

Atlanta, September 23, 2001

Msgr. David P. Talley,  
Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and Director of Vocations  
680 West Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30308-1984

Re: Continuation of the Holy Mass in the Polish language in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Msgr. Talley,

Writing this, I am referring to the letter of August 15, 2001 from Rev. Anthony Curran addressed to Rev. A. Maslejak S.Ch. with carbon copy to me. I appreciate the information on the present situation in the Parish of St. Lawrence. Again I worry about the future of the Mass in Polish if Father Stanislaw Drzal S.Ch. has to leave his position at St. Lawrence. I would like to ask for your help in finding another parish with accommodations in the rectory for Father Stan Drzal.

Why me? I have been the organizer of the Mass in Polish for the past 8 years (Aug. 1992- Aug. 2000). I helped to organize Polish community around the Mass in Polish: lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar boys, choir, organist, ushers, I have also edited and sent bilingual letters with information about the Mass to 200 families at first and now to 650 families. Father John Ozarowski and Father Adam Ozimek were helping us. They worked full time in their parishes - and we appreciated the generous offer of their free time to celebrate the Holy Mass, hearing confessions, baptizing, blessing food before Easter Mass. After the transfer of Father Adam Ozimek to his new parish, I was able to invite Father Stefan Filipowicz S.J. from Chicago, to celebrate Christmas Mass 1999, Lenten retreat in April and Easter Mass in April 2000. For the past 10 years we have had continuous Mass in Polish, at least at Christmas and Easter.

We started weekly mass in Polish on August 20, 2000 with Father Stan Drzal S.Ch. Thanks to an agreement in June 2000, between Society of Christ, represented by Provincial Rev. A. Maslejak S.Ch. and Archdiocese of Atlanta, Father Stan Drzal was obligated to serve 80% of his time to an English-speaking parish of St. Lawrence. Now we are going to lose the Mass in Polish, because of the difficult situation in an English-speaking parish.

For us there were baptisms, marriages, and confessions in Polish, new Songbooks for everyone, religious weekly journals, Lenten retreat by visiting priest from Poland, and home visitations. After a year of weekly Masses we started to expand - to have additional Mass in Polish in the church of Mary Our Queen, in Norcross, once a month, thanks to Pastor Rev. David Dye. Mass in Polish at Mary Our Queen, at 5:30 PM on September 9th (second for Father Stan during that Sunday), was attended by 95 people, a lot of new faces. At St. Lawrence, at 2:30 PM there were 90 people. That indicates the need for that Mass in Norcross, which is more centrally located in Atlanta area. For those from Alpharetta, Roswell and Marietta it is difficult to come to St. Lawrence Church, to Lawrenceville.

On September 16, we had an emergency visit of the Provincial for the Society of Christ, Father Andrzej Maslejak S.Ch., whose conversation with Father Anthony Curran helped to prolong Father Stan accommodation in the rectory of St. Lawrence Church to the end of May 2002.

As a member of the Polish community in Atlanta (the current vice-president of the Polish Club of Atlanta) I am involved in its interests and needs. As I mentioned in my last letter in 2000, the families are widely dispersed throughout the Atlanta area. We would like to have Father Stan, helping and working in another parish and accommodated in the church rectory. With a general need for a priest in growing metro Atlanta area, I believe there is a place where Father Stan can serve as a bilingual priest. Our congregation is constantly growing; new families are arriving in Atlanta: we worked very hard to create Polish community. The Mass in Polish plays a vital part in the life of our community. Last week's terrorist attack left all of us vulnerable and helpless. People need their Mass.

With your blessing and approval I will continue to do my best for Polish community. I am writing asking for your help and the help of other interested parishes in finding a parish where a bilingual priest could serve both congregations. We need to pray to keep the Mass in Polish in Atlanta. This letter is by way of being a petition and is accompanied by the signatures representing over 340 people.

May God bless you,

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Gürtler-Krawczynska, M.D., Ph.D.  
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Cc: Rev. Andrzej Maslejak S. Chr.  
Society of Christ  
Provincial for North America and Canada

Cc: Fr. Stanislaw Drzal S.Ch.  
Cc: Rev. David M. Dye  
Cc: Rev. Anthony Curran,  
Cc: Fr. Adam Z. Ozimek  
Cc: Fr. Jaroslaw Topolewski