



PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER NO. 120

Rudolph (Edward) Wieszczyk, OFM

1923-2009

Edward Wieszczyk was born to James Wieszczyk and Anna Mozdierz on November 10, 1923, in the Polish enclave of Hamtramck, a suburb of Detroit, MI. He had two sisters Helen and Mary as well as a brother, Stanley. Edward's father died when he was four years old leaving his widowed mother to raise four children.

Baptized and confirmed at St. Florian Church, he attended the parish elementary school. After attending Copernicus Junior High, he moved on to attend Hamtramck Public High School.

Graduating in 1942, he applied to the Franciscan Friars in Pulaski WI to join the Order and begin studying for the priesthood. Because he needed studies in Latin he was admitted to St. Bonaventure High School in Sturtevant WI, for a year of intense coursework. The outbreak of WWII made high school graduates eligible for the draft and so Edward was invested in the Franciscan Order on June 25, 1944, rather than the traditional August 14th. Entering religious life he took the name of Rudolph which he kept until his death.

Following the traditional course of formation, Rudolph received his BA degree from St. Francis College in Burlington WI, in 1949. Theological studies were completed at Lourdes Theologate in Cedar Lake, IN, and it was there that he received his minor orders. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 17, 1954, by Bishop Leo Pursley in the parish church in Cook, IN, which is near the seminary.

Rudolph's first assignment after ordination was to the faculty of St. Anthony of Padua H.S. and Minor Seminary in Watkins Glen, NY. After two years he was assigned to parish ministry at Assumption BVM parish in Pulaski, WI, in 1956 as assistant pastor. After eleven years of winning the hearts and souls of parishioners, he was feted not only by the St. Ann Society but by the parish at the Pulaski Picnic Grove. While at Pulaski, Rudolph acquired expertise in climbing the clock tower to adjust the mechanism for the clock face which was visible for a few miles above the trees and roofs of the village of Pulaski. Rudolph also was known for his ability to collect donations for the two annual parish picnics.

Moving to North Baltimore, OH, in 1967, Rudolph was appointed Administrator of Miraculous Medal Parish together with Sacred Heart Mission in Cygnet, OH. It was at this assignment that Rudolph finally learned to drive so that he was no longer dependent upon the charity of friends and parishioners. After five years, Rudolph began a series of parish help-outs which would last for the next twenty years. From 1972 to 1992, he was Assistant Pastor at Holy Cross in New Britain, CN, Holy Rosary in Passaic, NJ, and finally at St. Hedwig in Cambridge, MA.

Approaching his 70th year, Rudolph moved to St. Pius X Friary in Philadelphia where he helped out at nearby St. Martha Parish. He was recruited by Fr. Joel Szydowski, Director of Pastoral Care to be a part-time chaplain at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton, NJ.

Because of deteriorating health Rudolph moved to Queen of Peace Friary in Burlington, WI, where he enjoyed his retirement and occasional bus trips to the casino in Milwaukee. Francis may have had his lady Jacoba, but Rudolph sought the company of the more fickle lady Luck who lurked in the poorer area of the nickel slot machines. He was always sending his donations of \$2.00 to the various charities that deluged his mail box—his “widow’s mite” sharing of lady Luck’s beneficence.

Rudolph touched the lives of many people with his pastoral ministry. He had a great joy for living, a Franciscan twinkle in his eyes and the ability to see things through to the end.

Rudolph was a great promoter of the 2-2-2 devotion to St. Joseph: two *Our Fathers*, two *Hail Mary’s* and two *Glory be’s* in honor of St. Joseph. It was simple, do-able and fit any occasion or need. May his loving patron lead him into the company of Mary and Jesus during the season of Advent.

May his sould and souls of all our departed friars, relatives and benefactors rest in peace. Amen.

Fr. Richard Tulko OFM

Secretary