

ROMAN NIR

STATUS OF POLISH PRIESTS IN THE UNITED STATES
1956-1977

Priests who have come to the United States from Poland.

Requested by the Hierarchy of Poland in cooperation with the National Council of Catholic Bishops of the United States.

Purpose:

To verify the present status of priests who have come to the United States from Poland.

Organization:

Bishop Władysław Rubin¹, Delegate for Migrants from Poland of His Eminence Stephan Cardinal Wyszyński², Primate of Poland, in Rome. Bishop

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¹ Władysław RUBIN (1917-1990) – cardinal, prefect of Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches. Theological studies at the Jesuit University in Beirut, Lebanon. He was ordained a priest in Beirut 30 June 1946, and from 1946 to 1949 he was involved with ministry to Polish refugees in Lebanon. Doctorate in canon law at the Gregorian University in Rome. In 1953, he was named a pastor of Poles living in Italy, and in 1959 became rector of the Polish College at the Gregorian University. In 1964 he became rector of the hospicium in Rome for Polish pilgrims, and on 29 November of that same year, was consecrated titular bishop of Serta and suffragan bishop to the Archepiscopal See of Gniezno by Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, with a special mission to the Polish emigration and Poles living abroad. *New Catholic Encyclopedia. Jubilee Volume. The Wojtyła Years*, Washington 2001, p. 402.

² Stefan WYSZYŃSKI (1901-1981) – polish archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw and Primate of Poland. Ordained August 2, 1924 at Włocławek. Doctorate in sociology and ecclesiastical law at the Catholic University of Lublin. Rector of the seminary to Włocławek in March 1945, one year later he was appointed bishop of Lublin. On November 12, 1948 he was named archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw, and Primate of Poland; ha was named cardinal by Pius XII on 12 January 1953. Doctrinally, he was a strong conservative, and he played an important part in electing John Paul II pope in 1978. Wyszyński was often called the Primate of the Millennium. *New Catholic Encyclopedia...*, pp. 426-427.

Szczepan Wesoły³, Vice Delegate in the office of Bishop Władysław Rubin, Rome. Orchard Lake Seminary consented to conduct the Study. Bishop Rene Gracida⁴, Chairman N.C.C.B. Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and Tourism in the United States. Bishop Wesoły, with consent of Archbishop Bernardin⁵, President of the National Council of Catholic Bishops, Appointed Monsignor Alexander A. Cendrowski Coordinator of Project “Priests from Poland in the United States” requested by the Hierarchy of Poland in cooperation with the National Council of Catholic Bishops of the United States⁶.

Procedure:

Bishop Wesoły’s office in Rome transmitted 278 names of priests who supposedly resided in the United States.

Request to add names of those not listed in Rome.

Procedure of the Orchard Seminary:

³ Szczepan WESOŁY (1926-2018) – archbishop, born in 1926 in Katowice. After the outbreak of WW II he was forcibly enlisted in the German army, but he managed to escape. Later, he fought in Algeria and Italy as a radio operator in the Polish Armed Forces in the West. Archbishop Wesoły took Holy orders in 1956 and served as a chaplain for Polish migrants in Italy. In 1968, he became a bishop. While serving this function he visited hundreds of Polish communities all over the world. In 1994, he became an archbishop and retired in 2003, staying in Rome. W.M. ZARĘBCZAN, *Polacy w Watykanie*, Pelplin 2004, pp. 349-350, 375, 554.

⁴ Rene GRACIDA – auxiliary Bishop of Miami, Florida 1971-1978; Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida 1975-1983; Chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), Committee on Migrants and Tourism in the USA; Bishop of Corpus Christi, Texas 1983-1997, Central Archives of Polonia at Orchard Lake [APOL], File no 259, pp. 23-24.

⁵ Joseph BERNARDIN (1928-1996) – cardinal, archbishop of Chicago. He studied at St Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore, to the Catholic University of America. Ordained a priest for the Diocese of Charleston on 26 April 1952, he served chancellor, vicar general and diocesan consultor, and administrator, auxiliary bishop of Atlanta on 9 March 1966. In 1968 Bishop Bernardin was elected general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) in Washington, D.C. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*..., pp. 258-259.

⁶ Alexander CENDROWSKI (1901-1991) – msgr Cendrowski attended Detroit’s St. Albertus Grade School; Detroit’s St. Hyacinth Grade School; the University of Detroit High School; Orchard Lake St. Mary’s College; and Orchard Lake’s SS. Cyril and Methodus Seminary. He was ordained February 27, 1926 in Detroit. After his ordination, he was appointed to the faculty of the Orchard Lake Schools where he served in many capacities until 1952. He was dean of men at the college, and athletic director of the prep and college. His longest service was as procurator-treasurer in the Orchard Lake schools complex from 1938-1952. In 1952, he became pastor of Detroit’s Immaculate Conception Parish, where he became pastor emeritus in 1971. In 1965 Cardinal Dearden named Msgr. Cendrowski to chair the 1966 Archdiocesan and State of Michigan observance of the Millennium of Poland’s Christianity. In 1976-1978 Coordinator of Project “Priests from Poland in the United States”. Recipient of many citations and awards and among his honors are the Gold Cross of Merit Polish Government in Exile, Orchard Lake Schools Fidelitas Medal. *Polish Daily News* [Detroit] vol.18, 1986, no 6, pp. 1-5.

A letter was sent to 53 Dioceses and 14 Religious Orders which, according to the list from Roma, had priests from Poland working or residing.

The letter requested filling out a special questionnaire on each priest from Poland.

Results:

48 Dioceses and 14 Religious Orders have priests from Poland

Diocesan Priests	150
Could not locate	15
Total	165
Religious Orders	180
Could not locate	9
Total	189
Grand Total	354

Incardinated in various Dioceses.

Diocesan Priests	49	Order Priests	3	Total:	52
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In Process of Inardination.

Diocesan Priests	11	Order Priests	5	Total:	16
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Bishops wish to retain, but No word about Incardination.

Diocesan Priests	14	Order Priests	3	Total:	17
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Retired:

Diocesan Priests	14	Order Priests	3	Total:	17
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Returned to Poland:

Diocesan	5	Order Priests	2	Total:	7
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Deceased:

Diocesan	3	Order Priests	1	Total:	4
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Problem Cases.

Diocesan Priests	12	Order Priests	21	Total:	33
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Order Priests holding assignments as Pastors, Administrators or assistants 56⁷

Note wall:

⁷ List of Polish diocesan priests residing in the USA in the Years 1956-1976; List of Polish religious priests residing in the USA in the years 1956-1976. The Central Archives of Polonia Orchard Lake, documentation of Polish priests staying in the USA. Personal file no 1, p. 579; Further abbreviated APOL.

The Study began on January 27, 1977 and completed on October 15, 1977.

Files on each Dioceses and priest is under lock and retained at Orchard Lake.

The Study was totally confidential. The Coordinator's Office had no secretarial assistance.

Only the Chancellor of the Orchard Lake Schools and the Coordinator has access to the Files.

Results of this Study will be mailed to Bishop Wesoły at Rome and to the Office of Bishop Gracida at Washington, D.C.⁸

Priests who have come to the United States from Poland are Incardinated in the following Dioceses:

Allentown	4	Paterson	1
Baltimore	1	Pittsburgh	1
Bridgeport	1	Providence	1
Detroit	9	Rochester	1
Denver	1	Rockville Centre	1
Fargo	4	Saginaw	2
Galveston – Houston	1	Sioux City	2
Newark	1	Sioux Falls	1
Greensburg	1	Springfield	1
New York	2	Superior	2
Oklahoma City	5	Tulsa	4
Oakland	4	Worcester	1
		Total	52 ⁹

Priests who have come to the United States are working in the following Dioceses:

Allentown	5	New York	13
Altoona – Johnstown	1	Oakland	4
Baltimore	2	Paterson	6
Brooklyn	18	Philadelphia	18
Buffalo	15	Passaic	3
Albany	2	Providence	4
Chicago	41	Pittsburgh	5

⁸ APOL, Incardinal documentation confidential, File no 2, p. 245.

⁹ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 10, p. 9.

Bridgeport	2	Rochester	3
Boston	1	Rockville Centre	7
Cleveland	1	Oakland	4
Detroit	42	Oklahoma City	6
Denver	2	Wilmington	1
Belleville	3	Worcester	3
Fall River	2	Syracuse	5
Fargo	9	Seattle	1
Gaylord	1	Springfield	8
Greensburg	8	Sioux Falls	2
Galveston – Houston	2	Sioux City	2
Hartford	8	Saginaw	2
Gary	20	San Francisco	4
Lansing	1	Toledo	1
Milwaukee	4	Tulsa	4
Miami	2	Trenton	6
Marquette	1	Superior	2
Newark	13	Los Angeles	2
		Washington D.C. ¹⁰	

Whereabouts Unknown

Altmayer Emil – 1934 – Lublin – Was in Detroit in 1973
 Borowski Karol – 1939 – Opole – ?
 Fedko Stanisław – 1941 – Tarnów – ?
 Grabowski Stanisław – 1935 – Płock – ?
 Grabowski Zygmunt – 1935 – Wrocław – No more in New York
 Hebda Stanisław – 1942 – Tarnów – Detroit – Chicago associated with Pawelek
 Hermanowicz Ryszard – 1931 – Białystok – ?
 Igliski Jan – 1934 – Kraków – Suspended in Poland – Probably in Canada
 Kowalczyk Jan – 1929 – Lublin – Bishop Abramowicz is to give information
 Krasowski Witold – 1939 – Łomża – Chicago?
 Kropnicki Henryk – 1932 – Białystok – Probably in Fall River Diocese. We are checking
 Latocha Kazimierz – 1934 – Łódź – ?
 Lepich Józef – 1912 – Częstochowa – Newark?
 Leszczyński Zdzisław – 1938 – Drohiczyn – No more in Altoona – Problem
 Łuszczewski Jan – 1938 – Gniezno – ?

¹⁰ APOL, Incardinalional. File no 3, p. 3.

Misiewicz Roman – 1938 – Katowice – Not in Chicago?
 Niemiotka Antoni – 1925 – Left Chicago in 1966 – Białystok
 Nowicki Henryk – 1936 – Łomża – ? – Suspended in Poland
 Pagacz Julian – 1941 – Tarnów – ?
 Pastuszek Zbigniew – 1929 – Przemyśl – Suspended in Poland?
 Pietruszka Wiesław – 1942 – Tarnów – ?
 Polański Ryszard – 1938 – Warszawa – ?
 Przyborowski Józef – 1940 – Gdański – Probably laicized
 Stypultowski Stanisław – 1937 – Łomża – Left Allentown?
 Wawerski Edward – 1936 – Lublin – ?
 Wilczek Jan – 1939 – Warszawa – Probably married
 Wódka Aleksander – 1937 – Tarnów – Suspended?
 Zalewski Wojciech – 1937 – Gniezno – Married¹¹.

Diocesan priests who have come to the United States from Poland.
 Incardinated

No.	Name	Diocese of Origin	Diocese in U.S.	Date
1.	Banasiewicz Witalis	Częstochowa	Fargo	June 5, 1969
2.	Chojecki Antoni	Siedlce	Tulsa	October, 1974
3.	Ciaptasz Franciszek	Kraków	Denver	Dec. 31, 1976
4.	Dudek Leo	Culmensis	Oakland	June 26, 1964
5.	Dudek Władysław	Gdańsk	Allentown	March 18, 1969
6.	Ferenz Bonifacy	Łomża	Buffalo	March 1, 1975
7.	Hodys Antoni	Katowice	Oklahoma City	June 8, 1974
8.	Kaczkowski Leon	Wilno	Baltimore	March 31, 1974
9.	Kopania Stefan	Włocławek	Oakland	July 2, 1958
10.	Kowalski Władysław	Przemyśl	Superior	October, 1968
11.	Krajewski Apolonius	?	Paterson	Dec. 7, 1944
12.	Krawczyk Waclaw	Drohiczyn	Saginaw	1952
13.	Kruk Wincenty	Częstochowa	Oakland	Nov. 30, 1963
14.	Krutkowski Kazimierz	Siedlce	Oklahoma City	June 8, 1974
15.	Leśniewski Henryk	Włocławek	New York	July 15, 1976
16.	Liguziński Zenon	Kielce	Buffalo	Nov. 2, 1966
17.	Lis Edward	Tarnów	Detroit	June 12, 1973
18.	Lisowski Józef	Wrocław	Sioux City	October 10, 1968
19.	Lisowski Jan	Wrocław	Sioux City	October 12, 1973
20.	Maszkiewicz Waclaw	Siedlce	Tulsa	October, 1974
21.	Menthal Józef	Katowice	Fargo	March 7, 1962

¹¹ APOL, Dioceses. File no 4, p. 2.

22.	Nieborski Jan	Łódź	Sioux Falls	May 15, 1953
23.	Pajdzik Sebastian	Kraków	Greensburg	1972
24.	Pańkiewicz Marian	Tarnów	Allentown	Sept. 8, 1964
25.	Patejko Grzegorz	Płock	Fargo	July 19, 1975
26.	Pączek Velerius	Poznań	Fargo	March 18, 1963
27.	Pietrzykowski Wilhelm	Tarnów	Rochester	May 29, 1973
28.	Pikuła Zygmunt	Włocławek	Newark	October 5, 1970
29.	Podgórný Jan	Włocławek	Paterson	Nov. 19, 1973
30.	Prill Jan	Gniezno	Galveston-Houston	Dec. 21, 1973
31.	Przydział Fryderyk	Tarnów	Allentown	Dec. 21, 1972
32.	Posłuszny Franciszek	Tarnów	Bridgeport	Jan. 20, 1975
33.	Rojek Artur	Przemyśl	New York	Nov. 13, 1968
34.	Sanczenko Piotr	Drohiczyn	London, Canada	February, 1976
35.	Stasiak Jan	Lublin	Okland	Mar 23, 1964
36.	Stephan Albert	Katowice	Oklahoma City	June 8, 1974 ¹²
37.	Surman Stanisław	Lubaczów	Saginaw	1967
38.	Szczypiński Stanisław	Pelplin	Springfield, Mass.	1952
39.	Szperlak Karol	Kielce	Allentown	Nov. 2, 1971
40.	Szyma Robert	Katowice	Superior	October 4, 1956
41.	Szymański Bronisław	?	Providence	Dec. 10, 1959
42.	Waleczek Alojzy	Katowice	Oklahoma City	June 8, 1974
43.	Wójcicki Mirosław	Łomża	Pittsburgh	October 29, 1976

Borzych Tadeusz Detroit

Oberć Wincenty Detroit

Tymiński Jan Detroit

Włoszczyk Franciszek Detroit

In Process of Incardination:

Czarnota Stanisław	Lublin	–	Lansing
Grzyb Józef	Tarnów	–	Detroit
Józwiak Zygmunt	Poznań	–	Detroit
Kędziński Kazimierz	Płock	–	Cleveland
Kopek Tadeusz	Gdańsk	–	Gaylord
Kubik Jan	Częstochowa	–	Detroit
Lipczewski Bolesław	Lublin	–	Detroit
Obernikowicz Maciej	Płock	–	Brooklyn
Pilarski Bernard	Katowice	–	Detroit

¹² APOL, Personal. File no 5, p. 6.

Polakowski Józef	Włocławek	–	Marquette
Serkowski Zbigniew	Warszawa	–	New York

Bishops wish to retain in their Diocese, but No word on Incardination

Czerkies Joseph	Tarnów	–	Paterson
Dudek Stanisław	Sandomierz	–	Fargo
Ihnatowicz Janusz	Kielce	–	Galveston–Houston
Januszewski Jan	Gniezno	–	Miami
Król Stanisław	Sandomierz	–	New York
Krzywosz Aleksander	Białystok	–	Chicago
Maliszewski Franciszek	Warszawa	–	Paterson
Murawski Apolinary	Płock	–	Greensburg
Piekoszewski Jan	Kielce	–	Buffalo
Podgórski Franciszek	Włocławek	–	Brooklyn
Semla Tadeusz	Kraków	–	Rockville Centre
Soja Kazimierz	Tarnów	–	Syracuse
Świątek Władysław	Wrocław	–	Rockville Centre
Winceniak Tadeusz	Kraków	–	Chicago ¹³

Retired:

Bayer Walter	Łuck	–	Chicago–Florida
Bogusz Jan	Warszawa	–	Seattle
Chojecki Antoni	Siedlce	–	Tulsa
Kaczmarek Stefan	Society of Christ	–	Providence
Kopania Stefan	Włocławek	–	Okland
Krutkowski Kazimierz	Siedlce	–	Oklahoma City
Kurtyka Paweł	Tarnów	–	
Poplicha Józef	Lwów	–	New York
Stasiak Jan	Lublin	–	Oakland
Szymański Bronisław	Providence	–	
Tołpa Jan	Sandomierz	–	Springfield, Mass.
Wójcik Stanisław	Nowy Sącz	–	Springfield, Mass.
Wojewoda Antoni	Tarnów	–	Chicago
Tymiński Jan	Przemyśl	–	Detroit
Borzych Tadeusz	Poznań	–	Detroit ¹⁴

¹³ APOL, Coordinator's. Office. File no 11, p. 10.

¹⁴ APOL, Personal. File no 12, p. 1.

Returned to Poland:

Berenda Stanisław	Warszawa	–	June 1, 1976
Bielski Józef	Białystok	–	May, 1976
Krol Władysław	Kraków	–	July, 1976
Kwiatkowski Julian	Warszawa	–	June 1976
Węglikowski Paweł	Chełmno ¹⁵	–	

Deceased:

Czop Stanisław	Detroit	Jan. – 20, 1977
Knuth Leonard	Greensburg	– July 13, 1977
Krzyżanowski Aleksander	Philadelphia ¹⁶	– June 13, 1976

Unknown or left the Diocese:

Grabowski Zygmunt	Wrocław	– New York
Hermanowicz Ryszard	Białystok	– Philadelphia
Iglicki Jan	Kraków	– Kanada
Lepich Józef	Częstochowa	– Newark
Łuszczycycki Henryk	Drohiczyn	– Altoona
Niemiotka Andrzej	Białystok	– Chicago
Nowicki Henryk	Łomża	– Buffalo
Polański Ryszard	Warszawa	– Brooklyn
Skiba Wincenty	Lubaczów	– New York
Stypultowski Stanisław	Łomża	– Allentown
Szarek Mieczysław	Tarnów	– Saginaw – in Detroit at present ¹⁷ .

Order Priests who have come to the United States from Poland.**Incardinated:**

Bielonko Józef OFMConv	Worcester	–	1973
Chmura Julian Society of St. Michael	Detroit	–	May 3, 1976
Pedzik Witalis Conv. Friars	Rockville Centre	–	Dec. 27, 1976

¹⁵ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 13, p. 1.

¹⁶ APOL, Personal. File no 14, p. 1.

¹⁷ APOL, Personal. File no 15, p. 2.

Candidates for Incardination:

Gągala Jan	Carmelite	–	Detroit
Górecki Alfons	Society of Christ	–	Detroit
Wałęga Stanisław	Salesian	–	Brooklyn
Wdowiak Bogusław	Pauline	–	Sacramento
Wiera Stefan	Salesian	–	Detroit ¹⁸

Returned to Poland:

Bemke Leon	Palloyn – Buffalo
Brzozowski Waclaw	CSP ¹⁹

Retired:

Kaczmarek Stefan	Society of Christ	–	Coventry, R.I.
Wawak Karol CM		–	Brooklyn
Wilczyński Paulinus	bernardyn	–	Milwaukee ²⁰

Deceased:

Szopiński Jan Jesuit – Detroit June 23, 1977²¹

There are 56 Order Priests working as Pastors or Assistants in various parishes in the United States²².

¹⁸ APOL, Documentation of religious priests. Personal. File no 19, p. 1.

¹⁹ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 20, p. 1.

²⁰ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 21, p. 1.

²¹ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 22, p. 1.

²² APOL, Statistics of religious working in the pastoral ministry. File no 1, p. 2.

ANEX
QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire on personal data and the canonical status of Polish priests who are currently permanently or temporarily residing in the USA in the years 1956-1976

The questionnaire included a list of Polish diocesan and religious priests residing in the USA in the years 1956-1978. It was sent by the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopate to all dioceses and orders in Poland in 1976.

1. First name and last name.
2. Exact address of your current US residence.
3. In what capacity does he/sche reside in the parish: quest, vicar.
4. Wheter he applied for admission to the American diocese.
5. In which dioceses he stayed.
6. When he left for USA.
7. What was the purpose of the trip.
8. On whose invitation he left.
9. Was it posted.
10. Permission of the Bishop, the Primate
11. Whether the permit was issued on a permanent or temporary basis.
12. For what reasons-after the expiry of the residence-he does not return to the diocese.
13. Does he intend to return to the country, he does not intend to return to the country.
14. Who supportthe request for an extension of stay.
15. Can a priest be left to work in a Polish parish.
16. Whether he was suspended by his own ordinary.
17. Does the local bishop in the USA know about the suspension.
18. Does the local parish priest in the USA know about the suspense.
19. Has he been called back to the country.
20. Have I been given other, not mentioned above, church penalties.
21. If he fell into church penalties, was he relased.
22. Does he form priestly functions.
23. Does he work in a job not related to the pastoral ministry.
24. Whether the local bishop had reservations about his activities.
25. Whether the abandoned the priesthood.
26. Was he transferred to the secular state.
27. Does he have an exemption from celibacy.
28. Have you got married²³.

²³ APOL, Questionnaire. Archives of the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopal Conference in Warsaw. File no 20, pp. 325.

October 20, 1976

Procedures for the Regularization of Priests from Poland now serving in the USA:

1. The Orchard Lake Seminary, under monsignor A.A. Cendrowski, has prepared a verified list of priests from Poland now serving in the USA.
2. The list is divided by Diocese. It will be sent to Bishop Gracida for his review.
3. Bishop Gracida, through Father Charron, will alert these dioceses that they be receiving a communication from the Orchard Lake Seminary. (Item A.)
4. The Orchard Lake Seminary will send a cover letter together with the list to the Ordinary. (Item B.)
5. Orchard Lake will keep Bishop Gracida and Father Charron informed as to the responses.
6. Each individual case will be handled separately, and details will be purposed as they occur.
7. Bishop Gracida will contact an individual priest's Ordinary through the office of Bishop Rubin.
8. The Orchard Lake Seminary will assist in any way it is called upon or able to help²⁴.

Item A

Draft Letter form Bishop Gracida to Ordinaries of priests from Poland serving in the USA:

Dear Bishop _____,

At the request of the Primate of Poland, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, and with the consent of Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, our NCCB President, as a result of the talks between the Polish Hierarchy and our Conference, my Committee on Migrants and Tourism has been entrusted with the task of attempting to regularize those priests who have come from Poland to the USA after World War II and who do not enjoy that status at the present time.

Soon you will receiving a letter, together with information about priests who would fall into that category who are now serving in your diocese from the Orchard Lake Seminary which is cooperating with me in this work.

Cardinal Wyszyński, in his letter of October 20, 1976, to Archbishop Bernardin, described our task as follows:

“Regulating the canonical of diocesan and religious priests who came to the USA after 1956 but, as yet, have not received this recognition. The ascertainment of this status will effect a healthier climate in mutual relations between the American and Polish priests”.

Bishop Ladislaus Rubin of Rome will serve as our liaison with the Polish Bishops whose subjects will be involved²⁵.

²⁴ APOL, Archive of the Coordinator's Office. File no 31, p. 2. Secret documents.

²⁵ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 26, p. 1.

Item B

Draft letter from Orchard Lake to Ordinaries who have priests from Poland in their dioceses who need to be regularized:

Dear Bishop _____,

In his letter of ____ (date) ____, Bishop Gracida, Chairman of the NCCB Committee on Migrants and Tourism, wrote to you to alert you that you would be receiving this letter from Orchard Lake, relative to the following priests from Poland who are serving in your diocese whose status we are attempting to regularize with their Ordinaries:

Names ...

More detailed information is found on the enclosed sheets²⁶.

Most Reverend Joseph L. Bernardin
President
Conference of Bishops of U.S.A.
5418 Moeller Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45212

Your Excellency:

The Conference of Bishops of Poland wishes to express to you, the President of the Conference of Bishops of the U.S.A., its sincere gratitude for the reception accorded in the United States to the Delegation of our Episcopate. Headed by Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, the Bishops participated at the 41st International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia and afterwards visited many of the Polish ethnic centers in the United States. The presence of a relatively large number of Polish bishops in America, their broadly – scoped personal contacts with American bishops, and their invitations to visit Poland mark an unprecedented event. The bishops, members of the delegation, have already expressed their grateful appreciation in letters written to bishops who hosted them. With this letter, however, the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland desires to extend thanks to the Conference of the Episcopate of the U.S.A., through you, Your Excellency, as their President.

The visit of the Delegation of Polish Bishops was closely linked with the talks held earlier on matters that concern both our Episcopates. The first of these meetings occurred in the autumn of last year in America, the second during the visit to Poland of Your Excellency and Bishop James S. Rausch in May, 1976. As a result, the Conference of the Episcopate of the U.S.A., as far as we know, has already taken action on the following:

1. Regulating the canonical status of diocesan and religious priests who came to the U.S.A. after 1956 but, as yet, have not received this recognition. The ascertainment

²⁶ APOL, Coordinator's Office. File no 27, p. 1.

of this status will effect a healthier climate in mutual relations between the American and Polish priests.

2. Establishing norms for the arrival of Polish priests to the U.S.A., for a temporary or permanent stay as well as for acceptance of Polish diocesan or religious priests into pastoral work in Polish parishes or other communities comprised of old and new Polish emigrants.

It is, particularly, the second matter that requires the establishment of permanent contacts between the Polish and American Episcopates. Documents of the Holy See, "Exsul Familia" and "Pastoralis migratorum cura" speak very clearly about these kind of contacts.

We would like to inform you, Your Excellency, that within the Conference of the Polish Episcopate a special commission, under the leadership of Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, the Primate of Poland, exist and acts for the pastoral care of emigrants. The immediate responsibility rests with Bishop Wladyslaw Rubin, who is the delegate of the Primate of Poland for this purpose. Because Bishop Wladyslaw Rubin, as is well known, is the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, the Holy See assigned Bishop Szczepan Wesoly to assist him.

In view of this, the Conference of the Episcopate of Poland earnestly requests Your Excellency to permit and facilitate Bishop Wladyslaw Rubin and his associate, Bishop Szczepan Wesoly to establish direct contacts with the respective Commission of the Episcopate of the U.S.A. and to systematically coordinate with it in the name of the Conference of Bishops of Poland the various matters of pastoral care of Polish emigrants in the United States.

This communication is of paramount and social significance. During the visit of the Polish Bishops' Delegation in the U.S.A., at the recent Eucharistic Congress, the necessity for settling this concern was indicated in many centers; the Polish press, too, published many articles and appeals on this subject. Obviously, the over – all as well specific circumstances of these problems call for a most objective consideration. Per this reason, therefore, it is indispensable to organize such permanent contact suggested by our Conference of Bishop. This proposal, in no way, will diminish the importance of the numerous Polish parishes in the United States. There is no doubt, however, that besides the old emigration of few generations, there exists a considerable never and newest emigration which is the object of our special concern that it remain faithful to God and the Catholic Church.

Desiring a broader and more intensive cooperation, the Conference of Bishops of Poland, nevertheless, simultaneously acknowledges fully the authority of the Conference of the Episcopate of the United States and of the respective diocesan bishops. It is only in this spirit that it appeals for the facilitation of more frequent contacts by Bishops Wladyslaw Rubin and his associate, Szczepan Wesoly, with the officials of the Conference or the respective American diocesan Ordinaries.

With a hopeful conviction that the matters presented in the letter will be favorably accepted and understood by the Episcopate of the United States, we express to you, Your

Excellency, our fraternal esteem for Brother Bishop to whom Our Lord entrusted the pastoral care for His Church in the beautiful and abundantly blessed American country.

Fraternally yours in Christ,
Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński²⁷

May 10, 1977

Most Reverend Rene Gracida, D.D.
Diocese of Pensacola – Tallahassee
1804 North Davis Street
Pensacola, Florida 32503

Dear Bishop Gracida,

After a busy commencement weekend I'm getting down to work on the matters we had discussed with you during your visit at Orchard Lake last week.

First, may I express our deep gratitude for the very open attitude with which you approached all of the details and the very cooperative spirit you promised as we work together to implement action in the two areas related to priests from Poland.

I have drafted some items in the area of regularizing the priests and these are enclosed. (I have not looked at the files, as yet, so have no idea how many priests will be involved in this category). The other area I will tackle later this week. (This is one of those super – busy weeks: contract negotiations and signing for 26 priests and 20 lay people).

We'll be in touch

Peace and joy.

Fraternally in Christ,

Very Reverend Walter J. Ziemba²⁸

President – Rector

²⁷ APOL, Archive of the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopal Conference in Warsaw. File no 21, pp. 1-2.

²⁸ Walter ZIEMBA (1926-2012) – msgr Ziemba had been on the School's campus for 68 years. He graduated from St. Hyacinth Grade School in Detroit. Graduated with highest honors from St. Mary's Preparatory at Orchard Lake (Class of 1944) and St. Mary's College in 1947. He was appointed to the Orchard Lake Schools' faculty in 1951, and was rector-superintended of the Schools from 1967-1977. Ordained in 1951 for the Archdiocese of Detroit. In 1966 he was awarded a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Michigan. Msgr Ziemba served numerous positions on the faculty and in administration, including teaching in the Seminary, college, prep, librarian, dean of St Mary's College, executive secretary of the alumni association. Msgr Ziemba founded the Center for Polish Studies and Culture, the Centre for Pastoral Studies. He hosted visits by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła – Pope John Paul II – to the campus in 1969 and 1979, and served as translator-interpreter for the Cardinal's visits to other areas of the United States. Wrote several books of poetry and numerous articles about the Orchard Lake Schools and the American Polonia. *Who's Who in Polish America*, New York 1996, pp. 539-540.

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STATUS OF POLISH PRIESTS IN THE UNITED STATES 1956-1977

Summary

In 1976 the Polish Episcopate made a decision to regulate the status of Polish priests who left for the USA in 1956-1976. In Warsaw, the work was managed by the Episcopal Secretariat, and in the USA, the coordinating office in Orchard Lake Schools, headed by Rev. Msgr. Alexander Cendrowski. Bishop Wesoły and Rubin from Rome cooperated with the center. On behalf of the American Episcopate, the Secretary General, Archbishop Bernardin, and the head of the Emigration and Tourism Commission Bishop Gracida cooperated.

In the years 1956-1976, 356 priests and religious left Poland from 48 dioceses and 14 religious orders, including 165 priests and 186 religious. October 15, 1977 the status of priests was as follows: incardinated priests 52, religious 56; 16 in the incardination process, 17 emeritus, 7 returned to Poland, 33 had problems with incardination, 56 worked as a guest. They worked the most; 42 in Detroit, 41 in Chicago, 20 in Gary, 18 in Brooklyn and Philadelphia, 15 Buffalo, less than 10 in 18 dioceses. It was impossible to establish the status of the other priests they were suspended, sent to the secular state and entered into marriage.

After 1978 Polish bishops made individual decisions and, in general, they lifted their suspensions and allowed them to work in the USA.

Keywords: Polish priests; Polonia; USA

STATUS POLSKICH KSIĘŻY PRZEBYWAJĄCYCH W STANACH ZJEDNOCZONYCH
W LATACH 1956-1976

Streszczenie

W 1976 r. Episkopat Polski podjął decyzję uregulowania statusu księży polskich, którzy w latach 1956-1976 pojechali do Stanów Zjednoczonych. W Warszawie pracami kierował Sekretariat Episkopatu, a w USA biuro koordynacyjne w Seminarium Polskim w Orchard Lake, na czele którego stał ks. prał. Aleksander Cendrowski. Z ośrodkiem amerykańskim współpracowali biskupi Władysław Rubin i Szczepan Wesoly z Rzymu. Z ramienia Episkopatu Amerykańskiego współpracowali Sekretarz Generalny Episkopatu Amerykańskiego, arcybiskup Joseph Bernardin i szef Komisji Emigracji i Turystyki biskup Rene Gracida.

Z Polski w latach 1956-1976 wyjechało do Stanów Zjednoczonych 354 księży i zakonników z 48 diecezji i 14 zakonów, w tym 165 księży i 189 zakonników. Status na dzień 15 października 1977 r. przedstawiał się następująco: inkardynowanych księży 52, zakonników 56; w procesie inkardynacji 16; emerytów 17; wróciło do Polski 7; problem z inkardynacją miało 33; pracowało na prawach gościa 56. Najwięcej pracowało: 42 w Detroit, 41 w Chicago, 20 w Gary, po 18 w Brooklynie i Filadelfii, 15 w Buffalo, poniżej 10 w 18 diecezjach. O pozostałych księżach nie można było ustalić ich miejsca pobytu, statusu, czy też byli suspendowani bądź przeszli do stanu świeckiego czy zawarli małżeństwo.

Po 1978 r. polscy biskupi podejmowali indywidualne decyzje i na ogół cofali duchownym suspensy i pozwalali im pracować w Stanach Zjednoczonych.

Słowa kluczowe: księża polscy; Polonia; Stany Zjednoczone