

Welcome and Greeting for Jubilee Mass

Your Eminence Cardinal Cupich we welcome you to St. Stanislaus Kostka – along with his excellency Bishop Robert Kurtz, the Very Reverend Eugene Szarek, my provincial superior, to all the Resurrectionists, and other priests who have assisted the parish and radio, especially this past year. We welcome all the religious Sisters, the School Sisters of Notre Dame – Sister Susan and Sister Lupita, the Resurrection Sisters, the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, and the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, the Missionaries of Charity, and The Consecrated Sisters of the Most Holy Savior.

We welcome as well the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulcher.

Also the Consul Generals from Poland and Mexico, Mr. Piotr Janicki and Mr. Carlos Martin Jimenez Macias. We're happy to have our Alderman Mr. Brian Hopkins of the 2nd Ward and Alderman Scott Waguespack of the 32nd Ward with us today.

We welcome representatives of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America including their president, Mr. Joseph Drobot, and the president of the Polish National Alliance, Mr. Frank Spula.

Representatives of Big Shoulders, including Joshua Hale, the President and Chief Executive along with Mr. Tom Zbierski.

We are happy to have with us Cecilia Murphy and Lambert Shaer who are related to Peter and Agnes Kiobasa who were among the founding families of this parish. Also we are very happy to have with us John Smietanka, an attorney from Grand Rapids who is a direct descendant of Fr. Vincent Barzynski. We welcome the media as well and all the coverage they've give us this past week.

In the name of the parishioners of St. Stanislaus Kostka I welcome all of you to the parish that moved an expressway.

She survived the Chicago fire of 1871 – she was set for demolition to make room for the Kennedy Expressway in the 1950's – and just seven years ago, faulty trusses threatening the total collapse of the roof nearly led to the parish's demise yet again. Divine Providence averted the forces pushing against the life of this parish. She is very much alive and still stands as a sacred sanctuary and a beacon of light in the heart of Chicago.

The story of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish was woven into the Church's 2000 year history in the year of our Lord 1867. The Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Resurrection were brought to St. Stanislaus Kostka in 1871 and under the pastorate of Fr. Vincent Barzynski, the parish grew from 400 to 8000 families in the short span of fifteen years. At the turn of the century she had 40,000 parishioners, from 1870 to 1917 more than 50,000 infants were baptized as recorded in the archives of the parish. The School Sisters of Notre Dame educated the young people of the parish in a school that by the turn of the century had 4000 students with a staff of priests and laity working alongside 70 Sisters. The statistics are impressive beyond belief. Well over 20 parishes were born from this parish.

In 1882 Josephine Dudzik arrived from Poland and worked in this very sacristy. Under the spiritual direction of Fr. Barzynski, she founded the Chicago Franciscan Sisters. One of their first convents was in the Lewandowski home which still stands today, across the street from where her sacred image is now enshrined. The image which the Cardinal will bless today is a donation of the Alta Aka Family and the work of our artisan in residence, Stefan Nieodorezo. Josephine Dudzik took the religious name, Mother Mary Theresa and is a venerable in the

Church, two degrees away from canonization. She was called “Chicago’s Apostle of Mercy” for her work with orphans, the elderly, the sick and suffering.

Also, a Resurrectionist Brother, Casimir Zeglen, who also worked in this sacristy, inspired by the assassination in 1893 of Chicago’s mayor Clayton Harrison, invented the bullet proof vest. I only knew this because the Discovery Channel called from Great Britain and came here to film a documentary which airs every so often on the Discovery and History Channels.

But that’s the past and here we are 150 years from the time 13 Polish families petitioned Bishop Foley that a parish be established and a church built on this property which in the 1860’s was farmland, where ducks were hunted and rabbits trapped.

Today we serve the people of God in three languages, English, Spanish, and Polish. We continue to have a school thank God. For 30 years the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence have operated a soup kitchen. Sister Florine and her volunteers from all over Chicago serve those in need Monday thru Friday.

Even before the Holy Father, Pope Francis, issued the call for parishes to reach beyond their doors, St. Stanislaus Kostka, for ten years has been reaching people via the air waves. We have two broadcasting studios on our premises. Radio Maria in Spanish and the Winds of Change – daily.

Nonetheless we are confronted with challenges unheard of 2000 years ago and certainly the parish is a far cry from the multitudes who worshiped and socialized, were married and buried from this church at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century.

Today we may be more likened to the small band of disciples we will hear about in today's Gospel – those disciples to whom the Risen Lord appeared in the upper room – in the cenacle – breathing his Spirit into their lives – empowering them to go forward in faith, with courage, and in peace – his emissaries to the world.

Today is a new day and a new time for sure, but the Risen Lord is the same now as he was 2000 years ago. He is the same today as he was 150 years ago when permission was given to build a sanctuary on this ground. The Risen Christ is still with us. I believe with all my heart his mother is keeping us alive. They seem to work well together.

Something rather simple but dramatic happened here nearly 20 years ago. The Blessed Virgin Mary asked that we give her the parish – that we make her mother and queen of the parish. She also asked that we open the doors. While keeping her eyes on the neighborhood she seems to have turned her gaze to the expressway – to the pilgrims so to speak traveling alongside this sacred space. We've acted in obedience and we've kept the doors open. They're never closed – never locked.

So I welcome all of you to her home – the home of Our Lady. She is creating for Chicago, God's safe space. This is a place of encounter. Here we see men and women, old and young, rich and poor, saints and sinners, police officers and gang bangers, conservatives and liberals, Catholics and non-Catholics – people of all races and ethnicities – often seated or kneeling or prostrate, at some point during the day or into the dark of night, side by side. People come here and they are changed.

Something is happening here quite slowly. And believe me, quite painfully, yet quite joyfully we find ourselves participating in his unfolding drama. For me, Bogdan Janski, the founder of the Congregation of the Resurrection puts it into perspective when of his

own conversion to Christ he wrote: “I want to live in the temple of the Great God, where everything is found. In this sanctuary, I find all that I love most rapturously, all that I thought most truly, all those beautiful things I wished to accomplish.” The words of Bogdan Janski.

Here in the sacred space of sanctuary – this Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy, the rude noise of the world is not permitted to shout into silence the voice of the living God. This Our Lady will not allow - not here – she will not permit it. To her Son our Risen Lord we entrust our lives today and well into the future.

I realize this welcome is a bit long but suffice to say we are excited about where we’ve been, where we are, and only God knows where we’re going. We simply throw ourselves into this mystery and we find ourselves quite free. It’s a wonderful mystery and a wonderful freedom.

I will speak no more and allow you his Eminence to carry us now into the Sacred Liturgy – the Sacred Mysteries of our faith that we be renewed and ever more committed to the work of life – to the mission the Lord has entrusted to each and every one of us. We thank you for being here today.