. Besides teaching Polish she has been a reader at Mass and attended the Choir and Altar Society.

George Klinowski was born in Poland where he married Christina Pietruszka in 1971. They have one child, Christopher. George and family came to Sydney in 1984 and he is employed as a project engineer at the Cape Breton Coal Research Laboratory.



Three parishioners who, for many years, have helped to look after repairs, renovations and polishing in and around the church. From left: Michael Ardelli, Eugene (Jeep) Deturbide and Thomas Chmiel.





St. Michael's Day Banquet in the old St. Michael's Hall, about 1949.





# PARISH PICNICS OF LONG AGO



1934



1935



1935



1938



No date



## POLISH IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

Between the years 1901 and 1939, the chief reason for migration from Poland to Canada was economic. Polish lands contained fertile soil and rich mineral deposits that could have been the basis of a land of plenty. However, the three occupying powers delayed the development of these resources.

Overpopulation of the country area caused a scarcity of land and employment for willing farm workers. In the towns and cities where many went in search of work, the lack of industry prevented them from making a living. The difficult economic conditions forced a great migration of Polish people from their native land.

Most of the early Polish immigrants to Canada were peasants and uneducated.

Later, members of other groups such as workmen, artisans, merchants and ex-service men accompanied the

pre-dominant peasants. A large percentage of these newcomers had a background of some education.

The third and last wave of Polish immigrants to Canada brought in political refugees, displaced persons, and a large number of well educated professionals such as doctors, teachers, lawyers, university students, artists and engineers.

All had the same reasons for coming to Canada. They wanted to escape the insecurity of living under the rule of alien powers. They also expected a better life in a new land where they could work and prosper in freedom and security, and raise their children far away from the threat of war.

Statistics Canada has estimated that approximately 129,000 Polish people immigrated to Canada from the late nineteenth century until the year 1961.

## POLISH IMMIGRATION TO SYDNEY

Sydney acquired a percentage of all the different groups of Polish people who arrived in Canada.

The beginning of the Polish community in Sydney dates back to 1901 with the arrival of the first group of Polish immigrants, numbering four families. During the next few years a slow trickle of new immigrants added to the original group.

From 1906 to 1913 a heavy wave of immigration brought large numbers of Polish people from their beloved homeland. Many came from Galicia in Southern Poland during the years 1911 and 1912.

Not all of the Polish newcomers remained in Sydney. Many left after a short stay and moved on to Western Canada, to the United States, or back to Poland. Some moved to the mining districts close by. Those who remained soon found employment at the Dominion Iron and Steel Co., and related industries.

The movement of Polish immigrants into and away from Sydney was sometimes brisk. For instance, in July 1914 there were approximately four hundred eighty Polish people in Sydney. By September, only two months later, over one hundred had moved out and three hundred forty-six remained.

This group was comprised of about sixty-three families with two hundred and six adults and one hundred and forty children. Soon another influx occurred so that by September 1915 the total Polish population of Sydney had risen again to four hundred and ninety people.

Early settlers in Sydney informed relatives and friends living in Poland that the rapidly expanding area offered a certainty of work, prosperity, and freedom. Encouraged by these favorable reports, many more Polish people came to Sydney spurred on by the expectation of a bright future.

## POLISH SETTLERS IN SYDNEY

Most of the Polish immigrants who remained in Sydney settled in the Whitney Pier district. Some took up residence in the area near the Coke Ovens, while others occupied dwellings in the section near the Steel Mills.

Groups of low-rental company houses were provided by the Steel Company. Families that managed to become tenants in company houses felt fortunate, because they had more stability than those renting from private owners. They also enjoyed living among people of similar language and background.

The Company deducted rent money from the worker's pay which was provided in cash. At first the men worked twelve hour shifts and earned about \$1.40 a day. On one weekend they worked a twenty-four hour shift and the next weekend they had twenty-four hours off.

Along with the Polish settlers, there were people from the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Hospitality and comradeship prevailed and the different ethnic groups got along well together.

Often a small family would convert their rented home into a rooming house. They provided meals and beds for several boarders of different nationalities who paid about \$13.00 a month.

By frugal living the early settlers managed to save a little money from their low wages. In time they had sufficient to cover the expenses of a journey from Poland. They sent their savings to relatives who arrived as soon as possible and shared their accommodations.

Some men brought their families from Poland. Others were married in Sydney. Each family soon started a vegetable garden. Some also raised poultry. Several kept cows that provided fresh milk for themselves and other families.

Thus early Polish settlers supplemented their meager earnings and everyone worked for a living. There were no social services such as unemployment payments, welfare cheques, or free medical care. (Thanks to Angela D. Radzikowski's thesis, "History of Polish Community in Sydney" for information used here.)



## OPENING CEREMONIES OF ST. MARY'S 75th ANNIVERSARY

On January 1, 1988, the 75th anniversary of St. Mary's Polish Church was ushered in with joyous bell ringing. A procession entered the church from the lower level and Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Monsignor James MacLean.

On Sunday, January 3, a very good attendance of parishioners assembled in the church hall to inaugurate the anniversary year. Chairperson for this occasion was Mrs. Agnes Stephenson.

An interesting feature of the afternoon was a short skit performed by Ed Durkacz and Tom Chmiel relating events leading to the establishment of the Polish Church and the subsequent sod turning.

With this relaxed and spirited atmosphere chairperson Agnes Stephenson called on Father MacLean to propose a toast. Father responded with an appropriate prayer

relating to the anniversary theme "With Praise and Thanksgiving."

The choir, under the direction of Ursula Melski with musical accompaniment by Wandzia Pierrynowski rendered many of the season's carols with all present participating in a general song fest.

Of particular interest to all was the display of vintage photos of various events of the early days of the parish. Much discussion and exuberant reaction resulted when viewers delightfully recognized relatives and acquaintances. This display was the combined effort of Mrs. Jean Annette White, Gary Baker and Shauna MacKay. They were instrumental in gathering photos from various members within the parish. The two large panels will serve as a beautiful permanent display.

Another highlight of the afternoon was the establishment of 2 - \$500.00 Anniversary Scholarships to be awarded to graduating students. Only students in the parish are eligible for this award. This announcement by Father MacLean was enthusiastically applauded.

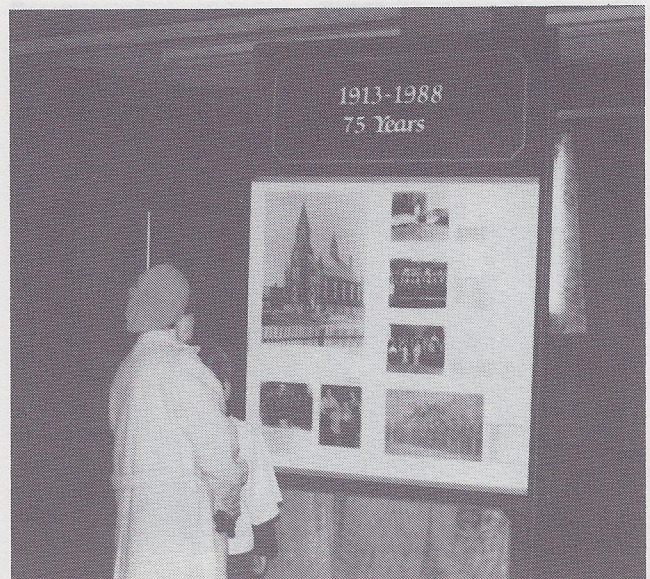
At the conclusion Father MacLean thanked the gathering for the good turn-out and expressed the hope that future events would be successful as the year progressed.

The scholarship winners were Laeora Ryba, Science student specializing in Nutrition at Mt. St. Vincent, Halifax, and Michael McComb, student of Electronic Engineering at Dalhousie, Halifax. Mrs. Annie Schella picked the winners.

*Submitted by John Tynski*



*Procession in St. Mary's Church, January 1, 1988.*



*Bernice Ratushny and grandson examine the display of old photos.*



# ANNIVERSARY YEAR ACTIVITIES



From left: Mary (Pierrynowski) Morrison, Agnes Stephenson, in period dress, president of Altar Society; Edmund Durkacz, president of Cultural Society; Jennie Melski, church organist; Rev. J.A. MacLean, pastor of

St. Mary's; Stanley Paruch, president of St. Michael's Society; Kay Malinowski, editor of Anniversary Booklet; Wayne Joseph, in period dress, committee member; and Michael Poswiata.

## MAY 3 CELEBRATION

A number of successful parish activities took place during St. Mary's 75th Anniversary Year, 1988.

May 3, which commemorates the feast day of the Most Holy Mary as Queen of Poland together with Polish Constitution Day, is observed annually. A special Mass was celebrated on May 3 and the parish dinner and dance was held at St. Michael's "Polish Village" Hall on May 6.

When the large gathering of parishioners and friends had assembled, the head table members paraded into the hall and were seated as shown in the above photo. They included Rev. J.A. MacLean, pastor, presidents of the parish

organizations, members of the anniversary committee, the parish organist, and two young people dressed in the regional costume of Krakow.

Following dinner, Father MacLean spoke in praise of the parish pioneers who had made so many sacrifices to build, support, and preserve their church, parish and culture. The dedication of the pioneers made St. Mary's 75th Anniversary possible.

Dancing, initiated by members of the head table, was enjoyed for the remainder of the evening.

## ANNIVERSARY TREE PLANTED



Father MacLean turns the sod while Stanley Paruch, Frank Starzomski and various members of the parish look on.

A tree planting ceremony took place August 7, on St. Mary's Church grounds. It was a happy event for about 100 parishioners and friends who attended on that sunny Sunday afternoon.

Rev. James MacLean officiated and Frank Starzomski was M.C. Stanley Paruch prepared the tree and earth for planting, and with Thomas Chmiel, constructed the poles to hold four flags set along the front of the grounds. John Tynski decorated the float used as a stage.

The ceremony opened with the singing of "O Canada" with St. Mary's Polish choir leading the congregation.

Father MacLean did the honors of turning the sod where the tree was to be planted. Mrs. Annie Melski read the poem "Trees".

Four members of the Parish Family, Ted Kiech, Michael Pierrynowski, Evelyn Cook, and Elaine Tynski addressed the gathering with remembrances of the pioneers of the parish.

Also featured during the two hour celebration was the modelling of costumes from Cracow. The models were

(continued on bottom of pg. 93 . . .)



## ST. MARY'S MARKS 75th JUBILEE

by Peggy Ryba



*Pictured here are the clergy, altar boys and recipients of Confirmation. From left, rear: Rev. J.A. MacLean, Rev. Herbert Skurski, Stephen Joseph, Bishop Colin Campbell, David Melski, Rev. John Sajewicz, Rev. Adam Staszczak. Center: Randall Cormier, Shari Lynn MacKay, Matthew Cook, altar boy, Jeffrey Ratushny, Amy Leigh*

*Ingram, Lindsay Kokoska, Patrina Melski, Joel Cormier. Front: Joanne Melski, Kevin Ratushny, Sherry Lynn Dziubek, Tanya Marie Starzomski, Michael Cook, altar boy, Charles Stephen, Amy Kokoska, Leanne Stephen, Mrs. Michael Poswiata.*

St. Mary's Polish Church celebrated its 75th Anniversary in a special way on September 8, when Bishop Colin Campbell officiated at the Sacrament of Confirmation, confirming 15 young parishioners.

Celebrating at the Anniversary Mass with Bishop Campbell were pastor Rev. James MacLean; Rev. Herbert Skurski, a former pastor; Rev. John Sajewicz, O.M.I., a guest from Winnipeg; and Rev. Adam Staszczak of the Society of Christ in Warsaw, Poland, also a guest.

In honor of the occasion, the altar was decorated with baskets of red and white mums, carnations and gladioli.

Members of the Altar Society were dressed in traditional costumes, and St. Michael's Polish Benefit Society attended in a body.

Choir members were also dressed in Polish costumes and presented a musical liturgy of Polish hymns under the direction of Ursula Melski with organist Jennie Melski.

On behalf of the parish and the confirmants, Shari McKay welcomed Bishop Campbell with a traditional Polish greeting.

Later, a reception was held in St. Michael's Polish Hall. Dr. Leonard Pluta, a professor at St. F.X. University, was

guest speaker for the occasion, and spoke about early Polish settlers in Sydney.

Other head table guests were Bishop Campbell, Rev. J.A. MacLean, Rev. H. Skurski, Rev. J. Sajewicz, Rev. A. Staszczak, Rev. G. Andrusyshyn of Holy Ghost Parish, M.P. Russell MacLellan, M.L.A Paul MacEwan, and Alderman Frank Starzomski, representing the City of Sydney.

Father MacLean presented Dr. Pluta with a gift as a memento of the occasion, and confirmant Kevin Ratushny offered a gift to Bishop Campbell. Rev. G. Andrusyshyn, on behalf of the Ukrainian community, presented a monetary gift to the parish and to St. Michael's Society.

After lunch, which was served by the ladies of the Altar Society, the guests enjoyed an evening of entertainment highlighted by the Polish Singers and Dancers directed by Stephanie Black and Mary Pierrynowski. The choir, directed by Ursula Melski and accompanied by Joe Ryba, accordionist, sang Polish folk songs.

Father MacLean officiated at the cutting of the 75th Anniversary cake and Agnes Stephenson assisted as M.C. The evening concluded with the singing of the Polish Anthem.

### Anniversary Tree Planted

*(continued from page 92)*

Leanne and Sandy Stephen, and commentator/narrator was Jean Annette Baker-White.

In the church hall, displays of Polish folk art and crafts were set up by Janice Lubowska-MacCormack, Jennie Melski, and Peggy Ryba. On a separate table two special articles from Poland were shown. Mrs. Helen Michalik displayed an antique Polish Bible, and Edward Paruch displayed a

carving entitled "The People Mourn the Destruction of Poland".

Following the ceremonies, lunch was provided by the ladies of the parish and Polish ladies of St. Theresa's parish. The program, arranged by Peggy Ryba and Kay Malinowski, closed with the singing of the "Polish National Anthem".



## ST. MICHAEL'S DAY

As in previous years, a special Mass was celebrated in St. Mary's Church on September 29, in honor of St. Michael, patron saint of St. Michael's Benefit Society. Members of the Society attended in a body. Agnes Stephenson read the Epistle. The choir sang appropriate hymns.

On September 30, a dinner and dance was held at the Pier Legion Hall to accommodate all who wanted to attend. Nearly 300 parishioners and relatives enjoyed the evening. Music was provided by the Toronto Polish Band. The dinner was catered by ladies of the Legion Auxiliary.

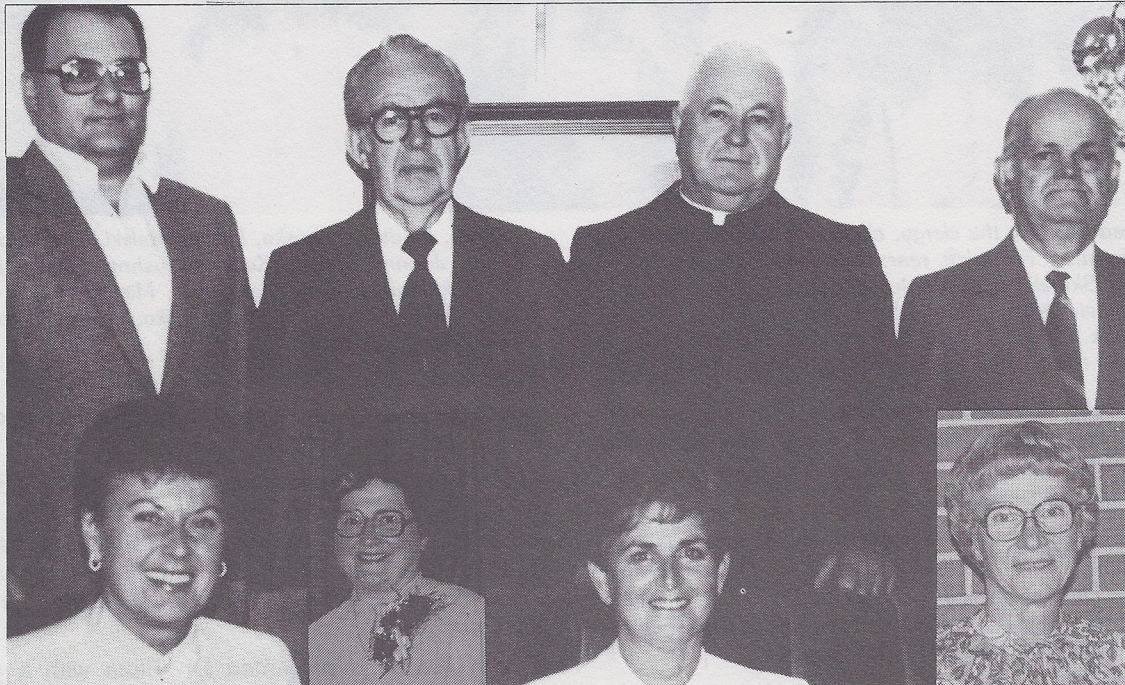
## PARISH PICNIC

On Sunday, July 24, a large number of parishioners from near and far converged at the Mira Boat Club for an enjoyable picnic. Some went by hired bus or private cars.

Among the activities were games including a scavenger hunt as outlined by Maureen Kokoska, and various races including a relay managed by Jean Annette White.

The adults also enjoyed a horse-shoe tournament arranged by Wayne Joseph. Stanley Paruch provided "Hot Dogs" that everyone declared were the most delicious!

## 75th Anniversary Committee



*From left: Agnes Stephenson, Irene Melnick, Peggy Ryba, Kathleen Malinowski, Wayne Joseph, Stanley Paruch, Monsignor J.A. MacLean and John Tynski.*

The committee met nearly every week at the Glebe House and worked faithfully to carry out the trust placed in them by the parishioners.

Agnes was the coordinator of activities. She has been active in church and cultural activities for years. She is president of the Altar Society.

Peggy was secretary and publicity person. She has organized several displays of Polish artifacts for city functions over the years.

Irene took care of Christmas cards, invitations, sale of memorabilia, etc. She has done the sewing requirements for the church and hall for several years.

Wayne took charge of anniversary memorabilia. He is an active member of St. Michael's Society and was president for three terms.

Stanley took charge of all the many extras. He has worked on church affairs, both business and building, for many years. He is president of St. Michael's.

Father MacLean supervised committee meetings and kept decisions in perspective.

John did the art work needed for this special year. He has taken care of all the art requirements in St. Mary's Parish for many years.

The Editor: Kathleen (Kay) Malinowski edited this 75th Anniversary Booklet and the Golden Jubilee Booklet in 1963. She is a retired school teacher and holds B.A. and B.Ed. degrees from St. F.X. University, and an M.A. in Religious Education from C.U.A., Washington, D.C. Her Dissertation on "Catechetical Development in Antigonish Diocese" is filed in MacDonald Library St. F.X. University.

Kay is deeply grateful to all who helped to make this booklet possible: Father MacLean, the Anniversary Committee, all parishioners and other friends who submitted family histories, reports, information, photos and advice, and her sister Veronica, typist.

She is very thankful for help received from Mr. Ed. Kyte of St. Augustine's Parish, the Beaton Institute, Antigonish Chancery Office, Holy Redeemer Church records, St. Mary's Church records, and our expert printer.

Although this book reflects only a small part of the life and activity of St. Mary's Parish during the last 75 years, it does contain what was suitable and available in the time allotted to its production. If there are any serious mistakes or omissions, please forgive them.



## Schedule of Events

Lenten Mission : Mid March

Poland's Constitution Day :

May 3rd - Liturgical Celebration 7:00 p.m.

May 6th - Dinner Dance - St. Michael's Hall  
(Polish Village)

Remember when Picnic :

July 10th - Mira Boat Club

Sydney's Action Week :

July 31st - Parish Participation

Celebration of Parish's Establishment :

September 8th - Mass and Confirmation  
Bishop Colin Campbell-celebrant  
Reception to follow  
St. Michael's Polish Hall

Feast of St. Michael :

September 29th - Liturgical Celebration 7:00 p.m.

September 30th - Dinner Dance - St. Michael's Polish Hall  
(Featuring Polish Band from Toronto)

October 1st - Polka Night

Feast of St. Catherine :

November 25th - Pre-Advent Social  
St. Michael's Polish Hall

Closing Celebrations :

December 28th - Opłatek - St. Michael's Polish Hall



