

A History of St. Hedwig Church

Rev. Joseph Barzynski, as founding pastor of St. Hedwig parish led a joyous congregation of 230 families. Christmas, 1888, was a meaningful and magnificent experience for those founding families. But, in their Christmas prayers, they yearned for a school for their children. In January 1889, Fr. Joseph arranged for 3 nuns from the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth to staff a school, located right in the church building. They opened the parish school and took up residence in a portion of the combination structure at 2124 W. Webster Avenue. The present rectory at 2226 N. Hoyne Ave. was completed about 1890. By 1894, Fr. Joseph was desperately in need of full time help. Parish membership had grown rapidly, from 230 families in 1888 to 1300 families by 1894. However, all the Polish-speaking ministry of the Resurrectionist Fathers was growing, and additional priests were scarce. And so in early 1894, Fr. Joseph arranged for a newly ordained priest from Europe, Fr. Anthony Kozlowski, to join the Chicago Resurrectionists. Fr. Joseph didn't know him, but was so strapped for help that he brought Fr. Kozlowski to Chicago and immediately assigned him as a full-time associate to St. Hedwig Parish on May 15, 1894. And in doing so, he set in motion, a series of events which had important consequences for St. Hedwig parish and for the Polish community in Chicago.

Fr. Kozlowski was extremely outgoing, popular, a good speaker - in fact, he was almost charismatic. Many of the parishioners flocked to his inspiring sermons. He was, in many ways, just the right man for the parish. But Fr. Kozlowski was also very human. His skills and talents were in distinct difference to the gruff, stern, and officious pastor. Within a few months, there were obvious camps within the dynamically growing parish. Fr. Kozlowski found the adulation and praise of his followers very inspiring -- so inspiring that he, along with some of his followers, thought he would make the better pastor. He had come at a time of economic downturn in the country and in Chicago. His preaching fell on the ears of many immigrants who were suddenly unemployed in this land of plenty. And so, a parish dispute began. By Fall, Fr. Kozlowski's supporters had drawn up a petition asking that he be appointed pastor. Flattered, he agreed to let them circulate the document. But the movement failed, and after quite a few spirited meetings, filled with shouts and claims and counterclaims, Archbishop Feehan ordered Fr. Kozlowski to leave the parish in December 1894. In January and February 1895, supporters of Fr. Kozlowski continued their efforts on his behalf. It was obvious that Fr. Kozlowski had many more supporters on his side of the issue than did Fr. Joseph Barzynski. So, in a conciliatory gesture, Fr. Joseph resigned and was reassigned to St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish. But the new pastor was not Fr. Kozlowski. Instead, Fr. Joseph Gieburowski, C.R., was appointed pastor which enraged the Kozlowski followers. On February 7, 1895, a crowd of supporters of Kozlowski physically stormed the rectory. They broke in and assaulted the priests living there. When the police were called, the mob turned on them, showering them with red pepper to blind them. One of the officers was attacked with a hammer. Chicago Police reinforcements were called in and eventually put down the riot with gunfire. Fr. Gieburowski was spirited off in a horse-drawn sleigh, and a shaky truce was called. After reading gory accounts of the strife recorded in The Chicago Tribune, a horrified Archbishop Feehan ordered St. Hedwig's closed until the issue was settled. That year, three attempts were made by the Archbishop to reopen the Church, but three times Kozlowski supporters prevented the reopening with violence. In his

study of the Resurrectionist Fathers, *The First One Hundred Years*, Rev. John Iwicki, CR, recounts the controversy which led to "violence, rebellion, and schism." According to Father Iwicki, "Father Kozlowski's initial plan was not to cause a schism, but a sufficient disturbance in the parish in order to convince the church authorities to change the administrative personnel, and place him in charge of the parish." By May 1895, Fr. Kozlowski was so taken with his popularity that he decided to start his own parish and many eager parishioners of St. Hedwig joined him. Father Kozlowski not only formed a congregation separate from that of St. Hedwig parish, but through legal means, his supporters obtained a temporary restraining order which prevented the reopening of the parish church on June 16, 1895. In the interim, Fr. Eugene Sedlaczek, C.R., was appointed the second pastor to help quell the insurrection. Unfortunately, emotions were so high and factions so bitterly divided, that Fr. Sedlaczek lasted only two weeks.

When St. Hedwig Church finally reopened on June 23, 1895, Rev. Peter J. Muldoon, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, read a letter from Archbishop Feehan introducing Rev. John Piechowski, C.R. the third pastor. In calling for unity among the parishioners, Auxiliary Bishop Peter Muldoon, expressed the hope that "all the old misunderstandings shall be erased, forgotten, and forgiven . . ." The rebirth of St. Hedwig parish was single-handedly due to the efforts of Father Piechowski, for he provided the calm and stability needed by the parish, and his influence charted the course for the parish until 1909. He was well suited to this task, having served as pastor of St. Hyacinth parish (that Catholic parish had been founded in 1894 in order to thwart the establishment of a schismatic parish in the Avondale neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago). In the meanwhile, on August 11, 1895, Father Kozlowski laid the foundation for All Saints Church, which had been under construction at 2023 W. Dickens Avenue. Father Kozlowski's supporters numbered nearly 1,000 families while only 300 families had remained as members of St. Hedwig Church. When Father Kozlowski ignored Archbishop Feehan's warnings to cease organizing All Saints parish, he was excommunicated and the decree was read in all Polish and Bohemian parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago on September 29, 1895 (Fr. Kozlowski continued his activities and on November 10, 1895, All Saints Church was dedicated. Father Kozlowski founded the Polish Old Catholic Church and in 1897, he was consecrated an Old Catholic Bishop. Following his death on January 14, 1907, All Saints Church became part of the Polish National Church under the direction of Rev. Francis Hodur. Today, All Saints Cathedral is the headquarters of the Polish National Church in Chicago). By 1899, the trouble at St. Hedwig died down and life became peaceful again. After Fr. Kozlowski's excommunication, many of his followers realized the severity of the situation and slowly and quietly returned to St. Hedwig parish. Due to this, the combination church and school building became overcrowded. As a result, the construction on the present church which had been interrupted by the bitter struggle over the appointment of a pastor was resumed. Under Fr. Piechowski, the whole parish came together for this one major project. The magnificent structure of Baroque Romanesque design that stands so splendidly at the southwest corner of Webster and Hoyne Avenue was envisioned and started by Fr. Piechowski in 1899 and the cornerstone of this imposing edifice was laid on June 18, 1899. St. Hedwig Church was the last building designed by architect Adolphus Druiding; he had been awarded a gold medal in Munich, Germany, for his plans.

The new church building which had been completed at a cost of \$160,000 (complete except for steeples), was solemnly dedicated by Auxiliary Bishop Muldoon on October 26, 1901. By then, most of the dissenters returned to St. Hedwig parish and a good deal of the animosity had cleared. The joy of seeing a truly inspiring church structure finally standing was a symbol of parish rebirth during the birth of a new century. Under Father Piechowski's leadership, St. Hedwig parish revived in faith and dedication and the missions conducted by the Jesuits in 1896, 1898, and 1908 did much to revitalize the religious life of the parish. By 1905, parish membership numbered approximately 1,500 families with 1,300 children attending St. Hedwig school. And by the end of Fr. Piechowski's pastorate in 1909, there were 10,000 parishioners, of which 1500 were students in the parish school. Fr. Piechowski provided the sound base upon which the parish of St. Hedwig prospered. Father Piechowski served as pastor for 14 years until his retirement in 1909; he died on April 19, 1921.

Rev. John Obyrtacz, C.R., former pastor of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church in Chicago, was appointed the fourth pastor in 1909. Father Obyrtacz was a kindly, unassuming, yet a strong leader, who brought a building boom to the parish. That year, immigration peaked as thousands were pouring into the country day by day -- very many of them Poles headed for Chicago. For many, the journey led to St. Hedwig church. By 1911, the parish had 2,700 families who sent 1800 children to the now giant elementary school. In 1912, Fr. Obyrtacz directed the construction of a classroom building at Hamilton and Lyndale at a cost of \$80,000, adding to it an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,000 persons. On December 7, 1913, Fr. Obyrtacz presided over the 25th anniversary celebration where the joyful parish family gathered in large numbers to greet Archbishop Quigley with banners and bunting, signs and even mounted horsemen. By the silver anniversary, the difficulties of the past had been virtually erased by a vital, thriving parish of caring people, all concerned with helping one another achieve success in this land of opportunity. In 1914, another story was added to the parish school. Enrollment then numbered 1,882 students under the direction of 33 Sisters of Nazareth. In 1916, the rectory was modernized to suit the needs of the seven priests assigned to the parish and within the next few years, the parish debt was liquidated. In 1920, the parish was huge with 3,700 families, who sent 2300 students to the parish school. This was also the year when Fr. Obyrtacz was named pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church and was succeeded by Rev. Stanislaus Siatka, C.R., as the fifth pastor (he had been pastor of St. John Cantius Church since 1915). Although with the parish only a short time, Fr. Siatka contributed a monumental addition -- an entire school building complex at Hoyne and Lyndale, solving the critical school overcrowding and unsafe conditions. Father Siatka and his parishioners financed the construction of the three story school annex in 1921 at a cost of \$160,000 and within four years, 2,651 children were enrolled under the direction of 39 Sisters of Nazareth.

In 1923, Rev. Francis Dembinski, C.R., a former pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, was named sixth pastor of St. Hedwig parish. As a tribute to the tremendous work of Fr. Obyrtacz, Fr. Dembinski had the long dreamed for church steeples completed on the church building in 1925 and had the bells finally moved from the temporary wooden belfry that had stood in the school yard since 1899. Fr. Dembinski led an active and vibrant parish in the 1920's and, as the parish matured, had hopes for a youth center and meeting place. But Fr. Dembinski's flock ran into the Great Depression as 1929 struck. His work changed to counseling families without work, helping to provide food for those families without, and serving as a social service agency for the growing number of people who faced endless

tomorrows with vacant pocketbooks. Daily he worked his special charm to help the minds, souls and bodies of the St. Hedwig Parish family but as Depression droned on, one of the victims was Fr. Dembinksi. He died on April 19, 1935. During the midst of this time of gloom, Rev. Francis Uzdrowski, C.R., was appointed seventh pastor and under his leadership, a concerted effort was made to restore the parish buildings. He rallied his parishioners together realizing that during times as rough as the Depression, there was a great deal they could accomplish, just by working together. With that spirit, Fr. Uzdrowski set to work to find a way to build a new convent for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who had staffed the school since the parish birth in 1888. The project provided jobs, good work, a new home and the feeling of accomplishment for a parish coming out of a difficult time. Despite the hardships, and with a great deal of physical help from the dedicated parishioners, the sisters moved into their new home in 1937. The present convent, designed by Leo Strelka, was completed in 1937 at 2219 N. Hamilton Avenue. In preparation for the parish's upcoming golden jubilee, the church was repaired and refurbished. Bishop Stanislaus V. Bona of Grand Island, Nebraska, presided at the 50th jubilee Mass held at St. Hedwig Church on December 11, 1938. The jubilee planning committee, under Fr. Uzdrowski's inspiration, held a magnificent gala with flocks of dignitaries joining in the season of celebration. The spirit of God's grace once again helped the people of St. Hedwig bring about the renewal of the society. In 1939, Father Uzdrowski organized St. Hedwig Mission by acquiring the small chapel at 2445 N. Washtenaw Avenue from a group of Hungarian immigrants who had used the chapel for worship for a number of years. St. Hedwig Mission served members of the parish who lived west of Western Avenue.

Rev. Jerome Klingsporn, C.R., a former army chaplain, became the 8th pastor and served the parish during the post World War II years. One of his first acts as pastor was to honor the servicemen of the parish who had given their lives for their country. Two memorial plaques were mounted in the church and dedicated on November 7, 1946. During Fr. Klingsporn's pastorate, additional youth activities were started, extensive remodeling and repairs were accomplished and a new organ was installed. That organ was completed one year after the retirement of the former organist and choir director, Dr. Emil Wiedeman, but was dedicated to his incredible service to St. Hedwig. Dr. Wiedeman was an unusual success story spanning 7 decades. An accomplished musician and teacher, he first came to St. Hedwig parish in 1896 and was appointed the second organist. He started the St. Hedwig parish choir. Dr. Wiedeman lived in the parish, raised 8 children, and served and served and served. From 1896 until 1950, he gave an unbelievable 54 years of his life as choir director. He witnessed the calming of the church, the turn of the century, both World Wars and the Depression. He saw pastors come and go, parishioners come and go, nuns, children and neighbors come and go. But he stayed. In 1950, he finally retired at the age of 88. Yet, he lived to see the new organ, and continued his love for his parish until 1957 when he died at age 95. In many ways, perhaps Dr. Emil Wiedeman symbolized St. Hedwig's. He was a pillar, a dedicated layman who affected the lives of thousands of people and he did so because of his faith. Appointed assistant pastor of St. John Cantius Church in 1954, Father Klingsporn was succeeded by Rev. John Mysliwiec, C.R., (who had been an assistant at St. Hedwig Church from 1937 to 1939 and again from 1948 to 1951) as the ninth pastor. Fr. Mysliwiec served the church during a new time of crisis.

Following the War, St. Hedwig Parish was thriving. The community was complete, the buildings built and maintained, the people faithful and generous. But then a profound change occurred in the neighborhood of which St. Hedwig parish is an integral part. The Northwest (now John F. Kennedy) Expressway cut through the heart of the parish, forcing hundreds of families to move to other parts of the city. Fr. Mysliwicz led a church being ripped apart by progress. The highway construction slit the lifeline of this neighborhood church, and for once, the people of the community and parish could not stop the danger. By 1960, when the highway was complete, enrollment in the parish and school had plummeted as people were displaced, and as those cut off went to other, more convenient parishes. And so, St. Hedwig lost its standing as one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese and its school enrollment dropped from 1,300 to 700 students. That part of the expressway which extends from Lake St. to Foster Ave. was opened to traffic on November 5, 1960. Father Mysliwicz was reassigned to St. John Cantius Church in 1960, and an assistant at that parish, Rev. Joseph Zaborowski, C.R., was named the tenth pastor of St. Hedwig Church. Fr. Zaborowski became pastor at a time when the Church was experiencing one of the greatest events in its history: the Second Vatican Council. Under his leadership, plans were made for the parish's diamond jubilee which was celebrated on December 8, 1963. The 75th anniversary celebration showed the true strength of the people of St. Hedwig parish, a faith community flourishing despite the deep concerns and pressures facing them. Fr. Zaborowski supervised the implementation of the winds of change following the Second Vatican Council. Those changes included a number of physical changes to the building, including a new altar facing the congregation. In 1965, vandals set fire to the magnificent church, causing tremendous damage. And yet, as they had each time in the past, trouble spurred the good people on, and the spirit of God worked through them as the damage was repaired and paid for.

Following Father Zaborowski's death from a heart attack on August 28, 1969, Rev. John Iwicki, C.R., was named eleventh pastor on November 2, 1969. Fr. Iwicki took over a church that had been shaken by the expressway, by the tragic fire, and by the unsettling changes brought about by Vatican II. And Fr. John took over a parish that was on the fringe of a social change as well. St. Hedwig parish had always been prosperous and successful, and rich in people, dedication, community and neighborhood strength. St. Hedwig had been overwhelmingly Polish and even founded to minister to their needs. However as 1970 dawned, the church ceased to be predominantly Polish. As parishioners achieved their American dream and moved away to their dream homes, for the first time, the population of the parish and school began to dwindle. Gone were the 4000 families and gone were the 2300 students. Now the ministry provided education to only 700. Fr. Iwicki began implementing the liturgical changes and directives of Vatican II. Consequently, the sanctuary of the church was refurbished with an altar of sacrifice, two lecterns and the presidential chair. The wall of the sanctuary were repainted, new electric fixtures installed, and the floor was carpeted. A Liturgical Commission was organized under the leadership of Casimir Deptula consisting of the lectors and commentators of the parish. The Commission inaugurated the use of missalettes and the Polish prayer books during the liturgical celebration; the offering of gifts by the faithful; the reception of Holy Communion in a standing position. Within a few weeks, the directives of Vatican II were fully implemented during the pastorate of Fr. Iwicki. The first Spanish Mass was celebrated by Rev. Joseph Malczyk, C.R. on November 14, 1969 thus incorporating a fairly large segment of Latino Catholics into the parish. After a year of

intensive work, the Spanish Society of St. Hedwig was formed in 1970 under the guidance of Rev. Robert Kurtz, C.R. and Rev. Joseph Malczyk, C.R. of Gordon Technical High School to promote their well-being and acceptance into the parish community life through Spanish-language liturgies, as well as events in the life of the parish appealing to Hispanic culture. Angel Nieves was the first Spanish-speaking deacon of St. Hedwig and he served as a deacon for 15 years. In 1971, the St. Hedwig Parish Council was formed, with delegates from each parish society and the result was a rebirth, renewal of participation, continued growth and development to the parish. Of the 1,300 families who now belonged to St. Hedwig parish, 900 were of Polish descent; 300 were Spanish; and 100 of other ethnic backgrounds. The weekend schedule of Masses included one Mass in Spanish, two in Polish, and four in English. In 1978, 362 children were enrolled in the school under the direction of 10 Sisters of Nazareth and seven lay teachers. The parish supported about 10 active groups. In September 1973, a Parish School Board was formed, with elected officers, as the advisory and policy-making body for the elementary school. In 1978 during the 90th year of St. Hedwig Parish, Blessed Pope John Paul II visited the parish as Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, just a few years prior to his election as Pope.

In January 1979, Father Iwicki was called to serve the Resurrectionist order in Rome and was replaced by Rev. John Nowak, C.R., as the twelfth pastor. Prior to this assignment, Father Nowak had served as a faculty member at Gordon Technical high school, where he taught and headed the religious department. Fr. Nowak served as pastor of St. Hedwig Church from January 1979 until December of that year, working closely with the parish council.

Rev. Denis Cross, C.R., was appointed the thirteenth pastor effective January 1, 1980. Ordained at St. Hedwig Church in 1973, he served as a librarian at Gordon Tech for four years after which he was assigned to Our Lady of Loretto Church in St. Louis, Mo., from 1977 to 1979. Prior to his appointment as pastor, Father Cross had served as professor at Weber High School.

An old friend to many parishioners, Rev. Charles A. Mrowinski, C.R., was named the fourteenth pastor in July 1982. His term extended until July 1986, when Rev. Norbert Raszeja C.R., took over the helm at the fifteenth pastor. Fr. Norbert stayed but one year, when he was called to other duties in the order. On August 16, 1987, Fr. Gerald Watt, C.R., was appointed the sixteenth pastor of St. Hedwig parish. Almost immediately, Fr. Watt, along with members of the parish council, plunged into the intricate and exciting work of preparing for a Centennial celebration for this magnificent parish. Sisters Recognition Day, a day to give thanks and remember the Sisters who taught at St. Hedwig's school over the years kicked off the Centennial celebration on September 17, 1988; followed by Renewal of All Those Married in the 1980's on September 18, 1988, Parish Mission Days on October 14-16 and Neighborhood Parade through Bucktown on October 15, 1988 at 3:30 p.m.

The 100th Anniversary Mass was celebrated by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin on November 5, 1988. Reception and Open House followed at the school hall. The 100th Anniversary Dinner Dance was held on November 6, 1988 at House of the White Eagle. On December 8, 1988, the Rev. Robert Kurtz, C.R., Superior General of the Congregation of the Resurrection and a former associate Pastor of St.

Hedwig Church, came all the way from Rome to celebrate the remembrance of the first Mass in the Church 100 years ago.

Rev. Michael Danek, C.R., became the seventeenth pastor of St. Hedwig from July 1, 1991 until June 30, 2000. Sometime in 1991, a parishioner, Florie Nilayan brought the image of Our Lady of Manaoag to St. Hedwig to be blessed by Fr. Danek who introduced the image to his parishioners and invited them to take the image of our Lady of Manaoag to their homes for a week of novena prayer. After a week the image would return to St. Hedwig church, ready to be taken home by another family. Devotion and presence of our Lady of Manaoag spread like wild fire which prompted Fr. Danek to offer a permanent place of worship and devotion to our Lady of Manaoag at St. Hedwig church. On April 1, 1995, the Devotees of Our Lady of Manaoag (DOLMA) was formally organized as a prayer group whose principal aim was for the glorification and sanctification of humanity bound by common faith and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary known as Our Lady of Manaoag. To this day, the Novena to our Lady of Manaoag is held every first Saturday of each month. The Feast of Our Lady of Manaoag is celebrated on the Wednesday of Easter.

Rev. Gary Hogan, C.R., was installed the eighteenth pastor of St. Hedwig on July 2, 2000. He served as pastor until August 31, 2005. Rev. Marcelo de Jesumaria C.R., was the nineteenth pastor from July 2, 2006 to December 31, 2007. Rev. Stanislaw Jankowski C.R., became the twentieth pastor of St. Hedwig in February 2008. Shortly after Fr. Stan's installation, a basement fire broke out on April 9, 2008 burning a 15 foot by 3 foot hole underneath the altar. There were no reported injuries, but the original statue of Our Lady of Manaoag was destroyed. St. Hedwig Church was temporarily closed for restoration work and church services were held at the school gymnasium. Restoration work was completed after seven months of round-the-clock labor just in time for the 120th anniversary celebration which was held on December 7, 2008. The main altar was fully refurbished to its original form, a new wooden flooring was installed, a new liturgical table and lectern were furnished, and the church was equipped with a state-of-the-art sound system.

On June 25, 2010, Fr. Stan kicked off the St. Hedwig Carnival, a fabulous weekend of sampling of American, Polish, Mexican and Filipino cuisine, carnival rides, games and wonderful live entertainment. Most importantly, the carnival provided a venue for parents, parishioners and friends to get together, enjoy summer, and raise funds for the church in maintaining its facilities and funding its pastoral and social services. Because of the carnival's success, similar fundraising events followed, with St. Hedwig Family Fests in the summers of 2011 and 2012.

In the Fall of 2010, Fr. Stan, in coordination with Parish Pastoral Council Chairman, Zenaida "Nini" Centeno, reorganized the Pastoral Council into working committee ministries to be attuned to the times and be more responsive to the social and spiritual needs of the parish. In 2011, Fr. Stan launched a 3-year spiritual preparation leading to the 125th anniversary celebration. Guest speakers were invited on Catechetical Sunday each month to talk on the Ten Commandments for the first year, 2011 and the Sacraments on the second year, 2012.

On March 2011, Maribeth and Allan Morby renewed St. Hedwig's longtime charter with the Boy Scouts of America.

In 2011 and 2012, Fr. Stan initiated two religious devotions (which continue to this day) for the private worship needs of St. Hedwig parishioners. In 2011, the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help was first held each Tuesday morning after Mass followed by the addition (in 2012) of the Novena to St. Peregrine Laziosi each Wednesday morning after Mass. St. Peregrine is the patron saint of those suffering from cancer, AIDS and other chronic illnesses.

On September 18, 2011, the rehabilitated former Sisters Convent was blessed, dedicated and inaugurated as the Parish Pastoral Center. This building provides function rooms for the various religious organizations and parish events.

In the fall of 2011, St. Hedwig hosted Oktoberfest to celebrate the feast day of our patron saint, St. Hedwig and to welcome the fall season. A "big top" was set up in the church's parking lot for this purpose and live entertainment was provided along with beer, hot dogs, hamburgers, barbecues, egg-rolls.

On June 3, 2012, Cardinal Francis Eugene George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago and Fr. Stanislaw Jankowski, C.R. joined the local Christian Bishops and judiciary leaders to pray for Christian Unity at the 12th Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service at St. Hedwig church. The homilist for the service was Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.

On June 23, 2013, the parishioners of St. Hedwig with their families and friends gathered at Schiller Woods West Grove 3 with their grills, folding chairs and tents for a whole day of cook-out, food and fun under the sun, parlor games, disco music, dancing and an open-air Sunday lawn Mass. It was a big success with an incredible turnout.

On June 29, 2013, DOLMA hosted a send-off party for Fr. Stan, who would be starting out his new assignment on July 1, 2013 as pastor at St. Hyacinth Basilica located between Central Park Avenue and Lawndale Avenue. A crowd of well-wishers from the American, Polish, Filipino and Mexican communities, friends and guests turned out for this occasion immediately after the 5 PM Mass at a sit-down dinner held at the school gymnasium. The highlight of the program was a video presentation created by Romulo "Mulong" Yambao on behalf of the Devotees of our Lady of Manaoag (DOLMA). This brief documentary of Fr. Stan's life from boyhood to adulthood, from seminarian to priesthood and eventually as pastor moved the audience to tears.

Rev. Tomasz Wojciechowski, C.R. became the twenty-first and current pastor of St. Hedwig in July 2013.