

Matthew's Monthly Message

June 2021

Forty-Fifth Anniversary
Ordination to the Priesthood:
Rev. Włodzimierz Sobolewski, C.R.



On Saturday 19th June, 1976, seventeen young men in Krakow, Poland were ordained to the Priesthood. One of the nine Resurrectionists present on that day was our diligent and beloved Pastor here at St. Patrick's Church, Fr. Vladimir.

The eldest of three boys, Vladimir entered Junior Seminary at the age of fourteen. His middle brother, Adam, is married and has two children. His youngest brother, Fr. Czesław (Chester) was ordained to the priesthood in Poland ten years after Fr. Vladimir, in 1986.

Father has not seen his family in two years because of the pandemic and is looking forward to spending time with them in the near future, now that travel has become easier.

For this edition of "Matthew's Monthly Message", I have interviewed my friend and Pastor, Fr. Vladimir, in celebration of his dedication to God, the Church and to his parishioners in Poland, Australia and Bermuda over the last 45 years.

Q: Who helped to nurture the seed of Faith for you as a child?

A: My grandmother. We called her "*Babcia*" in Polish. At the age of four, I remember her praying the Rosary with me. I tried to take the nails out of the cross on the end of the Rosary.

Babcia lived with us in the house, as her husband had died when our own father was eleven years old.

Q: Tell me how it was for you as a Polish Priest on 16th October, 1978. Pope John Paul II was elected as the first ever Polish Pope.

A: Oh, very enthusiastic. In Poland, the news was blocked. A priest called from France and told the Pastor at the church where I had just finished the Mass. So, I heard the great news when it was announced in the church by the Pastor.

Q: What happened next?

A: Everyone went home from that Mass, to listen to the News at 7.30 p.m. First – nothing! There was a report about the harvest of potatoes and so on. Then, international news. Only one sentence about a new Pope, Cardinal Karol Józef Wojtyła in Rome. Then more news from the rest of the world.

Q: What would be your favourite meal?

A: Hmm, well, I don't know. For me, the company at the table is more important than the food. I do like eating fish. (*Editor's note: When you invite Father home to dinner, he does not eat onions.*)

Q: Tell us about working in Australia.

A: Openness and friendliness of the people was a highlight. Parishioners were very accommodating. I worked in three different towns; Adelaide and Bordertown in South Australia; also 2 parishes in Melbourne, Victoria. I travelled to all the states and territories in this huge country, except Tasmania.

Q: Tell us about your learning English.

I knew very little English when I first arrived in Australia, so I went to a crash course for English as a second language. That is how I learnt.

Q: Tell us about the Joys of being a Priest.

A: For me, it is working with people to try to help them. In Adelaide, I worked with the Marriage Tribunal. Some married people have very difficult situations. We tried to assist them in returning to a sacramental life in the Church. It was good to get more understanding of family life.

It is a joyful experience to be able to celebrate the Mass for the past 45 years.

Q: How does you feel when you return to Poland on vacation?

A: After my parents died, I stay with my brother. It is like exchanging one rectory for another. I see my family and also some of the men who were in the seminary with me.

Q: What is your Anniversary message to the St. Patrick's family?

A: I am very happy to be here with you, and I hope we can continue to work together to spread the Kingdom of God. Thank you.