

• [Home](#) • [About PGSA](#) • [Calendar](#) • [Directory](#) • [Google](#) • [Membership](#) • [PGSA Publications](#) •

[Click on "Home" for latest Website updates.](#)

In 1836, a Catholic action group, spawned by the French Catholic Revival movement, was formed in Paris under the leadership of Bogdan Janski. By 1842, this small group of Polish emigré students emerged as the Congregation of the Resurrection under the guidance and direction of Janski's two disciples: Peter Semenenko and Jerome Kajsiewicz. In 1857, the Congregation was recognized by the Church and dedicated itself to the care of souls and the education of youth, and by 1860 received the first ecclesiastical approval or Decree of Praise.

The Congregation, born in exile, was destined to fulfill its purpose among those in exile, especially among the diverse immigrant groups in the United States and Canada.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Church in the United States was predominantly a missionary Church. Immediately after the Civil War, with the influx of immigrant groups into the country, the American bishops were confronted with a tremendous challenge and obligation, to provide for the spiritual and intellectual development of the new Americans. In large measure the Congregation of the Resurrection aided the American hierarchy in preaching the Gospel to the Polish immigrant and in strengthening Catholicism among the thousands who flocked to the American shores.

The Polish settlement in Chicago took root in March of 1864, when about thirty families formed the first Polish fraternal aid society under the patronage of St. Stanislaus Kostka. Peter Kiolbassa was the leading figure among the Chicago Poles. In 1867, plans were set in motion to purchase land for a proposed church. In 1869, four lots were purchased at the corner of Noble and Bradley streets. The society's next objective was to locate a Polish priest to administer the parish and care for its spiritual life.

As early as 1866, Rev. Joseph Roles, pastor of Holy Name Cathedral, applied to Father James Kajsiewicz, C.R., superior general of the Resurrectionists, for Polish priests to work in the Diocese of Chicago among the Polish and Bohemian emigrants.

In 1869, Peter Kiolbassa again requested a Resurrectionist priest for the Chicago parish. On November 1, 1869, Father John Wollowski, C.R., was assigned. When he arrived, however, the administrator of the diocese, Rev. John Halligan, informed him that another Polish priest was on hand to assume the duties of the parish, Rev. Joseph Juskiewicz, a diocesan priest from Poland.

In August, 1870, Father Adolph Bakanowski, CR., made a stopover in Chicago on a journey from Texas to Rome. By September, Bishop Thomas Foley assigned Father Bakanowski to the St. Stanislaus Kostka parish on a temporary basis until the superior general would ratify the formal acceptance of the Chicago mission. When the superior

general, Father Kajsiewicz, visited Chicago on July 1, 1871, he met with Bishop Foley and formally concluded the agreement whereby the Resurrectionists were placed in charge of all the Polish missions in the Diocese of Chicago. The Resurrectionists were under contract to the Bishop of Chicago for ninety-nine years. They were to staff the present mission of St. Stanislaus Kostka and provide the personnel of Polish priests for subsequent parishes to be established in the future.

It was in the light of this contract between the Bishop of Chicago and the Resurrectionists that St. Stanislaus Kostka parish became the "Mother Church of all the Polish parishes in the Diocese." Between 1871 and 1900 the Resurrectionists founded some twenty Polish parishes. It was also through Congregation efforts that many diocesan priests from Europe and elsewhere were assigned to these various parishes either as pastors or associate pastors.

During the years 1874 to 1880, there was but a mere handful of Resurrectionists to meet the needs of the expanding Chicago mission. The superior general, Father Peter Semenenko, selected an individual, who under the most intolerable conditions could withstand the pressures and difficulties, the disappointments and criticisms, to work solely for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. He was Father Vincent Barzynski, C.R., who truly merits the title, Founder of the Resurrectionists in the United States.

When Father Barzynski arrived in Chicago on September 6, 1874, the city was rapidly rising from the ruin of the disastrous fire of 1871. To the thousands of immigrant Poles pouring into the city, Father Barzynski became pastor, Father confessor, counselor, guide, educator, and protector. The task of caring for souls in every phase of pastoral activity was his chore as pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka parish until his death in 1899. There was no facet of religious endeavor or social program which did not emanate from his broad vision and genius for organization. Together with a handful of Resurrectionist priests and Brothers and a few diocesan priests who called themselves "Tertiaries of the Resurrectionists," Father Barzynski directed the foundation and establishment of a number of Chicago parishes: Holy Trinity (1872), St. Adalbert's (1874), Immaculate Conception (1882), SS. Cyril and Methodius, Lemont (1883), St. Josaphat's (1886), St. Hedwig (1888), St. John Cantius (1893), St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr (1893), St. Hyacinth (1894), Sacred Heart, Melrose Park (1895), St. Michael's, South Chicago (1897), St. Mary of Mount Carmel (1897), St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr, Posen (1898), Ascension, Harvey (1899), St. Mary of the Angels (1899).

In addition to the herculean task of organizing parish life in the Chicago archdiocese, Father Barzynski devoted himself to other numerous projects. Among the most important: he was co-founder of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (*q.v.*), a fraternal organization for the emigrant Poles (1873); he sponsored the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (*q.v.*) to the United States and established them at their first mission of St. Josaphat's school (1885); he founded the Polish Publishing Company for the printing of Catholic books and periodicals (1887); he founded the Congregation of priests under the protection of the Sacred Heart to foster mutual peace and unity among priests, to help the bishops, and to warn people of evil influence (1887); he built and organized Holy Family Orphanage on

Division and Holt streets and placed the orphans under the care of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (1890); he founded the Polish Daily News (*Dziennik Chicagoski*), a Catholic daily newspaper in the Polish language (1890); he was founder of St. Stanislaus Kostka College (1890), the forerunner of Weber High School (*q.v.*); he was instrumental in organizing St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital (*q.v.*) in conjunction with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (1894); he, together with Theresa Dudzik and Anna Wisinska, founded a new religious sisterhood, known as the Franciscan Sisters of Blessed Kunegunda, to care for the aged and sick poor (1894). In the last years of his life, he was negotiating to bring the Sisters of the Resurrection to Chicago.

In 1898, the superior general appointed Father Barzynski to be the first Provincial superior of the Resurrectionists in the United States, headquartered in Chicago. He died on May 2, 1899. The Poles of Chicago erected a monument to the dynamic Father Barzynski in 1901; it still stands in St. Adalbert's cemetery in Niles.

For the past 110 years, Chicago has been the center of Resurrectionists' pastoral work and activity. The following priests continued the work of Father Barzynski as provincial superior or delegate general: Very Rev. John Kasprzyński, C.R. (1899-1904), elected superior general in 1905; Very Rev. David Hennessey, CR, (1904-05); Very Rev. Wilhelm Klopfer, C.R. (1905-09); Most Rev. Archbishop Joseph Weber, C.R. (1909-1918); Very Rev. Francis Gordon, C.R. (1908-1928); Very Rev. Michael Jagowicz, C.R. (1928-1932); Very Rev. Thaddeus Ligman, C.R. (1932-34); Very Rev. Stephan Kowalezyk, CR. (1934-37); Very Rev. Thaddeus Ligman, CR. (1937-1945); Very Rev. Casimir Guziel, CR. (1945-1951); Very Rev. Stanley Fiolek, C.R. (1951-58); Very Rev. Walter Galna, C.R. (1958); Very Rev. John Grabowski, C.R. (1958-1964); Very Rev. Bernard Bak, CR. (1964-1970); Very Rev. Edmund Raczka, C.R. (1970-1976); Very Rev. Francis S. Rog, C.R. (1976- ).

Archbishop Weber, C.R. established the Resurrectionist novitiate in Chicago in 1914 and the first Resurrectionist seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1918.

Perhaps no Resurrectionist other than Father Vincent Barzynski made such an impact on immigrant Poles in the Chicago archdiocese as Father Francis Gordon, C.R. He became one of the leading figures in Chicago because of his total dedication to the cause of Catholicism and his concern for the Polish immigrant. For many years he headed the *Dziennik Chicagoski*, and he founded the Polish Alma Mater in 1897. He was a noted publisher and author of books and articles, as well as an educator and pastor of souls. Father Gordon's many services to the Church in Chicago were recognized in 1924, when Pope Pius XI conferred upon him the papal medal for extraordinary service to the Church. The *Pro Ecclesia et Pan* (lice medal was bestowed upon him at St. Mary of the Angels church by Cardinal Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago. At Father Gordon's death in 1931, a legacy of many accomplishments was left in cherished memory.

During Father Guziel's term of office, the Resurrectionists realized a long cherished dream in the building of a new Weber High School (*q. v.*). A long-range building program was launched during Father Grabowski's tenure of office, including a new novitiate in 1959, a

new Gordon Technical High School in 1960 (q.v.), in 1962 an addition to Weber High School, and a new Resurrection Mission Center in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1963. Recent provincials have continued to lead the Resurrectionists in promoting the growth of the Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

From "A History of the Offices, Agencies, and the Institutions  
of the Archdiocese of Chicago" - 1981

Reprinted with the permission of the Chicago Archdioces

---

For Website Problems: Webmaster at [webmaster@pgsa.org](mailto:webmaster@pgsa.org)  
For General Comments & Inquiries: [PGSAmerica@aol.com](mailto:PGSAmerica@aol.com)

[Top of Page](#) 

Copyright © 2003— Polish Genealogical Society of America — All Rights Reserved

*Last Updated on December 1, 2003*