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*"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)*

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item 371

### **80 years service to chronically ill children** **St Joseph's Home – Cape Town – South Africa**

After the breakfast in the community of the provincial house in Pinelands, we Sisters drove with three cars to the St. Joseph's Home at Montana. We were welcomed by community superior Sr. Priscilla Rego and other sisters who were not on duty.



Director Thea Patterson guided us, together with a group of about 30 other guests, through the renewed and extended buildings of the facility. There are actually 130 children and adolescents with chronic illnesses. We were impressed by the beautiful, bright rooms for the children and staff. Everything is arranged very practically, with lots of space. Children can move around in an attractive playground outside, furnished with play equipment. It was heart-warming to play a bit and hug some of these vulnerable children.

At 11 o'clock we had the thanksgiving Mass with Most Reverend Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town. Several Pallottine and other priests concelebrated. Each of the participants, on entering the chapel, was invited to light a candle in front of the altar. Many of the children were present, at the right and left side of the altar.



In his sermon, Archbishop Stephen commented on the manifold hardships of so many children today, and highlighted St Joseph's Home as a place of light and hope for vulnerable children. In spite of the suffering there is joy and hope in this Home, he said, because of our belief that the God of love and compassion is present and because this love is shown to the children. After the final blessing, small children gave a very vivid presentation.

All guests were then guided to their tables in a big tent and it was time for some speeches. The Provincial superior Sr. Annemarie Niehsen SAC highlighted the early initiative of Bishop Hennemann SAC and the great effort of the pioneering Pallottine Sisters and many others. Director Mrs. Thea Patterson mentioned that from the beginning the Sisters had been open to new methods of treatment, and were astute in the difficult time of apartheid. St. Joseph's always has been innovative, she said.



After addresses from the chairman of the Board, Mr. Peter Hughes and the representative of the mayor of Cape Town, Mrs. Little, Sr. Maria Landsberger conveyed a message of good wishes and appreciation from the superior general, Sr. Izabela Świerad SAC. All were then invited to the festive buffet. At the round tables we enjoyed a happy gathering with lively conversations.

It was precious for us to experience the good collaboration of so many people of all social classes who, with an enduring loyalty, have been connected with St Joseph's Home and the Pallottine Sisters.





It was a beautiful and dignified thanksgiving to God and to so many who are continuing and promoting this apostolic work.

**Clementia Burkard SAC +  
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item 372

**“may my life be destroyed...”**

**Józef Jankowski** was born on 17 Nov 1910 in Czyczkowy, Poland, and baptised three days later. In the academic year 1924/1925 he commenced at the Pallottine school in Suchary and in 1929 he entered our Society. On 05 Aug 1931 he made his first consecration in Wadowice. Ordained priest on 02 Aug 1936, he dedicated himself to pastoral work, including working as a catechist in two schools.



At the beginning of World War II he gave great spiritual and material help to many civilians and looked after wounded soldiers. On 31 Mar 1941 he was appointed novice master. He was arrested by the Gestapo 16 May 1941 and deported to Auschwitz concentration camp where, on 16 Oct that year, he was murdered by the camp guards. He was proclaimed blessed by [St.] John Paul II in Warsaw on 13 Jun 1999, together with another 107 martyrs of the Catholic Church in Poland.

The documentation connected with his Process of Beatification presents Józef as a priest who lived out St. Vincent Pallotti's model of holiness with unusual perseverance and coherence. His spiritual path could be characterised by the very words that he wrote in a letter addressed to his brother one year after his priestly ordination:

“My ideal, naturally, must embrace God, my neighbour and myself... and the principal movement in this must be the love of God. ... I want to love God more than my own life”.

In fulfilment of this ideal, the worship of the Eucharist and a deep trust in the Mother of God were of particular value to him. In his act of consecration to the Madonna we read:

“Mary, Most Holy Virgin, Queen of Apostles, my most beloved Mother, I want to love you... You are the Mother of Divine Love. Fill my heart with the love of God. Fill me with the Holy Spirit, as you filled our Father and Founder... I am confident that you will entrust many, many souls to me. May my life be destroyed so that your Kingdom will reign in the world, so that the Kingdom of Christ, your dearly beloved Son, will reign in the world”.

His faith and the richness of his personality were expressed in his pastoral ministry, which he was able to exercise for only five years. Witnesses unanimously highlight his exceptional pastoral zeal, driven by his love

for God and neighbour, his holiness, his dedication, his sense of responsibility, his prudence and his justice but, above all, by his sensitivity to the needs of people, leading him even to heroic gestures.

During his time of five months in the extermination camp of Auschwitz, a place of the greatest hardships with respect to work, hunger and humiliation, Fr. Józef endured much physical, moral and spiritual suffering and torture. On 16 Oct 1941 he was tortured by camp guard Krott and, following the beatings he received, died in the sick ward. He was just 31 years of age. An eyewitness of the event, Fr. Konrad Szweda, reported: "Half killed by bloodthirsty Krott, he was admitted to the camp hospital. The next day I went to find him, but he was already dead, I don't know whether following the blows or a lethal injection, which was a regular practice in Auschwitz".

Fr. Józef, fulfilling in a radical way his Pallottine consecration in daily life, gave continual proof of the total giving of his life "for love of God". According to what the witnesses say, he declared himself – and not just once – ready to give his life for the faith. It is therefore no surprise that, finding himself in danger of his life, he went to bring pastoral and medical assistance to the sick and the dying.

During the interrogation he placed all responsibility on himself, even though neither he nor the other prisoners were guilty of anything. By sacrificing himself, he wanted his brothers to escape the consequences of his arrest. On the basis of testimonies, it can be seen that his willingness to sacrifice himself for his neighbour, attested by his actions, his sufferings, his imprisonment in the camp and by his death, is more than a virtue – it is heroism, heroic charity which follows in the footsteps of the love of Christ, because "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13).

The fame of the martyrdom of Fr. Jankowski, which began immediately after his death, became stronger and stronger among Pallottines and among ex-prisoners of the Auschwitz camp, and then more widely among the faithful who, seeing his charitable pastoral ministry, regarded him a saint. An expression of that faith are the numerous reports and reminiscences written by eye witnesses, the celebrations of the anniversaries of his death, the numerous publications about him, and finally, the beatification itself which took place on 13 Jun 1999 in Warsaw. Different graces obtained from God have also been attributed to his intercession.



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## sac asia oceania e-bulletin

**you commented...**

**on #194** In the article of Fr. Jacob, the life of Fr. Josef Lasiak from Poland, is very inspiring for all Pallottines to learn from him and live as good Pallottines.

**MK 16.11.15**