

Changing of guard at St. Stan's

For incoming pastor, assignment is a homecoming

By GREG PEARSON
Transcript-Telegram staff

CHICOPEE — For the Rev. Marion Tolczyk, his new assignment as pastor of St. Stanislaus Church is like a trip home.

Not only will he be coming back to the same church he served in the late 1950s, he also will be returning to pastoral work for the first time since 1976.

He has spent the past six years serving as minister provincial of St. Anthony of Padua Province. From his Baltimore office, he supervised the operation of parishes from Maine to Maryland.

Traveling was a major part of the job since he annually visited more than 40 parishes in the United States and also traveled to missions in West Africa and Japan.

His new job will require little travel, a factor that does not bother Father Tolczyk. "I've had enough travel. You know what jet lag is? Well, I'm jet-lagged out," he said.

Father Tolczyk served as assistant pastor at St. Stanislaus from 1955 to 1959 after being ordained in St. Michael's Cathedral, Springfield, by the Most Rev. Christopher Weldon. Since leaving St. Stanislaus, he has performed a number of assignments, including serving as principal of St. Francis High School in Athol Springs,

N.Y., and pastor of St. Adalbert Parish, Elmhurst, N.Y.

After his past six years in administration, he is looking forward to being a pastor again. The major change at St. Stanislaus since he left is the church's school, which was opened in 1976 and built after the former school was destroyed by fire.

"I want it to be my home and be part of a parish family," said the Bridgeport, Conn., native. He arrived Thursday and conducted his first services Sunday.

"I've been away from pastoral work for many years. It's good to be back," he said.

Father Tolczyk said his goal is to continue the spiritual growth of the church and its communicants, a factor his predecessor, the Rev. Bonaventure Jezierski, cited as one of his accomplishments while at St. Stanislaus.

"I hope to build on what my predecessors have built," said Father Tolczyk, who is 55. "You can't go over that (age) these days. There are too many signs saying that's the limit," he said.

But he has no plans of slowing down. Although he wants to start a new hobby — he is not quite sure what it will be yet — he also expects to continue his rigorous work schedule. "My hobby has been work. I hate to admit it, but I'm a work-aholic," he said.



Rev. Marion Tolczyk ...
... a trip home



Rev. Jezierski ...
... leaving a family

Outgoing pastor to miss school children the most

By GREG PEARSON
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CHICOPEE — The Rev. Bonaventure Jezierski said he feels like he has left a family behind — everyone from the church's communicants to the students with whom he shared an afternoon snack.

The former pastor of St. Stanislaus Church recently was reassigned to the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Taunton, where he began serving as pastor last week.

"I'm certainly going to miss Chicopee and its people," he said Friday in a telephone interview from his new residence in Taunton. "They're wonderful, wonderful workers."

But, he confessed, there is one group he will miss the most — the young students at the church's school, which is next to the Front Street church.

Father Jezierski usually visited the students every day to share a snack and what he called "a mutual grandfather's relationship."

"We've been very close. Many of them would come up to me and say, 'You're as funny as my grandfather,'" recalled the 62-year-old priest.

He also praised the communicants of St. Stanislaus, where he

began serving as pastor in January 1979.

"They are very loyal to the church and their nationality," he said of the members, many of whom are first- or second-generation Polish immigrants. "It's been a happy 3½ years. There was a lot we had to accomplish, and we did it," Father Jezierski said.

He spoke of the "spiritual growth" of the church members, a growth he said was enhanced by two visits from the Rev. Gregory Koziel, a priest from Niepokalanow, Poland.

During Father Jezierski's stay at St. Stanislaus, more than \$1 million worth of improvements and repairs were done to the church, including some needed following a 1980 fire.

Part of his work at the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church will be to oversee the building of a new social center for the church. He also will be involved in helping the church celebrate its 75th anniversary, which will occur in two years.

While Father Jezierski enjoys his work, he sometimes wishes there was not so much travel and relocation. "You'd better believe it gets tiring. We get older, and the bags get heavier," he said. Then, as if to interject one final note about his St. Stanislaus days, he added, "We leave so many beautiful people behind."