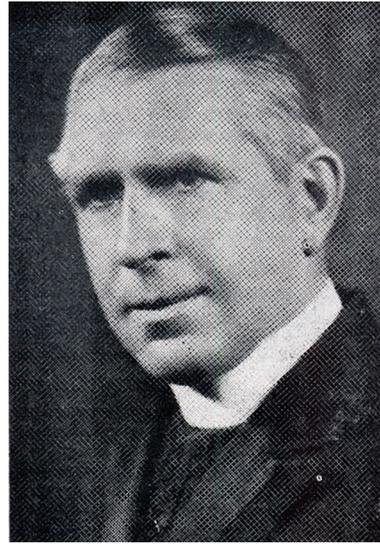


Rev. Francis Wilamowski

ord. May 30, 1907

Golden Jubilee (1905-1955)

Rev. Gervase W. Kubec, Floral Park, NY, p. 32



When the St. Hedwig parishioners accompanied the remains of Father Francis Wilamowski to the Holy Rood Cemetery in Westbury, Tuesday, October 19, 1953, the final chapter was written in the life of this kindly, courageous priest and pastor. After a week's illness which he contracted after participating in the Forty Hours Devotion in St. Ladislaus Church in Hempstead, October 11, 1953. Father Wilamowski died Friday night, October 16, 1955, leaving his parishioners silently mourning the loss of a faithful, tireless worker in the vineyard of the Lord. He was a kind and zealous priest and patriot, a father to his people, a true son of the Church. As the bells of the church tolled out the news of his death and funeral, his faithful flock realized that their pastor had ended 41 years of toil and service in their behalf.

Father Wilamowski was born in Mlew, Pomerania Province, Poznan region, Poland. As a student he was a member of secret underground societies which fought against the Hakatists' Prussianization and Germanization of Poland, especially Polish students, who were forbidden to speak, to write or to read Polish. He began his religious studies at Collegium Marianum in Pelplin, Poland, but the college was closed by Prussian government officials and he and other students were imprisoned in Niedenburg, East Prussia for daring to study Polish and for desiring to become a Roman Catholic priest for a Polish Church.

He came to the United States in September, 1902, settling at first in Detroit, Michigan, where he attended the Polish Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius. He was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Mc Donnell on Sunday, May 30, 1907. His first assignment was as assistant at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, Brooklyn, where he served for four years. On August 17, 1911 he was appointed the pastor of St. Hedwig's Church to replace Rev. Adolf Swierczynski, the first pastor of St. Hedwig's. On becoming pastor of St. Hedwig's Church, Father Wilanmowski proceeded to unite his flock under his able guidance, ministering tirelessly as long as his strength held out, never complaining in the face of failing health, cheerful in every circumstance, ever ready to acquit himself to the fullest where a soul was in need. Always alert to the vital part the Sacraments fulfill in the life of a Catholic, he took

special care in the work of the confessional, spending long hours for the conversion of souls to the way of a devout and moral life. He took special pride in the performing of marriages, knowing that this Sacrament opened for many a new vista on life. In Church and in office, he gave his beloved attention and care as a devout priest.

During the first World War, Father Wilamowski was a tireless patriot, knowing that America's future and the independence of Poland depended upon the defeat of the Hun. He made countless speeches and even had the renowned Ignacy Paderewski and Roman Dmowski visit St. Hedwig's. He directed the Liberty Bond sales for the parishioners and conducted the gathering of food and clothes for the war victims. After 1945 Father Wilamowski organized relief and an immigration Committee in the Parish to assist the displaced Polish persons to come to Long Island and to the parish to join their relatives. This work with NCWC made it possible for 286 immigrants to come to U.S.A. through St. Hedwig's.

Knowing that the Church needs more priests and nuns and Catholics who perform their duties with zeal, Father Wilamowski expanded the St. Hedwig School facilities. In 1927 a twelve room building was the result. In 1952 the Church was refurbished and decorated, old altars pews, stations of the Cross a new Italian Marble Baptismal Font were added, and other improvements were completed for the parish's Golden Anni-versary, 1902-1952.

The 41 years which Father Wilamowski spent in St. Hedwig's remain as a testimony of his ardent zeal for the Faith. The parishioners will long remember the kindly man and he will be further remembered with countless prayers.