



# NEW ENGLAND PROVINCE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

Provincial's Newsletter

Volume 2023 / December

## FROM THE PROVINCIAL

We spend so much of life waiting. As children, we could hardly wait to grow up. Now, as grown-ups, we wait for buses and trains and planes; we wait in doctors' offices; we wait to get into the movie theater or restaurant. Some people even wait to die. At times we wait for something to happen; at other times we wait for something to stop happening. Waiting is a common human experience.

Advent is described as a time of waiting. But waiting for what? The readings for the first Sunday of Advent tell us to wait for the appearance of the reign of God.

The reign of God constantly unfolds before us, so we are always looking for its further appearance - hoping for a time of reconciliation and genuine peace, a time of mutual respect and cooperation. We believe that we have a future worth waiting for, worth working toward.

**WATCH and WORK.** Can we live engaged in God's work and be ever open to the arrival of the new? This strange combination, rooted in the present and on the edge of the future, is the way of Christian discipleship and the life of the Vincentian.

The Lord is arriving at every moment, and when the watchers see Him, they become workers in the Kingdom. A blessed Advent to you all as we watch and work together for a present and a future that is in tune with God's promises. *(based on Father John Sledziona's homily)*

## WORKS AT THE MANCHESTER HOUSE

Renovation works at Manchester House are done. The wall between the garage and the hallway has been repaired and painted. The workers had removed wallpaper from the lower part of the hallway's walls in the western wing, and everything was repainted there as well. The carpenter rebuilt the workbench in the garage, and all was repainted and cleaned.

Lawn and irrigation system companies have prepared our property for winter.

Father Anthony successfully found roofers who did some repair work on the house roof. Hopefully, there will be no more leaks. The roofers also fixed the gutters of the building and vents.

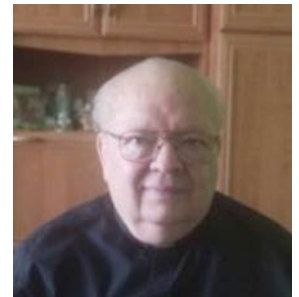
As Superior of the House, Rev. Anthony keeps everything neat, clean and well-looking. Most importantly, he cares for the priests living in the House.

## FR. JAN URBANIAK'S STATUS

Fr. Jan Urbaniak has found a new home in the Polish Province House in Kleparz, Krakow. He moved there on November 14, 2023. Fr. Adam Borowski, the Secretary of the Polish Province, transported Fr. Jan from his family home to Krakow. According to Fr. Jacek Gasinski, the Superior of the House, Fr. Jan feels home in the new place and is very satisfied. Unfortunately, Fr. Jan's health is not improving, and his vision is worsening. Fr. Gasinski mentioned that a doctor visits the House weekly, and Fr. Jan will be in his constant care.

Rev. Boleslaw Potomski testified that Fr. Jan is handled with respect and care - they wheel him in a wheelchair to the chapel and bring his meals to his room. "I am jealous," laughs Fr. Boleslaw.

On Wednesday, November 22, I spoke with Father Jan, who expressed his heartfelt thanks for his care. He feels very comfortable at Kleparz. He knows several priests there. He mentioned that he already moves around with the help of a walker to the church, where



he concelebrates mass every day at 9 am. He has also started going to the refectory for communal meals. He is happy because his medications are placed in the daily medicine dispenser, and the caregiver checks that he is taking them correctly. Fr. Jan sends his warmest greetings to all the confreres.

At this point, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Provincial of the Polish Province, Fr. Paweł Holc, for immediately responding and showing readiness to assist Fr. Jan and our Province. He and other confreres acted with Vincentian love. They found a place for Fr. Jan to reside at St. Vincent House for priests in short 10 days. I am very grateful to Fr. Adam Borowski, Secretary of the Polish Province, who visited Fr. Jan in his hometown, brought him the good news, and transported him to Kleparz a few days later. I am also grateful to the Superior of the Kleparz House, Fr. Jacek Gasinski, for accepting our priest, Fr. Jan, to the local community with a warm welcome.

## ADVENT DAY OF PRAYER



On Thu., Nov. 30, 2023, the confreres of our Province gathered at the Provincial House in Manchester for the annual Advent Day of Prayer. During this service, we adored the

Blessed Sacrament. The priests shared their thoughts on Advent or how to prepare well for Christmas.

We based our reflections on texts from the Holy Scripture or books written by our missionary confreres. After Mass, we sat down to share a meal and continued to talk and share our thoughts. It was a fantastic and peaceful day for each of us. It was an opportunity to forget daily duties and be in a larger group of priests. We thank God for this great opportunity given to us. These peaceful moments of meditation and adoration were our efforts to give God honor, glory, and praise. It was also a time to deepen our love for Him and build Vincentian unity among confreres.

## ST. MICHAEL CEMETERY

Gino DiGiovanni and his company, DiGiovanni & Sons Contructions, LLC, finished the renovation of the "priests' circle," where our confreres are resting in peace, at St. Michael's Cemetery, just before All Saints' Day.

They have dug out deep trenches and installed concrete benches that protrude slightly above the level of the grass. On these concrete benches, they installed unique holders. On these holders, the workers placed the tombstones of the priests at a 45-degree angle. The headstones were power-washed beforehand.



The whole area looks much better now. The burial places of our confreres have become visible.

Previously, the grass was overgrowing the tombstones, and the entire area looked like a grass-filled field. People who came on Sunday, November 5, for the Rosary Procession for the Souls in Purgatory were surprised to see how many priests' graves were there. For some, it was a complete discovery, as they had previously been convinced that it was only a grassy patch of the cemetery. Brian Torini, our parishioner and the voluntary cemetery keeper, was instrumental in helping with work and grounds. We thank Gene, his crew, and Brian for their time and dedication.

BTW - new grass will grow in the spring.

## OUR PILGRIM – FR. SZPILSKI

Our confrere, Fr. Joseph Szpilski CM (90), who works at St. Stanislaus Kostka parish in Brooklyn, has been chaplain of the Circle of Friends of the John Paul II Foundation in New York for over a dozen years. He often travels with the pilgrim group, providing spiritual care. From October 19 - 26, 2023, Fr. Joseph Szpilski CM was with the Foundation in France, Spain and Andorra. It was another



pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. John Paul II.

After arriving in Paris, the first Mass was celebrated in Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal chapel on Rue de Bac. This place was visited by JP II, during his visit to France. Among other places, the pilgrimage went to Lourdes, where Our Lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous. The pilgrims visited Carcassonne, a city that is considered one of the most beautiful, fortified cities in France, and they prayed at the Basilica of Saint Nazaire.

The next stop was Spain, and our pilgrims were in Montserrat, a Benedictine abbey, and the Sanctuary of the Black Madonna. They also visited Tossa de Mar, Girona, and Barcelona, where they prayed at the Sagrada Familia Basilica. They saw many other Sanctuaries. At the end of their pilgrimage and sightseeing, the pilgrims stopped in the tiny country of Andorra, located in the heart of the Pyrenees, on the border between Spain and France.

During this pilgrimage, Fr. Joseph tirelessly led Eucharistic liturgies, the rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the Divine Mercy chaplet, and other prayers.

Congratulations to our great Traveler and brave Senior Citizen, Fr. Joe!



## DEATH INFO

Please pray for the soul of Mr. Jozef Stepanczuk, father of our confrere Andrzej Stepanczuk, who passed away on November 12, 2023. May he rest in peace.

## ST. MICHAEL CEMETARY



## KLEPARZ, KRAKOW – ST. VINCENT HOUSE – FR. JAN'S RESIDENCE



**ADVENT DAY OF PRAYER NOVEMBER 30, 2023, MANCHESTER**



**FR. SZPILSKI'S PILGRIMAGE**

