

Mission Church Is Home to San Diego's Polish Community

PACIFIC BEACH — On Jan. 10, Bishop Robert H. Brom celebrated Mass, blessed new buildings and attended a special dinner with parishioners — all at St. Maximilian Kolbe Roman Catholic Polish Mission in Pacific Beach.

Concelebrants at the Mass included Father Tomasz Sielicki, superior general of the Society of Christ in Poland; Father Pawel Bandurski, SCh., from Chicago, who serves as North American provincial of the Society of Christ; and Father Jerzy Frydrych, SCh., current pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

“This event has been almost 40 years in the making,” Father Frydrych said.

The mission celebrated its first Polish-language Mass in July 1971 at the Carmelite monastery on Hawley Boulevard in San Diego. Because parishioners did not have their own church building, they gathered for worship at the monastery's chapel as well as at Blessed Sacrament and Our Mother of Confidence parishes.

The first pastors of the mission were Fathers Justynian Pawelek and Fryderyk Gorka. Later, Fathers Thomas Thompson

and Gerard Oblonczek guided its congregation.

In 1995, the Society of Christ was entrusted with ministry to the Polish Catholic community in San Diego and surrounding areas. Founded in 1932 by Polish Cardinal August Hlond, the society's mission is to bring spiritual guidance to Poles living outside of Poland.

Also in 1995, after years of yearning for their own place of worship, parishioners at the mission finally attained their own church, located at 1735 Grand Ave. in Pacific Beach. This major milestone took place under the leadership of Father Stanislaw Kowalski, SCh. After the remodeling of the existing building, Bishop Brom blessed the sanctuary on Dec. 22, 1996.

Father Kowalski was succeeded as pastor by Father Edward Traczyk, SCh. Since 2005, Father Frydrych has held that position.

In 2007, with the help and persistence of many parishioners, the mission fully repaid a loan taken out for its church building. In 2009, the John Paul II Parish Hall was renovated and the rectory was constructed. On



TRADITION: Father Jerzy Frydrych, SCh. (left), and Bishop Robert H. Brom take part in the Polish tradition of breaking and sharing the Christmas wafer during a dinner Jan. 10 at St. Maximilian Kolbe. That date marked the last day of the Christmas season.

Jan. 10, after concelebrating Mass, Bishop Brom blessed the parish hall and rectory, and joined the mission's parishioners at a dinner celebrating these recent milestones.

Father Frydrych said he and his parishioners “are entering the new year of 2010 with great hope.”

“We are poised to begin a project of remodeling the interior of the church,” he said. “This project will underline the greater glory of God, inspiring all who enter the church's doors to a closer, more spiritual

contact with God.”

He added, “We believe that, through the intercession of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the patron saint of our mission, and the wholehearted involvement of good-willed parishioners, this beautiful plan will come to fruition.”

For more information on St. Maximilian Kolbe Roman Catholic Polish Mission, visit www.polishmission.org.

The Southern Cross

Hogar de los Niños



Tony Ralphs, founder of the Hogar de los Niños orphanage in Tijuana, and his wife, Pilar, pose on Jan. 8 with some of the orphanage's young residents.

A small church community at Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado, formed to support the orphanage, recently raised nearly \$1,800 through a parish bake sale. The baked goods were sold Dec. 12-13 after all of the parish Masses. The money was used to provide one week's worth of food and services at the orphanage.

Members of the small church community visited the orphanage Jan. 8 and presented Tony and Pilar Ralphs with a novelty oversized check representing the money raised at the bake sale.

Tony Ralphs founded the orphanage more than three decades ago. He and his wife are currently members of Sacred Heart Parish and its small church community.

According to its Web site, Hogar de los Niños serves as a home for children and women who are orphaned, abused or abandoned. It provides education, protection, shelter, food, religious guidance, counseling and more.

For more information on the orphanage, visit www.hogardelosninos.com.

Mexico City Archdiocese: Political Party Declared War on Society

By David Agren

MEXICO CITY — The Archdiocese of Mexico City has accused a leading political party of “declaring war on Mexican society” by approving laws that legalize same-sex marriage and permit homosexuals to adopt children in the nation's capital.

In an interview published online Jan. 5 by the archdiocesan publication, *Desde la Fe*, Father Hugo Valdemar Romero, archdiocesan spokesman, also accused the Democratic Revolution Party of showing “its true face ... intolerance and hatred toward the Catholic Church.” He said it resorted to the same anti-democratic tactics that the Mexican left decried during previous decades of authoritarian, one-party rule.

“The [party] has declared war on Mexican society because it can't ignore that the vast majority of it is Christian, whether it's Catholic, evangelical or other smaller churches that show a great respect for life and the family,” Father Valdemar said. He added that the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches — a group often at odds with the Catholic Church — and the country's Greek Orthodox Church had come out against the same-sex marriage laws, too.

On Jan. 4, the national president of the Democratic Revolution Party, Jesus Ortega, said he would file complaints with the Interior Ministry accusing the archdiocese of improper Church meddling in political matters. Ortega demanded the Church hierarchy stop its attacks on his party and that the Interior Ministry enforce constitutional mandates that forbid religious leaders from weighing in on political matters.

The new same-sex marriage laws in Mexico City take effect in March. The city's National Action Party is attempting to gain the backing of one-third of the Mexico City Assembly to file a constitutional challenge with the Supreme Court.

The Dec. 21 approval of same-sex marriage by the assembly — where the Democratic Revolution Party and its allies hold a majority — further strained the already tense relationship between the Archdiocese of Mexico City and the local government, which has promoted liberalized abortion and euthanasia laws over the past three years.

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