Father Jerzy Rebacz Succeeds Monsignor Stoetzel as Cathedral Rector

The Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman has a new rector who grew up in Poland and who has become proficient in English while living in Wisconsin the past 12 years. Bishop William Callahan appointed Father Jerzy Rebacz as the parish's rector, effective July 16.

He succeeded Monsignor Charles Stoetzel, who after eight years as the Cathedral’s rector became pastor of Holy Family Parish in Prairie du Chien. That appointment by Bishop Callahan also was effective July 16. Before he became rector of the Cathedral in July 2011, Monsignor Stoetzel had been serving as pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church in Marshfield and Christ the King Parish in Spencer. Ordained a priest in 1980, his first assignment was as associate pastor of the Cathedral and religion instructor at Aquinas High School.

Bishop Callahan also appointed Father Rebacz as judicial vicar for the Diocese of La Crosse effective July 2.

Father Rebacz had been pastor of St. Joseph and St. Stephen parishes in Stevens Point, before moving to La Crosse for his two new positions.

As judicial vicar of the diocese, Father Rebacz’s main responsibility is to head the Diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal, which deals with the annulment process.

Father Rebacz is a native of Poland. Most of his family moved to the United States to escape economic hardships, and settled in the Chicago suburb of Rosemont, Ill. Father Rebacz frequently came to Chicago to visit his relatives.

Father Rebacz was ordained a priest in 1996 in Poland and then served as an associate pastor before being sent to study law at the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland. He earned master’s degrees in theology and in canon law, as well as a doctorate of juridical science with specialization in canon law.

While teaching law at a university in Poland, he took a one-year sabbatical in 2007 and came to St. Therese Parish in Rothschild, Wisconsin, to learn the English language. The pastor of that parish, Father Janusz Kowalski, and his parishioners had been offering Polish priests a program to come to the parish to learn English.

After a year in Rothschild, Father Rebacz served as pastor of St. Florian Parish in Hatley, Wisconsin, from 2007 until 2010.

In 2010, he became pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Stevens Point. Soon after that, he also was named pastor of nearby St. Stephen Parish.

Continued on column 1 page 2
Donations Are Sought to Install Concrete Floors in Rural Churches in Ghana

At Masses on the weekend of August 24-25, Father Augustine Bentil, a native of Ghana, encouraged Cathedral parishioners to donate money that will be used to put in cement floors in rural churches in his diocese in that nation.

People can continue donating at any time. Checks can continue to be made payable to Cathedral Parish with “Ghana Mission Appeal” in the memo line, and should be directed to the Cathedral office. If a donor wishes to keep supporting the mission beyond this year, information can be obtained from Father Bentil at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Galloway.

Father Gus, as Father Bentil prefers to be called, is a priest from the Diocese of Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana. He spoke at the Cathedral parish’s annual Mission Co-op Weekend.

It costs an average of about $2,000 to put a concrete floor in a rural parish in his diocese in Ghana, Father Gus told parishioners during the weekend Masses.

“Many of the parishes in the cities have concrete floors and some have tiles and all that,” he said later in an interview. “It’s smaller, rural parishes that have not had concrete floors. Since we began this appeal to help them have concrete floors, we’ve done about 64 churches in the rural areas. That’s over about the last four years.”

It will take a few more years to put concrete floors in the rest of the churches that don’t have them, he estimated.

The Diocese of Sekondi-Takoradi covers about one-fourth of the nation of Ghana, he said.

Father Gus has been a pastor in parishes in the Diocese of La Crosse for the past 14 years. “I am temporarily ministering here in the Diocese of La Crosse,” he said.

He has been pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Galloway and St. Ladislaus Catholic Church in Bevont, in Marathon County, since 2011. Both are in the Wausau Deanery of the Diocese of La Crosse.

Before that, Father Gus was a pastor in parishes in Milford and Berekley in the Manfield Deanery and in Junction City in the Stevens Point Deanery.

Father Gus said he has been to the Cathedral several times for events and other things, “The building is awesome, amazing, with all of the stone work,” he said of the Cathedral. “It is beautiful.”

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Vince Lopreati, The Worker

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PCCW to Hold Annual Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale

The Parish Council of Catholic Women will hold its annual Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, December 7, in the Undercroft of the Cathedral. There is free parking in the church lot and elevator access to the Undercroft.

The sale will feature many Christmas decorations and wonderful gift items, as well as hand-made greeting cards, said Ruth Wettstein, one of the event’s organizers. “There will also be several unique items for the ‘tasteful,’” she said. Donations can be brought to the Undercroft anytime and left next to the elevator.

“People will again be able to purchase delicious and beautiful cookies, breads and candies,” Wettstein said. Bake sale items should be brought to the Undercroft anytime during the day on Friday, December 6. Anyone with questions can call Wettstein at 608-785-0062.

For the first time this year, PCCW has organized a special area for a Christmas raffle. Raffle tickets will be available for sale throughout the day in the Undercroft.

Father Roblez Baltazar Assists at Parish While Staying in Rectory

Father Roblez Baltazar, a native of Mexico, is helping at the Cathedral parish, while staying in its rectory and studying English at Western Technical College in La Crosse.

Father Roblez Baltazar grew up in Mexico and at age 14 entered seminary to explore the priesthood. He completed his 16 years of formation in the Archdiocese of Guadalajara. He came to the Diocese of La Crosse on the recommendation of a seminary classmate in Mexico.

Father Roblez Baltazar was ordained a priest by Bishop William Callahan on June 24, 2017, at the Cathedral. He began his priestly ministry as associate pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Sparta and St. John the Baptist Parish in Summit Ridge.

He was released from those responsibilities effective this past July 2, so that he could undertake full-time English language studies. “I’m so glad about this,” Father Roblez Baltazar said of studying English at Western Technical College, while living in the Cathedral rectory.

He said he expects to spend the rest of his priestly ministry in the Diocese of La Crosse. “That’s the reason why I need to learn the culture and the language,” he said.

Father Roblez Baltazar helps at the Cathedral parish by doing such things as celebrating and concelebrating Masses, and hearing confessions.

“I like it,” he said of La Crosse and the Cathedral parish. “It’s a nice change for me. In each parish I’ve been in, it’s been a nice place, with beautiful hills and nice people. I’m happy to be here, to build relationships with the people, and to practice my English,” he said.

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Men’s Club Is Again Holding Pancake & Omelet Breakfasts

The Cathedral Men’s Club is once again holding Pancake/Omelet Breakfasts on Sundays in the Cathedral Undercroft during the fall and winter months, with each breakfast raising funds for a particular cause:

- The first breakfast was held on September 29. The others will be on November 3, February 16 and March 15.
- The first three breakfasts are raising money for Cathedral Elementary School, and the March 15 breakfast will raise money for the Aquinas High School Junior Prom.
- The breakfasts are from 7:30 a.m. to noon. Prices once again are $1 for a pancake breakfast, $4 for an omelet breakfast, and $12 for a family.
- Jack Honfull cooks the pancakes, Jim Noelle makes the omelets, Joe Noelle makes the batter for the pancakes and club President Geoff Willhern brings in the supplies and collects the receipts.
- Aquinas Middel School and High School students are volunteer servers at the breakfasts.

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CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 2019

Father Augustine Bentil, a native of Ghana who prefers to be called Father Gus, spoke at the Cathedral at Masses on August 24-25 for the parish’s annual Mission Co-op Weekend.
Deceased parishioners to be remembered at November 3 Mass

Cathedral parishioners who have died since November 1, 2018, will be remembered during the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, November 3. Their names will be read at the time of the intercessions.

The Remembrance of the Deceased Members of the Parish will be held then because, In the Church, the month of November is to pray for our beloved dead. Even though individually we are to pray for them and the Church every day, November is devoted to this as the Church year comes to an end.

The Catholic Church will celebrate All Souls Day on November 2. At the Cathedral, the remembrance with reading of names is held on the Sunday closest to All Souls Day so that family members can attend with parish members and visitors.

Veterans to be Honored After November 10 Masses

Military veterans will be honored at a reception at the Cathedral after morning Masses on Sunday, November 10, which is the day before Veterans Day.

The parish’s Family Life Committee will host the Veterans Day Hospitality Sunday reception and serve refreshments in the Gathering Area after the 7:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses, committee member Carol Ballas said.

“If you have a photo or any memorabilia of yourself or a family member serving in the military, please consider sharing it with us,” Ballas said. “There will be a display table for all to enjoy. Please contact me at 608-498-9713 at least two weeks before the reception” if you have something you’d like to share at the table.

A special blessing will be offered for veterans at all the Masses that weekend.