



St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

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Meet Fr. Marcin Krycki

Hopefully by now you have had a chance to meet **Fr. Marcin Krycki**, who arrived at St. Rita's last summer. He is our resident Polish priest studying at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, DC.

Fr. Marcin grew up in Szczecin in the northwestern corner of Poland. His parents moved there after they married so his father could work at the shipyard. Poland regained this

territory from Germany after World War II and since it was resettled after the war it is a mix of cultures.

In his second year of high school, Fr. Marcin started considering his vocation. He started to ask, "What would God like me to do?" He attended a retreat at his diocesan seminary and then attended annually throughout high school. He credits knowing lots of great priests and seeing their positive examples in his home parish as encouraging him to become a priest. Fr. Marcin notes a subtle yet astute difference in discernment... we should not think of discernment as "choosing what we want to do" but instead to "discover what God wants and consent to His will."

Fr. Marcin went straight to the seminary after high school when he was 19 years old. This is normal in Poland—attending seminary when a man is older is rare in Poland. In fact, Polish seminaries often need dispensation from the bishop to ordain priests younger than Canon Law allows (Canon Law states that men should be at least 23 years old to become a deacon and 25 to become a priest). About half of Fr. Marcin's seminary class was younger than 25 at their ordination in 2009.

After two years at his first parish, Fr. Marcin visited the United States in summer 2011 when he came to stay with his Polish friend Fr. Tomasz Medrek at St. Lawrence in Alexandria. Shortly before Fr. Marcin left Poland for his U.S. visit, a priest from the Chancery (the Archbishop's Office) called and asked him if he would like to study at the John Paul II Institute. His archbishop sends at least two priests a year outside of the archdiocese to study—either at other locations in Poland, or internationally. Fr. Marcin only had a day to give him an answer and he had not yet been to the U.S., let alone visited the Institute. But he let faith take over and he said yes. During that trip, he visited the John Paul II Institute and was reassured about his decision.

When he returned from his U.S. trip that summer, he had a letter from his archbishop saying that he was being transferred to another parish. This was surprising since he would be leaving in a year to study in the U.S., but his new parish duties were well-fitting and helped him to go through

the admission process. He spent some of that year brushing up on his English and applying to the John Paul II Institute—he even took a week off from the school where he was teaching to write his admission essay.

Bishop Loverde assigned him to live at St. Rita's while he studies for his licentiate degree. Although he is only at the beginning of his program he decided that his thesis will look at the error of reductionism in bioethics. He explains reductionism as a philosophical position that a complex system (a living organism) is nothing but the sum of its parts, and that an account of it can be reduced to accounts of individual components. After his degree he will return to his archdiocese where he will receive his next assignment. Some possibilities are being assigned to a parish or teaching on the Faculty of Theology at University of Szczecin.

Fr. Marcin loves his classes and finds it a joy that his English skills allow him to easily understand his professors. The most challenging part of his program is writing since academic language is much different from everyday English.

The hardest thing about living in the U.S. is the distance from his family but he will try to visit them on his winter and summer breaks. He has an older sister and a younger brother. His brother works in North Carolina's Outer Banks in the summer so Fr. Marcin was able to see him last summer and plans to this summer as well. In a couple years the two hope to take a roadtrip together out west to visit California and the Grand Canyon. He is looking forward to crossing the Mississippi River, too.

Fr. Marcin's favorite things about St. Rita's are the great people and the lovely church building. He is very grateful for everyone at St. Rita's who has helped him settle into life and his studies here.

Polish Parish Life

Fr. Marcin provides lots of insight into the differences of the daily life of Catholic parishes in Poland and the US. Unfortunately, Polish vocations need the same prayers as American vocations because the numbers are decreasing. In 2003 when he started seminary there were around 90 seminarians in his archdiocese. By the time he was ordained there were 60-70 and now only around 50.

Poland does not have many Catholic schools because religion is taught in public schools for two hours each week. Roman Catholicism is the focus but ecumenicalism and world religions are also discussed. Priests, sisters, and laypersons teach the classes. Parishes provide sacramental preparation programs for Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage. About 90% of

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"The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven, and will help bring about an everlasting peace on earth."

- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Eucharistic Adoration at St. Rita's: Could You Spend an Hour?

At St. Rita's, there is Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday from 7:30am to 7:15pm. This is a wonderful devotion, as the words of the great saints testify, and those who have the opportunity to pray before the Sacrament will obtain great graces.

Recently, there has been a scarcity of adorers and there is some concern that the Blessed Sacrament may be left alone because of gaps in the schedule of adorers. As the Congregation for Divine Worship states very clearly in its 2004 instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*: "...The Most Holy Sacrament, when exposed, must never be left unattended even for the briefest space of time." All are encouraged to examine their schedule to see if there might be a time on Wednesdays which they could spend in prayer in front of the Eucharist. If you work, perhaps you could spend your lunch hour? If you are a mother with small children, perhaps you and another mother could share an hour, and take turns watching each other's children every week? If you are a college or graduate student, perhaps you could take time between classes? To commit to a time slot, please contact Joanne at 703-836-1640.



We Are A People Of Life

Two busloads of parishioners and St. Rita School students made their way downtown on January 25 to walk in the March for Life. January 22 marked the 40th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that has resulted in the death of 55 million children. The St. Rita's Group started with mass and lunch before they boarded the buses to make their way downtown and walk with an estimated 500,000 people to the Supreme Court building. They carried positive and peaceful signs, prayed, and met others from around the country.

MEET FR. MARCIN *continued from page 1*

Poles are baptized Catholic but today only 40-50% of them regularly practice their religion.

Another difference between daily life in the Catholic Church in Poland and the US is that in Poland the parish offices are usually open a few hours a week and the priests take care of all parish business. Only some parishes (usually in big cities) provide daily office service and can afford to employ parish staff (a secretary, a bookkeeper, a sacristan, some coordinators). Polish daily mass schedule is usually very similar to the American one – there are morning and evening masses with confessions heard before Mass. On Sundays the Sacrament of Reconciliation is held during every Mass.

■ LIVING OUR FAITH



Baptisms at St. Rita

- + Ryan Josue Turcior, Jan. 26
- + Jordon Israel Rosales-Chavez, Jan. 26
- + Arlie Ellena Rosales-Chavez, Jan. 26
- + Fatima N. Arevalo, Jan. 26
- + Diego O. Arevalo, Jan. 26

Weddings at St. Rita

- + Joseph Martin Norton II & Hannah Beth Paschael, Jan. 5
- Daniel Robert Beller & Elizabeth Rose Twaddle, Jan. 5

Prayer Intention

Please pray for the 39 young men and women in our parish who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at 5pm on Feb. 10.



Do you know of a parishioner who is ill, and in need of prayers? Or a parishioner who is serving in the armed forces, overseas? We will be happy to publish their names so that fellow parishioners can pray for them. Please contact Catherine Feil (catherine.feil@gmail.com, or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church (erinmchurch@gmail.com).