



Rev. Mieczyslaw M. Monkiewicz

St. Adalbert Diamond Jubilee Commemorate Book,
Philadelphia, PA.

Father Mieczyslaw M. Monkiewicz was born on November 30, 1878 in Raseiniai, Province of Kaunas, Lithuania. After completing his primary education in Poland, he came to the United States and in 1893 began his studies for the Priesthood at the Polish Seminary which was then located in the city of Detroit. In 1899 he transferred to the diocesan seminary of St. Charles Borromeo in Overbrook where he had as his professor of Theology a certain Father Dennis Dougherty who at a future date would be the Cardinal-Archbishop of Philadelphia. On Thursday, November 7, 1901, he was ordained to the Priesthood in the seminary chapel by Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan.

Father Monkiewicz celebrated his First Mass on Sunday, November 10, 1901, in St. Stanislaus Church, South Philadelphia. He was assigned to St. Stanislaus Parish, Philadelphia, and served there as assistant pastor from November 18, 1901 to May 6, 1903 when he was sent to St. Stanislaus, Shenandoah, Pa. From March 12, 1904 to August 20, 1904, Father Monkiewicz was assigned to Holy Trinity Parish in Phoenixville, Pa. The St. Stanislaus and Holy Trinity appointments were as "pastors pro tern" to provide the people there with the ministry of a Polish-speaking priest at a time when there was a great priest shortage for work among the immigrants.

On August 20, 1904, at the age of 26, Father Monkiewicz was appointed pastor of the oldest Polish parish in the Archdiocese, St. Casimir in Shenandoah, Pa. His tenure as pastor of an up-state parish again was very short because in 3 months a new assignment called him from the oldest Polish parish to the youngest, as the founding pastor of "a new Polish church between St. Laurentius and St. John Cantius in Philadelphia," as his letter of appointment reads.

From November 25, 1904 to the day of his death, June 3, 1946, the life of Father Monkiewicz and the history of St. Adalbert Parish are inseparable. His life is the history of the foundation and growth of the parish.

With the passing of years and his own health visibly failing, Father Monkiewicz was less frequently seen taking his daily walks around the parish buildings. As long as he could, he continued celebrating the Sunday Children's Mass. His concern for the children of the neighborhood, his tireless

pleading with city authorities for recreational facilities brought results sometime after his death when the Monkiewicz Playground was established at Richmond and Allegheny which continues to perpetuate the memory of his name.

Seventy-five years have passed since Father Monkiewicz at the age of 26 came to Port Richmond. With the grace of Almighty God, with his youthful vigor and the generosity of the Polish community in Richmond, he started a Polish parish that today is one of the great parishes of the Archdiocese. We can best epitomize the accomplishments of Father Monkiewicz in the words of the Roman poet, Horace: "I have raised a monument more lasting than bronze and loftier than the pyramids, one that no biting rain, no raging north wind can destroy, nor the countless file of years and the flight time."