

Date: June 8, 2012
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ---

**Passing of Rev. Msgr. Walter Joseph Ziemba, Ph.D.
Rector-President-Superintendent of the Orchard Lake Schools (1967-1977)
Born November 26, 1926, in Detroit, Michigan,
The son of Thomas and Sophia (Sosnowski) Ziemba**



ORCHARD LAKE, Mich. (6-8-12) – The Orchard Lake Schools have lost one of its greatest leaders. Msgr. Walter Ziemba passed into eternal life on Friday, June 8, 2012, in Petoskey, Michigan. Msgr. Ziemba had been on the Schools’ campus for 68 years. He graduated from St. Hyacinth Grade School in Detroit; graduated with highest honors from St. Mary’s Preparatory at Orchard Lake (Class of 1944) and St. Mary’s College in 1947. He was appointed to the Orchard Lake Schools’ faculty in 1951, and was rector-president-superintendent of the Schools from 1967-1977. He retired in 1996.

Msgr. Ziemba spent all 61 years of his priestly life assigned to the Orchard Lake Schools.

A native of Detroit’s east side, Msgr. Ziemba, 85, was ordained in 1951 for the Archdiocese of Detroit. In 1966, he was awarded a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Michigan. Msgr. Ziemba served numerous positions on the faculty and in administration, including teaching in the Seminary, college, prep, librarian, dean of St. Mary’s College, executive secretary of the alumni association, director of the Friends of Orchard Lake, secretary-general of the Orchard Lake Schools, charter member of Founder’s Day, and director of the Pope John Paul II Center.

During his tenure as CEO of the Schools, Msgr. Ziemba founded the Center for Polish Studies and Culture, the Center for Pastoral Studies, the Polish American Liturgical Center and the Orchard Lake Ambassadors. He hosted visits by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła–Pope John Paul II- to the campus in 1969 and 1976, and served as translator-interpreter for the cardinal’s visits to other areas of the United States.

In 1971, Msgr. Ziembra and Edward Piszek, then president-owner of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, inaugurated "Project: POLE," a \$500,000 nation-wide public relations campaign to promote a positive image of Polish culture and heritage.

Major construction projects included a \$2.1 million residence hall in 1971 and, two years later, a fieldhouse donated by alumnus Robert Dombrowski. In 2001, Msgr. Ziembra was awarded the 2001 Fidelitas Medal for "fidelity in serving God and country through the realization of the religious and cultural ideals of the forefathers" of the Orchard Lake Schools. He shared the honor with his schoolmate and lifetime friend, Msgr. Stanley E. Milewski.

Among Msgr. Ziembra's publications, he translated the prison notes of Cardinal Stephen Wyszynski titled *A Freedom Within*, for which he received the Christopher Award, wrote several books of poetry and numerous articles about the Orchard Lake Schools and the American Polonia.

Msgr. Ziembra will lie in repose in the Shrine Chapel of Our Lady of Orchard Lake, Sunday, June 10, 12:00pm through 9:00pm and Monday, June 11, 1:00pm through 9:00pm. The funeral Mass will be Tuesday, June 12 at 11:00am at the Shrine Chapel of Our Lady of Orchard Lake. Burial will be at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery.