

Forms of work of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate
Among Polish Immigrants in the Prairies of Canada (1898-1926)

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Institute of Mission Studies, Saint Paul University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Missiology

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ABSTRACT

The theme of the dissertation is «Forms of Work of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Among Polish Immigrants in the Prairies of Canada (1898-1926).» The work is presented in four chapters. The first one gives a general background of the situation which existed at the time. The second chapter examines the work done in the parish of Holy Ghost in Winnipeg, which was the first Polish parish on the prairies. The third chapter shows the situation existing in the prairies in rural areas, where there were many Polish immigrants. The fourth chapter investigates the Oblates' work in other different forms, that means the involvement in the Polish schools, in the apostolate of the press, and in formation of different associations and societies.

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Abbreviations

- AAP - Archives of the Assumption Province (OMI) in Toronto
- AD - Archives Deschatelets (OMI) in Ottawa
- AGH - Archives of the General House (OMI) in Rome
- ASB - Archives of the Archdiocese of Saint-Boniface
- ASP - Archives of Saint Paul University in Ottawa
- CCHA - Review of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association. Ottawa, 1933-
- Missions-* Missions de la Congregation de Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée.
A periodical of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1862-1972.
- SCHEC- La revue de la Société Canadienne d'Histoire de l'Eglise Catholique. Ottawa,
1933-

Introduction

1. The question that prompted this research.

When we look at the present Oblates in Canada we see that one of the Oblate Provinces has specially dedicated its work to the ministry to the immigrants. This is not a unique phenomenon in the whole Congregation, because Oblates work with different ethnic groups outside of the country of their origins also in other Provinces of Canada, as well as in Scandinavia, France, and USA. How is it that some Canadian Oblates discovered their charism as working especially with immigrants? How does the work with ethnic groups (Poles among them) fit into the general Oblates' vision of the Canadian Church? These questions prompted this research but are too broad to be answered in a M.A. thesis.

Narrowing down the issue we may ask how the first Oblates involved in such ministry saw the necessity of working with Poles and how they responded to the existing needs. The Oblates working in the prairies of Canada at the end of the 19th century realized that among newly-arriving immigrants there were a great number of Catholics. Oblates well understood that in order to be able to work effectively with them they must first speak their languages (similarly to the work with the Native people). Some Oblates even began to learn Polish. The systematic work, however, began when the Oblate bishops of the prairies began to find priests who were not only Polish-speaking but also of Polish culture. The first among them were members of their own Congregation.

Some people regard the work with the immigrants as a purely pastoral undertaking. More and more, however, they realize that it is also real missionary work. One of the major

missiological themes is the encounter between culture and faith. Often when one speaks about this, one has in mind places where the coming of the Gospel brings changes in the culture or an understanding of the Gospel, or places where there is already an evangelized society which has gone through a major cultural change. The immigrants are among the groups which live constantly under this tension between culture and the Gospel. One of the signs of this understanding was the National Symposium on "Immigrants and the Churches" co-sponsored by the Institute of Mission Studies of Saint Paul University in August 1988. The 51st issue of the *Kerygma* (second half of 1988) was devoted to this theme.

2. Time of interest of this research.

The period of time this research covers are the years 1898-1926. In 1898 the first Polish Oblate, Wojciech Kulawy, came to the prairies to work with Polish immigrants. In 1926 the Oblate General Administration established a new Province, St. Mary's, for all the Oblates working on the prairies with immigrants (German and Polish). With the creation of this province came the approval and recognition from the Superior General that this work was proper to some Oblates. Since then, they themselves began to understand the distinctiveness of such a ministry. Until that time, however, the Oblates working with Poles did not form a special "club." They were seen as the members of a French Congregation. They were some among others working in different forms. Sometimes they replaced, for example, other Oblates during their holidays or sickness.

3. Specific purposes of this work.

To write a history of the work of the Oblates among Polish immigrants during that time could form a great history book. For the purpose of this thesis it was chosen, therefore, to analyze only forms of missionary work, which were undertaken by the first Oblates involved in work with Poles in the prairies in the chosen time frame.

A second, more theoretical purpose of this thesis is an attempt to re-discover the ideas and visions of such a ministry, especially concerning the relationship between the faith and culture of these Oblates. This analysis will be based on the analysis of the forms of work which were undertaken. Since these Oblates did not leave us a treatise on how they understood these relations between faith and culture, this second goal will be an attempt at trying to draw some conclusions on the basis of the available data.

The working hypothesis in this paper is that the Oblates promoted the model of integration of immigrants with society. This integration was considered as a long process during which the people joined into one community through recognition and sharing of their respective cultural values. In effect a new society was born, whose fundamental unity harmonized with certain social and cultural differences.

4. The sources that contain data for an answer.

Once the questions are stated it is necessary to point to the sources that will lead to the answer. The sources for this thesis may be divided generally into two groups. Since the concerns of the dissertation are the forms of the Oblates' work and their vision of such a ministry, the primary sources will be those written by the Oblates. Among these, there are

three of special importance. For the early period of the first few years the most important sources are the letters of the Kulawy brothers, for the work done in Manitoba the history of Fr. Puchniak, and for the work in Alberta the *Memoirs* of Fr. Sylla. The core of the dissertation will be based on the primary sources; however, without the general background it could be difficult to understand the issue adequately. Other information such as the general elaborations of the different topics, will be used, therefore, as secondary sources.

5. The method of the research.

This study will be a work of analysis of available data of the main forms of work of Oblates among the Polish immigrants in the prairies in a given time. It will be divided into three main parts: the Polish (ethnic) parish of Holy Ghost in chapter two, other forms of parishes and missions in chapter three, and other forms of missionary work, such as schools, press, and associations, in chapter four. Since the situation of that time and place is different than ours today these three chapters will follow the presentation of the general background of the situation in chapter one. On the basis of available data and of analysis of the given form of work, towards the end of every chapter we will try to re-discover the presuppositions of these Oblates in choosing these forms of work. The final conclusions, then, will be based on this analysis of the forms of work which were undertaken and an attempt to draw the conclusions about their understanding and presuppositions of their work.

Chapter I - Glimpse of the history

This first chapter is intended to provide a background to the situation and circumstances of a given period. In the first section there will be a brief description of the problems we encounter in analyzing the immigrant phenomenon. Since the situation of that time differed greatly from today, it is necessary to show generally the demographic situation of Canada at that time and the policy of the Canadian government, which forms the second section of this chapter. In the third section there will be an overall presentation of the situation of Polish immigrants in the prairies of Canada. Finally, in the fourth section of this chapter there will be a short presentation of the Oblate presence in the prairies of Western Canada.

1. Phenomenon of immigrants

To analyze an immigrant's experience is a very difficult and complex task. Different theories try to look upon immigrants from different perspectives. Some look upon them from the point of view of the country of adoption. This perspective tends to show an immigrant as new human material to be shaped and moulded into its own patterns, or as a threat, as someone to be tolerated and utilized, or someone contributing something to a new home. Some look upon an immigrant from the perspective of the country of origin as lost human potential, or as a possible source of economic or political advantage.¹

¹ There are also some essays concerning theology of immigration, for instance Giacomo DANESI, "Towards a Theology of Migration," in *Migration. Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 1 (Vatican City: Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, 1985), pp. 27-99; or Marcello SEMERARO, "Il Misterio di

Yet this is hardly the perspective in which an immigrant looks upon him- or herself. No one is born as an immigrant, as a transitional being, no one reproduces oneself as such. As an immigrant one is neither understood fully by one's parents nor by one's children, since they are both born into stable societies, and are not obliged to uproot themselves and begin a new existence in a foreign country. Difficulties with social sciences, psychology or history in analyzing an immigrant's experience lies in their presupposition of a certain stability. The immigrant's existence has been cut in two and let go into an unforeseeable stream. Besides, an immigrant is a human being, who experiences, endures, develops a defence against, and draws profit from, this fleetingness. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that sadness is the dominant feature of immigrant existence.²

Anyone who chooses another country as his or her adopted country must adopt also a new style of life, a particular kind of existence. The process of integration with the environment in which one is going to live is anything but easy. Immigrants are under pressure to adjust to the economic, political, and legal structures of the new country but there are some areas, such as family life, religious life, and social and cultural associations where society does not have so much influence.

un Popolo in cammino," in *Migrazioni. Studi interdisciplinari*, vol. 2 (Vaticano: Pontificia Commissione per la Pastorale delle Migrazioni e del Turismo, 1985), pp. 35-215.

Minor editorial modifications, e.g., capitalization, spelling, inclusive language, have been made in some of the quotations to conform to the adopted style for the presentation. Whenever the source of the translation is not given, the translation was made by the author.

² An immigrant as an immigrant is not an attractive subject, for as an immigrant one does not endure. See the very interesting remarks in Aloysius M. AMBROZIC, "Some Remarks on Immigrant Experience," in *CCHA*, 50 (1983), pp. 499-511, especially pp. 503-505.

Immigration, however, always affects religion because when people move to a new place they revise routines of daily life, and new experience acts upon religious tradition. Already the Bible shows how hard it was for the Israelites to maintain their desert faith in the land of Canaan after settling down to an agricultural existence. It shows also the problems related to the faith and culture which arose for the early Church with the expansion of Christianity from the Palestinian frame to Antioch in Syria. The history of the early Church shows the similar problems in Egypt, in North Africa (second century), or in Georgia and Armenia (fourth century).³ Today's debate regarding the Gospel and culture does not begin from zero. There is already a tradition to bear in mind, to learn from, to critique. In 19th century Canada the new immigrants were immersed in the same problems, which were at once both cultural and religious. Immigration is not merely a temporal or technical problem, it is also a great spiritual reality. The continuous arrival of new Catholics of varied nationalities has been a powerful contribution to the universality of the Canadian Church on the prairies.⁴

³ It would have been an interesting task to analyze the history of the Church, especially the early Church, from the perspective of the immigration of Christians and the crossing of cultures in the Church.

⁴ For a more general overview concerning the Church's attitude towards its work with immigrants see, for instance, acts of the International Catholic Migration Congresses: *[SECOND] International Catholic Migration Congress. Organized by the International Catholic Migration Commission, Geneva, and the Central Catholic Emigration Foundation, the Hague (in Ereda, Netherlands - September 11-16th 1954)* (The Hague: Pax International Publ. Co., 1955); *THIRD International Catholic Migration Congress. Organized by the International Catholic Migration Commission. In cooperation with the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione, Rome. In consultation with the International Catholic Institute for Social Research, Geneva (in Assisi, Italy - September 22-28, 1957)* (Geneva: Courrier, 1957); *FOURTH International Catholic Migration Congress. Organized by the International Catholic Migration Commission. In cooperation with Catholic Immigrants Services (in Ottawa, Canada - August 21-25, 1960)* (Geneva: Information Center of the International Catholic Migration Commission, 1960). Among other sources see for instance Andrew N. WOŹNICKI, *Journey to the Unknown. Catholic Doctrine on Ethnicity and Migration* (San Francisco: Golden Phoenix Press, 1982); Jean BEYER, "Fondamento Ecclesiale della Pastorale dell'Emigrazione," in *Migrazioni. Studi interdisciplinari*, vol. 2 (Vaticano: Pontificia Commissione per la Pastorale delle Migrazioni e del Turismo, 1985), pp. 9-33.

The relationship between religion and ethnic identity is very complicated. Some ethnic groups are almost entirely of one religion, others are spread among many. For example, when the Italians first came to Canada, they were almost all Roman Catholics; the Scandinavians - Lutherans; the Ukrainians either Greek Orthodox or Greek Catholic, but the Germans and Dutch were of different denominations and religion was not such an important part of their ethnic identity.

Every analysis presupposes some perspective.⁵ For this research we will look upon the immigrant situation of Poles in Canada from the point of view of Oblates who had to work with them. The Oblates' concern was mainly to work with immigrants in given circumstances. It required, therefore, not only an analysis but also a strategy, what to do, or how to proceed with missionary work. It was necessary to help those immigrants preserve and develop their faith in different conditions and circumstances, when they had to settle down in this new environment. We do not have any sources whether their attempt was more to preserve or more to transform the faith. We can see it only by looking at their work.

A concern of this dissertation is to analyze the situation which arose in the prairies of Canada at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time there was not one culture of the Canadian prairies. It was still at the stage of formation from the Native people and immigrants primarily from Europe. Some authors recognize the cultures of French and English Canadians. For the purpose of this work we will consider the society of the prairies as different from that of the French Canada of Quebec or the English Canada of Ontario. Before arriving in Canada

⁵ An immigrant can be appreciated only from some perspective; from one or the other angle, but one cannot be seen from no angle at all. To imagine that one can have a "pure" objective presentation without perspective is an illusion. One perspective, however, can be better than another one.

many new immigrants had already lived in some kind of Christian culture rich in tradition. Once they arrived in the prairies, they began to go through difficult times of adjustment and the creating of a new culture.

2. Immigration in the prairies at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century

Multinational state organisms have existed in different countries of the world, for instance in Switzerland, Belgium, or in the old Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. This situation has usually taken place through the embracing of various regions populated by different national groups by one State. In Canada we face a different development of a multinational state and culture provided through mass immigration. Without taking into consideration the variety of Native People we may say that since the arrival of English immigrants, Canada has never been a homogenous nation. Although the French and British have been leading, both in their number and in their cultural influence, the population of Canada has always been ethnically diverse. People of different origins entered Canada as fishermen, farmers, merchants, soldiers, adventurers, or fugitives.⁶

⁶In a document of the ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, Book 4 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1970), p. 22 we find that "between the censuses of 1901 and 1921 there was an increase of over 800,000 among those whose origin was neither British nor French in the Canadian population, and by 1921 they made up 15 per cent of Canada's population." This situation offered an exceptional opportunity for adjustment of the immigrants. In Canada immigrants did not have to exchange distinctly their "old" national identity for a new one. If one emigrated to the United States, one had to either turn oneself into an American or retain their status of a foreigner. In Canada one could stay a Canadian of Italian, Irish, German, Chinese or Polish origins.

At the end of the 19th century, the great Anglo-Saxon movement towards the empty West had suddenly slowed down. If colonization was to succeed, there were needed new men and women. Somebody had to open new homesteads in the prairies, build the railroads and clear the forests. The decision to "open the doors" for Slavic immigrants, was prompted by real necessity. In the pioneer period of populating the Western provinces, Canada found it suitable to admit people of physical strength. The government directed its immigration policy almost exclusively to the physically strong element, prepared for pioneering exertions in primitive conditions, chiefly in agriculture.

The wave of emigration from Europe between 1880 and 1914 has been described as "the mightiest movement of people in modern history".⁷ On the one hand the prairies needed a rapid increase in population, since the land was both underpopulated and underdeveloped. On the other hand the conditions in Europe - the collapse of the social structure, the transformation of agriculture and industry, the increase in population - caused the immigration of millions who moved to the United States and Latin America. Canada received very few of these settlers until the late 1890's. At that time diverse elements combined to begin mass immigration to Canada. The Yukon gold rush, the building of many new railway lines, the closing of the American frontier to new immigrants, new developments in farming, and the Canadian government's concentrated policy to promote immigration, all combined to attract more than three million immigrants to Canada between 1896 and 1914.⁸

⁷ Gerald M. CRAIG, "The Canadian Setting," in Albert ROSE, ed., *A People and Its Faith: Essays on Jews and Reform Judaism in a Changing Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 8.

⁸ See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 22.

In November 1896 Sir Clifford Sifton became the Minister of the Interior in the Macdonald government. For a time when he was a member of the Cabinet, he advocated the idea of enlarging Canada and winning new territories. When Canadian Pacific started to build new railway lines he forcefully attracted the people from Eastern Europe for the building of the railway and for farming. He brought in people who would clear the bush and start settled agricultural communities in the prairies. Among other things, in order to stimulate immigration to Canada, he offered his immigration offices in Europe five dollars for each recruited immigrant.⁹ From his name the great immigration of peasants or agricultural labourers of that time was called Sifton's immigration. In 1922, during one of the great debates about immigration policies, he made his famous speech to the Toronto Board of Trade. There he described what he thought was the ideal of a good and valuable immigrant. He said:

When I speak of quality, I have in mind something that is quite different from what is in the mind of the average writer or speaker upon the question of immigration. I think that a stalwart peasant in the sheep-skin coat, born on the soil whose forefathers had been farmers for generations, with a stout wife and half-a-dozen children is good quality.¹⁰

This statement sounds very strong, nevertheless it is a precise description of what Canada wanted at that time and what it received. Many immigrants from central and eastern Europe

⁹ See William Boleslaus MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada* (Niagara Peninsula: The Canadian Polish Congress, 1967), p. 50.

¹⁰ Quoted after Benedykt HEYDENKORN, "The Social Structure of Canadian 'Polonia'," in T. W. KRYCHOWSKI, ed., *Polish Canadians: Profile and Image* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1969), p. 39. In 1903 Sifton presented the situation in such words: "While the United States is [*sic!*] getting thousands of labourers from Southern Europe who are flocking to their cities and towns, we are getting *agriculturalists* almost without exception who are going directly upon the land." Quoted after The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 43, italic added.

came to Canada during that time.¹¹ The territories of the partitioned Poland were an almost inexhaustible reservoir of manpower in the shape of strong and stalwart peasants "born on the soil" and dreaming of the soil.

Problems began to arise when it became clear that Canada invited the residents of Central and Eastern European countries, but knew practically nothing about their past, their cultural peculiarities, social situation, economic needs and population position. Therefore, the reception of these new immigrants by the local society was in the first instance characterized by amazement created by the flow of such different peoples, and further by an aversion, increasing gradually to severe criticism of these newcomers. This was caused mainly by ignorance of the general background of the countries of emigration and their populations. The host society was neither sympathetic nor mature enough to clearly understand the problems facing these immigrants.¹²

Since society often approached the problem of immigrant adjustment negatively, it cannot be surprising that the immigrants, in order to survive, had to develop some defensive methods. In the case of Poles, these methods manifested themselves in religious customs and secular organizations mainly of a mutual aid nature. These two institutions helped the immigrants to face the crises associated with entering a new society; at the same time slowing

¹¹ The national boundaries in that period had been fluid in eastern Europe, and people who immigrated were sometimes even uncertain of their exact ethnic identities.

¹² See more in James S. WOODSWORTH, *Strangers within our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1909). It is fairly good picture of the situation; in religious matters from a Methodist's perspective. Some government officials saw the new immigrants as a population which could be economically exploited. This policy proved to be very successful in populating the prairies and in economic development but not necessary in the adjustment of immigrants. See Benjamin Galletly SMILLIE, "Introduction: Religious Settlement on the Prairies," in Benjamin Galletly SMILLIE, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem: Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), p. 2.

down a process of assimilation and allowing the process for slower but deeper integration with the society.

The focus of this research is to analyze the problems of the Polish immigrants and not of all the ethnic groups in the prairies. Therefore, after briefly showing the overall immigrant situation, in the third section we will take a closer look at the Polish immigrants.

3. Poles in Canada

Poles in Canada can point to several notable figures of Polish background in Canadian history. Historians of the Polish community in Canada have traced the presence of Poles in this country back at least 200 years, finding among them some who made a lasting contribution to Canadian life and history. On the whole, however, the size of the early Polish community was small. The earliest Polish immigrants, till the 1870's, were highly skilled and well-educated individuals.¹³ Those Poles found their place in Canada. Their integration with Canadian society was on the whole smooth and rather painless. Sir Casimir Gzowski, in his marriage to an English-Canadian wife, his conversion to Anglicanism and his lack of contact with Poland, is perhaps the best known example of total integration. Similarly, the Globensky

¹³ At least those about whom we have information. Among them one may mention the Globensky family known in economics, military affairs and politics, e.g. Frederick Globensky, born in 1790, a judge at Rivière-du-Chêne, Quebec, or Auguste Francis Globensky, Debartsch family, known in politics; Alexander Edward Kierzkowski, born in 1816, a member of the first Parliament after Confederation; Sir Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski, born in 1813, a civil engineer and contractor, and builder of the International Bridge at Niagara; and many others. See more in MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 4-44. There are many publications concerning specific people.

family records show the family's complete acceptance of the French-Canadian way of life, although along with a pride in the family's origin.¹⁴

An entirely different picture of Poles in Canada was presented by the wave of immigration at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. These immigrants had a different socio-cultural background and, therefore, underwent a different process of integration with the Canadian community. Since the interest of this research is in this particular period, it will be examined more thoroughly. In this period one may find two stages; one before the First World War and the other after that war.¹⁵

The great Polish mass immigration to America began in the 1890's.¹⁶ Most of the immigrants belonged to the landless peasant class, or were labourers or small tradesmen. Years of economic oppression, both domestic and foreign, made these people not only extremely poor but also often unwanted. Overpopulation and lack of economic opportunities

¹⁴ See more in Victor TUREK, *Sir Casimir S. Gzowski* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1957); Ludwik KOS-RABCEWICZ-ZUBKOWSKI, "Notes sur la Famille Globensky," in Victor TUREK, ed., *The Polish Past in Canada. Contributions to the History of the Poles in Canada and of the Polish-Canadian Relations* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1960), pp. 101-122.

¹⁵ The next big wave of Polish immigrants to Canada arrived after the Second World War when the size of the Polish community almost doubled. That time a large contingent of Polish engineers and technicians arrived. Some held degrees from universities. They took their place in industry, research centres and institutions of higher learning. A fourth big wave occurred from the end of 1970's, till the beginning of 1990's during the Communist government in Poland. Some immigrants came because of political reasons, but the majority came as economic immigrants looking for better possibilities of life and jobs.

¹⁶ During the thousand years of Polish history, beginning in 966, there were moments of great glory when the Polish nation exercised considerable influence upon its neighbours. In northern and eastern Europe, Poland's missionary work and Polish science, literature and music left an everlasting imprint. But by the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries the country began to show signs of weakness. Although a very progressive constitution was introduced in 1791, Poland could not defend herself successfully against the three powers allied against her. Between 1772 and 1795 Austria, Prussia, and Russia divided Poland among themselves, ending her independence until 1918. The occupation of the country by foreign powers was politically, culturally, and economically ruthless. Not surprisingly, in the wake of oppression and persecution, many Poles had to leave their country in order to find freedom, peace, and bread elsewhere.

in the villages as well as in the cities caused the depressed conditions in Polish villages. This wave of immigration reflected basically the economic conditions in Poland, although political oppression also played a role.

On the one hand, these immigrants were accustomed to the life of a permanent agricultural community, settled for many hundreds of years in the same place and changing very slowly. They were people who generally neither expected sudden changes nor did anything to stimulate them. Because mobility was virtually unknown to the Polish peasant a decision to emigrate overseas was one of the greatest events in one's life. The situation of the working class was similar. A worker's lot in nineteenth century Poland was not much better than that of a slave. Exploited by German industrialists and Russian tradesmen, the Polish worker was kept on the lowest possible level of development and served merely as a source of cheap labour.¹⁷ On the other hand, immigration offered an opportunity for improvement and sometimes the only possibility for survival, especially for the more industrious and resourceful young men and women of rural Poland. The main routes led to Western Europe (France), South America (Brazil and Argentina) and North America.¹⁸

What was the policy of the Canadian government towards Polish immigrants? In the early period (1896-1905) a dynamic recruiting campaign was started by Clifford Sifton, who

¹⁷ For all of these people immigration was a complete amputation from an established organism, cultural security and a definite way of life. One of the most important studies on the subject of Polish immigrants in North America, especially USA, is the classic work in sociology by William I. THOMAS and Florian ZNANIECKI, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, vol. I-II (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), which documented the disorganization that can result from the decrease in the influence of traditional social patterns on Polish immigrants.

¹⁸ See Rudolf K. KOGLER, "A Demographic Profile of the Polish Community in Canada," in KRYCHOWSKI, *Polish Canadians*, pp. 10-13. These immigrants were basically poor and simple. Their faith was often deeply linked to their culture and generally expressed in popular practices. In coming to Canada they met not only different culture but also more anti-Catholic attitudes.

wanted peasants to settle the vast territories of the prairies. However, already in the years 1906-1914 the first legal restrictions on immigration were introduced. They concerned those persons who did not have sufficient financial means. The First World War brought a stop to the influx of Polish immigrants. Immigration was resumed after the war, even in spite of the unfavourable attitudes of the Canadian authorities. In the post-war period Congress in the United States passed the so-called Quota Laws restricting the flow of immigrants to USA. This resulted in an increased number of entries to Canada. This resulted in Canada introducing a new law in 1923, which refused entry to immigrants apart from such classes as farmers, domestic servants, British subjects, and American citizens. In 1925 the railway agreement was signed which granted railway companies the right to recruit and bring in farmers and domestic servants from central and eastern Europe.¹⁹

What happened when Poles decided to emigrate to Canada? They suddenly discovered that the security, goals and habits belonging to the old group had disappeared. The new community was different; social norms were different and they could not even communicate socially or linguistically. Moreover, their habits were questioned, and their dress ridiculed. For some immigrants the effect was disastrous. There were some chances of adjustments but the main problem was survival. Some immigrants, confronted with the extraordinary physical hardship of lonely pioneering conditions, lost their lives at the very beginning. The Polish immigrants could not count on the services or advice of consular agencies since a legal Polish

¹⁹ See a very good article of Joanna MATEJKO, "Kanadyjska polityka imigracyjna w stosunku do Polaków w latach 1896-1939," in *Studia Polonijne*, vol. 3 (Lublin: KUL, 1979), pp. 23-60.

government did not exist. The Polish Consulate in Winnipeg has existed only since 1919.²⁰ Therefore it was no surprise that a deep link with Polish parishes was strongly felt.

Most of the Polish immigrants were from villages, and it was logical to expect that they would settle on the available lands of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Only some, however, did so. The reasons for a relatively small settlement on farms are diverse, but the most important one, it seems, was the exploitation of early immigrants by slick operators who were making fortunes out of human misery. Land was sold and resold, the initial deposit being kept, of course, while one settler after another, filing on the land on which no one before him had ever succeeded, was ejected. In addition the immigrants were exploited through the so-called nomination system. Farmers were asked, sometimes for a small fee, to put their signatures to several requests for labourers or domestic help, often without any intention of employing either. If we add to these pictures the cold unsympathetic reception of those who, seeing a strangely dressed, foreign speaking peasant, thought of him as a part of a non-preferred human element, we can very well see the extent of misery and degradation the early immigrants had to suffer.²¹

²⁰ The first Polish consulate in Canada was opened in November 1919 in Montreal and the second two months later in January 1920, in Winnipeg. In 1924 a Canadian immigration office was opened in Gdansk (Danzing) to facilitate and supervise the flow of immigrants. See Rudolf K. KOGLER, "The Polish Community in Canada," in Benedykt HEYDENKORN, ed., *Topics on Poles in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1976), p. 16.

²¹ See MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 133-134. Life of this generation of immigrants was excellently portrayed by Melchior WAŃKOWICZ in his novel *Tworzywo*. There were many editions, for example, 8th ed. (Warszawa: Pax, 1975). It was also translated into English as *Three Generations*. This book was based on a very thorough research and almost innumerable interviews with those pioneers themselves and their families. In this book one may find a powerful description how land was conquered and status among strangers won by those peasants so hungry for the soil, possessing no other advantage than their strength, health and a will to work.

Regardless of the difficulties a number of Polish farmers settled on homesteads. The place of settlement was a matter not so much of choice but rather of the availability of the land. By the end of the nineteenth century, the best lands had already been taken up by earlier immigrants who were continuously advancing westward along the railways. The land still available was either too dry for farming, or in the marginal belt to the north. Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan had considerable acreage of available land, but most of it was either too wet or too acidic. Some of the farms in this region had been previously occupied and later abandoned by Anglo-Saxon farmers.²²

The life of the Poles who settled in the urban centres of the prairies differed from those who settled on farms. The expanding Canadian industries needed plenty of hands for the ever increasing industry. The majority of unskilled peasants, however, without a knowledge of English and with different customs did not fit easily into a specialized industry. They were mostly employed by railways and construction establishments. Other occupations were forestry and mining. Slowly some of them were able to establish a number of commercial establishments, such as those to be traced in Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, and Edmonton. The biggest centre of settlement of Poles in Canada of that time was Winnipeg and the area west of it.²³

²² See MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 134-135.

²³ The first group of Poles of any considerable number settled west of Ottawa in the Barry's Bay area in 1864, where they founded a village named Wilno. Other Polish immigrants settled in Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Windsor, St. Catharines, Welland and the Lakehead. In the Province of Quebec there was a significant number of Poles in Montreal. In British Columbia the Poles settled mainly in Vancouver and Victoria. The exact number of Poles in Canada is difficult to determine. In official statistics Poles were recognized as an ethnic group only from 1901, and even that was not precise. See more in MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 49-50, 135-136. There exist many other publications concerning the Polish immigrants in Canada but it is not our goal to analyze them.

The situation changed somewhat after World War I, when Poland regained independence. The immigrants who did not return to the old country began to realize that the country of their residence was their true home. They became Canadian citizens and the burden of the defence of Polish national and cultural interest shifted to Poland. They ceased to be looked upon as an overseas province of the old country.

After sketching briefly the situation of immigrants in Canada, paying special attention to Poles, we will now briefly take a look at the situation of the Oblates in the prairies of Canada during that time.

4. Oblates in the prairies

If Saskatchewan and Alberta had remained as they were, a country of the Indians and Metis, the Oblates probably would not have had so great a difficulty in advancing with the task, which they had already begun, of "implanting" the faith into the Native people. But suddenly a greater problem in the prairies arose, that of the immigrants. The Oblates had to develop new strategies to answer the new challenges of evangelization of the people of European nationalities who flocked to the prairies.

In an effort to establish what was the ecclesiological and missiological understanding of these first Polish Oblates, we must first attempt to re-call who they were and how they were prepared. Unfortunately not enough research has been done about the Oblates' formation programs at that time. Generally, we may assume that their preparation was like other priests and Oblates of that time. The questions of the variety of cultures within the

Church were not yet discussed so largely in theology, and sciences such as anthropology, sociology or linguistics did not exist.²⁴

To better understand further development it is necessary to recall briefly the question of the Oblates, as well as the French and Catholic presence in the West, because in a sense it acted as an umbrella against conformity to one cultural norm.²⁵ Many people thought that if the French-Canadian lost his language he would soon lose his faith and his national identity. The bishops regarded the preservation and cultivation of the French language as the weapon in the struggle to maintain not only the heritage of New France but also the Roman Catholic community and its faith. In the second half of the 19th century some of the French-speaking clergy conceived the West as a religious and cultural extension of Quebec. As the missions

²⁴ Already the Founder insisted on theological formation of the new missionaries: "We have excellent young men here who only long to go to the native missions. But we are determined to have them finish their theological studies before sending them. Under the pretext that it is not necessary for them to know many things to evangelize the Savages, they are sometimes sent too soon into their territories. This is not my idea however impatient our young people may be, I shall keep them until the end of their studies" - Eugene de MAZENOD, "Letter of March 4, 1849 to Fr. Aubert," in Eugene de MAZENOD, *Letters*, vol. 1, *to North America, 1841-1850* (Rome: General Postulation, 1978), p. 212. One of the few researches concerning formation of the Oblates working in Canada was done by Claude CHAMPAGNE. See his book *Les débuts de la mission dans le Nord-Ouest canadien. Mission et Eglise chez Mgr Vital Grandin, o.m.i. (1829-1902)* (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université St-Paul and de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1983), pp. 20-50; and his article "La formation des oblats, missionnaires dans le Nord-Ouest canadien," in *SCHÉC*, 56 (1989), pp. 21-33. See also Donat LEVASSEUR, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada 1845-1967. Esquisse historique* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press. Western Canadian Publishers, 1995), pp. 105-108; Robert CHOQUETTE, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), pp. 11-18. There could have been some differences, because the missionaries working with the Natives studied basically in French seminaries while the first Oblates working with Poles, studied in Germany.

²⁵ Raymond HUEL wrote some articles concerning issues related to that topic. See his "French-Speaking Bishops and the Cultural Mosaic in Western Canada," in Richard ALLEN, ed., *Religion and Society in the Prairie West* (Regina: Canadian Plain Research Center, 1974), pp. 53-64; revised version as "*Gestae Dei Per Francos: The French Canadian Experience in Western Canada*," in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 39-53; "The French Presence, the Oblates and the Character of Settlement in Western Canada", in *A Pilgrimage to Our Past* (Toronto: Missionary Oblates. Assumption Province, 1994), pp. 20-35. Polish translation - "Kultura francuska, Oblaci i charakter osiedlenia w Zachodniej Kanadzie," in *Wędrownica ku naszej przeszłości* (Toronto: Misjonarze Oblaci Prowincji Wniebowzięcia, 1994), pp. 20-32.

of the Church of St. Boniface slowly spread across the Canadian North-West²⁶ the French clergy came to see the West as an excellent area to establish French settlers. Many French people, however, were sceptical about migration to the West because this could cause eventual assimilation by an Anglo-Protestant majority.²⁷

Already Archbishop Taché (of St. Boniface) appealed for colonists from Quebec and wanted to save Quebec immigrants to the United States from certain assimilation by repatriating them into western Canada. The Quebec clergy, however, preferred to devote its energies to the settlement of northern Quebec and northern Ontario. Hence, Archbishop Taché had to appoint missionary-colonizers²⁸ and form lay societies to promote French-Canadian emigration to western Canada. His policy was continued and intensified by his successor, Archbishop Langevin. Despite these dedicated efforts, the large wave of French emigration failed to appear and the French and Catholic elements remained minorities in the

²⁶ The diocese of St. Boniface, which originally stretched to the Rockies, gave the beginning to the vicariates of Athabaska (1862), Mackenzie (1901), and Saskatchewan (1891 - since 1910 of Keewatin), prefecture of Churchill-Hudson Bay (1925), and dioceses of St. Albert (1871 - since 1912 of Edmonton), of Prince Albert (1907), of Regina (1910), of Calgary (1912) and of Winnipeg (1915), as well as Exarchate of Winnipeg (1912). See André CHAPEAU, Louis-Philippe NORMAND, and Lucienne PLANTE, *Evêques catholiques du Canada - Canadian R.C. Bishops 1658-1979* (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 1980), pp. 7, 13-15, 21-22, 33-34, 57, 65, 70-71, 105-106.

²⁷ See more in André LALONDE, "L'Eglise catholique et les Francophones de l'Ouest, 1818-1930," in *SCHEC*, 50 (1983), pp. 485-497; Robert CHOQUETTE, "English-French Relations in the Canadian Catholic Community," in Terrence MURPHY and Gerald STORTZ, eds., *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 3-24; A. I. SILVER, "French Canada and the Prairie Frontier, 1870-1890," in *Canadian Historical Review*, 50 (1969), pp. 11-36.

²⁸ For example Fr. Blais, who brought in 1903 about 300 French Colonizers from Quebec. See an article "EXCURSION du R.P. Blais, O.M.I., Missionnaire-Colonisateur," in *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, 2 (1903), pp. 185-186. See also his talks, M. J. BLAIS, *Le Manitoba. Renseignements et Conseils aux Canadiens-Français de la Province de Québec et des Etats-Unis* (Ottawa: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1902).

western population.²⁹ Since the struggle to protect French-language and Roman Catholic interests in the West had suffered serious difficulties, bishops recognized the need to use other means. To compensate the balance, they called for the union of all Catholic ethnic groups. They hoped that ethnic associations would work together for the "re-conquest" of Catholic rights.³⁰

Where the faithful were grouped in sufficient numbers, they were constituted into a parish and provided with a priest of their own nationality. Some European Catholics were suspicious of the foreign clergy (even when they spoke their language) and insisted on priests of their own nationality.³¹ It was not an easy task to minister to the needs of this multicultural flock. The biggest ethnic groups among those Catholic immigrants were Ukrainians,³² Germans,³³ and Poles.

²⁹ At the beginning, proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (that time prairies included) were recorded in both languages, after 1892 only in English. See HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 42-44.

³⁰ See HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 46-48.

³¹ Besides two parishes for English-speaking Catholics (St. Edward and St. Ignatius), Archbishop Langevin established in his diocese parishes for the Poles, Germans, Italians, and Syrians. See Josaphat MAGNAN, *I remember Archbishop Adélarde Langevin* (Saint-Boniface: Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1966), p. 28.

³² Since in Canada no separate Church organization existed for Catholics of the Eastern Rite, it was appropriate for them to be under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. However, based on previous developments in Europe, many Ukrainians suspected the Latin clergy of attempting to detach them from their traditional ways of worship. Archbishop Langevin collaborated in negotiations which resulted in the establishment, in 1912, of Nicyta Budka as their first bishop. Beside, the rise and fall of the independent Ukrainian State (1917-1921) had developed in them a deep national consciousness. For more see Gaston CARRIÈRE, "Les évêques oblates de l'Ouest Canadien et les Ruthènes," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 33 (1974), pp. 95-119, 157-188; Stella HRYNIUK and Roman YERENIUK, "Building the New Jerusalem on the Prairies: The Ukrainian Experience," in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 137-152; PERIN, in WESTFALL, *Religion / Culture. Comparative Canadian Studies*, pp. 220-226 and its larger version as Robert PERIN, *Rome in Canada. The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the late Victorian Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 158-186.

³³ The Germans increased in the three Prairie Provinces from 46,800 in 1901 to 148,000 in 1911. In 1921, the census showed that those of German origin in the three Prairie Provinces had decreased to 123,000. This may be probably attributed to denials of German origin during and after World War I. In 1931, the census listed 242,000

To complicate matters, English-speaking Catholics also were scattered throughout the prairies and they too demanded services in their own language. Unlike the French, English Catholics had not been missionaries, colonizers, or explorers but their lack of such traditions was balanced by their knowledge of the English language which helped to reconcile Catholicism and the British element of Canadian culture. The situation itself caused controversy between French and English-speaking Catholics (often referred to as "the Irish"). There were groups who wanted to have more ethnic balance within the hierarchy by nomination of some English-speaking bishops.³⁴ Although they were a minority within the Catholic Church in Canada, they were, nevertheless, the most noisy element. They petitioned Pope Benedict XV and in December 1915, Winnipeg was removed from the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Province of St. Boniface and erected as a separate archdiocese.³⁵ This

Canadians of German origin in the prairies. See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 22. Oblates worked also with German immigrants, beginning at Holy Ghost and later at St. Joseph in Winnipeg, as well as among the farmers of German origin. An interesting situation existed in Saskatchewan when a large group of German immigrants from the United States decided to settle together around the German benedictine monastery of Münster. See Bede HUBBARD, "St. Peter's: A German-American Marriage of Monastery and Colony," in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 153-164.

³⁴ Traditionally, French-speaking bishops had been in the majority in the hierarchy in the prairies. In 1898 there were 2 bishops from France (Grandin in St. Albert, and Pascal in Prince Albert) and one French-Canadian, Langevin in St. Boniface from Quebec. In 1926 there was not one bishop from France, 3 French-Canadians (Prud'homme from Manitoba in Prince Albert, Mathieu from Quebec in Regina, and Beliveau from Quebec in St. Boniface), and 3 English-Canadians (Kidd from Ontario in Calgary, O'Leary from New Brunswick in Edmonton, and Sinnott from P.E.I. in Winnipeg). In the midtime there was one French bishop (Legal in Edmonton <1902-1920>), and one English-Canadian (McNally from P.E.I. in Calgary <1913-1924>). There were also two bishops of Ukrainian rite, Budka and Ladyka of Winnipeg Exarchate, both born in Europe. See CHAPEAU, NORMAND, and PLANTE, *Evêques catholiques du Canada*, pp. 7, 14-15, 57, 65, 70-71, 105-106. See also Raymond HUEL, "The Irish French Conflict in Catholic Episcopal Nominations: The Western Sees and the Struggle for Domination Within the Church," in *CCHA* 42 (1975), pp. 50-70.

³⁵ Already in 1912 "the Irish" succeeded in having James Thomas McNally named first bishop of Calgary. He was the first English speaking bishop to be appointed in the Ecclesiastical Province of St. Boniface. The erection of Winnipeg as a separate archdiocese in 1915 confirmed this trend as did the appointment of Bishop O'Leary to succeed Bishop Legal in Edmonton in 1920 and Bishop McGuigan to succeed Bishop Mathieu in Regina in 1930. See CHAPEAU, NORMAND, PLANTE, *Evêques catholiques du Canada*, pp. 7, 15, 65, 105; André LALONDE,

tension between French and Irish bishops was fairly understandable because the Catholics of those two groups formed the great majority of the Catholics of the prairies.

The changes of the bishops from French to English were at the same time changes from Oblates to non-Oblates. The Oblates were basically regarded as a French Congregation.³⁶ Therefore to these problems were added also the difficulties of new regulations between new diocesan bishops and the Oblates, who were sometimes the majority of the clergy in the diocese. Although it was up to the bishop to decide whether the Oblates would have a given work, it was still up to the Oblate provincial to provide personnel or not.³⁷

The first Oblate of Polish origin in the prairies of Canada was Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, who arrived there in 1896, but he did not work with Poles. The proper work of organizing Church structures and forms of work with Poles was a result of the efforts of other Oblates of Polish origin: Wojciech Kulawy (arrived in 1898), his brother John (1899),³⁸

"Archbishop O.E. Mathieu and Francophone Immigration to the Archdiocese of Regina," in *CCHA*, 33 (1977), pp. 45-59.

³⁶ This is seen clearly for example in the Circular Letter of the erection of the Provinces of St. Peter and St. Mary. The feeling that beside the "normal" work in French there is a "special" work in other languages (English and German) prompted the Superior General, Augustine DONTENWILL, (also a Canadian) to establish for them special Provinces, not territorial but personal. See Augustine DONTENWILL, "Deux Nouvelles Provinces dans l'Ouest Canadien," in *Missions*, 60 (1926), pp. 28-32, especially p. 29.

³⁷ More about the development of the Oblate Provinces in Western Canada see in Alban BOUCHER, *Provinciaux et Vicaire des Missions 1841-1948* (Rome: General House, 1948), pp. 53-61.

³⁸ Wojciech and John joined the Oblates in Germany, where they entered to Novitiate and where they began their study. During the Seminary time they came to Canada as did many other Oblate Seminarians from Germany. It seems that Wojciech (in French documents called usually Albert) Kulawy did not complete his studies. His brother John William received a Bachelor and Licence in Philosophy at the University of Ottawa. Wojciech did not receive any degree in Ottawa. For the programs of studies of the two Kulawy brothers and Stojar at the University of Ottawa see *ANNUAL Calendar of the Officers, Faculty and Students of the University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1894-95* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1894), *ANNUAL Calendar of the Officers, Faculty and Students of the University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1895-96* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1895), *The CALENDAR of the University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1896-97* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1896), *The CALENDAR of the University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1897-98* (Ottawa: Ottawa Printing Co., 1897), *The CALENDAR of the*

Charles Groetschel and August Forner (1901), Paul Kulawy (1903), Francis B. Kowalski (1904), Andrew Stojar (1905), Leonard Nandzik (1906), Ladislaus Grochowski, Francis Bregula and Theophil Nandzik (1907), Anthony Sylla (1909), Bronislaus Heintze (1911), and Richard Kosian (1912) as well as other Canadian-born Oblates of Polish origin.³⁹ These first Oblates who began their work among Polish immigrants studied basically in Germany and some of them, partially, in Canada. They were not taught in the seminaries about what to do in such circumstances when there are Catholics who cannot communicate among themselves in a common language to form one parish community. They knew more or less how to "build the Church" among non-Christians, but not what to do when there are Catholics without structures, such as parishes, church buildings, organized communities and so on.⁴⁰

The necessity of new solutions was simply forced by given circumstances. The increase of settlement in the prairies imposed new demands on the Oblates who were called to minister to many of the Catholic newcomers in the West. Some Oblates who were bishops were responsible for organizing the whole Church structure in the prairie territories, which

University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1898-99 (Ottawa: The Ottawa Printing Co., 1898), and *The CALENDAR of the University of Ottawa. Academic Year 1899-1900* (Ottawa: The Ottawa Printing Co., 1899). All of these can be found in ASP, some in AD.

³⁹ For more information concerning the life of a particular Oblate see Gaston CARRIÈRE, *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de Marie-Immaculée au Canada*, vol. I-IV (Ottawa: Editions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1976-1989).

⁴⁰ Perhaps sometimes in the missionary work of that time there was greater emphasis on civilization rather than on evangelization, but at least this gave some kind of vision to the work. What to do, however, in the case of work with immigrants where this element could not play so important a role?

could not exclude newcomers immigrants. The demographic patterns in the West necessitated a new organization.⁴¹

The Oblates' history may be written in different perspective, for example through non-Oblates eyes, but it is not the purpose of this work. This dissertation is an attempt to look at the work through the Oblates' eyes. In the sources of this research there are some hidden biases that reflect the spirit of the era in which they were written. This Oblate apostolate was viewed traditionally as an endeavour within a somehow idealistic Christian community. Less attention was paid to the involvement of human agents with varied motives and ambitions.⁴²

This is more or less the basic framework in which some Oblates began to work with Polish immigrants. Following patterns borrowed from their confreres they began to organize their ministry undertaking different forms of work. After this general presentation of the background in which the first Oblates worked with Polish immigrants in the prairies of Canada, we will proceed in the next chapter to an analysis of the special, and in a way unique, form of work, which has been done at Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg. In the third chapter we

⁴¹ It would have been interesting to analyze also attitudes to similar work in other denominations. There is no room to do this here thoroughly. The main difference was that they were basically of one ethnic origin and therefore those problems were not seen there so keenly. For general information see John Webster GRANT, *The Church in Canadian Era* (Burlington: Welch, 1988), pp. 24-135. For information concerning concrete denomination see articles in Benjamin Galletly SMILLIE, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem. Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983). About *Anglicans* see Frank PEAKE, "Anglicanism on the Prairies: Continuity and Flexibility," pp. 55-68; about *United and Lutheran Churches* see Benjamin Galletly SMILLIE and N. J. THREINEN, "Protestants-Prairie Visionaries of the New Jerusalem: The United and Lutheran Churches in Western Canada," pp. 69-90; about *Jews* see Abraham ARNOLD, "New Jerusalem on the Prairies: Welcoming Jews," pp. 91-108; about *Doukhobors* see Koozma J. TARASOFF, "The Western Settlement of Canadian Doukhobors," pp. 121-136; about *Hutterites* see Gail McCONNELL, "Hutterites. An interview with Michael Entz," pp. 165-176; about *Mennonites* - Ted D. REGEHR, "Mennonites and the New Jerusalem in Western Canada," pp. 109-120.

⁴² See the remarks in Raymond HUEL, "Western Oblate History: The Need for Reinterpretation," in *Western Oblate Studies / Etudes Oblates de l'Ouest*, 3 (Edmonton: Western Canadian Publishers, 1994), pp. 13-39.

will analyze the overall work done in other parishes and missions and in the fourth the special forms of involvement such as the establishment of Polish schools, press and associations.

Chapter II - Holy Ghost Parish

In the second part of the 19th century Oblates did a marvellous job in the prairies of Western Canada working with the Native People. In the new situation of massive immigration, however, they did not have the proper preparation nor the resources to establish the methods of work to deal adequately with the great influx of white settlers. Colonization was supported rather by the government and was not primarily a concern of the Church. The bishops of the prairies were simply faced with the difficult task of organizing care for the newly arrived immigrants. This situation required a new kind of ministry. It was not a work like the missions among the Natives where the task was to evangelize those who did not know the Gospel. Neither was it regular pastoral work as carried out in the rural parishes in populated areas. Many problems must have been confronted in setting up any kind of the religious organization. First of all, they had to find priests who spoke their languages.¹

When Polish immigrants began to flow in masses into the prairies, there was no organization which could meet their needs.² The bishops (at the beginning, they were all Oblates) showed interest in the ethnic groups. Bishop Langevin in St. Boniface, as well as Bishops Grandin and Legal in St. Albert did whatever they could to have Polish priests. Nevertheless, the creation of the framework of Roman Catholic organization for Poles was

¹ Most priests had to speak two, three, or four languages, and their own mother tongue was often other than that of the great majority of the immigrants. See Robert PAINCHAUD, "Les exigences linguistiques dans le recrutement d'un clergé pour l'Ouest canadien, 1818-1920," in *SCHEC*, 42 (1975), pp. 43-64.

² Neither on the Government's nor on the Church's side. On the Church's side Poles were at first served occasionally by the local clergy (mostly French-Canadian). Among many we have to mention at least a diocesan priest Fr. Cherrier from the Immaculate Conception Parish in Winnipeg and among Poles in rural settlements of Manitoba the Oblates, Frs. Page and Allard, as well as a Redemptorist, Fr. Delaere.

the work of Polish-born Oblates, who began it by answering to the most urgent needs of the Poles they found.³

This chapter is concerned with the Holy Ghost Parish in Winnipeg, in which originated an organized and systematic work of the Oblates with Polish immigrants in the prairies of Canada.⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century, the small town of Winnipeg had become the immigrant centre and gateway to the promised land. Many people passed through the city and the whole settlement of the prairies was clearly reflected in Winnipeg's growth and in its increasing ethnic heterogeneity. In the years 1881-1911, the population of Winnipeg grew from 8,000 residents to 136,000 and the proportion of those of British origin in the population declined from 84 to 59 per cent.⁵ Situated and growing in this city in that period, Holy Ghost parish is an interesting study case.⁶ As everything that is new, this parish also had

³ A fragment of the letter of Wojciech Kulawy may give an insight into the situation of many settlers. He wrote about the people in Sifton area: "On ne saurait croire jusqu'à quel point ces brave gens là sont trompés. D'abord ici à Winnipeg, par l'agent du Gouvernement, qui leur dit que la religion, surtout la religion catholique, doit être laissée de l'autre côté de l'océan, et ensuite par M. Paul Wood à Sifton, un autre agent du Gouvernement." Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of March 13, 1899 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB.

⁴ The best source for this chapter will be Fr. Puchniak's work - Stanley PUCHNIAK, *Polish Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Vol. I. Western Canada*, in AAP. Hereafter abbreviated as PUCHNIAK. Fr. Puchniak was brought up in this parish, he was an altarboy there, he went to the Holy Ghost school and later become an Oblate. Fr. Hubicz, a diocesan priest working with Poles in Manitoba for many years, held that the Holy Ghost parish of all the Polish parishes in Manitoba has best succeeded in preserving a Polish-Canadian character. See Edward M. HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba. A Collection of Historical Sketches* (London, UK: Veritas Foundation, 1960), p. 59.

⁵ By 1921 the population had reached 176,000 with 67 per cent of British origin. In succeeding censuses the British proportion has declined. This 1921 proportion was probably inflated as a result of strong anti-alien feelings after World War I and the Winnipeg general strike in 1919. See more in The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 24. For a very good description of the immigrants in Winnipeg in this period see the already mentioned book of James WOODSWORTH, *Strangers within Our Gates*.

⁶ This parish is interesting not only from the ecclesiastical and juridical point of view but also from the cultural and especially in its special interrelation between the faith and culture. An exhaustive study could examine the economic, historical, sociological, canonical and ecclesiological factors that combined to allow the creation of an institution that has supported the life, and faith of one immigrant group in a new and sometimes hostile

to grow slowly to its "adulthood," and from an idea, it had to become a real community. Originally it was an idea of Archbishop Langevin, who considered it as his project in answer to the challenge of immigrants in the growing and mixed Catholic community of Winnipeg.⁷ On the other hand, the Oblates who were to work there, met problems for which they were unprepared, and therefore they had to try some new solutions. A short examination of these two circumstances will form the first section of this chapter. Then, we will examine three periods of the parish history, paying special attention to the major issue of the period.

1. An idea of Archbishop Langevin and the first Oblates who put it into practice

Adélard Langevin, archbishop of St. Boniface, was aware of changes which were happening in the prairies with the mass arrival of European immigrants-colonists. As a bishop he had to organize in some way the local church, which was to be built from people of different backgrounds. This church could not have been simply a replica of the Church as it was in Quebec or in France, where the people grew up in more or less the same culture and spoke the same language. Here many of the newcomers did not know the language (English or French) and did not understand the priests.⁸

environment.

⁷ The immigration presents a series of challenges to parish life because it is in the parish where people express their faith. See Gerardo QUINTANAR, "Parish and Immigrants: The Challenge of Living Together," in *Kerygma*, 22 (1988), pp. 157-159.

⁸ A special interest of the Archbishop in this community was seen, for example, in the fact that he was a frequent visitor at the church and rectory as well as that he liked to invite his guests over there. Archbishop Langevin played a key role in the Church life on the prairies. For an overview of how he saw the situation of immigrants see Adélard LANGEVIN, "Les Galiciens au Manitoba," in *Missions*, 37 (1899), pp. 361-367. For more general information about his life see Adrien Gabriel MORICE, *Vie de Mgr Langevin* (Saint-Boniface: Chez l'Auteur, 1916). For more

Originally Archbishop Langevin did not want Holy Ghost parish to be Polish, but a kind of "cosmopolitan" one. When in the beginning of the parish the two major groups, Poles and Germans, wanted to give the church the name of a Polish or German saint, he replied:

Your church is not only for the Polish people . . . nor is it only for the German people, it is for all the Catholics originating from central Europe, now residing in the northern part of the city. I choose the name: Holy Ghost . . . and may unite the various Catholic elements, into one spiritual family.⁹

Was it possible and realistic to form one parish community from the various ethnic groups? It seemed reasonable that among three parishes existing in the city, one could be for different ethnic groups. In the beginning there were practically all Poles and Germans. For some time these two congregations were sharing the same church building, but difficulties with such a situation were growing. To solve one of the problems Archbishop Langevin ordered that henceforth two High Masses would be sung every Sunday morning, at 9:30 for the Germans and at 11:00 for the Poles. Finally, when the problems and difficulties increased, the German congregation, also under the guidance of Oblates, built their own church in the city (St. Joseph). They held their last service at Holy Ghost on April 28, 1905.¹⁰

general view of the Church on the prairies see Adrien Gabriel MORICE, *Histoire de l'Eglise Catholique dans l'Ouest Canadien. Du Lac Supérieur au Pacifique (1659-1915)*, vol. I-IV (Saint-Boniface: Chez l'Auteur, 1921-1923). There exist few French editions as well as the English one as *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, from Lake Superior to the Pacific, 1659-1895*, vol. I-II (Toronto: Musson Book Company Ltd., 1910).

⁹ *CODEX Historicus - Cook's Creek*, in AAP, p. 8. See also PUCHNIAK, pp. 53-54. Already Bishop Bourget of Montreal established bi-lingual parishes in 19th century, but in 1872 a decree of the Propaganda Fide forbade this practice and insisted on national parishes. See Julien HARVEY, "L'Eglise catholique de Montréal et l'accueil des immigrants au XXe siècle," in *SCHEC*, 59 (1993), p. 93. The official canonical erection of Holy Ghost did not take place until 1912. This parish was simply a third parish in the city with special services for the people of different ethnic groups. Although the Mass was celebrated in Latin, the sermon was in Polish or German. Besides, at that time, during the celebration of Mass people used to sing songs in their languages. That made the difference whether Mass was "Polish" or "German."

¹⁰ Besides Polish Oblates, already in the first years a few German Oblates arrived. They stayed at Holy Ghost to look after the German congregation. They also visited the prairies. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 49-60. For an brief overview of the work of the German Oblates in the following years see Josaphat MAGNAN, "Rapport du Vicariat

An interesting explanation of the phenomenon of differences in celebrating the same Mass is given by Jay P. Dolan. He uses the example of the ethnic Irish and German parishes in USA.

According to Catholic theology the Mass celebrated in Irish and German Parishes was identical. Priests recited the words of the liturgy in Latin, and their movement about the altar was the same. The difference however was the style of worship. Among Germans the sense of pageantry and the pomp of ceremony were more evident. They took obvious pride in elaborate ceremonies, which they expressed in frequent letters to the editor of the German paper. The Irish also took pride in their liturgy, but it was less noted and low key. Solemn simplicity characterized their attitude; only on special occasions did they feature liturgical extravaganzas.¹¹

Another big group of Catholics in the city were Ukrainians, who according to the bishop's idea of "cosmopolitan" parish were also supposed to be a part of the Holy Ghost community. They approached Archbishop Langevin with a request for a priest not only of their language but also of their own rite, and they were happy to welcome Fr. Wasyl Zoldak who preached to his people in Holy Ghost Church on October 20, 1901.¹²

de St-Boniface au Chapitre Général de 1904," in *Missions*, 44 (1905), pp. 124-128; and Jean-Baptiste BEYS, "Rapport du R.P. Provincial du Manitoba 1908 à 1920," in *Missions*, 54 (1920), pp. 274-277.

¹¹ Jay P. DOLAN, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 79-80. The reasons for this liturgical diversity were related to the history of Catholicism in Ireland and Germany. Irish Catholics, oppressed for centuries were accustomed to a quiet, low-key celebration of the Mass so as not to invite persecution. Germans Catholics were never forced to practice their faith under these conditions, and thus developed a different, more public brand of Catholicism.

¹² At the end of 19th century the influx of Greek Catholic Ukrainians was much greater than that of the Poles, but there was not a single Greek Catholic priest anywhere in the prairies. Considering the problem to be primarily one of language, Archbishop Langevin did not see anything wrong in providing priests of other nationalities to serve in the absence of Ukrainian priests. Besides, he like the other bishops seemed to believe that newcomers had to be brought to the Latin rite. That is why he opposed, at first, the formation of the Ukrainian parish of St. Nicolas in Winnipeg. According to Perin the later plea for priests of Eastern rite was not a change in the idea of gradual latinization but only a sign of the assumption that it would go more smoothly if there were initially priests of Eastern rite. Archbishop Langevin found it difficult to understand immigrants for whom language was not the only problem and for whom it was not sufficient to be ministered to by German or Polish priests who had some knowledge of their language. The Ukrainians were suspicious of Latin priests and perceived this attitude as a major affront to their religious sensibilities. In 1912 pope Pius X established a bishop of the Eastern rite with residence in Winnipeg. See more in Adelard LANGEVIN, *Letter of July 31, 1900 to Bishop D. Falconio*, in ASB (Bishop Falconio was an Apostolic Delegate to Canada); and his 11-page *Mémoire of July 2, 1904 sur la situation des sujets ruthènes de sa Majesté apostolique l'Empereur d'Autriche dans l'Ouest Canadien (Amérique Britannique)*, in ASB. See also Roberto PERIN, "Religion, Ethnicity and Identity: Placing the Immigrant within the Church," in

In the first ten years of the 20th century St. Mary's, at first regular, territorial parish became an English one, and therefore, besides Holy Ghost (Polish) and St. Joseph (German) there was need for a French parish as well. In 1905 a new parish (Sacred Heart) for the French was established.¹³

The first Oblates working with the Poles were capable men, but they were inexperienced. Almost all of them were newly ordained, only with philosophical and theological training, without experience of pastoral ministry and in fact even without much experience of normal life in society.¹⁴ Their only preparation were their seminary courses of ecclesiology (of that time). They were sent to do "something" and it was in the practice of their ministry that they began to clarify the vision of their ministry and the vision of the work with immigrants.¹⁵

They came into a new and difficult situation. One of the first features they met were difficult conditions of life, the hardships which they had to endure living in the first years of Holy Ghost parish in the basement of the church which was poorly heated, ill-ventilated, and with no sunlight. They had to do their own cooking and house cleaning.¹⁶ They could have

William WESTFALL (et al.), eds., *Religion / Culture. Comparative Canadian Studies. Etudes canadiennes comparées* (Ottawa: Association for Canadian Studies, 1985), pp. 221-226; Stella HRYNIUK, "Pioneer Bishop, Pioneer Times: Nykyta Budka in Canada," in *CCHA*, 55 (1988), pp. 21-42; Joseph JEAN, "Mgr Adélarde Langevin, Archevêque de St-Boniface, et les Ukrainiens," in *SCHEC*, 12 (1945), pp. 101-110.

¹³ See "ERECTION d'une église de la langue Française à Winnipeg," in *Missions*, 43 (1905), pp. 244-247; Gilbert-Louis COMEAULT, "Les rapports de Mgr L.-P.-A. Langevin avec les group ethniques minoritaires et leur répercussions sur le status de la langue française au Manitoba, 1895-1916," in *SCHEC*, 42 (1975), pp. 65-85.

¹⁴ The majority of them grew up in Juniorates in a limited contact with life "outside" since the age of 12 or 13, then entered the Novitiate and Seminary.

¹⁵ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 66-68.

¹⁶ For more details see John William KULAWY, *Letter of July 12, 1900 to the Assistant General*, in AGH.

been prepared for difficult conditions in ministry but perhaps not for such conditions of living in community. Such circumstances can generate a depressed state of mind, especially when that state persists for weeks and months.

Some of those first Oblates were living at Holy Ghost during the week and travelled into the country for the weekends performing "itinerant" ministry.¹⁷ But there, too, they had to cope with physical hardships: travel by train to some very distant point, a wagon ride in summer heat, or a sleigh ride in the bitter cold of winter. The priest lodged with a family, as there was no church or rectory.¹⁸

Many of them had been together in formation. During their years of Juniorate, Novitiate and Scholasticate, they came to know each other quite well. They knew each other's successes and weaknesses. When they were together in the same house, in times of tension they could confront each other with past memories. Under such circumstances, co-operation was very difficult and community life could have been a burden. Some of them were also individualists, difficult to live with in a community.¹⁹

Almost from the very beginning the atmosphere among the Fathers at Holy Ghost was darkened by differences of opinion, incompatibility of character and occasional conflicts. John Kulawy, discouraged after a few years, returned to Europe. Wojciech Kulawy was accompanied in Grayson by Fr. Cordes. After several months the latter returned saying that

¹⁷ For more details concerning the ministry of the first years see Wojciech KULAWY, *Letters of May 27, 1898 and December 11, 1900 to Archbishop Langevin*, in AGH.

¹⁸ The families had usually a one-room log cabin where the entire family lived and slept. The priest shared their poverty. To live through such experiences was all but easy. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 67-69.

¹⁹ According to PUCHNIAK, pp. 62-68 it was rather on a personal basis.

it was impossible to live with that man. The same situation developed at Holy Ghost when Wojciech took over after his brother's departure. Those months he spent at Holy Ghost almost led the breakup of the community.²⁰

2. Holy Ghost parish at the time of its beginnings (1898-1909)

In this section we will study the history of the parish of that period and then the major problem concerning the relationship between the Catholic and Polish character of the parish. That tension caused the establishment of the Polish National Catholic (not Roman Catholic) parish in the city.

a) History

When Archbishop Langevin was searching for Polish-speaking priests to minister to the immigrants, he discovered the two brothers Kulawy, John William (Jan Wilhelm) and Wojciech (Adalbert, often called Albert), who were finishing their theological studies at St. Joseph Scholasticate in Ottawa. They were well disposed for this kind of multicultural and multilingual work because, besides Polish, they knew French, English, German; Ukrainian, Slovak and Czech are similar to Polish. In April 1898 Archbishop Langevin appointed

²⁰ Wojciech finally left Winnipeg and settled in Philadelphia. After the First World War he returned to Poland and was a diocesan priest. Fr. Grochowski also later left the Congregation. These problems were based more on individual characters than on the ethnic diversities. In later years, in separate fields of their own choice, many of them achieved remarkable success; but at the beginning they could not achieve it living in community with each other. See PUCHNIAK, p. 62.

Wojciech Kulawy a missionary for the Poles, the Germans, the Slovaks, the Ukrainians and other European settlers in Winnipeg.²¹

Wojciech Kulawy, the first Oblate priest of Polish origin in the prairies, arrived in Winnipeg in May 1898. At that time there were only two Catholic parishes in the city, *Sz. Mary's* and *Immaculate Conception*. Wojciech, a newly ordained priest, began his missionary duties at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, and in the rural settlements of the Slav immigrants in Western Canada. His mission work consisted of several visits to the scattered settlements all over western Canada. It could be considered the beginning of the itinerant ministry for the Polish priests in Manitoba. In May 1899 his brother John came to assist him. On June 4, 1899, Archbishop Langevin presided at the Corpus Christi procession at Immaculate Conception parish. Wojciech Kulawy preached in Polish and John Kulawy in German. After the procession a meeting was held at which the Archbishop discussed the plans for the new church and its building was decided.²²

Together the two brothers undertook the task of building a church. The cornerstone was blessed the same year in August 1899, and the church was consecrated in June 1900.²³ The first Mass was celebrated there on All Saints Day in 1899. Then, Wojciech left for Alberta and his brother was appointed pastor of Holy Ghost. Having built a home for

²¹ *HOLY GHOST 1899-1974. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary* (Winnipeg: Holy Ghost Parish, 1974), p. 57. See also Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of April 23, 1898 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; and John William KULAWY, *Letter of April 5, 1899 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB.

²² See more in *PAROISSE du Saint-Esprit à Winnipeg. Exposé sommaire de l'établissement de cette paroisse et de sa situation actuelle (23 avril 1919)*, in AD, pp. 1-9; PUCHNIAK, pp. 44-48; MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 138-140; and HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 60-63.

²³ See John William KULAWY, *Letter of August 2, 1899 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB.

themselves (the basement of the future Church) the Fathers immediately opened a school in the basement of the Church. On September 8, 1902 Archbishop Langevin gave Holy Ghost Parish to the Oblates *in perpetuum*.²⁴ After six years of work John left Canada and went to Europe,²⁵ and in the years 1904-1905 the parish was again confined to Wojciech, but he too, had to resign. In the meantime in 1905 the German Catholics managed to establish a separate parish. Slowly Archbishop Langevin managed to bring out further Polish clergy, diocesan and religious, among whom the most numerous group were Oblates.²⁶

Father Groetschel was appointed as the new pastor in August 1905. He served as pastor until December of 1909. His administration was "one of healing, with such good results that in 1906, it was necessary to add wings to both sides of the church and remodel the sanctuary."²⁷ In December 1908 a Polish diocesan seminarian, Joseph Szajnowski, was ordained.²⁸

²⁴ For the text of a special indult from Rome allowing him to do so and the text of the Convention between the Archbishop of St-Boniface and the Superior General of Oblates see *PAROISSE du Saint-Esprit*, pp. 10-12. There were eight parishes given to Oblates *in perpetuum*: St. Mary's and Holy Ghost in Winnipeg, as well as in Mariahilf, in St. Charles, in N.D. du Portage du Rat, in St. Laurent, in St. Rose du Lac, and in Qu'Appelle.

²⁵ He left in the Fall of 1904. This was not a matter of different approaches to their work but rather some difficulties with the common work and life. For more details of his personal motives and his situation see his *Letter of September 23, 1906 to the Superior General, Fr. Augier*, in AGH.

²⁶ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 49-61.

²⁷ Norman J. CHARTRAND, *The Dismemberment of the First Polish Parish in Western Canada* (Ottawa: A Seminar Paper at the Faculty of Canon Law of St-Paul University, 1985), p. 6.

²⁸ In a long article he expressed his thanks to the Oblates for taking him in upon his arrival and extending their hospitality. See Józef SZAJNOWSKI, "Po Prymicjach," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 1 (1908), no. 43, p. 5.

b) Problems concerning the Polish and Catholic character of the parish

The greatest outcome of the tensions between the Catholic and Polish traditions in North America was the National Church. The sources of the movement which led to it were in the United States.²⁹ Against the background of this movement there, it will be easier to see the importance of the work done by Oblates in the prairies. In the beginning of the Polish mass settlement in the United States, there arose differences between the traditional Polish and the American systems of Church arrangements. In addition to quarrels between parishioners and pastors there were more serious conflicts arising out of the policies adopted by some bishops. The chief object of these conflicts was the question of Church property, especially the legal titles to the church buildings. Immigrants claimed participation in the control of buildings built out of their hard-earned money. Some of the bishops were also making difficulties in the usage of the Polish language and the creation of ethnic schools. Poles were also concerned by the fact that although Catholics of Polish origin formed a considerable percentage of the whole Catholic population, there was no bishop of Polish origin.³⁰

In that way there had developed Polish independent tendencies within the framework of the Catholic immigrant communities in the United States. They retained the doctrine and

²⁹ It would be interesting and probably useful to explore more deeply the origins and early history of this linguistically-defined and ethnically-based denomination which broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. In its attempt to preserve Old World values, the Polish National Catholic Church employed the methods of the New World. This Church could be a model of ethnic religious movements, which protest against and initiate into the accepted values of life in a foreign country.

³⁰ The conviction of an unfair treatment of Poles was so general that they appealed to Rome. The Curia promised to yield to this request, but the appointment of new bishops is made on the recommendation of the local episcopate and the American bishops were not eager to propose Polish candidates. In that situation they requested to create for the Polish Catholics a separate organization subject directly to the Holy See. Obviously this was not accepted.

rituals of the Roman Catholic Church, but they refused to recognize the jurisdiction of American bishops, and in consequence that of Rome. The main changes involved the replacement of Latin by Polish in the liturgy, and more influence of parishioners in controlling parish administration. The most important and lasting organization within this whole movement has been the *Polish National Catholic Church*, founded in 1897 by Francis Hodur, who received episcopal consecration from the bishops of the Old Catholic Church.³¹

Sometime towards the end of 1902 a few parishioners from Holy Ghost wrote to the United States asking for a Polish priest. As far as we can find, there arose two problems. The first one consisted of the fact that some Oblates, although working in a Polish parish, had difficulty with the Polish language.³² The second conflict arose more on a personal basis.³³

³¹ For more about the beginnings of this Church see Robert TRISCO, "The Holy See and the First 'Independent Catholic Church' in the United States," in Nelson H. MINNICH (et al.), eds., *Studies in Catholic History: in honor of John Tracy Ellis* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1985), pp. 175-238; Laurence ORZELL, "Variation on an Old Catholic Theme: the Polish National Church," in Gordon HUELIN, ed., *Old Catholics and Anglicans 1931-1981: to Commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of Intercommunion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 40-61; Warren C. PLATT, "Polish National Catholic Church: An Inquiry into its Origins," in *Church History*, 14 (1987), pp. 321-334; Theodore ANDREWS, *The Polish National Catholic Church in America and Poland* (London: SPCK, 1953); Jean Michel HORNUS, "Les petites Eglises catholiques non romaines," in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, 50 (1970), pp. 263-266. For extended bibliography see Bernard WIELEWINSKI, ed., *Polish National Catholic Church, Independent movements, Old Catholic Church and Related Items: an Annotated Bibliography* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1990).

³² There was a need for priests speaking fluent Polish. For some Oblates it was a problem. Both Wojciech and John Kulawy did not know Polish too well. They had to attend German schools and they could speak Polish only at home. It was Silesian dialect (South-West Poland), different from the one of the majority of immigrants who were from Eastern Poland. Frs. Groetschel and Stojar were Moravians. They knew hardly any Polish. Frs. Kowalski and Kosian spoke Polish well. Fr. Grochowski had mastered the language but Fr. Heintze had difficulties with the Polish language all his life. Most of them did their study in Germany. When Fr. Groetschel preached his first sermon at Holy Ghost shortly after his arrival, Fr. Suffa, who heard this sermon, said to him with a sense of humour: "Father, you preached a wonderful Polish sermon in German." See more PUCHNIAK, p. 63. Quotation from PUCHNIAK, p. 52.

³³ When the *Holy Ghost Fraternal Society* was founded in 1902, the members elected the executive officers and made Fr. John Kulawy the honorary president. Some people felt that he should have been made the acting president. At the next meeting he was elected president. The man who yielded his office never forgot nor forgave that. The ex-president was popular and had many friends who shared his resentment. This tendency revealed itself in the demand that the pastor would be changed, or a second Polish parish be set up in Winnipeg and be given to

As a result, Fr. W. Błażowski came to Winnipeg in 1903. He spoke Polish very well and impressed some people, so that they signed pledges on the spot for a new church. It was ready by July 10, 1904.³⁴ For the blessing ceremony of the new church, Holy Ghost Church was almost empty.³⁵ Obviously Błażowski carried on an open campaign against the Oblates.³⁶ One of the arguments he used was that at Holy Ghost the priests were not really Polish (they did not have sufficient knowledge of the language). Finally Błażowski was taken by the police, because he was wanted in the United States. Thus ended the first chapter of the Polish National church in Winnipeg.³⁷

After these incidents the independent parishioners, seeing how insecure their future looked, wrote at the beginning of 1907 to Archbishop Langevin requesting a Polish Roman Catholic priest. In reply they were told that the new Holy Ghost church, recently enlarged,

a priest not belonging to the Oblates. Probably this group did not originally want a schism, or any other drastic measure. They wished to be Catholics, but considered it impossible for them to remain in the parish administered by Oblates. Finally they addressed themselves to the United States, requesting they be sent a priest who would organize a new Polish parish in the city. See PUCHNIAK, p. 63.

³⁴ This Church was not originally affiliated with the *Polish National Catholic Church* headed by Bishop Hodur. Until 1909 the independent Catholic parish in Winnipeg did not belong to it. See Victor TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1967), p. 179.

³⁵ See TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba*, pp. 306-307.

³⁶ The Oblates retaliated against him as well. In October of 1905 there was even a court case between the Oblates from Holy Ghost versus Błażowski. Earlier, Błażowski had published in his weekly *Prawda* insulting articles against a Basilian priest, Fr. Hura, and against Frs. Groetschel and Wojciech Kulawy. Błażowski was found guilty. Later, he even arranged the scenario of somebody's (means - from Oblates') attempt to assassinate him.

³⁷ Earlier, in 1906, Błażowski's own parishioners brought him to court on a charge of defraudation. See more in PUCHNIAK, pp. 63-65.

could easily accommodate all those who wished to return.³⁸ In 1909 this same small group at the independent church experienced further affliction, due to Fr. Baligrodzki.³⁹

Though there were reasons for expecting that this movement would be able to achieve an increase from among the Poles in Manitoba, it eventually appeared that the life of these priests estranged them from many of its sympathizers. Because of the scandalous behaviour of the independent priests, the whole movement ceased to represent any danger for the Holy Ghost parish. In the initial periods of their activity, they had to rely on the services of clergy of a different moral level, of an unknown past, who sometimes played on the generosity of the faithful and credulity of their superiors. In 1911 Fr. Markiewicz arrived in Winnipeg to reorganize this parish. When Bishop Hodur (of the *Polish National Catholic Church*) refused to appoint him as bishop for Canada, he broke away in 1913 and a year later, he founded the *Apostolic Catholic Polish Church*. One group followed "Bishop" Markiewicz,⁴⁰ another returned to the Roman fold, still another remained loyal to the *Polish National Catholic Church* and in 1922 Bishop Hodur again included them into his Church.⁴¹

Elements of dissatisfaction revealed by the Polish independent and national Catholic movement attracted the attention of Protestant bodies. They saw here a good means for

³⁸ For more details see Adelard LANGEVIN, *Letter of February 8, 1907 to the Signers of the Petition Condemning the Independent Polish Church and Asking for a Polish priest*, in ASB; and his *Letter of February 15, 1907 to the Polish Delegation of the Independent Church on Burrows Street, Winnipeg*, in ASB.

³⁹ If the Roman Catholic Church suffered from the scarcity of well qualified and trained priests, this was much more true within the ranks of this new Church organization. See TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba*, pp. 306-307.

⁴⁰ He built a church in 1923. In 1941 "Bishop Paul" (the name adopted by Markiewicz) was appointed "Archbishop," by the Metropolitan-Primate of the North-American Old Roman Catholic Church. As long as he was alive, his strong personality supplemented the deficiencies and ideological void of this Church. Shortly after his death (1949) this congregation disappeared. See TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba*, p. 307.

⁴¹ See TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba*, pp. 179-180.

undermining the traditional influence of the Roman Church over the majority of Poles. They carried an interest in the activities of the independent and national Churches and extended them financial assistance. Here, however, they were unsuccessful. Even those Poles who acted against their religious authorities were very strongly attached to Catholic culture.⁴²

3. Holy Ghost parish during the time of Fr. Kowalski as pastor (1910-1917)

In a manner similar to the preceding section, we will show briefly the history of the parish in this period and then the most important problem which arose concerning the relationship between Archbishop Sinnott, the Provincial Fr. Magnan, and the pastor of Holy Ghost, Fr. Kowalski.

a) History

At the end of 1909, Fr. Groetschel, after three years as pastor, asked for a change in his duties.⁴³ Fr. Kowalski became the new pastor in December 1909. The year 1910 was noted for the arrival of a number of distinguished guests at the parish: in March, the Superior General of the Oblates, Archbishop Dentenwill; in September, Apostolic Delegate Cardinal

⁴² It is impossible to describe here the complexity of the Polish culture and tradition. Ignacy WIENIEWSKI in his book *Heritage. The Foundations of Polish Culture. An Introductory Outline* (Toronto: Polish-Canadian Women's Federation in Canada, 1981), discerns fairly well three main elements of the Polish culture: the Native, the Christian, and the Latin. Not only Native and Christian, but also Latin. This amalgamate grew and established a special relationship among these elements and every attempt to implant it into other soil always causes problems.

⁴³ He knew that Fr. Kowalski wanted to be the pastor. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 108, and 370. For the whole of this period see PUCHNIAK, pp. 109-132.

Vanutelli; in October Archbishop Szeptycki of the Byzantine Rite.⁴⁴ The same year of 1910, Fr. Kowalski invited the Polish Redemptorists to preach the parish mission in Holy Ghost.⁴⁵ In 1911, another Oblate came to work in the parish, Fr. Heintze,⁴⁶ and in 1912 Fr. Kosian. On December 10, 1912, the canonical erection of Holy Ghost parish took place.⁴⁷ In 1914 the First World War broke out.

On June 15, 1915, Archbishop Langevin died. After his death on December 4, 1915, a new archdiocese was created in Winnipeg and Alfred Arthur Sinnott was appointed the first Archbishop of Winnipeg.⁴⁸ A new era for Holy Ghost parish had begun.

b) Division of the parish.

The most important event of that period was the division of the parish. There is no need to describe here the whole story of the tensions and exchange of letters concerning the

⁴⁴ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 111-113.

⁴⁵ See an article "PIERWSZA Misyja św. w kościele Ducha św.," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 3 (1910), no. 41, supl., p. 3.

⁴⁶ He was not a young, unexperienced person. Before he became an Oblate he was a barber. He joined the Oblates when he was 27 years old and was ordained at 33. See PUCHNIAK, p. 118.

⁴⁷ The text of decree of erection in *PAROISSE du Saint-Esprit*, p. 19.

⁴⁸ He was a young bishop, about fourteen years a priest of the diocese of Charlottetown and Secretary of Bishop Stęgni, Apostolic Delegate to Canada. He was new to Western Canada and was put in the situation of the organizing of a new diocese. The new bishop chose as a cathedral of the new archdiocese the church of St. Mary's parish, which was given to the Oblates *in perpetuum*. This was not without tensions between the Oblates and the new bishop and because of that the canonical installation of the bishop took place only a year later, on December 24, 1916. See more in CHARTRAND, pp. 8-9; Robert CHOQUETTE, "Adélarde Langevin et l'érection de l'archidiocèse de Winnipeg," in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française*, 28 (1974), pp. 187-207. For more details concerning St. Mary's parish see *PAROISSE Ste-Marie de Winnipeg. I - Première Partie. Exposé de l'administration pendant que les Oblats étaient propriétaires de 1869 à 1911 (St-Boniface, 31 octobre 1919). Deuxième Partie. Exposé de l'administration pendant que la paroisse était propriétaire (St-Boniface, 11 décembre 1919). II - Appendice. Pièces Justificatives*, in AD.

fact of the division of the Holy Ghost parish and the canonical erection of St. John Cantius parish.⁴⁹ This situation involved three people: Alfred Sinnott, first Archbishop of Winnipeg, Francis B. Kowalski, an Oblate, pastor of the Holy Ghost parish, and member of the (Oblate) Provincial Council, and Prisque Magnan, an acting Provincial of the (Oblate) Manitoba Province.⁵⁰ The division of the parish was proposed by Fr. Kowalski already before Archbishop Sinnott came to the West. When the latter, however, issued the formal decree of the erection of the new parish, Fr. Kowalski immediately opposed it.

Some sources of the conflict lay in the Holy Ghost parish community. Among the different circumstances, the financial situation of the parish and the location of the church (far away for some people) played important roles. Comparing the growth of the Holy Ghost parish with the development of the churches in the Polish settlements, one may recognize the contrast in involvement of the people. In the countryside, the people welcomed the priest cordially. He lived with them, ate with them and shared their simple life. Whenever people wanted a church, they built it themselves and were never in debt. In Winnipeg, at Holy Ghost everything was given. The Archbishop bought the property and the Oblates paid for it. When

⁴⁹ Complete set of letters and more detailed information can be found in *PAROISSE du Saint-Esprit*, pp. 24-50; see also PUCHNIAK, pp. 127-132; and whole paper of CHARTRAND.

⁵⁰ The first two had strong wills and it was understandable that the conflict between them grew. Fr. Magnan tried to bring peace, but his situation was difficult. He wanted to be in good relationship with the bishop, but as an Oblate Provincial he had to protect the rights of the Congregation as well. To reconcile both of them he proposed a compromise, agreeing with the division of the parish, but amending the demarcation line between the two parishes other than as proposed by the bishop. See CHARTRAND, pp. II-III.

they built the basement church, the Oblates were there to help. When they needed a school, the Oblates extended a loan. The rectory was built from money advanced by the Oblates.⁵¹

In the meantime, the debts accumulated and so did the interest. When the debts reached almost \$90,000.00, internal trouble in the parish broke out. When the parishioners found out about the enormous debt and that the property and the buildings did not belong to the parishioners but to the Oblates, complaints spread and delegations began to go, periodically, to Archbishop Langevin.⁵² Some parishioners, seeing no improvement in the financial situation, asked for a division of the parish.

The need for a new parish was seen clearly.⁵³ In 1917 Archbishop Sinnott planned to solve this question. On June 17, he paid his first official visit to Holy Ghost. Two days later the Oblate Provincial Council met to discuss the Archbishop's plans concerning Holy Ghost parish.⁵⁴ During the summer the parish committee sent a delegation to the Archbishop. He

⁵¹ There seems to have been no effort made by the Oblates at Holy Ghost to get parishioners involved. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 116-117. This situation could develop the wrong image of what the parish is, especially as concerning the involvement of the parishioners in material support of their own parish. This development might suggest that the ecclesiology behind such involvement was not the best one. Building of the parish relied too much on the activities of the priests. Probably it was more a matter of personal activities, than of the ecclesiological vision.

⁵² Oblates drew no salary. The Easter and Christmas collections supplemented that. Beginning with the month of September, 1911 two sets of books were kept in the parish, one for the Oblate accounts and the other for the parish accounts. Until then, since everything belonged to the Oblates, one set of books was kept. To help in the difficult financial situation, Fr. Kowalski organized a cemetery for the Polish people. For more details see *PAROISSE du Saint-Esprit*, pp. 13-23; and PUCHNIAK, pp. 67, 117, and 123-124.

⁵³ Even Archbishop Langevin and Fr. Kowalski were, at first, in favour of the division and the first went so far as to buy property for the new parish. Fr. Kowalski already in 1912 made an attempt to have a second Polish parish. In his Annual Report for the year 1914 Fr. Kowalski wrote: "Beaucoup de paroissiens ne peuvent entendre la messe le dimanche parce que l'Eglise est trop éloignée et beaucoup trop petite," and in 1915 Report he continued the same: "Nécessité absolue de fonder une nouvelle paroisse au plus vite. Les âmes se perdent en grand nombre, parce qu'il n'y a place à l'église et qu'elle est trop éloignée pour un très grand nombre." Quoted after CHARTRAND, p. 7. See also PUCHNIAK, p. 117; and HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 68-70.

⁵⁴ The Oblates were ready to withdraw from the parish, but they chose to wait and see what would develop. See PUCHNIAK, p. 127.

promised to speak with the Oblates.⁵⁵ On October 4, the Archbishop sent the pastor a letter informing him of his plans to divide the parish and asking him for his opinion. Fr. Kowalski waited a whole month before replying to that letter. In his reply of November 3, he expressed his views against the division.⁵⁶

There is no reason for describing here all these measures, which were taken in the following days. Finally this situation finished with the establishment of the second Polish parish in Winnipeg (St. John Cantius) and with the suspension of Fr. Kowalski. Fr. Nandzik was appointed as the new pastor.⁵⁷ The rough relationship between the two parishes slowly began to smooth. In May 1918, Fr. Joseph Solski took charge of the St. John Cantius parish. He already knew the Oblates. After his ordination in 1912 he stayed at Holy Ghost before he began his ministry in Manitoba.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Based on the documents from the Archives of Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Chartrand shows that the formation of a new parish was not the only problem. On August 17, 1917, an Oblate, Fr. Grochowski wrote to the bishop that the church was too small, too far away, and that "A great number of the members of the Holy Ghost parish is absolutely dissatisfied with the administration of the parish. . . . It is the firm belief of a great number of the actual parishioners that with the forming of a new parish, the people belonging to this new parish would be perfectly satisfied and the remaining Holy Ghost parish, having so to say - a competitor, would only gain by it." Fr. Grochowski was not totally objective in this letter since he continued "though the people would prefer a secular priest, they would be perfectly satisfied with your humble servant." Archbishop Sinnott met with Frs. Grochowski and Kosian on October 1, 1917 and in a *Memorandum* he noted that "they were of the opinion that a division should be made." See more in CHARTRAND, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁶He concluded his letter declaring that if this proposal were carried out, he would consider it his "duty to take the following stand: 1st. to enter a solemn protest against a measure the execution of which involve the destruction of our parish; 2nd. to resign my position as parish priest of Holy Ghost parish; 3rd. to advise the Administration of the Reverend Oblate Fathers to abandon the parish." Quoted after CHARTRAND, p. 12.

⁵⁷It is not surprising that in such circumstances Fr. Kowalski went to Europe. On February 22, 1922 he was appointed the Provincial of the newly established Polish Province (Provincial Vicariat). See Augustine DONTENWILL, "Le Vicariat des Oblats en Pologne," in *Missions*, 56 (1922), pp. 95-97. Some years later, Archbishop Sinnott made his *ad limina* visit to Rome. On his way back he met Fr. Kowalski in Poland and "both were happy with this meeting." See PUCHNIAK, pp. 128-132; CHARTRAND, pp. 12-21.

⁵⁸After a few years, similar financial and personal problems began to arise in the new parish, too. See HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 69-74.

This conflict which arose was not so much a conflict of an ethnic parish with a bishop but rather a conflict of the Oblates with a new bishop. After all these troubles, Oblates still worked in the diocese of Winnipeg and the bishop did not force the Oblates to leave Holy Ghost parish. Among the sources of the conflict, we saw three issues, which are important for every parish, namely a proper relationship with the local diocesan church united under the diocesan bishop, the proper management of money and proper involvement of the parishioners in the life of the parish.

4. Holy Ghost parish during the time of Fr. Nandzik as pastor (1917-1926)

a) History

The choice of Fr. Nandzik was very fortunate. He was a good manager and gradually rid the parish of its debt. His planned methods began to show results, which slowly brought the parish back on its feet.⁵⁹ He knew how to resolve problems quietly. He was supported by the parish Council. To share the responsibility with the pastor, several new committees were formed: church, school, cemetery and finance. His time marked the end of an important period in the history of the parish. He succeeded in getting the parishioners more involved.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For instance, in 1919 he experimented with collection envelopes for fuel, and in 1923 he introduced Sunday collection envelopes. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 139, and 144.

⁶⁰ From his experience he learned that, to get co-operation one must get the people involved. For instance, when he was preparing his annual bazaar during the summer, he divided the parish into ten districts and appointed two ladies to lead each district. They, in turn, selected other workers. Once this team of several hundred parishioners started to work they performed wonders. See more in PUCHNIAK, pp. 133-153. See also *HOLY GHOST 1899 - 1974. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary*, p. 62.

That was in the parish. In the rectory, however, things were a little different. In the beginning the new pastor was in no better position than the former one. There were differences of opinion, incompatibility of characters and, one by one, the other Oblates moved away. Fr. Grochowski went to St. Laurent and Fr. Heintze to Regina.⁶¹

From the financial point of view, Father Nandzik was the saviour of Holy Ghost parish. He displayed his ingenuity by involving as many parishioners as possible into a strongly knit unit which no one before him had been able to accomplish. He left for Poland in 1927 and Fr. Sylla was appointed as the new pastor.

b) Some results of the Oblate work at the Holy Ghost parish

Along with the development in relations with the Bishop and greater involvement of the parishioners, there were also some other signs of growing maturity of the Holy Ghost community. Slowly it was gaining its place within the Church of the prairies. After all the problems and perhaps even in spite of them, the Holy Ghost parish began not only to show the signs of its maturity but also yielded some fruit. Among the signs of the maturity of the local church, an important one is local priestly and religious vocations. Already Fr. Kowalski sent some boys to the juniorate hoping that some of them may eventually become priests.

On December 22, 1920 Stanley Baderski was ordained priest.⁶² He was the first Oblate of Polish origin and native Canadian to be ordained. In June, 1921, he returned to

⁶¹ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 137-139.

⁶² He was the first Oblate brought up in Holy Ghost. His family was very well known and respected. His father had been an organizer of schools in Manitoba and later inspector as well as for a period of time he was editor of the *Gazeta Katolicka*. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 142-143.

Winnipeg for his first solemn Mass at Holy Ghost parish. In September he and Fr. Theophil Nandzik⁶³ went to Poland. Fr. Baderski remained there for ten years, first as a teacher and later as a missionary.

John Heuchert was also brought up in Holy Ghost parish. Before he was to be ordained priest, he was hospitalized at St. Boniface and died during the operation in 1921. John Czujak, the second Oblate priest from Holy Ghost parish, was ordained in Edmonton in 1923. In June, he returned to Winnipeg, where he was appointed to Holy Ghost as assistant. The third Oblate from Holy Ghost, Stanley Puchniak, was ordained in Edmonton in 1925, and the fourth, John Bednarz in 1926.⁶⁴

Things were improving constantly. The parish prepared to celebrate its Silver Jubilee on November 1, 1924. Fr. Nandzik invited the founder of this parish, John Kulawy, to preach the Jubilee Mission. Fr. John William Kulawy, who came from Poland for the Jubilee of the Holy Ghost, also preached a mission in St. John Cantius parish.⁶⁵

⁶³ The brother of the pastor of Holy Ghost, Leonard Nandzik.

⁶⁴ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 143-150.

⁶⁵ See John William KULAWY, *Letter of January 20, 1925 to the Superior General, Fr. Dontenwill*, in AGH; and PUCHNIAK, p. 146.

5. Some problems as seen in the Holy Ghost parish

The purpose of this second chapter was an analysis of the development of the idea and praxis of the ethnic parish. Usually the changes within the society are faster than within the Church, especially if this involves Church structures. What seems to be the most important Oblate achievement seen in this analysis of the second chapter was the initiative taken by Archbishop Langevin to establish a new kind of parish, an ethnic one.⁶⁶

Originally Holy Ghost was to be a multicultural parish. Experience led to the creation of an ethnic parish. Among the concrete issues, initially, the most important one was language. For Oblates learning a language was a normal form of beginning the ministry since the time of the Founder. The development of Holy Ghost parish showed clearly that to speak and to understand a foreign language, it is not sufficient to know the grammar and the vocabulary. Also very important was an appreciation of the people, their customs, their traditions, and their view of reality. It seems that the goal of the Oblates in preserving the Polish language was the preservation of the faith.⁶⁷ However, because of the challenge of the Polish National Church this attitude was not developed so strongly as among the French-speaking Oblates.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ This was even before the first Code of Canon Law of 1917.

⁶⁷ See clearly in John William KULAWY, *Letter of October 24, 1903 to Archbishop Sbaretti, Delegate Apostolic to Canada*, in AAP.

⁶⁸ Today we are more aware of this deep link between the language and culture learning. See for instance Jon P. KIRBY, "Language and Culture Learning is Conversion . . . is Ministry: Towards a Theological Rationale for Language and Culture Learning as a Part of Missionary Formation in a Cross-Cultural Context," in *Missiology: An International Review*, 23 (1995), pp. 131-143.

The omnipresent problem, seen also in Holy Ghost parish, was an issue of personnel. The first key in looking for the priests was language and later also Polish origin. That was important, but not sufficient to resolve all the problems. It seems that although they were very devoted to their work, they were not sufficiently prepared. Perhaps there were no other means available. The personal tensions caused some problems also in their work. Although the personal situation and appropriate training were far from being perfect, they were better, nevertheless, than that of the clergy of the Polish National Church.

Another challenge to the Oblates of Holy Ghost was found in the relationship with the local bishop. As long as Archbishop Langevin lived, these relations were very good. Most probably the problems around the creation of St. John Cantius parish were caused by personal tensions between the new bishop, a non-Oblate and the Oblates. It may be good to realize also that Archbishop Langevin was a French-Canadian (more in favour of ethnic parishes) and Archbishop Sinnott was an English-Canadian. The problems between the bishop and Holy Ghost parish were caused not so much by the ethnic character of the parish but by the tensions between the new bishop and Oblates.

Another issue experienced in Holy Ghost was the question of money. These financial problems caused a lot of tension. Some Oblates tried to find who was in the wrong, instead of realizing that the situation was different than in Poland and must be worked out differently. It seems that this problem was only a tip of the iceberg of the larger issue of the involvement of the parishioners in the parish. Later on, experience taught the Oblates that the best way to achieve the goals was in active interaction between the priests and immigrants. Fr. Nandzik was especially successful in getting parishioners involved. It seems that at the beginning, the

Oblates were trying too much to organize themselves or even give what was needed instead of involving more parishioners. Some troubles ending with the establishment of Polish National parish might have been caused by not allowing parishioners to take initiative and responsibility for their parish.

One of the signs that the local Church is becoming "mature" or "indigenous" are local vocations. As was seen in the chapter, some parishioners of Holy Ghost discovered their vocation to the service of the Polish immigrants in the priestly and religious life.

From the perspective of an Oblate, the work in the Holy Ghost parish was seen as one among many others undertaken by the Oblates in the Province.⁶⁹ In the beginning the Oblates belonged to the (Oblate) Vicariate of St. Boniface, which later became the Province of St. Boniface, and then of Manitoba.⁷⁰

Among many Polish communities, the one at Holy Ghost was the biggest and so important that it was necessary to analyze it separately. This parish was clearly ethnic in character. In the next chapter we will analyze the forms of work in other communities.

⁶⁹ Although it required some special skill - a knowledge of Polish language and culture. See Francis B. KOWALSKI, "Eglise Polonaise du Saint-Esprit à Winnipeg," in *Missions*, 44 (1906), pp. 148-152.

⁷⁰ The report of the Provincial in 1920 gives an interesting insight into the understanding of the different works in that Province as proper to them: French or French-English, German, Polish and "savage" works. See BEYS, "Rapport du R.P. Provincial du Manitoba 1908 à 1920," especially p. 272.

Chapter III - Other forms of parishes and missions

The Holy Ghost parish was the biggest Polish immigrants' centre in the prairies at that time. There were, however, many other Polish immigrants scattered throughout the prairies in small settlements. The first Polish Oblates were aware of that fact and they tried to minister to them too. After a few years of "itinerant" ministry, they began to settle the communities, some of which later developed into parishes. The analysis of the forms undertaken by Oblates in these places will be done against the background of the general situation. This general history, with its abundance of details, stories, and anecdotes is not an aim of this chapter. The presentation of this chapter will concentrate briefly on the itinerant ministry, then more on the concrete work done in the given areas. The work will be completed with an analysis.

1. First stage - "itinerant" ministry

As noted previously, the first Polish priest in the prairies was Wojciech Kulawy. His preoccupation with the building of the new church in Winnipeg did not prevent him from visiting his parishioners living outside the city. During his first year his "parish" numbered about one thousand Poles dispersed across the prairies. This included different settlements in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in the territories of the dioceses of St. Boniface and St. Albert (not to mention the immigrants of other groups).¹

¹ He was appointed by Archbishop Langevin as a missionary not only for the Poles, but also for the Germans, the Slovaks, and the Ukrainians in the whole archdiocese of St. Boniface. By May 27 (3 weeks) he had already visited *St. Norbert* and *Brokenhead*. See Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of May 27, 1898 to Archbishop Langevin*,

During these visits from settlement to settlement, though he was able to give only urgent and passing care to the Poles, he was able to estimate the magnitude of the task. After the arrival of his brother, they both spent their time exploring different settlements in the prairies. These were still more trips and spontaneous visits than systematic work. John Kulawy, who arrived in Winnipeg in May, went west in July and August of the same year to visit Polish settlements in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

It would be interesting to describe these trips. All of them had something specific, but the general conditions were similar. Therefore, in order to give the general picture of the circumstances, we present here a longer quotation from one letter of Wojciech Kulawy to Archbishop Langevin describing the first trips:

In the district of Dauphin, I visited eleven centres during the period of two weeks! This is the most considerable mission, it covers more than 40 square miles and counts about a thousand families, which is more than 6000 souls. . . . During my 14 days spent there I did not stop to minister; I was listening to the confessions and I was baptizing every day. I have heard 300 confessions, I have baptised 43 children and I blessed 8 marriages. . . . During the month of October I have baptized in the same area 30 children, which means that in the period of a month I baptized 73 children and I gave Holy Communion to 400 people. Not many parishes . . . can present the same numbers for a whole year. The travels which I have to undertake are difficult because the farms are dispersed and the routes are in terrible condition. I had to travel all the time. When I finished one mission I had to leave for another one. Often I travel at night by buggy with the hackney or "per pedes apostolorum", what is called in France "the car of St. Francis." One night I carried my heavy box-chapel for 16 miles. After that I slept in a haystack when it was so cold that it did not provide any warmth. That was Bethlehem, but Bethlehem in Manitoba. Another night they took me on a buggy with two wheels and we fell down into the river. But God protected his missionary! Your servant arrived this night at the second hour of the day, after arriving heard 80 confessions, baptized 13 children and preached 6 times! I had happened to sing the Mass and I could not take a cup of coffee until 2 P.M.! I fast almost a whole year and it is rare that I eat before one, two, or even three P.M. . . . One Sunday I ate at 7 P.M.! At three o'clock I finished administering the sacraments when they called me to a sick

in AGH. During the period Dec. 29, 1898 - Jan. 10, 1899 he was in the *Dauphin* district. On February 3, 1899 he visited *Minnedosa*. On March 10 he was at *Sifton* and on March 16 he travelled to *Edmonton* and district, returning to *Winnipeg* on April 8. His brother John arrived in *Winnipeg* on May 8, 1899. See more in Wojciech KULAWY, *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises du diocèse de St. Boniface à Mgr. L.P.A. Langevin O.M.I., Archevêque de St-Boniface*, in ASB; PUCHNIAK, pp. 46-47; HUBICZ, "Early Polish Priests in Manitoba," in TUREK, *The Polish Past in Canada*, pp. 93-94.

person 5 miles away. . . . Coming back the moon shined in the sky without warming up my poor stomach, which was empty and it was really cold.²

After this first period of itinerant ministry, when the new Oblates were subsequently arriving, there came a time to begin the more systematic and organized pastoral work. A following presentation will trace more or less the geographic pattern going westward, presenting the work of the Oblates among Poles in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

2. Laying the foundation of the local churches

a) Manitoba

The presence of Poles in Manitoba dates back to 1817, when a group of Polish ex-soldiers from the De Meuron Regiment joined the founder of the Red River colony, Lord

² Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of Dec. 11, 1900 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB. The letter was written originally in French. As French was not his first language, but his third or fourth, grammar and style can be forgiven. The original follows: "Dans le district de Dauphin, j'ai visité onze centres dans l'espace de deux semaines! C'est la mission la plus considérable, elle comprend plus de 40 milles carrés, et compte environ mille familles ce qui doit donner plus de 6000 âmes. . . . Pendant les 14 jours passés dans cette localité, je n'ai cessé de faire du ministère; je confessais et je baptisais tous les jours. J'ai entendu 300 confessions, baptisé 43 enfants et béni 8 mariages. . . . Dans le mois d'octobre j'ai baptisé dans cette localité même 30 enfants; de sorte que, dans l'espace d'un mois, j'ai baptisé 73 enfants et j'ai distribué la sainte communion à 400 personnes!! Bien peu de paroisses . . . peuvent présenter les mêmes chiffres pour toute une année. Les voyages qu'il me faut entreprendre sont difficiles parceque les fermes sont dispersées et que les chemins sont affreux, impraticables. Or, je voyage constamment. A peine ai-je fini une mission que je quitte pour en commencer une autre. Souvent, je voyage pendant la nuit sur une voiture trainée par des beufs à pas lents, ou bien "per pedes apostolorum", ce que l'on appelle en France, la voiture de Saint François! Une nuit j'ai porté ma boîte-chapelle joliment lourde, l'espace de 16 milles; puis j'ai couché dans un tas de foin! Or, le froid était intense et le foin n'était pas chaud! C'était Bethléem; mais Bethléem au Manitoba. Une autre nuit, on m'a transporté sur une petite voiture à deux roues et nous avons failli nous noyer en traversant une rivière! Mais, Dieu garde son missionnaire! Votre serviteur arrive cette nuit là, à deux heures du matin; aussitôt il entend 80 confessions, baptise 13 enfants, et prêche six fois! Il a fallu aussi chanter la messe et je n'ai pu prendre une tasse de café du'après deux heures de l'après-midi. Je jeûne presque toute l'année, et il est rare que je mange avant une, deux et même trois heures de l'après-midi. . . . Un dimanche, j'ai mangé à sept heures du soir! A trois heures et demi j'avais fini l'administration des sacrements, alors on m'appelait aux malades à 5 milles de là. . . . En revenant, la lune brillait au firmement sans réchauffer mon pauvre estomac qui était bien vide, et le froid était grand."

Selkirk. However, only two Polish families settled permanently in this colony. The great wave of the new Polish immigration began at the end of the 19th century.³

Holy Ghost was not only a church for the Poles in Winnipeg but also a base for the Oblates staying in Winnipeg and taking pastoral care of Poles in the area. On the weekends, the Oblates from Holy Ghost travelled to visit the churches and the chapels of the area, where the Polish immigrants lived. The early missionaries regularly included *St. Norbert, Gonor* and *Victoria Park* in their itineraries even before chapels were built there.⁴

Oblates from Holy Ghost also visited Poles living in more distant places. Since there was a variety of situations in different areas and there was no one possible form of work for all of them it is necessary to present these places here. They will be divided in 4 groups: Eastern, Northern, North-Western and Western.

The Eastern District. *Cook's Creek* lies twenty miles east of Winnipeg. During Wojciech Kulawy's time, the settlers built the church in this area. Oblates visited the place and

³ The census for 1901 gives the number of Poles in Manitoba as 1,674. In 1911 the number was 121,321. These Polish settlements extended into Saskatchewan and Alberta, basically following the railroad. See MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, p. 50.

⁴ Already Wojciech Kulawy visited them and preached a week's mission in *St. Norbert* shortly after his arrival in Winnipeg in May 1898. For more about their work see the Act of visitation of the House of the Holy Ghost by the Provincial J. Magnan in October 1907, in *MAISON du St-Esprit, Winnipeg. Conseil local et actes de visité du 1er octobre 1907 au 25ème juin 1908*, in AAP, esp. p. 23. See more in PUCHNIAK, pp. 45, 59, 96-97, 100-101; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 68-82; Edward WALEWANDER, ed., *Leksykon geograficzno-historyczny parafii i kościołów polskich w Kanadzie*, vol. II (Lublin: KUL, 1993), pp. 114-116. Hereafter abbreviated as *Leksykon*. See also a lot of information about different Polish churches on the prairies in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 2 (1909), no. 26 (of Sept. 5, 1909). This special issue was devoted to the presentation of the Polish churches in the prairies. See also a lot of particular information about different places in other issues of *Gazeta Katolicka*.

in 1908 Frs. Kowalski and Grochowski preached a mission there.⁵ North-East from Cook's Creek there is *Beausejour*. Oblates visited the Polish settlers there from time to time and celebrated Mass in private homes.⁶

From its early days the *Garson* area has also been served by the Oblates. They visited the settlers in the area and celebrated Mass there a few times a year until 1924, when Fr. Antoine d'Eschambault who had learned the Polish language took charge of this territory.⁷

The first priests to visit the district of *Brokenhead* were Oblates Allard and Woodcutter and a Franciscan, Świder. They celebrated Mass in private homes. Wojciech Kulawy was the first Polish priest who extended more regular care.⁸

South-East of Winnipeg there is a district which in the early days was known as *Stuartburn*. Later the region took the name *Overstone*, and still later it changed to *Tolstoi*. It was one of the first places visited by W. Kulawy in 1898 and 1899, then other Oblates

⁵ The church in Cook's Creek questions the claim of Holy Ghost in Winnipeg to be the first Polish church in the prairies. On June 3rd, 1899, Wojciech Kulawy celebrated the first Mass there in the new chapel (and in Holy Ghost the first Mass was celebrated only a few months later on November 1, 1899). Some insist that the chapel in Cook's Creek was not yet complete at that time. Until 1913 Oblates were coming there. In 1913-1921 diocesan priests were in charge of it, and since 1921 the Oblates.

Not everything was so smooth there. There were some tensions. In 1926 the trustees of the parish with the approval of some parishioners withheld Fr. Kosian's salary for six months. When he left the parish they asked Archbishop Beliveau for a new pastor, but he refused. Finally they gave up and Fr. Kosian came back. See more in *CODEX Historicus - Cook's Creek*, especially pp. 3-12; Francis B. KOWALSKI, *Letter of March 26, 1914 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 87-90; *Leksykon*, pp. 71-74.

⁶ Priests from either Beausejour or from Winnipeg celebrated Mass in the small churches in *Elma*, *Hadashville* and *Whitemouth*. See more in Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of December 11, 1900 to the Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; BEYS, "Rapport du R.P. Provincial du Manitoba 1908 à 1920," pp. 277-278; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 98-112; *Leksykon*, pp. 45-48, 123-126.

⁷ Oblates also visited the settlers around *East Selkirk* and *Narol*. See HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 113-119; *Leksykon*, pp. 81-85, 140-141.

⁸ In 1921 Fr. Meissner found himself in a difficult situation concerning money, similar to that of Fr. Kosian in Cook's Creek but here, in *Brokenhead*, he gave up and in 1924 Polish Missionaries of La Salette came here. See PUCHNIAK, p. 95; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 91-97; *Leksykon*, pp. 65-67.

visited this post regularly. The most frequent visiting priest there was an Oblate, Bronislaus Heintze, during the years 1912-1927.⁹

The Northern (Gimli) district. Poles began to settle in this region in 1897. Some fifty miles north of Winnipeg there was a large settlement of Poles in the area of *Gimli*. W. Kulawy was the first Polish missionary there. The Oblates were the first "itinerant" missionaries¹⁰ in the district but it fell to a diocesan priest, Ernest Kostorz, to organize regular work when he became the first pastor in 1905. When he departed in 1907, the Oblates again took charge for an interim period, then in 1910 the parish received other diocesan priests.¹¹

The parish at *Camp Morton* began with the chapel built by Poles and Germans at *Haas* in 1906. Polish and German Oblates ministered there. The coming immigrants built a new church at *Berlo* in 1908. When Monsignor Morton opened the children's camp in 1923, Archbishop Sinnott built a church and rectory there, and the following year with the arrival of Sisters of Service he established a parish there. In the interim, Oblates served the parish.¹²

⁹ A native of *Tolstoi*, Felix Kwiatkowski became an Oblate (ordained 1933) and later the Provincial of the Assumption Province. For the first visits see Wojciech KULAWY, *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises*; PUCHNIAK, pp. 98-99; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 108-112; *Leksykon*, pp. 215-217.

¹⁰ Wojciech Kulawy baptized thirty-four children during his three days' stay in February on 1901. See Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of December 11, 1900 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of October 1, 1903 to Fr. Magnan*, in ASB.

¹¹ Wojciech Kulawy visited the Pleasant Home area in 1899. See Wojciech KULAWY, *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises*; PUCHNIAK, pp. 99-100; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 130-136, 148.

¹² See more in HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 126-138.

The Benedictine Sisters established their Motherhouse in *Arborg*. The first resident priest there was an Oblate, Andrew Stojar, assisted by Leonard Nandzik, who was in care of the missions in the area. Later, the Oblates left Arborg.¹³

North-West of Winnipeg. The district of *Sifton* extends north of Dauphin along the CPR line. The first missionary in this district was an Oblate, Agapite Page, who learned enough Polish to get along with the settlers. Wojciech Kulawy was the first Polish priest to visit them, within a few months of his arrival in 1898 (December 29, 1898 - January 10, 1899). The Catholics there already had a small church, which later was destroyed by a prairie fire. Since 1911 diocesan priests served there as pastors.¹⁴

West of Winnipeg. To have a full picture, it is necessary to mention this area, although there were no Oblates there at that time. The first priest to visit these Polish settlers was a Redemptorist, Achilles Delaere, who learned enough Polish to help immigrants. The first missionaries to take care of the Poles in this area were Redemptorists from Brandon and later from Yorkton, Sask. In 1913 the Poles in *Portage la Prairie* built a church. Until 1921 it was served by visiting missionaries, Oblates as well as diocesan.¹⁵

¹³ See more in HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 152-155; *Leksykon*, pp. 40-42.

¹⁴ See Wojciech KULAWY, *Letters of March 13, 1899; of December 11, 1900; and of November 1903 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; and his *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises*; PUCHNIAK, pp. 46, 97-98; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 201-228.

¹⁵ On June 12, 1898 Wojciech Kulawy was in Huns Valley (Polonia). That was probably the only recorded pastoral visit of an Oblate there. See Wojciech KULAWY, *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises*, in ASB. Fr. Finke, who was in Oakburn in 1904-1906 was not an Oblate (as HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, p. 171 says). See more in PUCHNIAK, p. 98; HUBICZ, *Polish Churches in Manitoba*, pp. 161-187,

b) Saskatchewan

The fertile lands of Saskatchewan attracted groups of Polish settlers, who gradually established themselves there. More Poles arrived in Saskatchewan after the First World War. Generally they settled on farms. This was not, however, a mass immigration. This territory became a province in 1905. The southern part of the province remained attached to the diocese of St. Boniface until 1910, while the northern part formed the diocese of Prince Albert.¹⁶

The Oblates from Fort Pelly, Jules Decorby and Agapite Page, visited the *Yorkton* area long before any Polish priest was available. The latter had learned enough Polish to be able to minister to the people. In 1899 a small church under the patronage of St. Kinga, a Polish saint was built in *Otthon*, southeast of Yorkton. The first Polish missionary in this district was Wojciech Kulawy in 1900. Since 1904 the Redemptorists were in charge.¹⁷

Further south, Poles settled around the settlement of *Neudorf (Mariahilf)*, which became the original Catholic community in this area. Wojciech Kulawy visited it in 1900; later other Oblates visited this place.¹⁸ The people built a church there in 1901. The Germans, Poles and Ukrainians formed the nucleus of this parish. In 1905, Wojciech Kulawy was authorized

193-157.

¹⁶ The Dominion Bureau of Statistics registered 669 Poles in Saskatchewan in 1901; 3,922 in 1911; 8,161 in 1921, and 25,961 in 1931. The increase has been significant, but it is not too great if compared with other provinces. See MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, p. 150.

¹⁷ See Wojciech KULAWY, *Rapport sur les colonies Galiciennes et Polonaises*; PUCHNIAK, p. 265; *Leksykon*, pp. 329-330.

¹⁸ For more about this visit see Wojciech KULAWY, *Letter of September 2, 1900 to Fr. Tatin*, in AGH. Poles called their new settlement *Lwow* (later germanized to *Lemberg*).

to establish a mission-house at *Grayson* which would become the headquarters for two missionaries (similar to the centre in Winnipeg). They would visit the Catholics on the CPR line westward. This venture was not a success at that time. Between 1905 and 1907, a considerable number of Polish families came to this area, but they did not remain. The majority of Catholics were Germans anyway and all the church services were conducted in German.¹⁹ The Polish parish in *Regina* was founded only in 1930. Prior to that, the Polish community there was visited by some Oblates (Groetschel, Sylia) and some others.²⁰

The northern part of Saskatchewan belonged to the diocese of Prince Albert. In that region, there were Polish settlements in the Batoche district. The first Polish settlers arrived there in 1900. A German Oblate, Fr. Brück from Prince Albert, visited these Poles and celebrated Mass for them several times. Another Oblate of German origin, Fr. Forner, came to this diocese in 1901. He learned Polish and was for many years the only Polish speaking priest in the diocese. He established his headquarters at *Fish Creek* where he remained until 1908. In 1908 a Polish Oblate, Theophil Nandzik, was appointed pastor of all the Polish missions in the Prince Albert diocese. After his departure to Poland in 1921, Fr. Forner

¹⁹ All the Oblates who served *Lemberg* at that time were Germans. See Frank GEREIN, *Outline History of the Archdiocese of Regina. Written and compiled on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee Year 1961* (Regina: Chancery Office, 1961), p. 175-177; PUCHNIAK, pp. 279-280; MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 146-147; *Leksykon*, pp. 317-319.

²⁰ In 1938 an Oblate from this parish, Leo Engel, was ordained priest. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 282-285; *Leksykon*, pp. 340-343.

returned and remained there until 1926 when the new diocesan priest of Polish origin, Joseph Cybart, came to the Prince Albert diocese.²¹

c) Alberta

Probably the closest tie between the Polish pioneers and their church in the prairies was seen in Alberta, especially in its northern part. In almost all its manifestations, Polish life was centred around the church. Very often the building of the churches was neither coordinated nor directed but was rather the spontaneous cooperation of the settlers. In northern Alberta,²² there were many Polish farmers. Southern Alberta, on the other hand, attracted working-class immigrants as labourers, in the service area, or miners.²³ The Oblates' work among the Poles in Alberta at the period of time of our interest could be divided into three different periods. The first one covers the years 1898 and 1899 when Wojciech and John Kulawy visited them from time to time, then a period of foundations (1903-1916) and a period of organization (1917-1926).²⁴ In the organization of this section, we will generally

²¹ Theophil Nandzik came from South Africa where he had been a missionary for five years and remained at *Fish Creek* until 1921 when he returned to Poland. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 103-104, 290-294; August FORNER, "Rapport sur la mission de l'Immaculée Conception à Fish Creek, Sask., Canada," in *Missions* 47 (1909), pp. 251-259; *Leksykon*, pp. 287-288, 297-299, 333-335.

²² Looking on the map it would be rather central Alberta, but usually this part of the province is called "northern."

²³ Probably there were many Polish miners in southwestern Alberta because in the *Banff* cemetery a memorial plaque, commemorating those who were killed accidentally in the *Bankhead*, notes over twenty-five names of Poles who lost their lives in mine accidents in 1905 and 1906. See MAKOWSKI, *History and Integration of Poles in Canada*, pp. 161-162.

²⁴ See Aristides PHILIPPOT, "L'oeuvre des Oblats polonais parmi les Polonais de l'Alberta," in *Missions*, 64 (1930), p. 341-344.

follow this subdivision with a little more information about the Holy Rosary parish in Edmonton.

Visits of Wojciech and John Kulawy. Already in 1896 a delegation of Polish Catholics from the Edmonton area asked Bishop Grandin to invite a Polish-speaking priest. As in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the first Polish priest to visit Alberta was Wojciech Kulawy. His first visit there occurred from August 9, to September 10, 1898. His second visit occurred in the spring of 1899, from March 16 until April 6. His brother, John, was in Alberta from August 31 to September 30, 1899.²⁵

When Wojciech and John Kulawy began to lay the foundation of the Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg, a Polish seminarian Francis Olszewski was ordained priest for the St. Albert diocese in 1900. For some time he was the only Polish priest working in the diocese (covering the whole of Alberta) on a regular basis. The biggest Polish settlement at that time

²⁵ During his visit John was also at *Fernie, BC*, where he preached a one-week retreat to the miners. See John William KULAWY, *Letter of September 13, 1899 to the Superior General, Fr. Augier*, in *Missions*, 37 (1899), pp. 367-372; Marie Bernice Venini BYRNE, *From Buffalo to the Cross. A History of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary* (Calgary: Calgary Archives and Historical Publishers, 1973), pp. 391-392; PUCHNIAK, pp. 314-315.

See also Anthony SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol I, pp. 3-13, in AAP. There are a few versions of Fr. Sylla's *Memoirs*, some in handwriting, some in typewritten versions. The numbers of pages vary. This year his work will be published in a book edition. For the purpose of this thesis page numbering will follow the version typed on the computer for the book edition as preserved in the Archives of Assumption Province in Toronto. A few fragments of Fr. Sylla's work were published in the book Joanna MATEJKO, ed., *Polish Settlers in Alberta. Reminiscences and Biographies* (Toronto: Polish Alliance Press Ltd., 1979). These fragments will be quoted here as published in that book.

lay about 90 kilometres north-east of Edmonton and was called *Kraków* (Beaver Hills area). Fr. Olszewski took his residence there and served Poles in the area.²⁶

The period of foundations (1903-1916). In 1903, Paul Kulawy, a brother of Wojciech and John, was sent to work in the diocese of St. Albert. Bishop Legal assigned him to look after the Poles. At first he chose *Lethbridge* in the south as his headquarters.²⁷ In 1905, he moved his headquarters to the north at *Round Hill* on Lake Demay because there were more Poles there.²⁸ When Paul Kulawy moved to *Round Hill* and worked basically in the northern part, Poles in the south were without a Polish priest. Bishop Legal stressed that situation at the Oblate chapter. In 1909, another Polish Oblate, Anthony Sylla, arrived in

²⁶ Bishop Grandin accepted him into his diocese in 1899 and ordained him in St. Albert in 1900. He was placed in charge of the Polish settlers east of Edmonton. In 1901 he started a Polish congregation of sisters whose main goal was teaching. For a few years he was the only Polish missionary to visit the Poles along the CPR line and in other parts of the diocese. In 1911 he left Canada with his community and passed to the diocese of Crookston, U.S.A. See more in PUCHNIAK, pp. 315-319; Emile Joseph LEGAL, *Short Sketches of the History of the Catholic Churches and Missions in Central Alberta* (Edmonton: [n.ed.], 1915), pp. 115-117; Anthony SYLLA, "Kraków - Father Olszewski's settlement (1899-1910)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 270-273; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. IV, pp. 76-92.

²⁷ Bishop Legal told that Paul had to undertake many expeditions and affirmed that there was a real need for more Polish priests. See Emile Joseph LEGAL, "Rapport du Vicariat de Saint-Albert," in *Missions*, 44 (1905) pp. 161, 176-177; PUCHNIAK, pp. 319-325. For more about Lethbridge see SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 41-57.

²⁸ Already Wojciech Kulawy had visited Round Hill. Later under Fr. Olszewski's guidance they established a parish there. With Paul Kulawy they built a church in 1905. See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 47-73; LEGAL, *Short Sketches of the History of the Catholic Churches and Missions in Central Alberta*, pp. 117-118.

For more about Rabbit Hills (now Nisku) see SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 29-46. In 1915 Kopernik had its first parochial mission preached by Fr. Kowalski, and in 1925 by Fr. John Kulawy. In 1915 a diocesan priest Fr. Michael Dymiński took care of Kopernik but left next year. For more about Kopernik see Anthony SYLLA, "The Polish Community in Kopernik (1903-1926)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 279-290.

southern Alberta. His duty was to serve all Catholics of Slavic origin such as Poles, Slovaks and Ukrainians who laboured along the railroad line and in the mining camps.²⁹

Fr. Sylla built a home and made his headquarters in *Canmore*. Consequently it became a parish. He also built churches in *Bankhead* and in *Exshaw*.³⁰ Bishop Legal recorded that in 1913 the Polish congregation in *Calgary* had as yet no church and no resident priest although Fr. Sylla visited them from *Canmore*.³¹ Until 1912 Anthony Sylla worked in southern Alberta, which belonged to the diocese of St. Albert (under an Oblate, Bishop Legal). That year a new diocese of Calgary was erected and T. McNally was appointed the first bishop. Estimating that the number of Poles in the south was small and that there were many more in the north he let Fr. Sylla go north to Edmonton in 1917, as Paul Kulawy insisted.

The period of organization in the north (1917-1926). Since the departure of Fr. Olszewski (1911), Paul Kulawy had too much work to do for himself in the northern part of Alberta. East of Edmonton there were Franciscans who were working with Poles.³² For some

²⁹ Strictly speaking there were no Polish language churches in the south. Paul Kulawy offered his services to all Catholics in the area regardless of their nationality.

³⁰ See BYRNE, *From Buffalo to the Cross*, pp. 312-315, 394-396. In her book she called the Kulawy brothers Kulawy! For more about *Canmore* see Anthony SYLLA, "Christmas Among the Miners in *Canmore*," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 291-293. About *Bankhead* see SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 49-65, about *Exshaw* - SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 66-68, and about *Banff* - SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 69-70.

³¹ In August of 1914 plans had been drawn up to the new bishop's (McNally) specifications. This church was never begun, however, because of the outbreak of the First World War. During the war many of the Polish people left their places. The next bishop, Kidd (1925-1931), made efforts to provide Polish speaking priests, and they came principally from the Redemptorists. From this parish in *Calgary* was one Oblate, Peter Klita. See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 1-18; BYRNE, *From Buffalo to the Cross*, pp. 185-186.

³² The Franciscans were in charge of the missions east of Edmonton since 1911 to 1914. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 329-331; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. IV, pp. 63-64.

time, Paul Kulawy had help in the person of a German Oblate, Fr. Gelsdorf³³ and finally from Anthony Sylla. These two Oblates divided the territory and both lived in Edmonton, going out to the missions on weekends. The Provincial H. Grandin wrote about their work that they were both "killing themselves bringing teaching and spiritual help to the catholics of their language."³⁴ For four years of common work, till the departure of Paul Kulawy to Poland, they worked together in a more organized way.

In 1918 Fr. Sylla, together with another Oblate working with Ukrainians, Fr. Roux, suggested to the parishioners at *Skaro* a project to build a grotto in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes. The parishioners supported this project. Both priests met with them at Skaro. In June, 1919 work began. Not only did the Polish parishioners work, but their Ukrainian neighbours assisted them as well. The first pilgrimage was held August 14 and 15, 1919. During those years pilgrims came from all parts of the province.³⁵

Far north-west from Edmonton there was a Polish settlement at *Flat Lake* (ten miles northeast of *St. Paul des Métis*). Paul Kulawy visited them. Some people in this area had not

³³ William Gelsdorf, originally destined to work with Ukrainians, did not change to the Greek Rite and helped Paul Kulawy, staying first in Round Hill and later in Edmonton. During World War I, all Germans had to register and report to the police once a month. He was embarrassed by this and soon left permanently for the United States. See PUCHNIAK, p. 326-327; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 9-14. PHILIPPOT, "L'oeuvre des Oblats polonais parmi les Polonais de l'Alberta," p. 355.

³⁴ Originally in French. See Henri GRANDIN, "Rapport du Révérend Père Vicaire d'Alberta-Saskatchewan," in *Missions*, 55 (1921), p. 284.

³⁵ Already Wojciech Kulawy had visited Skaro (twice) and John Kulawy once. After the departure of Francis Olszewski Paul Kulawy came occasionally from Round Hill. See PHILIPPOT, "L'oeuvre des Oblats polonais parmi les Polonais de l'Alberta," pp. 358-360; PUCHNIAK, pp. 333-334; Anthony SYLLA, "Building the Church and Grotto in Skaro (1917-1919)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 314-316.

seen a priest for fifteen or more years!³⁶ Very few Polish settlers came to the Peace River area before the First World War. *Webster* contained 50% of the Poles in the vicariate of Grouard. The first Polish Oblate to visit *Webster* and *Sexmith* was Anthony Sylla in the summer of 1926. The second one was Stanley Puchniak.³⁷

Holy Rosary parish in Edmonton. Pastors of the respective parishes took care of the Poles in the Edmonton area, especially an Oblate, Fr. Alphonse Jan of St. Joachim and Fr. Alphonse LeMarchand of Immaculate Conception. These priests of the two parishes asked Paul Kulawy to celebrate Mass for the Poles. He did so occasionally.³⁸

Since 1904 (the first Mass of Paul Kulawy in Edmonton at St. Joachim) there were attempts at establishing a Polish parish there. In October 1911 a meeting took place and an organizing committee for building a Polish parish was chosen, although Archbishop Legal thought that this project was premature.³⁹ The building of the church began in the spring of 1912, and on New Year's day of 1913, the first Mass in the new church was said by Paul

³⁶ Fr. Rygusiak, working there in 1930s, wrote that there were people there who still remembered Fr. Paul Kulawy who visited them a few times. See Edmund RYGUSIAK, "Z lasów kanadyjskich," in *Oblat Niepokalanej*, 10 (1935), pp. 288-291, 11 (1936), p. 61-62; See also PUCHNIAK, pp. 336-337; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 108-111.

³⁷ See PUCHNIAK, p. 342; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 116-128.

³⁸ Besides other, more pastoral activities Fr. A. Jan organized also a night school for the so-called Galician (Ukrainian and Polish) girls. See Louis CULERIER, "Rapport sur la Paroisse de l'Immaculée-Conception à Edmonton," in *Missions*, 50 (1912), pp. 46-50; Louis CULERIER, "Notes sur les travaux des Oblats de Marie Immaculée à Edmonton," in *Missions*, 52 (1914), pp. 349-350; SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 1-2. For a general overview of the Oblates work in the Edmonton area see Eméric O. DROUIN, "The Beginnings and Development of the Catholic Church in the Edmonton Area and the Contributions of the Oblate Fathers and Brothers," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 40 (1981), pp. 211-250, 41 (1982), pp. 37-67.

³⁹ September 12, 1912 the Bishop once again replied that there can be no question of a "real" parish for the Poles of Edmonton. But he suggested, as he had already done for Calgary, that a site be purchased while prices were reasonable. See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 1-28.

Kulawy, whose residence was still Round Hill. On August 28, 1913, Archbishop Legal sent Paul Kulawy the act of canonical erection of Holy Rosary Parish. In a postscript, the bishop remarked that the new parish was exclusively for Polish Catholics and not for Germans nor for any other ethnic group. He paid his first official visit to the parish on June 3, 1917.

From 1914 Paul Kulawy located his headquarters in Edmonton. In 1917, Anthony Sylla joined Paul Kulawy there. From then, Edmonton became the centre of the Oblate work among Poles in northern Alberta. Paul Kulawy and Anthony Sylla now resided in Edmonton and from there visited their missions.⁴⁰

In 1917, the Oblates opened their new seminary in Edmonton.⁴¹ There were some Polish seminarians studying there. The first to be ordained in December, 1920 was Stanley Baderski. He was available to Fr. Sylla. Fr. Sylla continued his dedicated work in the missions committed to his care.⁴² After completing his studies, Stanley Baderski left for Winnipeg. George Salamon, a Slovak Oblate, was ordained next and took over where Fr. Baderski had left off. In the following years there were ordained: John Czujak (1923), Stanley Puchniak (1925), and John Bednarz (1926). All of these in turn assisted Fr. Sylla either at Holy Rosary in Edmonton or on the missions. By 1927 organization of Polish missions was basically

⁴⁰ Brother Anthony Kowalczyk, the first Polish Oblate in Canada, since 1911 worked at St. John's College in Edmonton. He loved this church and used to come there from his place. For more about the parish see Chester ZWARTYCH, *The Beginning and the End of the First Holy Rosary Church (Polish) in Edmonton*, in AAP; *ZŁOTE Pokłosie. Dzieje parafii Matki Bożej Różańcowej w Edmonton 1913-1963* (Edmonton: Holy Rosary Parish, 1963).

⁴¹ See "INAUGURATION du Scolarcat O.M.I. d'Edmonton," in *Missions*, 53 (1919), pp. 57-60. Paul Kulawy is listed there as a professor of Polish language.

⁴² Paul Kulawy left for Poland on June 7, 1921, seemingly for a visit and vacation, but never returned to Canada.

achieved and the other Polish diocesan priests took care after them. That same year Fr. Sylla went to Holy Ghost parish in Winnipeg.⁴³

3. System of the missionary work in the prairies

After the presentation of the situation existing in the prairies of that time, now we will proceed to analyze the missiological and ecclesiological perspective these Oblates had in their work. We will do it in two parts. First, we will summarize how they organized their work and secondly, we will try to draw conclusions what problems they had to face.

a) Organization of the ministry to the Poles

The necessity of trying to find new forms of missionary work was seen already in the second chapter but it was seen even more clearly in the kind of work presented in this third chapter. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who at that time were the most numerous congregation working in the prairies of Canada were faced with the problem of setting up the system and the forms of pastoral care of the white settlers in general, and the Poles, who formed a big part of the population of Catholic settlers, in particular. The first task of the

⁴³ In Edmonton we can see the same pattern that was seen in the south. When the new bishop, who was not an Oblate (Archbishop O'Leary) took the place of an Oblate bishop, after a few years Oblates left their work there. Fr. Sylla's successors at Holy Rosary were diocesan priests till 1961 when the parish once again returned to the Oblates. That same year when Fr. Sylla left Alberta (1927), the Oblate Seminary was moved to Lebret, Sask. One of the results of the work of the Oblates of the Polish origins in Alberta were Native Canadians of Polish origins who joined the Oblates: Stanley Wachowicz from Skaro, Frank Kosakiewicz from Edmonton, Peter Klita from Calgary, and Michael Smith from Nisku. See Frank KOSAKIEWICZ, "Polish Oblate Ministry and Immigration in Alberta," in *Western Oblate Studies / Etudes oblates de l'Ouest, 1* (Edmonton: Western Canadian Publishers et Institut de recherche de la Faculté Saint-Jean, 1990) pp. 176-177.

bishops was to find Polish-speaking priests. In the early period they could not find many, and therefore, the rescue came basically from their own Congregation of Oblates.

The first concrete form of work on the prairies, apart from Winnipeg was, then, the "*itinerant*" ministry. Wojciech Kulawy and later other Oblates carried on extensive work of visiting Polish settlements throughout the prairies. In such a situation, no one particular place could monopolize the attention of an itinerant missionary. This work, particularly in the pioneering period was very hard. They had to overcome many obstacles to be able to reach the scattered localities under the conditions of lack of proper transportation facilities and a scarcity of roads. Following the pattern of other Oblates in Western Canada working with the Native people they tried to "capture" the territory, finding good places for the headquarters. At first, the missionaries, when visiting people for the first time, baptized all the children (some of whom were well on in years), blessed marriages and besides administering the sacraments, advised, encouraged and sometimes helped them materially.

The Polish Oblates in *Manitoba* had their headquarters at Holy Ghost in Winnipeg. They stayed there and were going for weekend ministry into the settlements. It would seem that in the first years of their work, they originated the system of partitioning districts in such a manner that a missionary had five missions to visit. Four of them would be visited regularly every month. The smallest settlement would be visited whenever a fifth Sunday occurred. Usually the parishioners arranged among themselves to meet the priest at the train and to drive him back to the train. Usually the priest stayed with that family. The priest would arrive on Saturday. On Sunday morning at a convenient hour he would be driven to church to hear confessions before Mass. Mass would begin after all the confessions were heard. Children

were taught catechism after the Mass. Some missionaries used to have Vespers with Benediction after the catechism and only then would the parishioners return home. It was a fairly heavy schedule. In the early days only a few places had churches or chapels. Therefore, the priest celebrated Mass in private homes where the congregation met.⁴⁴

In *Saskatchewan*, because of the great distances, the Oblates also saw the need for establishing a centre for missionaries. In 1905, they tried to establish a centre for two missionaries in Grayson, but there were more German immigrants and, therefore, finally German Oblates took over. Polish Oblates came only later, in the 1930s, and made a centre in Melville. In Saskatchewan, where there were fewer Polish immigrants and fewer Polish priests available, it was seen that other Oblates, as far as they were able, would help the Poles. It seems that in Prince Albert diocese, the system was similar to that in Manitoba, although Fish Creek was a small centre and only one Oblate was involved in that ministry.

In *Alberta*, there were two Oblates involved in work with Polish immigrants: Paul Kulawy and Anthony Sylla. After 1909, when Fr. Sylla came, they divided the work. Paul stayed in Round Hill taking care of the north, and Anthony stayed in the south with headquarters in Canmore. Fr. Kulawy was forced to live almost like a farmer. In their travels they were often homeless, sleeping with workers in train wagons, and sometimes in homes. Fr. Sylla had to travel more and therefore he built churches in a practical manner. There were two rooms, one on each side of the sanctuary. On the left was the priest's room equipped with a bed, a small table, chairs and a box stove. A hot air furnace in the basement heated the

⁴⁴ Of course there were instances where a priest had more than four or five missions under his care. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 87-88.

church. The priest arrived on Saturday and was driven directly to the church. The fires were lit and the church and priest's room were comfortable. Of course not all missions were as practically arranged. In many, perhaps in most missions, the missionary had to prepare his own firewood.⁴⁵ After 1917 they both worked together in the north, establishing headquarters in Edmonton.

Besides establishing parishes, some Oblates also tried other forms of work known to them from Poland, like preaching *retreats* as we saw already in Holy Ghost (in '910), in St. Norbert (W. Kulawy), at Cook's Creek (Frs. Kowalski and Grochowski), or in Edmonton and Kopernik (J. Kulawy). It seems, however, that it was less frequent because of the scarcity of priests available.

This system of work was not just the pure invention of those Oblates working with the Poles. Those working with the Germans developed their work similarly.⁴⁶

b) What problems did they have to face?

Every missionary work always involves some theological visions, usually ecclesiology. The Polish Oblates also had to face some of these issues. Now we will try to recover some of them, especially six big sets of problems: the question of basic communities, the issue of Polish and Catholic character of the parishes, the question of the proper relationship between the priests and lay people within these Polish parishes, the issue of the self-understanding of

⁴⁵ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 88-89.

⁴⁶ See Bernard ÜBERBERG, "Rapport du R.P. Provincial de Regina," in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 399-404, especially p. 400. Although he spoke about the whole Province it was basically about the Oblates working with Germans. He mentioned the same system - parishes with attached missions, from time to time retreats, and in bigger places some societies.

their ministry by these Oblates, the question of Oblates' place in the process of integration of Polish immigrants, and the question of the proper relationship with the local bishops.

Basic communities. After the overview of the situation existing on the prairies it seems that the major concern of these Oblates was the creation of local communities. During this time Polish priests were few in number, in many places the services were held irregularly, and after fairly prolonged intervals. At the beginning they travelled from home to home with a portable altar and celebrated Mass for the settlers. In summer they travelled by horse and buggy, on bicycle or on foot. In the beginning the services, the Mass, ministering the sacraments, the sermons, or the catechesis were offered wherever it seemed convenient, in different churches,⁴⁷ inns, halls, in private homes, in the cottages, log-cabins or even outdoors. One of the first problems to be resolved, therefore, was a question of the chapels. Very often there was no place, no churches for use and, therefore, naturally the first aim was to build them. Since the ways of travelling were very primitive it was desirable that a chapel would be built in each settlement. Over the years "the countryside became dotted with tiny chapels, which could be visited by the priest only at intervals."⁴⁸ It is difficult to say whether this system was a result of their ecclesiological understanding or simply the most practical

⁴⁷ Sometimes even the local pastor asked for that. This work consisted then in helping the priest who was in charge. Usually these priests did not know Polish and often the people did not know English, or even if they knew, they wanted to make their confessions in Polish.

⁴⁸ HUBICZ, in TUREK, *The Polish Past in Canada*, p. 92. There was a problem of a shortage of priests but even if there would be a priest available most of the small Polish settlements was not strong enough to form a parish and support a resident priest. Those days the solution of small chapels seemed to be the reasonable one for the problem of the apostolate among a widely dispersed Polish population, but it resulted in some people becoming accustomed to participate at Mass only when a priest was present among them.

solution. Whatever it was we may conclude that one of the features of their ecclesiological vision was a community centred around the chapel building.

Traditionally, a parish was considered to be the basic christian community, so establishing the local communities (at that time) meant organizing parishes. For those who worked in the cities like Winnipeg and later Edmonton, the task was fairly understandable. Even though the idea of ethnic parishes was still new, their aim was to establish and develop a parish according to the practice of the Church. In the countryside, one solution was to establish multi-cultural communities. In some areas, missionaries gathered not only Poles but also other Slavs or Germans. In the long run, this policy was not successful. Even if there would be enough people in the area to form a rural parish, the people neither had a common language nor common cultural forms of expressing their faith.

The Polish and Catholic parish. Neither in Winnipeg nor in the smaller settlements did the multi-cultural parishes prove to be successful. Therefore, the missionaries began to settle Polish parishes. For the majority of missionaries who were in charge of the rural settlements, the idea and structure of "Polish parishes" was anything but clear. For example, what was supposed to be the criterion: an ethnic identity or a territory? The most popular solution, then, was establishing parishes on a territorial basis. They were called "Polish" because the majority of the people in the area were Polish and usually the priest was also Polish. The Mass was celebrated in Latin anyway and the people prayed and sang in their own language, which was more convenient for them. Some services, homilies or catechesis were conducted in Polish. These undertakings were perhaps not seen as a success at that time but

from today's perspective we may see that it softened the tensions based on the "culture shock" and different expressions of the faith. From time to time, these settlers had to attend the parish services of other people. In the long run, it protected Polish immigrants against establishing a kind of a "parallel" church like the Eastern Rite for Ukrainians, or Polish National Church.⁴⁹

The role of the lay people and the position of the priests. This issue was seen already in the second chapter. In other parishes it was also present, although perhaps it was not so obviously seen in this brief overview in the second section of this chapter.⁵⁰ It was the lay people, not the priests, who began to organize parishes. Sometimes they asked the bishops for a Polish priest. Often they organized themselves, for instance, to build a chapel. Missionaries would encourage the building of the chapel and then visit it only from time to time, but it was the local settlers who formed the local community. Sometimes, a visiting priest found himself in a position different, for which he had not been trained in the seminary. He was not on his own but he was a guest and could not enforce some solutions. The circumstances of the laity in setting up a congregation and in seeking out a priest made them more independent. It was seen in some places in matters concerning money.⁵¹ Oblates sometimes found themselves in the situation where the community existed independently of

⁴⁹ Even if a "polish parish" was established in the rural areas it developed in the same direction. Usually it was a place where the Polish priest used to come regularly or even live there. These parishes were established generally on a territorial basis i.e. grouping not only Poles living within the limits of the parish, but all Catholics of the Latin rite. There have been many localities where the Polish population was in the majority among the Catholics. For such places the bishops used to appoint pastors from among the Polish clergy. Usually in such churches, some sermons, instructions or devotions were held in Polish, but the ministry was directed to all, not only toward Poles.

⁵⁰ To show the details would require an analysis of many details, which may be found in the works analyzed in this chapter. Putting them into the body of the chapter would only blur the overall image.

⁵¹ See for example the problems of Fr. Kosian in Cook's Creek or Fr. Meissner in Brokenhead.

their presence (sometimes they even prayed together, although without a priest they could not celebrate sacraments). They must have realized that the church is not only present where there exists a canonically erected parish in communion with the bishop and the Mass is celebrated from time to time. These situations brought to light questions about who is the church and where is the local church formed. These are very interesting questions discussed today but during this research I did not come across any explicit explanation how they dealt with that situation. Perhaps they considered this as a "missionary" situation, which would settle down sometime in the future.

The self-understanding of the priest's role. In front of this somewhat different position of the lay Catholics, what was the Oblates' idea and self-understanding of their ministry? Among the great challenges for these first Oblates involved in ministry with Poles were the difficult conditions, much different from those to which they were accustomed in Poland. These conditions required a different style of life of the priests. This new type involved an energetic, enterprising, and resourceful priest, who was able not only to earn his living and to secure funds, but who also knew how to organize people, set up the parish communities, supply the parish with church buildings and to keep the immigrants in the readiness to maintain these establishments. It was not easy. Therefore, many priests, especially diocesan priests, who were more lonely left this kind of work after few years.⁵²

⁵² Some immigrants blamed specific priests for their lifestyle without understanding these general conditions. It was a surprise for some immigrants to learn that not only should they not rely on material assistance from the priests, but that they themselves were expected to support the parish and to contribute to the maintenance of the priest. Overall, however, the attachment to the religion and respect for the priests were so deeply rooted that, though they were hardly able to earn enough for themselves, they were giving generously in order to obtain in their locality a Polish priest. According to Turek, a historian of the Polish community in Canada, Oblates were generally

Basically, they saw themselves as ministering sacraments, and other people as "receivers." In the letters, reports, even in the works of Frs. Puchniak and Sylla, we can find much detailed information about the number of "distributed Communion," numbers of people confessed, or confirmed, sometimes even the themes of the homilies preached in given settlements. In different descriptions, very often major tribute was paid to the big celebrations, for example for the blessing of a new church building, or when the bishop came. In different memoirs, one often comes across the idea of visiting some places to give the immigrants "an opportunity to fulfil their Easter (or any holy day of obligation) duties." It seems therefore, that on the basis of their theological formation, they saw themselves and their ministry primarily as ministering the sacraments and organizing parishes. We must be honest, however, to add that they included in their work also efforts to help the immigrants with their problems, sometimes with organizational or financial matters.⁵³

The place of Oblates in the process of integration of Poles. Oblates were not the only ones involved in ministering to the Poles. There were other priests, diocesan and religious, as well. In fact Oblates working with the Poles were often treated by bishops like other diocesan priests working with the Poles. When one priest was moved, it was not a big problem to replace him with an Oblate or to replace an Oblate with a diocesan priest. Usually, wherever there was a more or less organized parish, it was given to diocesan clergy, if they

better prepared for that kind of work than some of the first diocesan priests brought by Archbishop Langevin from American dioceses. See TUREK, *Poles in Manitoba*, pp. 166-167, see also The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 97.

⁵³ See details in next chapter, especially welfare societies for immigrants in Winnipeg or southern Alberta.

were available (with an exception of Holy Ghost). Besides diocesan priests, there were also some other religious involved. The most active were the Redemptorists, but the Missionaries of La Salette and the Franciscans were also present. Religious preferred to have their own areas. Therefore, there were no special exchanges between Oblates and other religious working with Poles.

The Oblates working with Polish immigrants were not sent abroad for this work as overseas missionaries by their superiors from Europe, but were invited by the Canadian bishops and their confreres to work in their dioceses to form a Canadian Church out of Polish immigrants. In some way, Polish Oblates were better disposed for that work than the others, firstly as of Polish origin and secondly as Oblates. As Poles, they knew the Polish culture more deeply; as Oblates, they were part of the missionaries on the prairies. They often met the Oblates working in other situations and were close to others in charge of establishing the Church of the Canadian prairies.⁵⁴ This situation helped them form the Canadian Church of Polish immigrants and not the Polish Church in Canada.

The relationship with the local bishops. With the question of Oblates' work with Poles is linked the question of the proper relationship between Oblates and local bishops. It seems that Oblates' policy that Oblate bishops were also their religious superiors led to some problems when the bishops used Oblate money for diocesan purposes. When diocesan bishops succeeded Oblate bishops, there were some tensions on economic and personal grounds.

⁵⁴ Besides, they themselves were immigrants and this helped them to better understand and minister to the immigrants.

Some Oblates wanted to have their money back. Also in some places, new bishops found themselves alone among the Oblates without many diocesan clergy. Generally, French bishops promoted ethnic parishes more than English bishops. Theoretically speaking, it is better when a local, diocesan church shows also a variety of the diocesan and different religious clergy, but the period of transmission from the time when Oblates were practically in charge of everything in the church on the prairies caused some problems. Because of that tension and because of the small number of Oblates involved in the ministry to Poles, very often after the change of the bishop, Oblates often left the diocese leaving this work to others.

A span of twenty-eight years between 1898 and 1926 is too short a period of time to see clearly the development of the forms of Oblates' work with immigrants. It would be even harder to see clearly the results of such work. We may say, however, from today's perspective that the work they had begun and the forms of this particular work brought fruit in the form of "regular" parishes after many years. The pattern of the work, although later somewhat changed, has been followed for many years and it seems to give good results.

Chapter IV - Other forms of works and activities

After analysis of the Oblates' work in the Holy Ghost parish (chapter two) and of the other forms of parishes and missions (chapter three), we will now present other forms of work, which had an important role to play in the process of integration of the faith and culture of the Poles. We will concentrate here on Oblates' involvement in schools, the press, and different Polish organizations.

1. Schools

An ethnic educational system has a very important role to play in the gradual process of the integration of an ethnic group into a different community. It helps in the process of integration, which allows adoption of new values while at the same time preserving the "old" cultural values of the group.

a) General school situation on the prairies

When immigrants settled basically in the rural areas and mobility was limited, a public school might have been in fact an ethnic one, if located in a community of a particular cultural background. At the beginning, in different provinces some schools used languages other than English or French as the language of instruction.¹

¹ See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The CULTURAL Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 102.

The general legislation on the prairies was at the beginning well disposed toward Catholic interests (French in particular). The Northwest Territories Act of 1875 provided that a majority of rate payers in any district could "establish such schools therein as they may think fit" and tax themselves accordingly. The minority in the district (Catholic or Protestant) could establish a separate school and be liable only for the support of that school. As time went on, however, in the absence of a significant Catholic population in the prairies, this confessional school system became redundant. The English-speaking majority favoured a non-denominational school system with a British character and traditions. Consequently, the authorities began to modify the system and, in a short time, its confessional features had almost disappeared.²

Manitoba, the oldest of the Prairie Provinces (established in 1870), was the first to enact laws concerning public education and teaching in languages other than English. In 1916 the Manitoba School Act was amended according to which school attendance was made compulsory from ages 7 to 14 and teaching in languages other than English was removed. The standards for teacher training were made uniform for all candidates. This anti-bilingual school law struck at the heart of many Catholic schools. The numerous protests followed for weeks.³

² Until 1892 the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories were recorded and published in English as well as in French. See HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 42-45.

³ In 1916 Manitoba had 61 school districts with German as a language of instruction (73 teachers and 2,800 children) and 11 with Polish or Ukrainian (114 teachers and 6,500 children). Taken together with French schools they were educating one-sixth of all Manitoba's children. See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, pp. 102-104. To complicate the matter, to French Catholics, separate schools were synonymous with linguistic ones. The "Irish" Catholics naturally defended separate schools but they were, nevertheless, opponents of French or foreign-language instruction in these schools. It is a real irony that some of the first separate schools in Saskatchewan, which were later the subject of much anti-French and anti-German attitude, were established by English speaking settlers from Britain! See Brian NOONAN,

When Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces in 1905, their educational authorities followed the experience of Manitoba. Catholics no longer had the right to administer an autonomous educational system, although they could establish separate schools, elect their own trustees in such districts and employ Catholic teachers. In Alberta, school districts were staffed basically by teachers whose mother tongue was English. To aid immigrants desiring to teach, a special school was opened in 1912 at Vegreville to instruct older students with a limited command of English.⁴

Generally we may say that the system in which every minority had a right to establish their own school often did not operate smoothly,⁵ but withdrawal of the right to use other languages of instruction also led to problems. One of the greatest defenders of the rights of the Catholic⁶ and ethnic schools in the prairies was Archbishop Langevin. Among other

"The Contribution of Separate Schools to the Development of Saskatchewan: 1870 to the Present," in *CCHA*, 46 (1979), p. 73.

⁴ See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, pp. 104-105. The legal system for separate schools on the prairies has been well documented. See for instance George M. WEIR, *The Separate School Question in Canada* (Toronto: The Reyson Press, 1934); Charles B. SISSONS, *Church and State in Canadian Education* (Toronto: The Reyson Press, 1959); Manoly Robert LUPUL, *The Roman Catholic Church and the North-West School Question: A Study in Church-State Relations in Western Canada, 1875-1905* (Toronto: The University of Toronto, 1974); Stephen Thaddeus RUSAK, *Archbishop Adelard Langevin and the Manitoba School Question 1895-1915* (Edmonton: Ph.D. thesis at the University of Alberta, 1975). See also Raymond HUEL, "The Anderson Amendments and the Secularization of Saskatchewan Public Schools," in *CCHA*, 44 (1977), pp. 61-76, where he argues that the opinion that Catholics were persecuted with their schools is a myth rather than fact.

⁵ In some school districts separate minority schools could have been requested by two or three different minority groups. In many school districts, one or more local ethnic minorities had to send their children to schools which taught in the language of another minority. For instance, Polish children were forced to attend Ukrainian schools, or Finnish children Polish schools, and so on. In such districts the arrival or departure of a single family could alter the situation at any time. See The ROYAL Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, p. 104.

⁶ Moved by the problem, even Pope Leo XIII himself wrote an encyclical *Affari Vos* on the Manitoba School Question (December 8, 1897). Latin text in *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 30 (1897), 356-362. English translation in Claudia Carlen IHM, ed., *The Papat Encyclicals 1878-1903* (Wilmington, NC: A Consortium Book - McGrath Publ., 1981), vol. 2, pp. 429-432; see also Thomas CHARLAND, "L'encyclique 'Affari vos' de Léon XIII à l'épiscopat

things, he and other prairie bishops provided religious orders and teaching communities recruited along national lines such as *Les Filles de la Providence* (among the French), or the Basilians (among Ukrainians).⁷

Such was the general background of the so-called school question. In their concern for the schools, the Oblates working with the Poles were following the efforts of many Oblate predecessors. Therefore, now we will briefly sketch how Oblates found themselves in this situation.

b) Oblates' involvement in the school question

Archbishop Langevin was already mentioned, but other Oblates were also involved in the school question. Brian Noonan stated that "until the great immigration floods of the 1890's, the only educational force at work in the West was the famous order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate."⁸

Among the earliest and most famous Catholic schools in the prairies one may count St. Boniface College, founded by Bishop Provencher, which during Archbishop Taché's

canadien," in *SCHEC*, 19 (1952), pp. 13-25.

⁷ Archbishop Langevin himself was the founder of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate, whose main apostolate was teaching in rural schools and education of youth. See Marie-Jeanne FOURNIER, "La Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblates du Sacré-Coeur et de Marie-Immaculée," in *Vie Oblate Life*, 47 (1988), pp. 313-319. See also HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 46-47. From today's perspective it seems to be obvious that the people in the prairies must know English in order to live and communicate with others, but that period was a different time. It was still the era in which life on the prairies was dominated by agriculture. It was only after World War I that growing industrialisation, urbanization, and population mobility made it more important for young people to know English.

⁸ NOONAN, "The Contribution of Separate Schools to the Development of Saskatchewan: 1870 to the Present," p. 71. For more general perspective on the relationship between faith, language and schools see CHOQUETTE, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, pp. 211-221.

administration was staffed by the Oblates until 1885, when it was handed over to the Jesuits.⁹ Fr. Kowalski sent a few Polish boys from Holy Ghost to this College hoping that some of them may possibly join the Oblates.¹⁰

In 1900 Oblates started the College-Seminary, and in 1918 the Grand Seminary in St. Albert.¹¹ In 1920 the Oblates accepted responsibility to take over the College in Gravelbourg.¹² When in 1926, Archbishop Sinnott organized St. Paul's High School and College in Winnipeg, Oblates also helped him in this undertaking (especially Fr. Hilland and Fr. L. Nandzik, a pastor of Holy Ghost). Among the members of the first staff was Fr. Puchniak.¹³

In many different cities, towns and small settlements in the prairies, Oblates also organized many schools for different ethnic groups of settlers. In the last years, there was also a lot of consideration around the Oblates' involvement in *Indian Residential Schools*. This research has no interest in exploring this issue here, but it is important to realize that Oblates

⁹ In 1877 this College became one of the colleges of Manitoba University together with St. John's and Manitoba Colleges (Anglicans and Presbyterians). See Alfred BERNIER, *Les dates mémorables du Collège de Saint Boniface 1885-1945*, in AD.

¹⁰ See PUCHNIAK, p. 82.

¹¹ See LEVASSEUR, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada 1845-1967*, p. 224. In this Major Seminary studied the first Oblates of Polish origins who grew up in Canada.

¹² Later, in 1931, also the Seminary in Gravelbourg. See LEVASSEUR, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada 1845-1967*, pp. 205-206.

¹³ There were some Polish boys there as well. After 5 years, in 1931 the Oblates withdrew from it. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 163-166.

in the prairies (similarly to those in the East of Canada) were deeply involved in educational activities not only among the white settlers but also among the Natives.¹⁴

c) Holy Ghost School

Against this background of the general school situation and Oblates' educational activities, we can now come closer to the issue of the Oblate involvement in organizing Polish Schools. The Holy Ghost school was founded in 1902.¹⁵ The founder of the school was John Kulawy. A temporary school capable of accommodating 150 students had been organized in the church basement. The first teachers who conducted classes in the crowded church basement were John Kulawy himself, along with Caroline Czerniegiewicz and her sister Antonia, a Grey Nun. In September, there were 125 children registered to the parochial school.¹⁶

This was just the first step. More serious efforts were to be taken if the school was to exist and provide good education. The difficult task of establishing and abiding by the

¹⁴ See LEVASSEUR, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada 1845-1967*, pp. 196, 217-219. For more detailed information see for instance Rudolph NOWAKOWSKI, *Indian Residential Schools in Saskatchewan Conducted by the Oblate Fathers* (Ottawa: M.A. Thesis at University of Ottawa, 1962); Yvon LEVAQUE, "The Oblates and Indian Residential Schools," in *Western Oblate Studies / Etudes oblates de l'Ouest, 1* (Edmonton: Western Canadian Publishers et Institut de recherche de la Faculté Saint-Jean, 1990), pp. 181-191; Jacqueline GRESKO, "Everyday Life at Qu'Appelle Industrial School," in *Western Oblate Studies / Etudes oblates de l'Ouest, 2* (Queenston, Ont.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 71-94; Brian TITLEY, "Dunbow Indian Industrial School: An Oblate Experiment in Education," in *Western Oblate Studies / Etudes oblates de l'Ouest, 2*, pp. 95-113.

¹⁵ See John William KULAWY, *Letter of October 30, 1902 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB. The first Polish language school in Canada was opened at Wilno, Ont. in 1875, the second in Galt, Ont. in 1890, and the third in 1902 in Winnipeg. See KOGLER, in HEYDENKORN, *Topics on Poles in Canada*, p. 23.

¹⁶ See an article "Les ECOLES galiciennes," in *Missions*, 40 (1902), pp. 20-29, especially pp. 25-26. Fr. Puchniak who was brought up in this parish and who knew the school personally as a child gives many interesting remarks about the school in his work. See for example PUCHNIAK, pp. 50-53, 71-76.

provincial standards of education was undertaken by the Benedictine Sisters. At the request of John Kulawy, five Sisters from Duluth, Minn. arrived in Winnipeg on August 19, 1903 and took charge of the school. The new school was officially opened January 7, 1903. At first the Polish children used two rooms and the German, the other two (that time Holy Ghost was still a parish for both the Poles and the Germans). Archbishop Sbaretto, the Apostolic Delegate, visited the new school and blessed it on October 19, 1903.¹⁷

Oblates from Holy Ghost also kept parishioners involved in the issue of the school.¹⁸ On Sunday, September 1, 1907, a meeting was called of Poles and Ukrainians at which some school issues were discussed. They demanded: 1. that the Government educate Polish and Ukrainian students in training schools to be established as soon as possible; 2. that candidates be chosen by John Baderski, inspector and organizer of schools in Manitoba;¹⁹ 3. that this school be under the direction of Polish and Ukrainian teachers.²⁰

¹⁷ See PUCHNIAK, p. 58.

¹⁸ The Knights of Columbus, Winnipeg Council, also took a serious interest in Catholic education. Every year they donated a gold medal for proficiency to a Catholic school in the city. In 1908 the medal was awarded to Stanley Baderski (who later became an Oblate). See PUCHNIAK, p. 81.

¹⁹ Among other things he organized 75 new public school districts in the years 1902-1910. See more about him and his educational activities in John BADERSKI, *Memoirs*, in AAP. About the Teachers Training School see pp. 35-36. See also an article "Un INSPECTEUR Catholique pour les Galiciens dans le Manitoba," in *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, 2 (1903), pp. 5-6.

²⁰ These efforts to have a government sponsored training school for Polish teachers were crowned with success in January, 1909. This school was a concession made by the Manitoba provincial government to the Catholics. It was established by the Oblates for the purpose of training teachers of Polish and Ukrainian origin, who could later teach in the dual-language schools (it was before the 1916 anti-bilingual laws). It had a religious character and some of the subjects were taught in Polish. This was accomplished chiefly through the personal efforts of John Baderski with the Department of Education. The registration was limited to twelve candidates on an experimental basis. Later that year, seven more Polish students who were studying at the Ukrainian Training School at Brandon, were transferred at their request to Winnipeg. See *LETTER of October 4, 1907 signed by parishioners of Holy Ghost send to Hon. Dr. McInnis, Minister of Education*, in AAP; "RZĄDOWE Seminarium Nauczycielskie w Kanadzie," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 2 (1909), no. 2, p. 5; no. 3, p. 5, no. 4, p. 5; PUCHNIAK, pp. 70-71, 84; Victor TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press in Canada. Its History and a Bibliographical List* (Toronto: Canadian

Under the direction of the Benedictine Sisters, the Holy Ghost school did very well. In 1910 it was overcrowded. To accommodate all the children, the hall on the third floor was partitioned off to form an extra classroom. A year later, a sixth classroom was necessary and another partition on the third floor solved the problem. In 1913, there were 400 children in attendance.

The Sisters did a good work but every year the parish was uncertain whether they would return in September. There were frequent changes in the staff and there were other problems to be taken into consideration. Archbishop Langevin and Fr. Kowalski came to the conclusion that all these problems could be solved if the Sisters established a convent independently of Duluth. This took place in 1912.²¹

From a small enrolment of 150 children at the outset of the new school's career, Holy Ghost school had developed to an extent that at times more than 100 children were enrolled in one grade. In 1921, the parish school was completely remodelled.²²

Polish Congress, 1962), p. 150.

²¹ A pressure of needs in the United States necessitated the recall of the Sisters in 1912. The necessity of having Polish-speaking sisters in Winnipeg was evident. On August 19, 1912, Archbishop Langevin blessed a new convent for the Sisters and informed them that the new Community had been approved. He also established a canonical novitiate. The Sisters soon had new candidates. It was planned that, besides conducting the school, the Sisters would have a day nursery, an orphanage, a centre for immigrant girls, a residence for the elderly and a Polish hospital. In 1923 they were granted the status of a separate Congregation. On the erection of the parish of St. John Cantius they were entrusted with teaching in that parish school as well. The Sisters established their motherhouse in Arborg. To keep the Sisters at school, Oblates gave much assistance. Fr. L. Nandzik was appointed chaplain at Arborg and in charge of the missions in the surrounding district. See "PIERWSZY polski klasztor żeński w Manitobie. Siostry benedyktyнки zostaną na zawsze w Kanadzie," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 5 (1912), no. 17, p. 1; PUCHNIAK, pp. 58, 119-120.

²² See more in *PAMIATKA otwarcia i poświęcenia nowej szkoły parafialnej sw. Ducha - Souvenir of the Opening and Blessing of new Holy Ghost Parish School - Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 23, 1958* (Winnipeg: Holy Ghost Parish School, 1958), p. 86-87.

d) Other Polish schools founded by the Oblates

The good example of Holy Ghost was also followed in other areas, although the number of Poles was too small and they were too dispersed to organize such a big school. In Manitoba, in Brokenhead the *Wisła* school was found in 1913.²³ There were many problems to establish a Polish school in Cook's Creek.²⁴

In the south of Alberta, Fr. Sylla launched the idea to build a Polish school in Tide Lake, which was later called *Polonia* school.²⁵ Also in the north of Alberta, there were many schools organized by both Frs. P. Kulawy and A. Sylla. In Kopernik, Paul Kulawy organized the *Polska* school district.²⁶ At his headquarters in Round Hill, he also helped to organize a school district, which was called *Kulawy* school district.²⁷ The *Halicz* school was founded by Paul Kulawy in Rabbit Hills.²⁸ In Kraków a school was built in 1905.²⁹ Fr. Sylla mentions also many Sunday Schools (in Canmore, Bankhead, Skaro, Mundare, Kraków).

²³ See *Leksykon*, pp. 65-67. Strictly speaking that time a diocesan priest, Fr. Polawski was a pastor there.

²⁴ Fr. Stojar tried to establish a Polish school there. See also Joseph SZAJNOWSKI, *Letter of January 25, 1916 to the pastor of Holy Ghost*, in ASB (originally in Polish); John BADERSKI, "Polska Szkoła w Cook's Creek," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 1 (1908), no. 6, p. 2.

²⁵ See Anthony SYLLA, "The Tide Lake Community (1910-1917), in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 294-295.

²⁶ See Anthony SYLLA, "The Polish Community in Kopernik (1903-1926), in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 287-289.

²⁷ See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 65.

²⁸ See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 41-42.

²⁹ In fact it was organized by a diocesan priest, Fr. Olszewski, but later also Oblates were there. See Anthony SYLLA, "Kraków - Father Olszewski's settlement (1899-1910)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, pp. 271-272.

Besides just organizing the schools, Oblates were involved in the summer vacation schools. For a good number of years it had become a general practice in Manitoba that summer vacation schools of catechetics were conducted in almost all the rural missions, basically by the Benedictine Sisters and Sisters of Service. In places where Sisters were not available, the local priest in charge would spend two weeks in each place and prepare the First Communion and Confirmation classes.³⁰

During this research, it was impossible to find more details about the programs and qualifications of teachers in the Polish schools founded by Oblates. Apart from Winnipeg, the teaching in these schools was often limited to catechetics, preparation for First Communion or Confirmation, and Sunday classes before or after Mass. However, it was also about Polish culture and often given in Polish. During this research no special references were found in relation to the other schools. Probably, there was nothing extraordinary in them. As a conclusion we may say that probably these activities were generally minimal. As Radecki wrote:

The children of the parishioners were usually taught the Catechism in Polish once a week before or after the Sunday Mass, prior to their first communion. Usually this was the total extent of their education in the Polish language, history, and culture. In later years a number of parish part-time schools emerged with evening or Saturday morning classes taught by the clergy, nuns, or lay teachers; such schools provided an overview of Polish history, rudiments of grammar and language as well as religious instruction. On the whole these schools were characterized by a small enrolment, a limited curriculum, and a short life span. The outstanding exception to this pattern was the parish school of the Holy Ghost Church in Winnipeg. This was a full-time elementary school, and later high school, with a full Polish curriculum in history, geography, religion and language, taught by trained nuns brought specifically for that purpose from the United States by the parish clergy.³¹

³⁰ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 151-152.

³¹ Henry RADECKI, and Benedykt HEYDENKORN, *A Member of a Distinguished Family. The Polish Group in Canada* (Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1976), p. 64.

Besides organizing the schools on the prairies there was also an attempt to foster an education of possible future Oblates. When Oblates in Poland were organizing their province, Fr. John Kulawy appealed to his former parishioners of Holy Ghost for assistance to purchase a property for the juniorate in Poland. They wanted to give an opportunity for schooling to boys from poor families.³²

The schools were an important part of Oblate work, but not the only one. Oblates were also involved in the apostolate of the press and founding different organizations.

2. The Press

a. Oblates' involvement in the apostolate of the press

The press played a very influential role in the integration of the Polish group with the society of the Canadian prairies. The Oblates promoted the establishment of a Catholic press. This press furthered the interests of the Church (especially in educational matters), and promoted the rights of other languages, especially French. *Les Cloches de St. Boniface*, the official organ of St. Boniface archdiocese, began publishing in 1901.³³ The Oblates also promoted the establishment of ethnic newspapers. *West Canada Publishing Company*, directed by the Oblates in Winnipeg, in 1914 published five weekly journals: in French *La Liberté*, in English *North-West Review*, in German *West Kanada*, in Polish *Gazeta Katolicka*,

³² See PUCHNIAK, p. 142.

³³ There were more papers in French. *Le Patriote de l'Ouest* appeared in 1910 in Saskatchewan, *La Liberté* began publishing in Manitoba in 1913 and *La Survivance* began to serve Alberta in 1928. See HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 46-47.

and in Ukrainian *Kanadyjskyj Rusyn*. Already by 1911, the Company spent over \$50,000 to promote the Catholic press in the West.³⁴

Oblates were not alone in the work of the Catholic and ethnic press on the prairies. From the early days of the German colony of St. Peter in Saskatchewan, centred around the Benedictine Abbey, the importance of a Catholic weekly paper was also well understood.³⁵

b) The Oblates and Polish-language press

In the prairies, where vast distances separated different settlements of Poles and where some immigrants lived hundreds of miles away from other Poles, the need for a Polish press was great. The Oblates realized that since they were so few in number, and unable to minister to all of the immigrants personally, a periodical offered a means of reaching the whole Polish community.³⁶

³⁴ During World War I the Government prohibited editing in German and Ukrainian. In 1924 the company passed through a severe financial crisis and had to be liquidated. It was accused after one article and it was taken to court. It was claimed to be bankrupt and a new company called Canadian Publishers Limited was established in 1925, in which Oblates have been partial owners. See more in Omer PLOURDE, "L'Oeuvre de Presse Catholique à Winnipeg," in *Missions*, 61 (1927), pp. 126-138, especially 131-133; an article "L'OEUVRE de presse catholique des RR. PP. Oblats," in *Missions*, 48 (1910), pp. 193-196; HUEL, in SMILLIE, *Visions of the New Jerusalem*, pp. 46-47; LEVASSEUR, *Les Oblates de Marie Immaculée dans l'Ouest et le Nord du Canada 1845-1967*, pp. 204-205, 225, 245.

³⁵ The first number of the German weekly, the *St. Peter's Bote*, was issued on February 14, 1904 (less than a year after St. Peter's Colony had been opened for settlement). The first numbers were printed and edited in the parish of Holy Ghost in Winnipeg. Another paper *St. Peter's Messenger*, (now *The Prairie Messenger*) was issued on May 21, 1923. See "St. PETER'S Abbey, Muenster, Sask," in William JORDAN, ed., *Northwest Review - 50th Anniversary Number (1885-1935)*, p. 68.

³⁶ In some way the Poles were present almost since the beginning of the press on the prairies. One of the oldest newspapers in Manitoba, *The Manitoba Gazette* was published in the years 1872-1877 by a Pole, Edwin Brokowski. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, p. 16.

At the end of 1902, John Kulawy asked Archbishop Langevin for permission to start a Polish Catholic newspaper.³⁷ The plans had been discussed and in 1904 John Kulawy obtained permission to launch it. The first Polish-language newspaper published in Canada was the *Głos Kanadyjski [Canadian Voice]* which started on June 17, 1904. Its actual publisher was Fr. Kulawy, who received for that purpose a subsidy from Archbishop Langevin, but the nominal publisher was a firm called the "Polish Printing and Publishing Company." The venture was short-lived, surviving little over a year. Before thoroughly analyzing the financial implications and responsibilities of such an undertaking, Wojciech Kulawy took it for granted that the parishioners would subscribe to it and furnish the necessary funds.³⁸

The Oblates were the first ones who launched the Polish language press, but not the only ones. The second Polish newspaper, a weekly *Prawda [Truth]*, was founded by the pastor of the parish of the Polish National Church. It appeared in 1905 and folded up in a few months. Its main objective was a campaign against the Oblates who attacked the National Church. This campaign must have been violent, since a criminal lawsuit was initiated against the editor and the court found him guilty. The third Polish periodical, the *Gazeta Polska [Polish Gazette]* started publication in Winnipeg in 1906. Its downfall was probably a result of bankruptcy. Another Polish weekly, called *Echo Kanadyjskie [Canadian Echo]*, was

³⁷ See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, p. 100.

³⁸ It discontinued publication in the summer of 1905, though the exact date is unknown. See more in TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, pp. 100-101; PUCHNIAK, pp. 57-59. Wojciech Kulawy tried to sell the business and get investment back. Three parishioners were interested in purchasing the press, but their business also collapsed. The press returned, then, to the Oblates. In 1906 the German Oblates launched the German newspaper *West Kanada* and established the West Canada Publishing Company. See PLOURDE, "L'Oeuvre de Presse Catholique à Winnipeg," pp. 126-127; PUCHNIAK, pp. 79-80.

published in Winnipeg simultaneously with the *Gazeta Polska* by a Canadian company interested in land subdivision and settlement in Western Canada. This newspaper had a commercial character and its breakdown was a result of the breaking up of a partnership.³⁹ The fifth Polish newspaper which appeared in that initial period and the first one which survived, (for 44 years) was the *Gazeta Katolicka [Catholic Gazette]*.⁴⁰ The first issue appeared on March 17, 1908 and it was published regularly until October 31, 1951.⁴¹

The foundation of the *Gazeta Katolicka* was a victory of the Oblates in their conflict with the anti-clerical camp, and its continued publication provided them with a powerful instrument for influencing public opinion in favour of the Church in the Polish community. Their opponents had no press organ until the establishment of the weekly *Czas* in 1915.⁴²

³⁹ See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, p. 101-103.

⁴⁰ Complete files of the paper have been preserved in AAP. The official title until 1923 was *Gazeta Katolicka w Kanadzie [Catholic Gazette in Canada]*. In November 1940 it was changed to *Gazeta Polska w Kanadzie [Polish Gazette in Canada]*. Since May 1949 it was *Gazeta Polska [Polish Gazette]*. The changes of title indicate that the newspaper decided to provide general news coverage instead of being only a Catholic organ. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, pp. 52, 104, 105, 149-150.

⁴¹ Among other newspapers, which came into existence after *Gazeta Katolicka* but within the time of interest of this thesis, we should mention *Gazeta Narodowa [National Gazette]*, founded in Winnipeg in October 1913 (did not last long) and *Czas [Time]* founded also in Winnipeg in 1915. The first Polish newspaper east of Manitoba was the *Nowe Życie [New Life]*, founded in Toronto in 1919. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, pp. 109-116; Benedykt HEYDENKORN, "Gazeta Katolicka - the First Polish-Language Weekly Paper," in Benedykt HEYDENKORN, ed., *Heritage and the Future. Essays on Poles in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Polish Congress, 1988), pp. 195-234.

⁴² The Polish-Canadian community in the years prior to World War I was too weak in numbers and resources to support permanently its own newspaper. According to Turek, if Oblates had not undertaken the publication of a Polish-language newspaper, there would not have been any. The liberal camp accused the *Gazeta Katolicka* of not being a Polish newspaper because it was owned by a non-Polish firm. It is significant, however, that when the Winnipeg Poles belonging to the anti-clerical camp finally produced their newspaper, *Czas*, it was originally owned and published also by a firm, controlled by Czech and Ukrainian immigrants. The name of the West Canada Publishing Co. was mentioned in every issue of the *Gazeta Katolicka*. Between July 1914 and February 1925 it gave the name of the Polska Spółka Wydawnicza Gazety Katolickiej [Gazeta Katolicka Publishing Co.] as its publisher. No such company existed but the name was used as a protection against charges of non-Polish ownership and non-Polish attitude of the periodical. According to Turek, the editors of the *Gazeta Katolicka* have enjoyed more freedom than their colleagues in the *Czas*, until it was purchased in 1931 by Poles. See TUREK, *The*

Among many interesting features of the *Gazeta Katolicka* was the fact that it was never owned by Poles, but was published by a firm belonging to the Oblates. The *Gazeta Katolicka*, as well as the other publications in other languages could not have survived for a long time without the support, such as the one provided by Oblates.⁴³ In 1934 the *Gazeta Katolicka* became the official organ of the *Stowarzyszenie Polaków w Kanadzie [Associated Poles of Canada]*.⁴⁴

The editorial policy of *Gazeta Katolicka* was controlled by the Oblates and the editor was usually either one of the priests from Holy Ghost, or a person under the supervision of a priest. The religious page was always edited by the clergy.⁴⁵ It seems that the editors understood that there was a deep link between the Catholic and the Polish culture. In the long introductory article of the first issue of *Gazeta Katolicka* we read:

We will fight for holy issues. These issues will be the issues of our people. As we have said in our appeal, since we first announced the publication of the *Catholic Gazette*, our nation has often been outraged and wronged by other people; often by those who call themselves our brothers. We will speak clearly and openly. We will tread the paths of truth and justice, always and at all times. We will stand, at all times, by the principles of Catholicism, as befits the *Catholic Gazette*. We did not hesitate to publish a newspaper under the name *Catholic Gazette* because we know that every true Pole is a good Catholic and that he who is Catholic only for appearance's sake and for material gain, brings only shame and disgrace to the name of Poland.

Polish-Language Press, pp. 103-104.

⁴³ Being published by a well established company, the *Gazeta Katolicka* could afford much higher production standards than other newspapers. A wide selection of type, printing, proofreading, and good illustrations put it technically ahead of the other Polish newspapers. It could afford the comic sections, which were also used by the other publications of the same company. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, p. 105.

⁴⁴ This organization had also been founded by the Oblates (in 1933) and it represented the Polish parishes in Western Canada. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, pp. 104-105.

⁴⁵ See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, pp. 105-106. It is true that the *Gazeta Katolicka*, as a newspaper under ecclesiastical control, could represent only the views in tune with the Catholic hierarchy.

Although the periodical was a Catholic one, it was also a Polish immigrant's one. In the same introductory article we read:

Go forth into the world O *Catholic Gazette*, and teach our beloved people; tell them of the life and suffering of our beloved brothers in the Old Country; protect your readers from false brothers, those predatory wolves in sheep's clothing; show them the road to victory in their fight for their rights and in their struggle to improve their welfare; comfort them in their troubles and their sorrows - give them spirit when in spite of their strength and courage they fall. Help them to be victorious against their enemies. Fear no one, persist to the end until you fulfil your duty.⁴⁶

The periodical turned principally to the Polish community in Canada. It propagated Canada as a country of permanent residence, a place where that community prospers and grows. The paper called for full participation in Canadian public life. During the war years *Gazeta Katolicka* combined its loyalty to Canada with Polish patriotism. On the occasion of the visit of the Polish Consuls, *Gazeta Katolicka* stated that they were representatives of Poland and not of some organization or party; that they deserve respect; but at the same time that the Poles in Canada needed neither advice nor instruction from them. The periodical was first of all a spokesman for the Polish community of Western Canada. To confirm that, already in 1909, it published documents about pioneer Poles among the first settlers with Lord Selkirk in 1811-1814. It wrote:

We have, thus, every right to tell Canadians straight to their faces: listen - you think of us as foreigners, but we ask you to look a little deeper into Canadian history so you can see for yourselves whether or not our ancestors were living in Canada from the very beginning of its settlement. We are at home and we feel at home.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Both quotations from "DO CZYTELNIKÓW [To the Readers]," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 1 (1908), p. 1. The translation is taken from Benedykt HEYDENKORN, "Polish Press - *Gazeta Katolicka*," in *Polyphony. The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario*, 4 (1982), no. 1, p. 52.

⁴⁷ See more in HEYDENKORN, "Polish Press - *Gazeta Katolicka*," pp. 52-57.

After the presentation of the Oblates' involvement in the schools and the apostolate of the press, we will now proceed to the presentation of the Oblates' involvement in the establishing of the new associations and societies.

3. Polish organizations

The immigrants in the prairies, especially those who settled on homesteads usually were a minority. Dispersed in small groups or single families they found it difficult both to establish a basis for co-operation with others and to create their own organizations. In addition to that, Polish immigrants could not count on the services and advice of consular agencies since a legal Polish government did not exist. Neither were any Canadian agencies interested to offer aid or advice.

a) General situation - a need for self-organization

In order to combat social isolation and loneliness, it was natural that the Polish immigrants began to organize themselves. First, they started to build churches or community halls.⁴⁸ Very often immigrants considered the parish to be their basic and local organization. As time passed a whole network of Polish churches was established. In due time numerous societies, religious and secular, were founded around them.

⁴⁸ The *ad hoc* "Polish Church-Building Committees" were some of the earliest, although yet still informal organizations that arose spontaneously.

Many Poles expected a Polish parish to be both a religious and community centre. The priests were seen not only as preachers, confessors, and religious leaders but also as teachers and social directors. They were expected also to provide guidance on various matters and undertake the propagation of the traditional culture and language.⁴⁹ In Polish public opinion the role of the priests as leader of the collective life was never questioned. Some demanded however, that the Polish priests carry on their leadership in cooperation with other organizations. It was not easy for some immigrants to keep a balance that one group is unique but neither superior nor inferior to other groups.⁵⁰

During the early period the inter-parish organizational activities of parishes were uncoordinated and rather weak. The main obstacles were the difficulty in maintaining contact among the scattered settlers and parishes. As early as 1912 an attempt was made at a convention in Regina to federate the various existing parish associations, but without success.⁵¹ As years passed, in the 1920's, a number of Polish parish associations became dissatisfied with their limited and narrow goals and functions. As a further step, the *Association of Poles in Canada*, a central body of parish organizations, was founded in

⁴⁹ See RADECKI and HEYDENKORN, *A Member of a Distinguished Family*, p. 64. Here we see one of the major problems. A parish as a part of the Church can and should make an attempt to understand the people's culture and adapt itself to it. This is not, however, for the sake of preserving culture. This may be a product but not a goal. Some secular organizations look upon the different Church organizations, especially parishes as an effective tool to perpetuate cultural customs and traditions because of the large contact with the people. See for example remarks of Fr. Michael SMITH, "The Ethnic Parish," in HEYDENKORN, *Topics on Poles in Canada*, p. 64.

⁵⁰ See remarks of Fr. Michael SMITH, in HEYDENKORN, *Topics on Poles in Canada*, p. 65.

⁵¹ A historian of Poles in Canada, Victor Turek wrote that "unfortunately, apart from Oblates, who acted in cooperation the other priests had never proceeded in a coordinated way" - TUREK, *The Poles in Manitoba*, p. 168. For some early attempts see Fr. Francis PANDER (a diocesan priest), *Letter of July 20, 1914 to Archbishop Langevin*, in ASB; "WIEC Związku Polskiego Kanadyjskich Katolików w Regina, Sask.," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 7 (1914), no. 20. p. 1. See also the speech delivered by Paul Kulawy at that meeting - Paul KULAWY, "Lud Polski i wiara katolicka," in *Gazeta Katolicka*, 7 (1914), no. 22, p. 4.

1933.⁵² It is not our goal to analyze the general situation of the Poles, therefore, now we will take a look at the Oblates' involvement in it.

b) Holy Ghost parish organizations

The Holy Ghost parish was the biggest and the most developed⁵³ but there were also others. Since Polish Oblates in Manitoba had their headquarters at Holy Ghost, it was normal that it was there that they founded most of the associations and societies.

The first among these groups was the *Holy Ghost Fraternal Aid Society* founded on May 18, 1902 with an enrolment of 23 members. This was a common form of inexpensive insurance in case of sickness and death. This insurance was very popular among the immigrants.⁵⁴ Further, there was a great need for an organization which would take an interest in the landed immigrants and help them in their difficulties. This service needed to extend its aid not only in the city of Winnipeg but wherever they lived in the prairies. The *Polish Immigration Aid Society* was founded for this purpose. This society rendered very great service to Polish immigrants in subsequent years. Another similar society was organized by

⁵² There were some ultra-parish societies grouping Poles from different places. The *Związek Polaków w Kanadzie [Polish Friendly Alliance in Canada]* was established in Toronto in 1907, the *Zjednoczenie Zrzeszeń Polskich w Kanadzie [Federation of Polish Societies in Canada]* was established in 1931 with headquarters in Winnipeg, the *Polskie Towarzystwo Robotniczo-Farmerskie [Polish Workers' and Farmers' Association]* emerged in 1931 with headquarters in Toronto, the *Stowarzyszenie Polaków w Kanadzie [Association of Poles in Canada]* was established in 1933 in Winnipeg. Finally in 1944 the *Kongres Polonii Kanadyjskiej [Canadian Polish Congress]*. See RADECKI and HEYDENKORN, *A Member of a Distinguished Family*, pp. 65-72.

⁵³ At Holy Ghost also the first meeting of the Polish priests working in Canada was called to establish the Polish Priests' Union in 1927. See PUCHNIAK, pp. 159-163.

⁵⁴ There was also the Holy Ghost Lending Library, sponsored by the Fraternal Aid Society. See *35th ANNIVERSARY of the Holy Ghost Fraternal Aid Society, Winnipeg, May 16th, 1937*, in AAP, history of the society on p. 19; *HOLY Ghost Fraternal Aid Society. Grand Opening of New Club Building, Winnipeg, April 24th, 1949*, in AAP, history on p. 13.

Fr. Grochowski as a branch of the *Polish National Alliance* in Chicago. It was a Fraternal Aid Group called "Bartosz Glowacki."⁵⁵

Among more "pious" organizations, there was the *Choir of St. Cecilia*, which had its beginnings in 1905. Their chief responsibility was to provide singing at Mass and Vespers on Sundays. The group formed a dramatic club which provided Polish entertainment for the entire community. They also organized various socials which were popular in those days. The *Holy Rosary Confraternity* was organized chiefly for the women, basically mothers of families. This was a strictly religious group fostering devotion to Mary through the daily recitation of the rosary.⁵⁶

Among other social groups, *St. Stanislaus Kostka Society* for young men was organized by Fr. Kowalski soon after his arrival in Winnipeg. This society, as well as some others founded by the priests from Europe, were conducted in a European manner and attracted chiefly the immigrant youth. Young native Poles were more inclined to engage in competitive sporting activities than in evenings of talks, readings and discussions.⁵⁷ There were also the *St. Vincent de Paul Society*, the Total Abstinence League *Elenteria*, and the *St. Elizabeth Society*.⁵⁸ Already since 1902, a Parish Council and the Third Order of St. Francis existed in the parish.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ See PUCHNIAK, p. 90.

⁵⁶ See PUCHNIAK, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁷ See PUCHNIAK, p. 90.

⁵⁸ To provide financial assistance to the Sisters at the orphanage in Arborg. See PUCHNIAK, p. 120.

⁵⁹ See brief information about all these societies in *Leksykon*, p. 246.

It was felt that a federation of the societies would be more representative and make a more unified effort in important undertakings. Therefore the *Federation of Polish Catholic Societies* was formed on January 24, 1909 and placed under the patronage of St. Michael the Archangel.⁶⁰ It immediately initiated an ambitious program. A Polish Catholic Congress was put on the planning board to be held on the Labour Day weekend in September of that year. The Congress received all the publicity it wanted through the *Gazeta Katolicka* from May to September. There were many capable people with organizational ability and experience who guided the efforts of all the committees. On July 3, 1909 Archbishop Langevin sent a special letter of greetings and recommendations.⁶¹

As it was noted in the second chapter, Fr. Nandzik shared the responsibility for Holy Ghost parish with the people and several new *parish committees* were formed, concerning church, school, cemetery, and finance.⁶² In other parishes, there usually were also Parish Councils. They were sometimes in charge of money. Almost in every parish there were some tensions concerning money.

The Gymnastic Association *Sokół [Falcon]*, a non parochial association, nonetheless had been established in Holy Ghost. During his pastorate, Fr. Groetschel organized it in 1904. Besides its athletic interests, it also assumed mutual aid responsibilities. Within a short period

⁶⁰ See PUCHNIAK, p. 90.

⁶¹ He even approved the Congress. See more in PUCHNIAK, pp. 91-93. *Gazeta Katolicka* of that period gave the detailed program for the three days of the Congress. The special issue of *Gazeta Katolicka* 2 (1909), no. 26 - special (the Congress time) was dedicated to the Polish parishes in the prairies.

⁶² See PUCHNIAK, p. 136.

branches in Canada spread to Brandon, St. Boniface and other communities. Its general perspective was very patriotic, even nationalistic.⁶³

c) Organizations in other places

In other places, a few other organizations were also found. The most popular among these societies founded by Oblates was the Rosary Society. Besides Holy Ghost, it was founded also in Narol, Hadashville and Tolstoi in Manitoba, as well as in Camrose, Round Hill and Edmonton in Alberta.⁶⁴

Fr. Sylla mentioned a cultural society *Zgoda św. Andrzeja* and a small library in Canmore, which he visited from time to time. In 1912 he organized the *Sokół* club in Bankhead.⁶⁵ In Coleman there was the Polish Brotherly Aid Society, which provided health insurance and funeral benefits for its members, but it was not organized by the Oblates. Branches were established in Blaimore, Bellevue, and Rosedale.⁶⁶ In Tide Lake Fr. Sylla founded the Brotherhood of Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.⁶⁷ Also in Calgary, Fr. Sylla

⁶³ The origins of this association were in Poland. Its primary aims were to lead its members to cultivate physical and mental health and alertness (its motto: "a sound mind in a sound body"). It first appeared in southern Poland (Galicia) in the 1860s. See KOGLER, in HEYDENKORN, *Topics on Poles in Canada*, p. 37; PUCHNIAK, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁴ It was probably founded even in more places. See *Leksykon*, pp. 85, 126, 217, 420; Paul KULAWY, *Letter of October 5, 1904 to Fr. Lemius*, in AGH.

⁶⁵ See Anthony SYLLA, "The Early Polish Organization in Canmore and Bankhead (1911-1912)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, p. 293. In Canmore there were also welfare societies of St. Joseph and St. Michael. In Bankhead Slovaks had the Holy Trinity Society (welfare association) and Poles the Blessed Sacrament and *Jednota*. See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. I, pp. 43-62.

⁶⁶ See *Leksykon*, pp. 401-403.

⁶⁷ See *Leksykon*, pp. 475-478.

gave the idea to organize a cultural association for Poles and Ukrainians *Prosvita*.⁶⁸ In Lethbridge, the Slovaks, who were the most numerous group there, served by Fr. Sylla, formed two welfare societies of St. John the Baptist and St. Michael. In addition, the women of the Latin rite belonged to the Holy Rosary Society and those of the Greek rite to the Society of the Blessed Virgin.⁶⁹ In Kopernik, a children's choir was formed.⁷⁰ In Edmonton the Oblates founded the Polish Canadian Association and the choir.⁷¹

Conclusion

It seems that the involvement of Polish Oblates in the school question was influenced by the fact that they were Oblates and their confreres were involved in it also. Although the concrete undertakings in Holy Ghost and in the settlements on the prairies were the fruit of the work of the Polish Oblates, they did not develop anything extraordinary or unusual in the way these schools existed. Probably they realized that there can be no true integration with the society and true transformation of faith unless the new generation is able to express it consciously. These schools helped the children to better understand the Canadian situation and also helped them to understand the Polish tradition in which their parents lived. The Oblates' involvement in schools helped not only to elevate the education of Polish immigrants but also to form the staff (school in Winnipeg for the teachers). Holy Ghost school, as the

⁶⁸ See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p.9.

⁶⁹ See SYLLA, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 45.

⁷⁰ See Anthony SYLLA, "The Polish Community in Kopernik (1903-1926)," in MATEJKO, *Polish Settlers in Alberta*, p. 288.

⁷¹ See *Leksykon*, pp. 409-420.

largest, had more possibilities and better staff provided by the Benedictine Sisters. About the other schools we have only limited sources and it is difficult to say more with certainty.

Before World War I, the Polish community had neither a political organization, nor representatives with any political authority. The Polish press was the only leader and spokesman. Generally, we may conclude that it acted in two directions: on the one hand, it slowed down the process of the rapid adjustment of newcomers, and on the other, it facilitated their slower and more profound adjustment to the Canadian conditions as present on the prairies.⁷² In the same manner the involvement of Polish Oblates in the apostolate of the press was common also to other Oblates working with immigrants. It does not mean that Poles simply followed what others did. They also opened these new possibilities and were active in the Catholic press since the beginning. This apostolate shows us their vision of the work with Polish immigrants, since the *Gazeta Katolicka* left a lot of written material in which the issue of integration is seen more clearly. Oblates were the only ones involved so deeply in the Polish press; more than any other non-Polish group, and at the beginning even of the Polish groups, which initially were too small and financially weak.

In Holy Ghost as well as in other places, each of the different societies had its own goal. Some of them were by nature "pious" associations, like a Rosary Confraternity or choir. There were many more associations of a social nature, especially the welfare societies. Some of them were more cultural in nature.⁷³ These organizations helped Polish immigrants to

⁷² The Polish-language press played also an important role in raising the general level of education. See TUREK, *The Polish-Language Press*, p. 17-23.

⁷³ The next step in the development of Polish welfare societies was later Polish Parish Credit Unions. During my research I did not come across any Polish political associations, nor any efforts to try to prepare the immigrants before their coming to Canada, for instance, establishing any links with the Church in Poland.

organize themselves not only in spiritual matters, but also in social and cultural aims. Later the Oblates helped to create multi-organizational associations. The Polish priests in the prairies united and organized the life of Polish immigrants. Only in Winnipeg and in Coleman were there Polish societies not linked to the Polish parishes.

Conclusion

We have presented the general framework of the forms of Oblates' work with Polish immigrants on the prairies of Canada in the period of time 1898-1926. The following conclusions gather the most important issues involved in this work. Four conclusions gather the more concrete questions directly involved in organizing their ministry: the question of languages, the question of basic communities, the relationship between the priests and lay people in setting up the local communities, and the relationship of the Oblates with the local bishops. Four more conclusions show some major issues involved in this kind of missionary work. Although they were not seen explicitly in their work, they were, nevertheless guiding their concrete undertakings. These were the issues of the relationship between faith and culture, the issue of unity within the plurality of the Church, the issue of integration of immigrants with society, and the question of the importance of ritual in living their faith. The purpose of the first chapter was mainly to give the general background of the situation, therefore, these conclusions follow chapters two, three and four.

1. The question of language.

For bishops seeking priests to work with immigrants, the most important issue was language. Ministering in a proper language has been very important for Oblates in Western Canada. Since the time of the Founder, the Oblates used to learn the languages of the Native people. To learn a language was very important, but it was not enough to build a real local Church among immigrants. At today's stage of mission studies, it is obvious that a missionary

should know not only the language but also the culture of the people. The bishops and other Oblates working with the Poles learned, that in the long run, the priests of Polish origin were generally better prepared for the work with the Poles because they knew not only the language but also the culture. The issue was then not only language preparation but also culture preparation.

It seems that the goal of the Oblates in preserving the Polish language was the preservation of the faith, which was similar to the attitude of the French-Canadian Oblates. There was, however, a difference. For the French-speaking Oblates, the preservation of language was considered the preservation of the Catholic faith. The Polish Oblates faced a considerable challenge of such an understanding from the Polish National Church, the priests of which spoke Polish well, and perhaps sometimes even better than the Oblates. Beside, the French culture had much greater impact on the life in the prairies than Polish one.

2. The basic communities.

The question of "basic," "local," or "living" christian communities has an enormous bibliography. It was not our concern to summarise or analyze today's understanding of the question but what their understanding and their involvement was. The one thing which was seen most clearly in the third chapter was a development of the ideas of how to organize the local communities. The case of Winnipeg was unique. Because of the large number of Polish immigrants, it was possible to establish something "unusual" there - an ethnic parish. This was also the case of some of the bigger cities later. A major question, however, was what could be done in the places where there were not enough Poles to form a Polish ethnic parish.

Generally, we saw that although the idea of an ethnic parish in the rural settlements on the prairies was similar to that in Winnipeg, there were important differences. In most of the places, there were no regular parishes. Therefore, every priest acting in the area tried to approach all the Catholics, regardless of their ethnic origins. The Oblates working with the Poles were no exception. Since many rural settlements were formed from the people of the same origins, some of these parishes were Polish in fact because the Poles were the majority in a given settlement or area. Although these parishes were "Polish," they were nevertheless established not on ethnic but on a territorial basis including all Catholic in the area. In the meantime system of parishes-missions was established (similar to the missions among the Natives).

3. The relationship between the lay people and the priests.

The theme of the lay people involvement in the Church has also been well developed since that time. This kind of work with Polish immigrants formed a new question for the Oblates concerning the relationship between the involvement of the lay people and the priests in forming the local community. Since the shortage of priests was evident, practically all of them were totally taken up with routine work (as recognized by contemporary ecclesiology) and the involvement of more parishioners was not only a matter of ecclesiological vision but also a mere necessity. Unfortunately we do not have enough materials to say how they saw this issue. They understood their missionary task basically as an assistance to the immigrants, particularly by means of the sacraments. The aim was to sustain the faith and to establish its

normal living rhythm, which could not have been done without the involvement of the parishioners.

Their main concern was with celebrating the sacraments and building new churches. It would not be fair, however, to say that it was their only goal. They also helped these people in many ways, starting with what we call today counselling in family matters and organizing solutions to financial problems, be it personally or by organizing different welfare societies of common help among the immigrants.

One of the signs that the local, "indigenous" Church is becoming "mature" is local vocations to the service of the Church. In the second and third chapter we saw that some representatives of the immigrants of Polish origin recognized their call to serve this local church about twenty to thirty years after such work began.

4. The proper relationship with the local bishop.

Many recent documents deal with the issue of the relationship between the bishops and the religious working in their territories. The example of Holy Ghost showed the attitudes of the Oblates working with the Poles and their relationship with the local bishop. As long as Archbishop Langevin lived, these relations seemed to be very smooth. After his death, the matter became more complicated. Most probably, the tensions around the creation of the second Polish parish in Winnipeg were caused by personal tensions between the new bishop and the Oblates.

The same was true to some extent when the new bishops came onto the scene in other places. Although sometimes the Oblates left their work to others, the main reason seems to

be not so much tension between Oblates and new bishops but rather the shortage of priests. It was natural to answer the call for help from an Oblate bishop rather than another one. This could have been a reason for giving up the missions in the south and later also in the north of Alberta a few years after the new bishops came. The other reasons could have been that these Oblates saw themselves only as the first-line workers and after establishing the basis they gave it up to the diocesan clergy - as Philippot suggested.¹

After recalling these four more direct issues proper to their time and place, we will proceed now to the four broader questions, which always have formed important issues in mission studies. These are the questions of the relationship between faith and culture, the issue of unity within the plurality of the Church, the issue of integration of immigrants with society, and the issue of the importance of ritual.

5. Faith and culture.

In speculating about the issue of culture in the ethnic immigrant parish, it is easy to get caught into a trap of regarding the culture of a given group as something static and unchanging. There was neither anything like a static and unchanging "Polish culture," nor such an already existing culture of the Canadian prairies.²

¹ See PHILIPPOT, "L'oeuvre des Oblats polonais parmi les Polonais de l'Alberta," pp. 360-361.

² To speak of cultural diversity, or of any of its dimensions, always assumes an understanding of culture. It often seems that we are all speaking about the same reality, employing the same notion of culture but in fact even today there is a big variety of concepts of culture. See Alfred Louis KROEBER and Clyde KLUCKHOHN, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1963). One of the classical books on that issue is Louis J. LUZBETAK, *The Church and Cultures*, revised ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988). See also very good book of Robert J. SCHREITER, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books,

One important outcome of their ministry was that they realized that their work formed a process. Trying to undertake any plan of work, the Polish Oblates had a great possibility to understand culture from a dynamic perspective. They not only knew that some of the features of Polish culture must be changed, but also that some others should be preserved. In everyday life, it could have been a problem as to which was which, but it was obvious that something had to change. It was necessary to do so especially since they came from a culture with a long established Catholic tradition³ and were in the situation when another tradition of faith was in the process of forming.⁴

The analysis of the fourth chapter allowed us to see more clearly their understanding of the relationship between the faith and culture. It seems obvious that there cannot be true integration with the society without schools, press and different associations. To ensure the effectiveness of the Holy Ghost school, they organized even the establishment of a new branch of the Benedictines of Polish origin in Canada. Establishment of Polish schools helped to foster the process of slow integration with the society.

Probably the main reason of founding the *Gazeta Katolicka* was the promotion of the Catholic faith. In fact, it became one of the greater promoters of Polish language and culture as well. In the long run, the Polish newspaper helped the immigrants to slowly integrate their

1985).

³ See an interesting remark of R. Côté that for a Christian an "ancestral memory is elevated to an unprecedented level of awareness and intensity in the faith experience." - Richard G. COTE, "People on the Move: Immigrants and the Churches," in *Kerygma*, 22 (1988), p. 141.

⁴ Today we are more aware that true evangelization should also revitalize culture to enliven it from within. The awareness of the whole issue of unity and self-identity was not seen in this work so clearly therefore it will not be more developed here but in this process also their self-identity as Poles was affirmed. The immigrants became more aware not only of their faith and Canadian culture but also of their "Polishness," their relations to others. At the beginning Poles were not recognized as such. They were seen as "Galicians," i.e. coming from Galicia.

faith and culture within the Canadian society of the prairies being born and the Canadian Church there. Much more space was given to Polish and Canadian matters than strictly to the Church.

Similar things could be said about laying the foundations of different Polish associations, which helped to strengthen the faith and Polish culture in these new conditions and because of that to go in the right direction in the process of integration. In these associations, we saw also an involvement in the material works of mercy, interventions, recommendations, legal assistance, which also are today considered part of the missionary's activities.

6. Unity and Plurality.

Today we speak a lot about the differences in the Asian, African, or Latin American Churches, all of which form the unity of the one Catholic Church. This important issue of the unity within the plurality was also seen in the second and third chapter. The practice showed that the best solution for rural areas was creation of the Polish parishes wherever more Polish immigrants settled in the area.

It was only at the Second Vatican Council that more serious discussion about the unity and plurality within the Church began. Can the unity of the universal Church be seen as a result of the communion of particular churches (and indirectly a communion of nations, languages, and cultures)? In *Lumen Gentium*, no. 23, we read that the universal Church exists not only "in" particular churches (dioceses), but also "out of" them. The same Constitution also showed that the local eucharistic celebrations are the place of the growth of the local

Church (no. 26). Of course, these Oblates could not be aware of those issues as we see them now. On the local level, however, they realized that even within one diocese there are different "churches" of Natives, of English, French, Polish, German and other immigrants.⁵

Usually the issue of variety within unity is raised in the context of the variety of diocesan Churches within the unity of one Church. In this case, it was a variety of cultures within the local Church of the Canadian prairies. The Catholic ecclesiology of that time was dominated by a universalistic ecclesiology. The word "Church" was basically used in the singular and referred to the single worldwide religious community and organization directed by the pope. Many theologians and canonists spoke of the church as if it were a single vast diocese with a single universal bishop at its head. Concepts, such as the people of God, communion, and mystery were virtually absent in theology. It was impossible, therefore, to find a more explicit Oblate policy toward this multi-cultural church of the prairies. From today's perspective, we may say that Polish parishes are part of the "regular" Roman Catholic diocesan structures.

⁵ For a good overview of the issue of the unity and plurality in the Bible see Lucien LEGRAND, *Unity and Plurality. Mission in the Bible* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990). For an interesting presentation of the issue of the particular Church from the perspective of the ethnic group see for instance Pierre CHARRITTON, *Le droit des peuples à leur identité. L'évolution d'une question dans l'histoire du christianisme* (Montéal: Fides, 1979); José-Maria LACHAGA, *Eglise particulière et minorités ethniques. Jalons pour l'évangélisation des peuples minoritaires* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1978). For a brief presentation of some more theological questions as we see it today see for example Henri de LUBAC, *Les Eglises particulières dans l'Eglise universelle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1971); Joseph A. KOMONCHAK, "The Local Church and the Church Catholic: The Contemporary Theological Problematic," in *The Jurist*, 52 (1992), pp. 416-447.

7. Integration of immigrants with society.

From this analysis we saw that it was good that these Oblates were immigrants themselves, because they were better able to understand immigrants' relationship between culture and faith in that specific situation. Basically the Oblates saw their enterprises as temporary, though actually fairly stable. This way was chosen in order to protect migrants against rapid assimilation, permitting at the same time their natural integration. The role of the immigrants' priest was considered as a "bridge," which can help to adapt to the new Christian community.

The theme of "integration" is close to the one of "inculturation." It is difficult to imply today's concepts of "integration" or "inculturation" to the work and ideas of the Oblates at the beginning of the 20th century simply because the meaning of the word "culture" has changed radically over the last one hundred years. The classical concept of culture was challenged at the beginning of the twentieth century by the emerging sciences, such as anthropology, ethnology, and sociology. Besides, the concepts of "integration" or "inculturation"⁶ did not exist at that time. It would be a methodological mistake, then, to try to find them among the Oblates working with the Poles at the beginning of the century. We may try, however, to trace some characteristics.

⁶ The theme of inculturation is a major theme of the last years in mission studies. For some concrete remarks see Claude CHAMPAGNE, "Foi et cultures à la lumière du passé," in *Kerygma*, 19 (1985), pp. 17-70; Alward SHORTER, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988); Lamin SANNEH, *Translating the Message. The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); David BOSCH, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), especially pp. 447-457.

It seems that according to these Oblates' model of integration, three principles were kept: church unity, cultural pluralism and common welfare of the community.⁷ The process of integration, governed by these principles, was spontaneous but slow. It was carried out through subsequent stages of adaptations and toward a full participation in the activities of the new community. This process was considered to be long and it only began to be seen at its first stage. It was to be continued by future generations. This scheme is only general because there was no such thing as one Polish community at any one stage. There were always new immigrants coming, for whom the process only began and there were some other groups which were very advanced in this process. The Oblates wanted to help immigrants in the process of becoming Canadians of Polish origin so as they would preserve and develop their faith during this process.⁸ Ultimately, we may say that their evangelization (in the large sense of the word) was synonymous with the process of integration with the Canadian society.

One of the recent attempts to apply the concept of inculturation to the situation of immigrants was made by Gerald Arbuckle.⁹ If we would apply his division to the Oblate work

⁷ For more analysis of this issue see David N. POWER, "Community Within Pluralism in the Local Church: Maintaining Unity in the Process of Inculturation," in William CENKNER, ed., *The Multicultural Church. A New Landscape in U.S. Theologies* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), pp. 79-101.

⁸ For more remarks on integration of Polish immigrants with Canadian society see Zygmunt RUSINEK, "From an Immigrant to a Canadian - Stages of Integration," in KRYCHOWSKI, *Polish Canadians: Profile and Image*, pp. 59-65; Victor SZYRYŃSKI, "Psychological Aspects of Successful Immigration in Canada," in KRYCHOWSKI, *Polish Canadians: Profile and Image*, pp. 67-86.

⁹ See an interesting chapter "Inculturation: migrants and adjustment" in his book Gerald A. ARBUCKLE, *Earthing the Gospel. An Inculturation Handbook for Pastoral Workers* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), pp. 167-186. He discerns 10 models of immigrants reaction to their situation: 1. Self-confident adjustment, 2. Migrant ghetto/segregation, 3. Migrant exploitation, 4. Retreatism/avoidance, 5. Contra-culture reaction, 6. Malaise-despair, 7. Cultural revitalization, 8. Grieving reaction, 9. Second generation, 10. Alienated elite.

with Polish immigrants, their general policy was similar to what Arbuckle calls "self-confident adjustment." He also discerns 5 models of policies of dominant societies. If, in the same way, we would like to analyze Oblates' work according to his standards, their policy was somewhere between integration and multiculturalism.

8. Importance of the ritual, especially the Mass.

People meet not only to be together and to settle human affairs but also to worship. It is necessary to mention this in an analysis of the ethnic parish. It is not often sufficiently appreciated that Christianity emerged from the extremely complicated context not only in linguistic and cultural milieu, but also from the complex of different liturgical traditions.¹⁰ In religious ritual, the interrelation between a particular culture and the faith of its members is powerfully expressed. Ritual is not simply the texts and written directions. It also encompasses how the ritual is enacted and understood by the people who are engaged in worship.

The most significant and most visible contribution to the Church's multiculturalism made by the Second Vatican Council was the virtual abolition of Latin as the language of the Catholic liturgy. Since the Council, there has been a tendency in the Catholic Church to want

¹⁰ For the first Christian community it was a natural tendency for Hebrew and Hellenists to worship separately, both because of language and because of differing visions of faith in Jesus Christ reflective of their respective cultures. In the last years scholars have become interested in the pluralism that was present within the primitive Christian community. See an overview in Mark R. FRANCIS, *Liturgy in a Multicultural Community* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 20-38. For an analysis of the use of four languages in the Palestine of Jesus' day: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin see Joseph E. FITZMYER, "The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.," in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 32 (1970), pp. 501-531.

to explain the faith rather than celebrate it (this dimension of celebration is sometimes called "popular" religion).¹¹

It seems that these Oblates felt the major importance of celebrating the faith and therefore fostered not only liturgical but also non-liturgical celebrations. In some way we may say even that one of the most important characteristics of the Polish religious culture of that time was the number of non-liturgical celebrations. In addition to the sacraments, there were processions with the Eucharist, novenas, or communal praying of the Rosary, or more specifically Polish devotions like *Goźkie Żale* or *Godzinki*.¹² Though not a part of the official liturgy, these devotions and popular practices formed an important part of the life of faith of the Polish immigrants. The Oblates promoted many of these devotions, especially the Rosary.

Some of these conclusions may be interesting and worthy of deeper analysis. It would also be interesting to follow the development of this work in the following years. In 1956, a new Oblate Province in Canada was established, designated especially for work with Polish, and later Italian immigrants (Assumption Province). This was the next important step in the development of Oblate understanding of such a ministry. It could be also interesting to compare this kind of work with that done by Oblates working with Polish immigrants in

¹¹ About the importance of the celebration of faith, also on the popular level see Robert TRABOLD, "Caribbean Immigrant Popular Religion in New York City: Pastoral Implications," in *Kerygma*, 22 (1988), pp. 195-207.

¹² The first one is singing during Lent about the passion of Christ. The second is singing about Mary in a similar manner as during the Liturgy of the Hours.

Eastern Canada, British Columbia, USA, France, Benelux, or Scandinavia.¹³ This perspective could be even broader and include even all Oblates working in the world with immigrants of any ethnic group. It might be also worthwhile to compare from a different perspective, that of the work done with Polish immigrants in Canada by other Congregations and diocesan clergy.¹⁴

Overall, one may say that in spite of many difficulties, the Polish immigrants turned out to be successful. By their hard work, they contributed to the development of the prairies. They not only achieved material wealth but also managed to educate their children who then took an active part in almost every branch of Canadian life. In this whole process, the Catholic religion was very strong, perhaps even the strongest cultural factor for the Polish immigrants. The Polish parishes, schools, press, and different associations happened to be an element of real integration with a Canadian society, understood as full loyalty to Canada with the simultaneous preservation of some cultural elements of the country of origin. We can understand the fortunes of Catholic immigrants. Catholicism in its traditional and often popular forms served both to affirm a first identity and to mediate the second loyalty, that is to Canada, which could be lived without losing contact with the old. In that sense, thanks also to the work of the Oblates, Catholicism did not become a block to being Canadian.

¹³ For a general perspective on Oblates' work with Polish immigrants in the world see Leonard GŁOWACKI, "Duszpasterstwo polonijne Misjonarzy Oblatów Maryi Niepokalanej," in Józef BAKALARZ, ed. *Działalność męskich zgromadzeń zakonnych wśród Polonii* (Lublin: KUL, 1982), pp. 453-563.

¹⁴ For a general overview of the work with Polish immigrants in Canada see Jadwiga PLEWKO, *Duszpasterstwo Polonii w procesie jej integracji ze społeczeństwem kanadyjskim (1875-1988)* (Lublin: KUL, 1995).

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