

Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus! (*People respond: Na wieki wieków, Amen.*) My name is Father Anthony Buś. I am the Pastor of Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish for the past 30 years.

I'd like to thank you all for taking time out of your day to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the 1920 victory over Soviet Russia at the Battle of Warsaw also known as the Miracle of the Vistula – CUD NAD WISŁĄ, and celebrations of the Polish Armed Forces Day ŚWIĘTO WOJSKA POLSKIEGO in Chicago.

I would like to recognize all those among us who have served or are currently serving, as well as any here who have lost a loved one in service. We are humbled by your sacrifices, as we know they are great, and we commend the demonstrations of courage and strength that you have no doubt shown throughout the most difficult of times.

Today, we are honored by many great guests who have come from near and far away: Poland, Washington D.C., our home - Chicago, and other places. We welcome all of you to St Stanislaus Kostka Parish and are greatly honored by your presence here. Not to prolong today's celebrations, I will not be naming all of our esteemed guests as our presenter Beata Wolska will name them later in her introductions.

Last year, Consul Piotr Semeniuk approached me with a suggestion to restore the World War One plaque outside of this historic church which pays tribute to 842 Polish-American soldiers of Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish who fought during the Great War. After many months of preparation and work, the restoration of the plaque is complete.

This project would not have been possible without major funding assistance from the Institute of National Remembrance and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago. We are very thankful to the Institute of National Remembrance and the Consulate General of the

Republic of Poland in Chicago for funding a great majority of the restoration of this plaque. Thank you so much for helping us honor those who died in defense of Poland and the United States of America.

A special thank you goes out to Consul Piotr for assisting the Parish in this restoration project and for all of the work you put in to organize today's event. We could not have done this without your help. Thank you!

Thank you to Doctor Andrzej Dajnowski's firm - the Conservation of Sculpture and Objects Studio - for the restoration work of the plaque.

I would also like to recognize a group of researchers who have undertaken the task of researching all 842 names on the World War One plaque. Mr. Eugene Murawski, a student of History and Polish Studies at Loyola University Chicago, who undertook the painstaking process of going through parish archives, various online databases, and other records to research the names of all the soldiers on this plaque. He worked under the guidance of Professor Dominik Pacyga, the Professor of History at the Columbia College in Chicago, Ms. Victoria Granacki, under the guidance of Consul Mister Piotr Semeniuk, and under the guidance of Ms. Bozena Nowicka-McLees from Loyola University.

The World War I memorial is a monument to the courage and heroism of those who have preceded us in life and a challenge to us to follow their example in defense of all that is right and just.

When Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States of America in 2008, he offered some challenging words that need to be heard anew in our day and in this time. He said:

*Freedom is not only a gift, but also a summons to personal responsibility. Americans know this from experience – almost every town in this country has its monuments honoring those who sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom, both at home and abroad. The*

*preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to a reasoned public debate.*

*In a word, freedom is ever new. It is a challenge held out to each generation, and it must constantly be won over for the cause of good. Few have understood this as clearly as the late Pope John Paul II. In reflecting on the spiritual victory of freedom over totalitarianism in his native Poland and in eastern Europe, he reminded us that history shows, time and again, that 'in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation', and a democracy without values can lose its very soul.*

*Those prophetic words in some sense echo the conviction of President Washington, expressed in his Farewell Address, that religion and morality represent 'indispensable supports' of political prosperity."*

Finally, again I thank all of you for being here with us today and remind all of you that the doors of this historic church literally remain open to you 24/7 – all day and all night. It is here that we receive the grace to remain ever faithful to the Lord and the courage to push against the forces that seek to undermine and destroy our God given right to live and labor for a morality based on the dominion of God the Creator and for the salvation of our souls.

May the Lord bless you, keeping you always safe, always sane, and always strong in our mutual quest for all that is right and just.