

CONFIRMATIONS

23 APRIL 1961

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

Joyce Barker, Sylvia Barker, Elizabeth Barker , Margaret Toich, Peter Toich, Emanuella Simon, Savino Simon, Bruna Vatta, Luigi Vatta, Fernando Diogo, Alice Diogo, Luiz Rodriguez, Manuel Fonseca, Manuel Santos, Carlos Martins, Amilcar Gomez, Norma du Preez, Patricia Kelly, Christopher Soglanich, John McKay, Gavan McKay, Ronald Vallero, Jan D'Oliviera, Muriel D'Oliviera, Sarah Zabba, Matheus Lammers, Joseph Gattichi

3 DECEMBER 1961

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

John Baker, William Lohrentz, Hester Zelma Lohrentz, Louise Sophia D'Oliviera

31 MAY 1964

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

Kathleen Kemp, Anita Vallero, Theresa Vallero, Michael Vallero, Sylvia Ciocatti, Erica Gattichi, Rudolf Baker, Oliviera Forte, Giovanni Zabbia, Mrs Zabbia, Mrs Ellis, Mrs A. Van Der Schyff, Mrs M. O'Grady, Mrs Enos, William Ellis, Peter Van Der Schyff

11 DECEMBER 1966

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

Manuel Farinha, Luca Toich, Anton Toich, Lucia Toich, Martha Botha, Oliff Roger D'Oliviera, Serafind de Sousa, Elvira de Sousa, William Michael Davis

12 NOVEMBER 1967

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

Willem Botha, Loretta Ciocatto

22 NOVEMBER 1970

ARCHBISHOP J.C. GARNER PARISH PRIEST FATHER O. DE VOS

Jenevieve Davis, Emilia Hendriques, Helen Hendriques, Fatima Hendriques, Eva Barker Lucilla Barker, Linda Moore, Lavaine Moore, Vittorio Mattariotti, Richard Mattariotti Bernard Odendaal, John Odendaal, Anthony Moore, Mario da Sousa, Lloyd Davis, Daniel Calacas

25 JANUARY 1976

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER MOLENAAR

Jose Hunes, Franco Barker, Ignatuis Enos, Wilfred Enos, Henry Losentz, Pedro Calaca, Roy Azvedo, Carlos Ramos, Clifford Ron Mon, Filonena de Convalho, Amiela Barker, M Odendaal, Paula de Convalho, Jennifer Kemp, Loreta Agostini, Annita Agostini, Agnesse Agostini

6 JULY 1980

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER ARMSTRONG

Gina Anna Barker, Maria Teresa De Carvalho, Martha Da Graca Araujia Nenes, Maria De Rosario Aravjo Nunes, Petro Francisco Fernando Nusca, Angelo Nathan Stipinovich, Rui Lavarinhas

25 SEPTEMBER 1983

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER ARMSTRONG

Johnny Gonsalves Chadinha, Ana Paula Oliveira Da Silva, Antonio Carlos Farinho Da Silva Graca Luisa Oliviera Da Silva, Louis Charles De Abreu, Richard Manuel De Abreu, Maria De Fatima Vieidas De Cavalha, Jose Manuel Alfonso De Jesus, Michael Enos, Malcolm Ho Tong, Peter Gavin Ho Tong, Joao Sousa Jardim, Giulina Maria Nusca, Oreste Paulo Nusca, Paulo Luigi Allessanro Nusca, Victor Albert Popich

10 JUNE 1984

ARCHBISOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER ARMSTRONG

Leslie Visser, Madeleine Visser

6 DECEMBER 1987

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL

Robert Roschlein, Wayne Howard Moore, Jorge Gabriel Da Silva, Paul De Sousa, Linda Rita Calaca, Annatjie Bella Ramos, Georgina Rosie Ramos, Penelope Ann Engelbrecht, Paula Phillips

8 OCTOBER 1989

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL

Cecilia Calaca, Celia Calaca, Anthony Enos, Dolly Grota, John Keough, Denis Kruger, Ria Tromp, Carol Walters

10 NOVEMBER 1990

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL
PARISH PRIEST FATHER
STANISLAW LIPSKI

Monica Araujo, Gieljan
Johannes Barwise, Jacques
Emil Barwise, Maciej Adam
Florczyk, Dorethea Hermina
Grota, Angelo Ho Sing,



Angelique Ho Sing, Colin Trenton
Ho Tong, Magdalena Irena Kolat,
Ewa Jadwiga Kowalska, Sylwia
Ledwosinska, Arthur Maydell,
Krzysztof Robert Potrawaik,
Karolina Anna Radomyska, Bartosz
Tadeusz Sielewicz, Jakub Sielewicz,
Angela Tilly Van Heerden, Brian
Basil Van Heerden, Magdalena
Maria Wozniak

12 DECEMBER 1995

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER JAN WESTFAL

Pierino Vatta, Celia De Abreu, Wayne Honeyman, Elizabeth Magdalena Whitehead, Anette Petro Du Plooy, Melani De Abreu, Jean Andre

8 DECEMBER 1996

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER JAN WESTFAL

Corrie Calaca, Tracy Rolfe, Roberto Araujo, Paulo Chadinha, Tracey Gibson, Lucia Calaca, Wayne Rolfe, Lucy Chadinha, Ania Rokith, Kabelo Motsepe

10 DECEMBER 1997

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATER JAN WESTFAL

Michelle Dante Andrei, Shawn Patrick Chadinha, Paulo Da Sousa

27 FEBRUARY 1999

Archbishop G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER JAN WESTFAL

Melissa Vatta, Stefanie Rheeder, Wendy Luizinha Venter, Karolina Konstancja Kuczynska, Anna Antonia Kuczynska, Martha Elizabeth Lira, Pedro Ivo De Sousa Faria, Carlos Fortunato Faria, Frankie Calaca, Ditiro Cornelius Magongwa, Robert Jerzy Dziubdziela, Wojtek Sokolowski, Tom Bic.

09 DECEMBER 2000

ARCHSBIHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Ernest Erwin Sigl, Jacqueline Osborne, Winifred Osborne, Clerides Kunuma

10 NOVEMBER 2001

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL
PARISH PRIEST FATHER
BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Mario Carlos De Sousa, Tishla Chantal Daniel, Lucy Figueira, Antonio Figueira, Anastasia Patrys, Amon Tshepso



7 DECEMBER 2002

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Lueza Maria Rosa Broodryk, Juanita Johanna Catharina Bezuidenhout, Pierre Broodryk Salome Gloria Thantsha, Miguel Angelo De Sousa Faria, Thato Zippora Thantsha, Samantha Tanya Chapman, Heidi Mellet, Diana Paula Chadinha, Heila Elizabeth Nusca, Dorothea Magdalena Silva

6 DECEMBER 2003

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH
PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN
WILKANIEC

Francois de Sousa, Vanessa Ellis, Lein Koorsten, Dick Shikhathi, Ian Sigl, Adam Swiatko, Glenda Tiquin, Jaco Tiquin, Thomas Van Der Merve, Stavros Varthalitis, Donavan Wright



12 DECEMBER 2004

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Bonita Violante Calaco, Christo Wright, Cindy Cieder Van Nieuwenaguizen, Michele Van Der Linde, Pedro John Calaco, Rogerio Santos Da Silva, Taryn Megan Bagley



11 DECEMBER 2005

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL
PARISH PRIEST FATHER
BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Charlotte Du Plooy, Mark Du Toit,
Hiromi Usuki, Tania Da Silva,
Veronica Gauwa, Marco Vatta,
Leanne Thabang.



9 DECEMBER 2006

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Amanda Vallero, Catherine Van Den Berg, Gino Vallero, Francisco Calaca, Jeffrey Redman, Johannes Coetzee, Lindsay Brink, Mathilda Nel, Ockie Botha, Priscilla Mureriwa, Shaun Stoltz, Tamsin Robson, Wayne Boyes, Irene Enos



9 DECEMBER 2007

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Mateusz Ziolkowski, Piotr Jan Osuch



7 DECEMBER 2008

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Johannes Van Der Berg, Marliese Helena Lourens, Chaisha Magongwa, Martiens Lourens
Brett Boyes, Nadia Da Silva, Erica Sigl, Jaco Gieselbach, Gerhard Federick Lombard, Magda Lourens, Martin Lourens



6 DECEMBER 2009

ARCHBISHOP R. M. KHUMALO PARISH PRIEST FR BOGDAN WILKANIEC



Maurisha Nusca, Marilee Enos, Naleen Tiquin, Kirsten MacKensie, Johannes Petrus Van Den Berg, Ian David Nel.

5 DECEMBER 2010

ARCHBISHOP G. DANIEL
PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN
WILKANIEC

Beulah De Pasquale, Cornelia Maredi, Filip Mateusz Kozlowski, Stanislaw Krzysztof Osuch, Szyman Ziolkowski, Pleaure Ishegofatso Moleleki, Maria Shikhati, Lucia De Freitas Nobrega, Maria Matsoaisa.





In the Parish Hall after the Sacrament of Confirmation

11 DECEMBER 2011

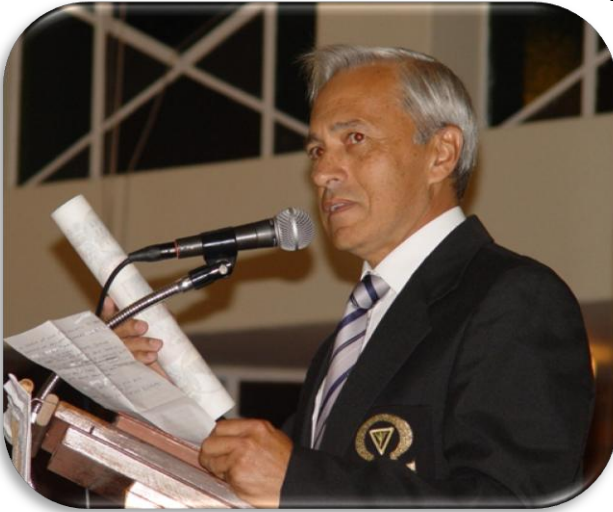
ARCHBISHOP W. SLATTERY PARISH PRIEST FATHER BOGDAN WILKANIEC

Nadia Nusca, Riana Rolfé, Jose Rodrigues Chaves, Andrij Kocur, Michelle Borruso, Danielle Tiquin, Carmen Maitland, Savana Lisa De Sousa, Marcia Paidomoyo Mureriwa, Adelaide Phutego Moeng, Shannon Maitland, Nikita Chantal Bairos



REFLECTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS

Manuel de Abreu - Parish Chairman



After many years of being just a traditional catholic, a soft voice came into to my heart saying! Manuel there is more in being a catholic than just going to Mass now and then, going one Sunday to one church next time to another church, looking for a community to satisfy my needs, also looking for a priest that is perfect, and never getting settled at one place.

1975 was the year I decided to look at myself and see where I was going with my life, so I went to look for a Bible that I could read and understand the word of God. I found one which I started reading and studying the meaning of God's purpose for my life. It took a few years for me to build a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ but then I could understand God's will.

1979 as I was now staying about 2 km from the catholic church in Pretoria Gardens I went to introduce myself to Fr. Armstrong who was the parish priest at that time and told him I wanted to become an active member of this parish so he said, come and join the parish council, so I joined. We were only a few people and the church was almost empty.

Manuel de Abreu says the first thing he noticed, on joining the church, was that some Sundays there was no music and hardly any singing. Another important point there was no sound equipment and this was when he started getting involved in building up the Spirit of our church. His first project was; as he could play a little bit on the guitar and he was teaching his son Richard how to play the guitar (he was only 12



Richard and Celia de Abreu playing and singing during Mass on 14 January 1990

years old), he went to Fr. Armstrong and asked him if they could use the guitars in the church and he was very pleased that some changes would take place. Our parishioners

were very happy and this is how he started the guitar group that is still going very strong today especial with the keyboard played by Michael Enos.



The next improvement was the sound system; the church had no money so he saved some of his money and went to buy an amplifier, 4 speaker boxes and a microphone. He installed it himself and

from that time on everyone could hear Father's sermons loud and clear. Later he went to buy another microphone for the readers so that everyone could listen to the word of God loud and clear.

Father Armstrong was transferred to another church in 1984 and in 1985 we got Fr. Schulpen coming to our church and I kept on serving our community in the parish council with the same enthusiasm as in the begining. During this time we learnt a few more hymns as Father loved singing. Fr. Schulpen became our house friend because my mother in law was living with us, she was very sick and he came to visit her quite often until she passed away and he prepared her funeral. Not long after this he was transferred to another church.

In 1987 our parish welcomed a much younger priest with a strong voice and very vibrant Fr. Ralph Milburn. The attendance in our church increased especially with the younger generation. During his time in our parish we had our church painted inside and outside. Looking around to see what needed to be repaired I noticed that all the wires coming down from the ceiling to the lights were disintegrating so I used the scaffolding from the painters who were using it to paint the ceiling in the church and replaced all the wires from the ceiling to the lights. We had a few mini fetes to cover all these expenses.

During Fr. Ralph's time we increased our music group with the keyboard played by Michael Enos and a few more guitars. We also started having shelter seeking (this is during Advent season going to different houses to pray, sing Christmas carols etc.). During Easter we celebrated Palm Sunday with a lot of palms, Good Friday with a normal Passion, Vigil Saturday with a lot of singing between all the readings and on resurrection Sunday early in the morning all parishioners got together at the foot of the mountain and with the guitars we walked right to the top of the mountain and we had Mass watching the sunrise, something never to forget.

We also started visiting the Holy Cross, playing guitars, keyboard and singing in their Christmas Mass and also singing Christmas carols for the sick people. We kept this tradition for many years.

We were becoming very active in our church but then Fr. Ralph started getting sick and every activity went backwards because we only had a relieving Priest on Sundays. This was difficult times for our parish but God knew what was happening and what was going to happen in the future. We had a few meetings with Archbishop George Daniel about our situation and we were assured by Him that he would look into it and so we started praying for a solution.

One day later in the year 1989 Archbishop contact me requesting to have a meeting with the parish council and so we made an appointment and He come to see us. We got sad news from him but also very good news, the sad news was that Fr. Ralph was being transferred to



Voortrekkerhoogte church, but the good news was! And the Archbishop started explaining to us what he had decided after Fr. Ralph got sick and was transferred.

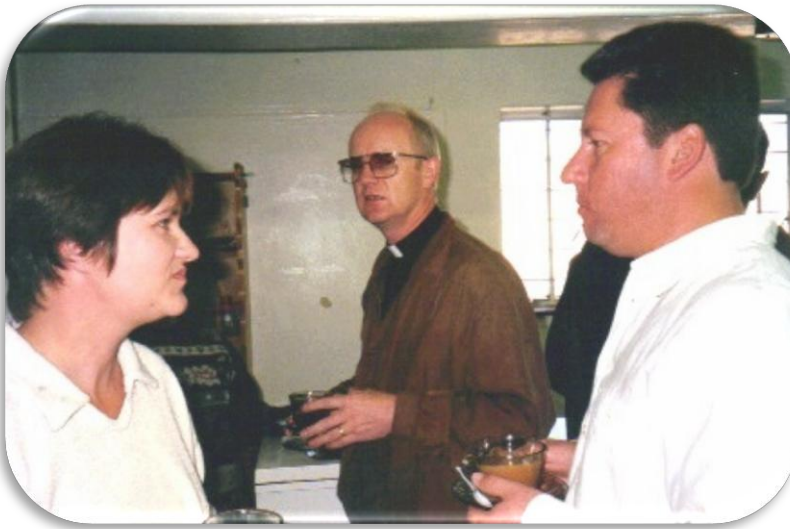
The Polish community in Pretoria were looking for a church where they could be accommodated and have a Polish priest saying Mass for them in their own language.

After consulting the Polish priests from the Society of Christ it was agreed that Immaculate Conception church was the only parish where they could be accommodated. This was God's answer to our prayers and God's plan for our future. The Polish community



was going to join our parish and we would have a permanent priest.

In 1990 we had a big welcome for the first polish priest in our community, Fr. Stan Lipski. We also welcomed the polish community and so the parish of Immaculate Conception got alive again. We started having two Masses on Sunday instead of only one. We also had mini fetes to help us with our finances and the life in the parish was getting better. Fr. Stan as we called him was a very humble man and the English community loved and accepted him with all their heart and the polish community as well. He stayed with us for two years and was transferred to another church.



In 1992 to replace Fr. Stan, we welcomed the young Fr. Wojciech Swiatkowski. His hobby was to climb mountains. When he started in our parish the first thing he did was to get rid of the very old things in the church not in use any more. One project I wanted was to cover the bench kneelers with soft

material especial for the older people, and so the parish saved some money and we had it done. It's still in good condition today and people enjoy using it.

Two years later in 1994 Fr. Wojciech went to another parish and we welcomed Fr. Jan Westfal. His birthday was the sameday as my birthday but ten years difference. A few years we celebrated our birthday together. Father enjoyed planting trees and working in the garden for exercise.

During his stay with us there were some renovations done in the priest house and in the public toilets. During this time there were some burglaries in our premises and our sound system was stolen as well as items from the hall and from the church. We had to spend a lot of money to put fences around the yard and burglarproof in all the windows. We had to buy new sound equipment.



We had to buy a motor car as the car which the priests were using belonged to the bishops' conference. We started a new campaign with our church members who were willing to commit themselves contributing any amount of money towards paying for the car. It worked perfect and in this way we paid the car in full.

At this stage Fr. Jan was the polish priest who had been the longest in our parish. In August 1999 close to the end of the century my father had passed away. In October while getting ready for my father-in laws funeral I received a call from Ulundi Kwazulu-Natal from a police officer giving me the news that Fr. Jan Westfal had a car accident and died in the accident. For me it was a big shock. I had lost three Fathers in one year. I phoned the Archbishop with the sad news and he took it from there. The question was what now?

We had a visit from Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec who gave us the good news that he was going to replace Fr. Jan. It was the best news I ever had for many years.

2000 a new century, Fr. Bogdan begins officially with his pastoral work in the Immaculate Conception church in Pretoria Gardens. All our parishioners were very happy. A lot was going to happen in the coming years.

Fr. Bogdan has been with us for 13 years, the second longest time that a priest has served this community and there are a lot of things to write about, but I'm going to write a few things in which I'm involved, concerning the Church. It's my responsibility to prepare the hymns every Sunday for Mass. We have got a strong group playing guitars, a good keyboard player and a group of ladies singing. We had recorded two Masses that were broadcast on the radio station, (one of them was recorded on 06 July 2003).

To me every hymn we sing is like saying a prayer; the words have a lot of meaning. When Father goes away I take the responsibility of looking after the premises until he comes back. Close to the end of every year I prepare the Christmas greeting envelops and included with these envelops the planned giving small envelops. These are prepared by my wife Norma and I. It's a campaign started by Fr. Bogdan which is doing wonders, with these greetings you receive a budget for the following year and a reminder of any project to be implemented.

My son Richard and I have designed a bingo game which we play from time to time for our fund raising.

A few years ago I realized that we needed a children's room so that parents could take their children and feel more comfortable if their children start crying. I suggested it to Father and it was done. Our community grew so much I had to increase the votive candles stands to take double the amount of candles. We had a problem with dozens of pigeons building nests all over the church buildings so I decided to cover all the possible nesting places to stop the pigeons from invading the premises and its working.

In 2005 Fr. Bogdan requested from Rome an Apostolic Blessing from the Holy Father John Paul II and I received it just before the Holy Father passed away and I treasure this certificate with all my heart.



On 28 August 2012 I had a live radio interview of about 20 minutes with Father Emil Blaser about what is

Manuel de Abreu, Fr Bogdan, Elzbieta Osuch and Sister Bernadette Duffy

happening in our church. Radio Veritas is the only Catholic radio station in Southern Africa. I hope you are listening as it's on 576 AM or 170 DSTV audio channel.

Manuel stated "Being an active member of this parish means that I'm prepared to work for the parish as long as it is God's will. I enjoy serving God and my church family and I keep my eyes focused on Jesus Christ who is my saviour and the way to the Father. "

Manuel says "Working with Fr. Bogdan has been an honour and pleasure. He is a dynamic priest that knows exactly what he wants, and what he wants is always the best for our parish. There is so much that he has done for us that I hope it will be written in this book. "

Manuel says "I'm always waiting for the Mother of our church Immaculate Conception for direction and with the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit nothing is impossible. I pray for Fr. Bogdan that God may give him good health and strength to keep preaching the good news of salvation. I also pray for our parish especially on the 50th anniversary of our church that your Faith may grow and grow and that you may become a witness to the Kingdom of God as long as we are on this earth. May you never lose Hope knowing that God is always in control even when things look bad; this is what I have done for the last 37 years. To God our Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit be all the Glory."

Jan and Gerda Windt – Readers List

Since the 1970's and first with Fr. de Vos we came once a month (not always) to the Hercules Parish for a Dutch Mass celebration; this continued later with Fr. Molenaar and Fr. Ausum.

In late 2005 we decide to move from the Church of the Presentation (Montana Parish) to the

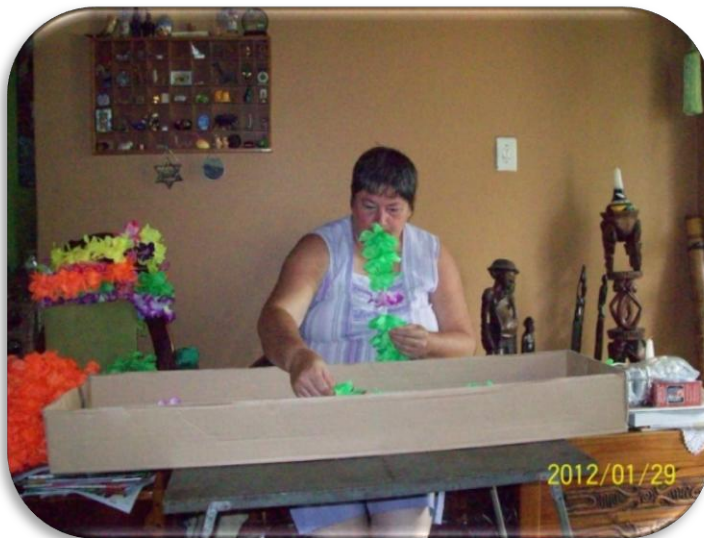
Immaculate Conception Parish; for us this was the perfect move. As requested by Fr. Bogdan, Ernst Sigl and I became Eucharistic Ministers on 18 June 2006.

From February 2007, I took over from Veronica van den Berg to establish the Readers lists. At the same time I became a member of the Parish Council. In that same year the planning of the Wall of Remembrance took place and after making drawings and supervising the project the final Blessing of the Wall took place on 9 December 2007. In 2008 the storm water (drain)-well was re-built and a new pump was installed.

I wish to thank the Parish priest Fr. Bogdan for his great and lovely support, and hope to serve the Parish with my "duties" in the future and for as long as possible.



Daleen Wright - Flowers



I've been asked to write about flowers. What do I tell you about flowers?

Every season supplies us with a wide variety, colours, shapes and sizes of flowers to brighten the heart of every person.

Flowers are one of God's most beautiful creations. You can sit and watch a flower for hours and you will always find something new to appreciate. Flowers talk a language that everyone can understand; they talk straight to the heart. They brighten up your day, they can make you sing about them and you can get lyrical about them. Flowers are used in decorations to light up the church, house, your work place or for special occasions.



People use different colours of flowers for different occasions. The colours even differ from nation to nation.

In the church we are privileged to have flowers to put some light into our lives. Different colours of flowers are used for different occasions. White is the colour that is used for most of the special feasts like Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Body and Blood of Christ, All Saints and Christ the King. White flowers are also used for Holy Communion. You can add a touch of red here, but it must not overshadow the white.

For the Easter Vigil it is yellow flowers, as it is the closest to gold. And then, of course from Ash Wednesday up to Good Friday and the four Sundays of Advent there are not supposed to be any flowers (or even decorations and weddings) in the church.

Nowadays it is easy to make an arrangement of flowers. The years when there were strict rules and regulations are long past. Let the flowers and containers "talk" to you. Plain and simple arrangements can sometimes be the most effective. But whatever you do with flowers, be creative and enjoy it.

John van den Berg - My First Confession

When I joined the church during 2008, the confession, compulsory component to qualify, posed a severe challenge. Apart from the riddle of how to tender one's misdeeds committed over decades in an allotted timeslot of minutes, the in-



depth soul searching during the morning events of the retreat in the run up to the confession hour later the afternoon, also made it awkward to render a supplication that will not compromise one's image of “the old dog”.

During a discussion after luncheon on the preamble wording, a point was raised about the tendency to go completely blank at the crucial moment; with my intense preoccupation with the confession thing itself, I've not given any thought to the importance of the preamble wording. With no time left to memorize it then, paranoia was about to set in. Luckily Sister Bernadette, who was one of our instructors, a teacher of long standing, familiar with the dilemma, furnished us with prompt sheets – in large print – just in case!

With the actual confession in progress, I procrastinated until I was the last to go. Manuel, my concerned sponsor, then nudged me forcefully with a “Toe, gaan nou!” I then entered with prompt sheet at the ready, holding it like I was carrying a tray.

When the confessional door closed shut behind me, I went into total shock: It was pitch dark in there! I then cried out involuntarily “Oh dear Father, I can't read a word of Sister's prompt sheet!”

After some agonizing, humiliating moments while the floor underneath me stubbornly refused to swallow “the old dog”, I heard a voice: “Then say after me...”

Sr. Bernadette Duffy

Sr. Bernadette Duffy joined Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in 2001 as representative of the Holy Cross Sisters to serve on the Parish Pastoral Council. During her time in the parish she took up responsibility as the Catechism coordinator. This task she led from 2001 to mid 2010 when her new post as Holy Cross School's Animator and Juniorate Directress disenabled her to continue her work in the parish due to important and weighty work commitments in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Sr. Bernadette's primary initiative on arrival in the parish was to amalgamate the teaching times of the English and Polish catechism classes. She carried out a short survey to get the opinions of the parishioners to see if they could agree to have all the children being taught at the same time. Their consensus led to the simultaneous teaching of all children during the 09h00 and 11h00 masses. It was Sr. Bernadette's



intention to build greater unity among the children who otherwise would never have met each other. This is a practice that is still operative in the parish today and has proved fruitful. It also brought the parents together as they meet in the church grounds while waiting for their children.

Sr. Bernadette says;

‘Teaching and coordinating catechism in Immaculate Conception was a pleasure and joy. It is highly personalised as the children are few and the teachers who volunteer are many. This makes the classes small and each child is given preferential and quality teaching time.’

She says the quality and expertise of the individual teachers is mainly due to their personal commitment to pass on living faith to the children in their classes in an informative and creative way. Sr. Bernadette always encouraged the catechism teachers to attend the monthly days of catechetical formation, and then conducted by Fr Angelo Dusi (CSS), Pretoria North.



Sr. Bernadette also taught the adult classes for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Communion and Confirmation) alongside Fr. Bogdan and Manuel Du Abreu. She commented that;

‘Journeying with adults in their search for God and in their search for their true selves was a wonderful time of grace. It was always a tangible experience of God expressed through the lives of those on the faith journey’.

Sister also said;

‘Other special times in the parish were when the children received the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation. At Confirmation we were blessed to have Archbishop George Francis Daniel with us especially when at times the smaller children thought he was the Pope’!

‘I will always remember my time at Immaculate Conception as happy and purposeful days. I loved to mingle with the parishioners to get know them personally. And still today it is a great joy for me when I meet you at various events or in the shopping malls

I wish the parish a blessed 50th Anniversary – Golden Jubilee’.

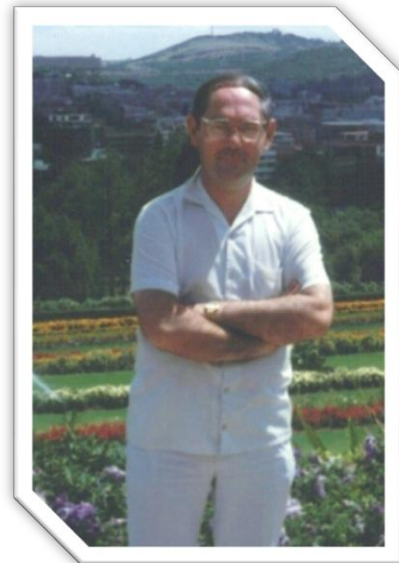
The Polish Community - Jerzy Sadowski - Chairman of the Polish Club



At the turn of the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century underground “Solidarity” Trade Union in Poland started openly challenging the communist party and government in Poland. After suspension of the Marshal Law the communist Polish authorities decided to allow dissatisfied Poles to leave the country. Hundreds of thousands of Poles left Poland and made their way to a free and democratic West. During this 1981 to 1982 emigration wave around 5000 to 6000 Polish families landed in the Republic of South Africa. The South African authorities required university degrees or highly skilled technicians and nurses from Polish immigrants.

The overwhelming majority of Polish immigrants were Roman Catholics and from the beginning the lack of Polish priests was encountered. The South African Conference of Bishops appealed to the Society of Christ in Australia to delegate Polish priests to work for Polish communities in the RSA. The first priests of the Society of Christ, Fr. Jan Westfal and Fr. Jozef Kolodziej, came from Australia on 15 February 1983.

In a few months additional priests from the Society of Christ from Australia began to arrive in South Africa and they were placed in bigger Polish community centres like Johannesburg, Vanderbijlpark, Secunda, and Cape Town. Pretoria with around 200 Polish families had to wait for their Priest. Finally at the end of 1989 Fr. Stanislaw Lipski and Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec entered negotiations with the Pretoria Diocese in the matter of placement in a Polish parish. The archbishop George Daniel assigned the abandoned church and parish of Immaculate Conception in Pretoria Gardens for Poles.





The first parish priest, Fr. Stanislaw Lipski, took over the Parish of Immaculate Conception and the first Sunday Mass in Polish was concelebrated on the 4th February 1990. This Mass gathered over 100 Poles who enthusiastically welcomed “their own priest”. Fr. S. Lipski acquired the respect, love and friendship of his

parishioners and the number of the parishioners increased constantly. Danielle Sadowski, daughter of Bartek and Poenie Sadowski, was the first Polish child baptised in the “Polish Church” on 16th June 1990. The group of the most active Polish parishioners under patronage of Fr. S. Lipski started to give a lot of thought to the organisation of the Polish parish. As a result of these discussions the Polish Parish Council was established, containing Liturgical Section, Catechetical Section, Juvenile Section, Financial Section and Polish Club Section, on the 26th August 1990. The main tasks of the Polish Parish Council (PPC) were to develop the catholic faith, to cultivate Polish culture and traditions, and provide financial assistance to the Parish Priest to manage the church and parish. Jerzy Potrawiak was elected as the Chairman of PPC, Andrzej Listowski was

elected as the secretary and Maria Wapiennik was elected as the treasurer.

Fr. S. Lipski and PPC did not waste time. Their first and the most important task was the catechesis of our children and youth and the preparation for Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confession.

The group of 10 youths were confirmed on the 10th November 1990 and the group of the children



*SA Ambassador Victor Zazeraj –
Birthday of Irena Grzechnik*

received Holy Communion on 25th November 1990. The catechesis was always the top

priority of PPC and has continued since 1990. There were numerous teachers in different periods of time with different periods of teaching. The catechesis instruction in the period since 1990 until today was given by Wanda Potrawiak, Aleksandra Wnorowska, Fr. Jan Westfal, Elzbieta Osuch, Izabela Cichon, Zenon Rozycki, Zofia Florczyk.



The Polish Club Section organised the first Polish Ball on the 26th October 1990, “Andrzejki” Ball on the 30th November 1990 and a New Year’s Eve Ball on the 31st December 1990. All these balls took place in the church hall and total profit of over R3000.00 was donated to Fr S. Lipski. The Collection Campaign among Polish parishioners in 1990 also brought an amount of R3790.00. Those monies were spent on the priest’s car installments, Diocese tax, municipal rates and taxes, priest’s monthly allowances and maintenance. Financial achievements of 1990 convinced the Polish community of their ability to support the church financially.

On the first meeting of the Polish Parish Council it was decided to establish a monthly information bulletin informing parishioners about church affairs, Polish community of Pretoria, SA affairs, news from Poland and building and developing the bonds among the Poles living in South Africa and in Pretoria particularly. The editorial team consisting of Jerzy Potrawiak, Jerzy Krajewski and Teresa Listowska edited on November 1990 the first edition of “The Polonez” as the bulletin had been named. Fr. S. Lipski edited the pastoral column. Teresa Listowska left the editorial team on April 1991. Leszek Szweda joined the editorial team in May 1991 and Wojciech Skowronski joined the team in June 1991. The editorial team had been expanded by two further members, Mira and Jerzy Sadowski, in July 1991 but the edition of “The Polonez” ceased in September 1991 due to an editorial team crisis. Jerzy Potrawiak, editor in chief, Leszek Szweda and Wojciech Skowronski quit the editorial team. The edition of “The Polonez” resumed in March 1993 as a monthly cultural newsletter of the Polish Club in Pretoria with the new editor in chief, Aleksandra Wnorowska and the rest of editorial team. The new member of the editorial team, Krzysztof Osuch, joined the team in October 1993. Aleksandra Wnorowska and her husband Tadeusz immigrated to New Zealand in January

1994 and a new editor in chief, Jerzy Wapiennik, took over the editor's office of "The Polonez" in February 1994. The year 1997 brought new changes to the editor's office. Jerzy Krajewski and Krzysztof Osuch quit the team in January 1997 and they were replaced by Grzegorz Paszczyk and Dariusz Stochmal. In September 1997 the editorial team was quit by Grzegorz Paszczyk and Jerzy Wapiennik, due to their families immigrating to Canada. The new editor in chief, Jan Fenrych, took over the editor's office in September 1997 and his wife, Barbara, also joined the team. The last issue of "The Polonez" was edited in February 1998 and further editions were ceased due to the crisis in the organization. From mid 1991 "The Polonez" as a monthly information bulletin became the best edited Polish newsletter in South Africa.



The year 1991 became a very active and very dynamic year. Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec arrived in Pretoria in the beginning of January and waited for his new parish in Bryanston, Johannesburg. He left for his new Bryanston Parish on the 9th March 1991. In this short period of time Fr. Bogdan, multitalented man, introduced the Polish community to a completely new style of social life based on faith, love, joy and friendship. He initiated a guitar "Thursday Rendezvous with a Song" and inspired Ola Wnorowska and Andrzej Listowski to compile the "Thursday Songbook". Fr. Bogdan initiated Saturday trips to picnic spots and Saturday bicycle tours. All those undertakings were attended by many Poles and many of them suddenly found themselves in a different world, many of them found happiness in their lives. All those activities initiated by Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec became a tradition of the Polish Parish and were continued for many years.

In mid April 1991 the new democratic authorities of Poland opened their first diplomatic mission in Pretoria; The Bureau of Interests of Republic of Poland in RSA. This fact had an enormous meaning for the whole Polish community in Southern Africa; they had the representatives of the authorities for which the Polish nation fought with communism for 45 years. The very dynamic development of the Parish life caused that the Polish Parish Council decided to transform the Polish Club Section into an independent organization. Polish Club in Pretoria would still be closely associated with PPC, Parish Priest and Parish, but with a division of responsibilities. The PPC would be responsible for liturgical and catechetical matters and general assistance of the Parish Priest in running the church and parish. The Polish Club in Pretoria would be responsible

for all social activities like organization of dance parties, official ceremonies, entertainments, financial assistance for the upkeep of the priest, church and parish.



The Polish Club in Pretoria was established during a general meeting of the Polish Parish Council on the 18th April 1991. The following persons were elected to the Board: Jerzy Sadowski (chairman), Adam Florczyk (Vice Chairman), Jerzy Wapiennik (Secretary / treasurer and Katarzyna van Loggerenberg, Aleksandra Wnorowska, Elzbieta Wozniak,

Jerzy Krajewski (Members). The newly established organisation received the first organisational acid test a few weeks later on the 31st May 1991 on the tenth anniversary of the death of the “Cardinal of Millennium”, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the outspoken opponent to the communist rulers in Poland and long prisoner of communist regime. Fr. Stanislaw Lipski proposed to organize a seminar on the occasion of this anniversary and proposal was accepted by

PPC and Polish Club with enthusiasm. This official ceremony was attended by whole Polish diplomatic corps, all Polish priests from Transvaal and Poles from all Polish centres in Transvaal. Altogether over 300 persons attended this ceremony and it was a great organizational success



of our Parish. From that day the Polish centre in Pretoria became well known among all Polish communities in South Africa.

The next initiative of the PPC and Polish Club was the founding of the Polish School in Pretoria with a Polish and South African educational curriculum. The godfather of this idea was Basil van Loggerenberg, the husband of Polish doctor Katarzyna nee Jaworska, and Fr. Stanislaw Lipski became the patron of this project. The Organising Committee was established in June 1991 and its core was represented by Basil van , Jerzy

Wapiennik and Jerzy Potrawiak. The Committee members set a very high standard for the Polish School and the students of high school were obliged to write their examination papers according to requirements of St. Aloysius College in Glasgow, Scotland and then they were sent there for checking and marking anonymously. The matriculation in such a school opened the doors of all universities in Europe and the USA. The Polish School could not stand on its own and its existence had to be in conjunction with other schools. The Greek and Portuguese Schools were not interested in a Polish offer but the Chinese School accepted the Polish proposal with great enthusiasm on condition that the number of Polish pupils would not be greater than 49% and the Polish pupils would be obliged to learn the Mandarin language. The conditions were accepted and thirty eight Polish children began their new school year in the new Chinese / Polish School in Pretoria in January 1992. The Polish subjects (language, history, geography) were taught by Polish teachers Agata Runowicz and Maria Piotrowicz and catechesis instruction were given by Fr. Wojciech Swiatkowski and Fr. Jan Westfal. The activities of the Chinese / Polish School ceased in December 1999 when the last Polish children left the school. The Chinese / Polish School in Pretoria became a world event.



Fr. Stanislaw Lipski had been transferred to Cape Town and Fr. Wojciech Swiatkowski arrived in Pretoria from Mossel Bay in January 1992 due to the rotation policy of the Society of Christ. Fr. W. Swiatkowski, young, energetic priest, sport lover, mountain climber, worthily replaced his predecessor. All activities of the PPC and Polish Club were continued

even with greater enthusiasm. In the same time the Polish Diplomatic Mission had been elevated to the rank of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland. Mr Stanislaw Cieniuch, first Polish Ambassador, asked our Parish if the celebration of the feast of the God's Mother Queen of Poland and 3rd May Constitution Day could be combined with the grand opening ceremony of the Polish Embassy and if it could take place in the newly erected building of the Embassy at 14 Amos St, Colbyn, Pretoria. Fr. W. Swiatkowski accepted the Ambassador's request without hesitation and we had a magnificent National Day attended by over 350 Poles from all Polish centres in Transvaal. The organisation of this Feast was a great success for the Polish Club in Pretoria which was responsible for it.



Very soon after his arrival Fr. W. Swiatkowski started to propagate an idea of organising a Polish sport competitions. PPC and the Polish Club caught on to this idea and the First Polish Sport Day was held on the grounds of NISSAN Sport Club in Pretoria

on the 23rd May 1992. The programme of this sport competition was rich in events. There was soccer, volleyball, tennis, table tennis, chess, bridge, darts and events for children. This sports feast was attended by around 300 Poles from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Vanderbijlpark, Secunda and Witbank. It was another great success for PPC and the Polish Club and after the event there was a common request for the repetition of the Polish Sport Day in the next year.

In this period of time the parishes in Pretoria, Johannesburg and



*Mrs. Loggerenberg, Mira Sadowska,
Jadwiga Piasecka, Andrzej Muzyk*

Vanderbijlpark managed by the priests of the Society of Christ began to cooperate in all activities performed by them. This cooperation relied on mutual support and an attendance in all undertakings organised by these parishes.

The year 1993 brought South Africa very serious political tension related to the transfer of power. The climax of this struggle was an assassination of communist leader, Chris Hani, in which Pole, Janusz Walus, was implicated. The wave of the hate was directed at Poles, and all Polish priests and leaders of Polish organizations received letters with death threats signed by SACP, APLA and the ANC. In this dangerous situation all

Polish mass events were called off. The Polish community members had a security guard during Sunday Masses. The Polish Club called off the Polish Sport Day and the Polish Embassy called off the feast of the God's Mother Queen of Poland and celebration of 3rd May Constitution Day. The National Day was celebrated locally in our Immaculate Conception Church and from that year this feast has become a yearly celebration in our Parish.

The member of our Parish Maciek Florczyk, triple champion of RSA in taekwendo (a kind of martial arts) took part in the World Championship in Madison Square Garden Hall, USA from the 16th to 23rd August 1993. Maciek reached the quarter final in the 60 to 64 kg division. His participation in the championship was sponsored by Marian Baran and Roman Komodolowicz, also the members of our Parish. Fr. Wojciech and a group of 10 parishioners took part in a two week unforgettable safari tour in Botswana and Zimbabwe. On a route of over 5000 km they visited Okavango Swamps, Chobe National Park, Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Matopos National Park and the Great



Zimbabwe Ruins. The participants of this tour were so excited that they decided to repeat the excursion in future but unfortunately it never materialised.



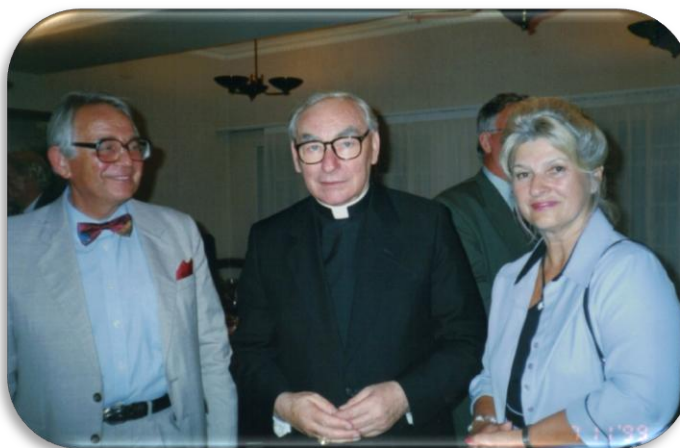
On the 23rd January 1994 our Parish said farewell to Fr. Wojciech Swiatkowski and welcomed the new priest Fr. Jan Westfal. Fr. W. Swiatkowski had been transferred to Durban and

Fr. J. Westfal came from

Cape Town. Fr. Jan Westfal knew his duties very well and he continued the management of the parish without any problems continuing the system of his predecessors. The PPC and Polish Club continued the organisation of annual events and celebrations like "Andrzejki" Balls, New Year's Eve Balls and feast of God's Mother Queen of Poland

and 3rd May Constitution Day. They also organised movie shows, dancing parties, picnic excursions, Thursday rendezvous with a song, birthday parties, Santa Clause feasts, Mother's Day, Child's Day etc.; simply all social gatherings. The "Andrzejki" Balls were specially supported for many years by Halina and Chris Bojara from Krisco Travel Agency and Dr R. Sadowski from AERO-Travel Tours who donated return ticket to Europe as a main reward in raffles.

By the end of 1993, newcomers from Poland, Grzegorz Paszczyk choreographer and his wife Joanna accompanist, decided to teach Polish folk dances to the youth group. The declaration was taken by the Polish Club and The Polish Folk Dance Group "The



Polonez" and established in April 1994. *With Archbishop Wesoly from Rome*

The technical management and coordination was taken by Mrs Aleksandra Jaworska and later on by another choreographer, Anna Wojnarowska, who joined the Group.



The Group included 10 pairs, mainly pupils of high schools. After a few months of hard work the Group performed not only in front of Polish audiences but in the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg for the

Annual Congress of the World League of Portuguese Women (8th October 1994), the Jacaranda Festival in Pretoria (19th November 1994), the Christmas Festival in Mary Immaculate Convent in Johannesburg (26th November 1994) and the Festival "Know Our Cultures" in Pretoria University (25th February 1995). All performances were accepted by the audiences with great applause and great admiration for the Polish costumes and Polish folk dances. The Group was a tremendous success in the Polish Parishes in Pretoria.

The Polish community in South Africa experienced one of the greatest moment in their life when Pope John Paul II visited the Republic of South Africa on the 16th and 17th of September 1995.

A very solemn Holy Mass was concelebrated by the Pope on the grounds of the horse racecourse in Gosforth Park, Germiston, on Sunday the 17th September 1995 for tens of thousands of believers. The



Polish Folk Dance Group from Pretoria performed with great success in front of the Pope and a very huge, multinational audience as part of the entertainment part of this feast.

The first General Meeting of the Polish Club in Pretoria was held on the 14th April 1996 and a new Board was elected: Jerzy Sadowski (Chairman), Grzegorz Paszczyk (Vice-chairman), Andrzej Muzyk (Secretary), Jerzy Wapiennik (Treasurer) and Leopold Bobak, Wieslaw Budzinski, Adam Florczyk (Members). The Polish and Portuguese Parish Council rolled into one Parish Council with the Chairman Manuel de Abreu in the beginning of 1997. The next initiative of the Polish Club “The Cinema of Polish Movie” was established on 20th September 1996. All necessary equipment had been bought and the shows of old Polish movies were organised once a week.

Our Parish was quite often visited by prominent Polish members of the church hierarchy. We visited Fr. Stanislaw Lipski, Provincial Superior (1995), Fr. Tadeusz Winnicki, General Superior (1966), Bishop Wojciech Zaremba, Head of the Polish Episcopacy Delegation (1997), Fr. C. Osika, Fr. A. Zuziak, Fr. R. Werner, Provincial Superiors from England (1997), Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Primate of Poland (1998), Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly, Head of World Polish Diaspora Committee in the Vatican (1999), Fr. Krzysztof Tyliczszak, Provincial Superior (2002), Fr. Marian Jachym, Provincial Vice Superior (2003).

The year 1997 became critical for the Polish community of our Parish and their activities slowed down considerably after emigration of a few of its leaders like Aleksandra and Tadeusz Wnorowski (1994), Jerzy and Wanda Potrawiak (1996), Jerzy and Maria



Wapiennik (1997). Many other Polish families emigrated due to political uncertainty in the country. The number of Polish parishioners decreased considerably. The Polish Folk Dance Group had to suspend its activities due to the resignation of more than half of its members who after matriculation went to university. Lack of attendance caused the



Visit of Apostolic Nuncio 1996

suspension of movie shows. The edition of "The Polonez" was ceased in February 1998 due to fragmentation of the editorial team.

The Polish Club at its stormy AGM on 16th

August 1998 elected a new Board of organisation. The new Board was elected as follows: Leopold Bobak (Chairman), Dorota Znatowicz (Vice-chairman), Izabella Cichon (Secretary), Jolanta Kuczynska (Treasury) and Alicia Zielinska, Adam Florczyk, Malgorzata Budzynska, Bozena Muzyk, Anna Muzyk and Marek Michalski (Members). The new Board proposed a very ambitious programme to start up all activities which were suspended or ceased; but lack of unity and cooperation within the Board caused the Board not to survive past two years and the Polish Club became dormant. The big tragedy happened on 24th October 1999 when Fr. Jan Westfal died in a road accident. The whole

Parish was cast into deep mourning; we lost a great priest completely devoted to Polish matters. Our mourning did not

last too long. In the beginning of December 1999, well known priest and our friend, Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec took over the Parish of Immaculate Conception. Fr. Bogdan with his enthusiasm, energy, organisational skills and with a sense of humor began a new



chapter in the life of our Parish. The Thursday's rendezvous with guitar and Saturday's picnic excursions came back. The number of parishioners slowly began to grow. The Polish Club was recalled to active service in May 2002 under the leadership of Jerzy Sadowski (Chairman), Izabella Cichon (Secretary), Ursula Kacka (Treasurer) and Zenon

Rozycki, Elzbieta Osuch, Tomasz Mazus (Revision Commission).

The programme of action contained all activities abandoned previously. The editing of "The Polonez" was renewed in May 2002 by Fr. Bogdan as the editor in chief. Fr. Bogdan handed over the editing of "The Polonez" in August 2002 to



the editorial team Izabella Cichon (editor in chief), Jarek Cichon, Andrzej Druzynski, Hania Mazus, Tomasz Mazus, Zenon Rozycki, Mira Sadowska and Jerzy Sadowski. The new version of "The Polonez" was edited in full colours due to Jarek Cichon's endeavour. Fr. Bogdan began the editing of his own monthly bulletin "Zrodlo" ("Spring"), very interesting magazine devoted to rising up the level of our religiousness.

Unfortunately the editing of “The Polonez” was suspended in February 2003 as a result of a depleted editorial team.

On 4th May 2003 our Parish celebrated a very great feast of the 20th anniversary of missionary work of the priests of Society of Christ in South Africa. Our guests were the prominent Polish members of church hierarchy from Vatican, England, Australia, Brazil, Iceland, RSA and Poland. This solemn celebration was attended by over 300 people and it was great organisational success of Fr. Bogdan and his Coordination Committee.

All activities of the Polish Club were gradually taken over by the Parish Council and Fr. Bogdan Wilkaniec. Two last enterprises organised by the Polish Club were Mother’s Day and Child’s Day in May 2004 and after that the Polish Club became dormant again.



With a Cardinal Glemp – Primate of Poland

From that time on all the religious and social activities of the Parish are continuously held but on a smaller scale; they became more chamber enterprises. Unfortunately, it is not easy to inspire the Polish community after so many years of stagnation.

Jerzy Sadowski



Fr Filip before priestly ordination.

POLISH PASTORAL CARE - Elzbieta Osuch - Parish Vice Chairman

In the Parish of the Immaculate Conception, the Polish community has formed an integral part of the local congregation for at least a quarter of the century.

The history of the Polish community in our Parish is established since 1990, when Fr Stanislaw Lipski SChr, a Polish Chaplain, was appointed as a Parish Priest. From the very beginning, he won the heart and friendship of the Polish community. Poles, for the very first time in their emigration period, in Africa, had the privilege of a Polish priest and Sunday Masses in their mother tongue, special religious and national feasts as well as Christmas Eve Masses. The very first Mass in Polish was celebrated on the 4th of February 1990.



The history of Polish Communities in South Africa started much earlier; from the time of the Second World War, when a great number of Polish orphans were sent to Oudtshoorn. Their parents were killed or taken to Siberia. The second, great wave of Polish migrants, occurred when, the communist government in Poland proclaimed Marshal Law. According to statistics, in the years 1981 to 1982, approximately six thousand Poles immigrated to South Africa. They scattered around the country with the largest concentrations in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Vanderbijlpark, Secunda, Durban and Cape Town.

It was obvious, that the majority of the Polish immigrants wanted to cultivate their religious and national traditions which are based on the principals of the Catholic Church. This justified the presence of Polish Priests in South Africa. They were essential to quell the hunger for cultivating Polish traditions in the hearts of the Polish immigrants. In this crucial time, when the number of immigrants was so large, only one Polish priest, Fr Jan Jaworski was serving Poles. In the year 1981, the South African Bishops Conference, approached Fr Zbigniew Pajdak, the Provincial of The Society of Christ for Polish Migrants in Australia and New Zealand, to send to South Africa a Polish Priest as an answer to numerous requests originating from the various growing Polish communities. These requests were acknowledged and accepted, resulting in the arrival of the first Polish priest from the Society of Christ, Fr Jan Westfal SChr and Fr Jozef Kolodziej SChr. Fr Westfal took over the Polish Community in Vanderbijlpark and Fr Kolodziej served the Poles in Secunda. In 1983 Fr Kolodziej fell sick and flew back to Australia.

His replacement was Fr Stanislaw Marut, who unfortunately, after a few months also fell sick and soon afterwards, died. His body rests eternally in the West Park Cemetery in Johannesburg.

In the year 1987, Fr Stanislaw Lipski arrived from Australia and took over the Polish Centre in Johannesburg and Secunda, after the late Fr Marut. Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec SChr arrived in 1988 and took over the Polish Community in Vanderbijlpark after Fr Westfal, who was transferred to organise the Polish centre in Cape Town. Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec, Local Superior of the Society of Christ in South Africa, approached the Archbishop of Pretoria George Daniel with a request to open a Polish centre in Pretoria as an answer to many requests of Polish people in this area. In the year 1990, his Grace, Archbishop, fulfilled this request by allocating the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Pretoria Gardens. The first Polish Parish priest in the church was Fr Stanislaw Lipski. It is clear that 1990 was the beginning of a very strong and vibrant Polish Centre, both religiously and culturally.

On the 26th August 1990, the Polish Community established a Polish Pastoral Council, which helped Poles organize themselves as a strong and active group of immigrants. The Sunday Masses, celebrated in the Polish language, gathered all local Poles into the church. Very quickly, the church choir was established. Everything that has taken place in our Parish (all the Sacraments, Polish national and religious feasts) was documented in the Parish News, under the name: “Wiadomosci Duszpasterskie”. Very soon this form of communication was not sufficient and the Polish Club was opened as a new form of information communication. Additionally a monthly magazine called the



“Polonez” containing all the information, from the religion field, to everything that was considered relevant in Poland, from cultural to economic aspects. This magazine was published until 1998.

In January 1991, Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec arrived in our Community. He was expecting to take over the parish in Bryanston, Johannesburg, but during this time of waiting, with his energy, and good spirit, full of enthusiasm and love he stormed Pretoria’s community. He initiated “Thursday Gatherings” with guitar and Polish songs. The atmosphere of these gatherings was so great that people still remember these good times. He organised “Saturday outings” into the African vibrant nature, often by bicycles. Everybody liked to be part of

these activities. A great spirit kept together our Polish community. After a few months, Fr Bogdan had to leave to take his new post in Johannesburg.

Since 1991, the Polish Community started to celebrate special religious and national feast by special Holy Masses, occasional plays and commemorative gatherings usually ending with Polish cuisine prepared by the Polish ladies. One of the first celebrations was a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the death of the Polish Cardinal, Wyszyński.

Our Polish priests decided that, each parish will celebrate, in a very special way a specific feast together with other Polish centres. The feasts were subdivided between the various communities as follows: Pretoria, Our Lady Queen of Poland and Constitution of Poland on 3rd May; Vanderbijlpark, Feast of Our Lady from Czestochowa on 15th September; Johannesburg, Polish Independence Day on 11th November. This unique way of celebrating was the best way of bringing together the Polish immigrants in prayer and God's Spirit.

Fr Stanislaw was responsible for our parish until 1992 and our memories of him will always be in our hearts, memories of a great priest, friend and founder of the Polish Pastoral Care in Pretoria.

After Fr Stanislaw left, Fr Wojciech Swiatkowski took over our Parish and he continued the work of his predecessor. As before weekly guitar gathering and Saturday outings were still organised. The beautiful safari camp in Botswana and Zimbabwe is still remembered. Fr Wojciech was passionate about sport and organised the Sport Olympics and other sports events. Together with the Polish Club, New Year's dances and other joyful events were organised to build and strengthen our immigrant community.

In January 1994, Fr Wojciech was transferred to Durban and Fr Jan Westfal came to the Parish.

He continued Fr Wojciech's pastoral care for the Polish people as well as the



whole Parish. His involvement should be emphasised in the area of children's education in the Polish School which was established in the Pretoria Chinese School. There our children had regular lessons in the Polish language, Polish history, geography, and Roman Catholic catechism. The Polish tradition and Polish customs were appreciated by the staff of this school and as a result they took part in various events such as the national dance.

In 1998 the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Pretoria established the Polish School for Polish citizens living in South Africa. The school was organised by the Polish government with fully accredited programmes required by the Ministry of Education in Poland. In this light, the Chinese school was dissolved and religion lessons were moved to the Parish hall. We should congratulate our parishioners: Magdalena Paweska for finalising primary Polish School, as well as Piotr Osuch, Stanislaw Osuch, Dominik Mon, Anna Mon, Filip Kozlowski, Marcin Kozlowski and Bartek Ruszkowski, for their great achievements finalising both primary and high Polish School, with excellent marks.

Fr Jan was involved in charity works, especially helping the children from the orphanage run by the nuns "Sisters of Mother Teresa" in Mabopane. Very often we had a special collection of money, clothes or food. During the great flood in Poland, in 1997,

our church ran a special humanitarian action to help our countrymen.



*Cardinal Glemp – Primate of Poland,
Archbishop Daniel, Fr Jan Westfal*

In the year 1995, Fr Stanislaw Lipski, who was a Provincial of Australia and New Zealand, came to visit our Polish Centres in South Africa. We welcomed him with great joy as our own Priest had not been with us long. One year later in, 1996, the General Superior of the Society of Christ from Poland, Fr Taduesz

Winnicki honoured us by his canonical visit.

In 1998, Primate of Poland Cardinal Jozef Glemp, arrived in South Africa to meet with the Polish Emigrants. After the solemn Mass, celebrated by the honourable guest, we had an opportunity to listen to the national singing and dancing group, "Harenda".

Fr Jan Westfal was well known for his devotion to our Mother Mary and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and he introduced this devotion to our parish community. In October 1999, Fr Jan, on his way to the Ngome Marian Shrine, had a car accident and died instantly. His death was a great shock to our Pretoria community. We lost not only a



Priest but also a friend, the one who as a pioneer came to us as a Polish Father when we were in great need. We were left without a Priest and the future of the Polish community was uncertain.

Our petitions were heard and in December 1999 the Pastoral care of Polish people in the Pretoria district was taken by Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec SChr. After sadness and pain over the death of Fr Jan, joy and hope entered into our hearts. Our Parish resurrected, a

new spirit and enthusiasm descended upon us. Once again, we started to organize our Thursday gatherings, as well as theological and philosophical discussions. We renewed our Saturday guitars outings. Unfortunately, after so many years of stagnation every effort to bring back the Spirit of togetherness was not easy, however, after a few months the effects of Fr Bogdan's initiatives were noticeable.

The number of Mass attendees increased rapidly, altar servers, readers and other posts in the liturgical services flourished. Fr. Bogdan's strong voice inspired us to sing, and a new song book, compiled by Father, helped us to participate in the Holy Liturgy.

In January 2000 the Polish Sunday School was established on our parish premises. Every Sunday, Polish children learned about our religion, especially those who were prepared for the Sacrament of the First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Besides the religious education, they learned about Polish culture, tradition and actively participated in the national patriotic feasts. Our school organised outings during which we deepened our relationship with God and each other. Most of our boys were involved (and still are) in the liturgical service. We should mention the great financial and patriotic involvement of our Polish Embassy especially his Excellency Roman Szuniewicz, Ambassador of Poland and Consuls Marian Bark and Marek Kolanski.





The Polish Sunday School, as a part of our local church communities, was included into the structure of English Sunday School, which helped us to assimilate with our local, English speaking friends. This resulted in more organised camps and other events together. In this light, I would like to mention and express our sincere thanks to the Polish catechism teachers: Elżbieta Osuch, Zenon Różycki, Izabela Cichoń, Zofia Florczyk.

From the very beginning of his pastoral work, Fr Bogdan actively integrated Polish communities in Pretoria, which required a lot of effort and dedication. In the year 2001, the Polish Club, started editing the monthly magazine “Polonez” once again and Fr Bogdan continued to publish his weekly bulletin “Sunday News” informing us about current affairs from Poland as well as other religions matters. In October 2002, Fr Bogdan initiated a new Catholic Magazine “Zrodlo” (“Wellspring”) which extended to all



Station of the Cross prepared by Polish Children with Fr Tomasz Wojciak and School teacher Elżbieta Osuch

Polish centers in South Africa. The social and religious uncertainty occurring amongst Polish immigrants was the main inspiration for publishing the above-mentioned magazine. Polish people drifted away from their national roots leaving aside the depth of religious traditions and authenticities. It is visible especially amongst the young generation, where culture can be lost very easily if not cultivated, for who even the Polish language became a foreign tongue and the Polish culture, occurred as a strange and unknown element from the past. In these realities, the magazine “Zrodlo” was an attempt to uncover the true value of our origin and search for the answers to our existence and final purpose in our lives.



All the Catholic feasts, that we celebrated, were based on the various Polish traditions. These feasts included: Palm Sundays, Holy Week, Resurrection, Christmas Eve Mass and others. We had moving emotional experiences during the Stations of the Cross, which were prepared by, not only Fr. Bogdan, but each one of the parishioners. This intimate

way of prayer prompted us to deeply reflect about our own unworthiness. It became a tradition that children from the Polish Sunday school actively participated in the preparation and reflections of the Station of the Cross during the period of Lent. Other innovations in our religious experiences included celebration of the Holy Thursday, when in the oneness of our Parish Communities, (English and Polish) we shared a Pascal meal and entered into the celebration of the Eucharist.



Another tradition was the yearly celebration of the feats of Our Lady of Poland and the Polish Constitution passed on 3rd May. We always had a lot of guests and visitors from the Church hierarchy and Polish Embassy. The great number of our fellow Poles from different Polish Centers took part in these events. The atmosphere and spirituality of celebrations was always

great and bonded us together as one Nation on the African soil.

As the continuation of Fr Jan's devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2002 our community participated in the blessing of the painting "Divine Mercy" painted by Zenon Rozycki during the solemn Mass concelebrated by Msgr Jan Jaworski, Fr Stanislaw



Lipski and Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec. This was already the second painting offered as a gift by Mr Rozycki. The first one was a picture of Our Lady as a patron of Our Immaculate Conception Parish.

One has to mention the enormous effort and work done by Fr Bogdan in the renovation of our church and in the building of the well and the

irrigation system around the church garden. Building the well was an absolute necessity to avoid disaster and the collapse of the church because of the water that gathered under the church's foundation. It is noteworthy to also mention the renovation of the organ pipes in our church.

Fr Bogdan was involved in the pastoral care over the Polish prisoners in South Africa and became the only Polish Chaplain for the South African Prisoners.



By the Bishop Decree he was also appointed the Chaplain of the "Knights of da Gamma Council 4 Pretoria". Thanks to Fr Bogdan there was much closer cooperation between Polish and English Communities. Every year in December, Parish Council Members and the Catechism teachers attended the end of the year functions where Fr Bogdan gives thanks and gratitude to all parishioners who assisted in building our community on a physical and spiritual level.

On the 4th May 2003 we celebrated four great anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of the work of the Polish priests from the Society of Christ in South Africa, 55th anniversary of the existence of the Polish Society in Johannesburg, 60th anniversary of the settlement of the Polish orphans in Oudtshoorn and the 25th anniversary of the existence of the Polish Council in Southern Africa. We have welcomed guests from Poland, Rome,



England, Australia, Brasil, Island and South Africa. The solemn mass was concelebrated in the two languages, Polish and English, by his Excellency Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly (protector of the Polish Community in the world), his Excellency Archbishop Blasco Francisco Collaco., Apostolic Nuncio in Pretoria, his Excellency Archbishop George Francis Daniel, Archbishop of Pretoria, Fr. Tadeusz Winnicki, General Superior of the Society of Christ, Fr Krzysztof Tyliszczak, Provincial of the Society of Christ in UK, Fr Wlodzimierz Pajak, Treasurer of the province of the Society of Christ in UK, Msgr Jan Jaworski, Fr Stanislaw Lipski, parish priest from JHB, and Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec. In the beautifully decorated church it was difficult to find empty space. Our community has welcomed distinguished guests from the Polish government with the Deputy Speaker of the Senate Mrs Jolanta Danielak, Chairman of the “Wspolnota Polska” (“Polish Community”) Prof Andrzej Stelmachowski, Director of the Consular Department of the Foreign Office Mr Wieslaw Osuchowski, Executive from the Senate



Office Mrs Ewa Czerniawska, Consul Mr Marian Bark and Mrs Anna Brabander from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Honorary Consul from Mozambique Mr Alberto Mabjaia, President of the Polish Council in

Southern Africa Mrs Dubla Kalinowska and many more distinguished guests. Fr Tadeusz Winnicki in his sermon emphasised that our polish tradition is deeply rooted in catholic faith and praised all Polish priests from the Society of Christ for the enormous work and



effort in the constant support of Polish emigrant. A very interesting combination of the pipe organs played by Prof Elzbieta Osuch (organist during Polish Sunday Mass since 2002) and guitars band by Manuel de Abreau gave the celebration an enhanced character. During the celebration, the banner offered by Prof Stelmachowski of the “Wspolnota Polska” was blessed. This banner should

be the symbol of the unity in South Africa and unity with homeland. Many words of thanks towards Polish priests came from the many other guests. The art programme was performed by the youngest members of the Polish Community.

Although the ceremony lasted 3 hours no one wanted to leave and all gathered in the garden to celebrate further with music, delicious food prepared by the Polish ladies and lots of joy.

The Polish Catechism School, apart from regular Sunday classes was active in organising many summer holiday camps for the Polish children. Memorable ones are in the beautiful valley created by the fall of the meteorite millions of years ago, near Vanderbijlpark



in Hakuna Matata in 2004 and 2005. The children, besides playing soccer, netball, swimming in the river, hiking, horse riding, were also growing spiritually by having Mass every day and religious discussions. Later on, from 2006, the summer camps became so popular that the English community joined us and continued through nature and fun to teach our children how to know and love God. More and more often

both communities started to organise fundraising, end of the year functions for the catechism teachers and parish council members together as one group. This symbiosis lasts to date and gives us a sense of unity.



The Polish traditions of celebrating Christmas have not been forgotten. All of these traditions (“Midnight Mass, Pasterka”, singing Polish carols and sharing bread as a symbol of love forgiveness and unity) have quelled the melancholic nostalgia of the Polish immigrants. There were also surprises for the smallest brought by

Santa Clause. Competitions, including 'building the best crib' were organised, which was won by the Ziolkowski brothers (Mateusz, Szymek, Lukasz) from Pretoria. As a reward they received medals given by the Polish Ambassador, Romuald Szuniewicz.

In May 2004 the Polish Community celebrated another big feast, “The inclusion of Poland into the European Union”. Again the main celebration was in Pretoria with guests from all over South Africa and Poland. The solemn Mass was celebrated by the Vicar General Fr Zbigniew Rakiej SChr, Fr Stanislaw Lipski and Fr Bogdan. The Mass was attended by many guests with Consuls Mr Marian Bark and Mrs Anna Brabander from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, nuns “Little Servants of Mary Immaculate” from Lyndhurst and many others guest.

On the 1st May 2005 the Polish local Community and Polish immigrants from all over the country celebrated yet another “60th anniversary of the end of the second World War” and the memory of the Katyn massacre and Warsaw uprising. The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Pretoria Mr Romuald Szuniewicz in his speech expressed gratitude to all killed during the 2nd World War. Again this time the children from the Polish Catechism School in the artistic programme prepared by Prof Elzbieta Osuch presented the tragedy and glory of those who died. As a continuation this was followed by the performance of the “Theatre mirror” from Poland, a play about God, Honour, and the Motherland through the eyes of Urszula Ledochowska a Roman Catholic nun and the founder of the “Congregation of the Ursulines of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus”.

The 2nd of April will always be remembered as one of the saddest days. Our beloved Pope John Paul the II died. We gathered during the Requiem Mass to pray for the soul of our beloved Pope. The



solemn Mass was concelebrated by Fr Stanislaw Lipski, Fr Terry Duran, Fr Joseph

Malopo and Fr Bogdan. Again both English and Polish communities joined together in their prayers. Many guests from the protestant, Dutch reformed Church (with pastor Horn) attended this memorable celebration. There was an opportunity to write ones thoughts in the Book of Condolence. Coincidentally during



the same time Fr Bogdan received two Papal Blessings (given by the Pope John Paul II still before his death) for the two members of the Parish Council Mr Manuel de Abreau and Dr Elzbieta Osuch for their tremendous work, effort and time offered to the Polish and English Communities for many years. This gift from our beloved Pope will always shine on us but also motivates and obligates all of us to do more and better. We should follow in the steps of John Paul II to serve and love with all our hearts.



In June 2005 our community said “goodbye” to Consul Mr Marian Bark who for so many years was deeply involved in the support of Polish immigrants. As a gift our



community has offered him the painting of the Holy Family escaping to Egypt. Mr Bark has also given us the Cross from the Holy Land which is now placed next to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

In the same year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Priesthood of our parish priest Fr Bogdan. Once again our parish walls housed hundreds of parishioners who wanted to say thanks and

praised Fr Bodgan for all the hard and generous work he has done for the Polish and English Communities. Guests also gathered from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland with Consul Marek Kolanski, from Johannesburg, Vanderbijlpark, nuns "Little Servants of Mary Immaculate" from Lyndhurst and members from the Knights of da Gama.

On 9th December 2007 we celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. From the Polish Community Piotr Osuch and Mateusz Ziolkowski received the gifts of the Holy Spirit from the hands of His Excellency Archbishop George Daniel. Solemn Mass was concelebrated by His Excellency Archbishop George Daniel, Msgr Miroslaw Adamczyk Councillor from the Embassy of the Holy See and Fr Bogdan.



In December 2010 we celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. From the Polish Community Stanislaw Osuch, Filip Kozlowski and Szymon Ziolkowski received the gifts of the Holy Spirit from the hands of His Excellency Archbishop George Daniel.

In the course of time, the living condition in Poland improved rapidly and the uncertainty of the political and economic situation in South Africa increased, causing



many Poles from South Africa to return to their homeland or immigrate to other countries. Presently, in Pretoria, we have only about 150 Polish families.

For the Polish People who emigrated from their own country, the church is a centre of cultural and religious enrichment. For me, personally, it is a great

privilege to be involved in this task of building a true image of a Polish community by playing organ during every church celebration, being part of the Parish Council and teaching our children to uphold the richness of our faith and cultures.

May
God be
praised for
His
goodness
for sending
us such
great
Priests; into
our Parish



Community. Their *Celebration of the Polish National Feast in 2001*

involvement in our daily lives

was and still is priceless. Without our Priests we would not celebrate Polish Mass and national and religious feasts. Because of them, we are not losing our national identity and our children are growing up in the spirit of Christianity with a seed of love towards our Mother land, Poland.

May God repay all of the Polish Priests, for their effort in keeping us in the spirit of love. May the Holy Mother Mary embrace all of them with Her love.

God bless!!!

Elzbieta Osuch

FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

During the last fifty years of our Parish history, the community celebrated: **687 baptisms, 261 confirmations, 178 weddings.**

The history reflects that our community is small but very vibrant. By analyzing the names of our members in the parish registry, one can easily conclude that we are a true “Rainbow Nation”. This parish is therefore a shelter for all nationalities, languages and cultures.

At the very beginning (1960) the Oblates Fathers, laid the first foundations for a new parish community after which Fr De Vos let the seed of God’s plan grow into a new congregation.

The Oblates are held in the highest esteem by many thousands of faithful, of all races, to whom from the earliest days they have brought the message and comfort of our Holy Faith. Later, when the Oblates left the parish, it experienced difficulty in finding a permanent Parish Priest.

It was only in 1990 when the Polish Congregation of the Society of Christ made an agreement with Archbishop Daniel allowing them to provide permanent pastoral care. This care was not only directed at the Polish community but at all the parishioners. The Polish Community has not only received spiritual guidance and fulfillment but has received a “home” for their cultural and social activities.

As a small group of dedicated, bounded by faith people, we are a self supportive congregation helping one another. The generosity of our parishioners is the fundamental factor that is constantly building a unique congregation of faithful in Pretoria Gardens.

May God bless those who engraved their names in the history of this church and those who are currently strengthening the foundations of the church and community with love and concern for one another.

Let the presence of our Mother Mary help us in being a fruitful Family of God.

Fr Bogdan Wilkaniec SChr.



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