



UAC NEWSLETTER

November 2011

Dear brothers and sisters in the Union,

we are happy to present you with some information in this newsletter about **BLESSED JÓZEF STANEK SAC**, prepared by Fr. Jan Korycki, SAC, Postulator General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, along with other news from the UAC.

1. MEMBERS OF THE UAC ALREADY PROCLAIMED BLESSED

Blessed Józef (Joseph) STANEK, martyr, Pallottine priest, born December 4, 1916 in Łapsze Niżne (Poland), was baptised on the following day. During the sixth year of his life he lost his parents. Having finished his studies in secondary school of the Pallottines in Wadowice, he entered the Society in 1935 and made his first consecration on August 15, 1937. Ordained priest on April 7, 1941, during the Nazi occupation, he dedicated himself to pastoral work and at the same time attended clandestine university courses in sociology in Warsaw. After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising (1.08.1944), aimed at liberating the city from the invader, he became chaplain to the insurgents. He met the pastoral and charitable needs of those in want with uncommon dedication. He did not take advantage of the opportunity offered to him to save himself by crossing the river Wisła on a barge. He gave up his place to a wounded man while he remained on with those under siege, in order that they not be deprived of pastoral care. Then realising that a continued uprising made no further sense, he did everything possible to save the maximum number of people. For this reason he also dealt with the occupying forces. He was arrested by Nazi soldiers when he went to the German command to organise the surrender of the insurgents and the following day, September 23, 1944, was hung before the eyes of the people amassed by the invaders in the place of execution. He was only 28 years of age. He was proclaimed blessed by John Paul II, along with 107 other martyrs of the Church in Poland, on June 13, 1999, in Warsaw.



Ryszard Czugajewski, a writer, one of the greatest promoters of the Cause of Beatification, published a book on Fr. Stanek entitled "He loved to the end". This title could be regarded as a synthesis of the spirituality of the Blessed. His pastoral zeal was seen in every priestly service carried out over the course of three years in the very particular climate of the Nazi occupation, of the persecution of the Church and, on the other hand, the awakening of the patriotism of the people of Warsaw who organised the resistance in various ways. The numerous witnesses note that the fundamental motivation behind the activity of Fr. Józef was love for God. Among others, Fr. Józef Dąbrowski, Pallottine confrere and colleague from the time of study, declared: "Considering the life of Fr. Stanek from the perspective of today, I am convinced that he felt obliged to live guided always by an exceptional love for God and that God... prepared him for the heroic offering of his life in defence of the faith and of the nation".

The extremely difficult situation in which he found himself after the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising revealed in a particular way the heroism of his love for neighbour, when as chaplain to the insurgents, without fighting with weapons in hand, he sacrificed himself, in continual danger for his life, in order to bring pastoral and charitable help to the dying, the wounded and to all who were suffering. His love for neighbour showed itself in an extraordinary way in a fact referred to by Mrs. Stanisława Żórawska, an eye-witness to his death. She recounts how Fr. Stanek did not take advantage of the afore-mentioned possibility of saving his life "because he believed that, as priest, he was useful to the combatants, to the insurgents, to people who were suffering and in agony".

Fr. Józef Warszawski SJ, also a chaplain himself, captured with the other insurgents, recounted what followed: "A long line of people emerged, precisely from the depths of the ruins. It was directed towards us [...] preceded by German uniforms, after which came a priest. [...] Finally, I was able to make out: it was the Pallottine, Fr. Józef Stanek". Nazis "were hitting him in the face with their fists, beating him until he reached our lines. While doing this they shouted out their Nazi beliefs with the words: "These are the most evil! Not the English! Not the Jews! But these with the black skirts! These are the devils!" ...Pulling him here and there, they pushed him towards the nearby ruins... And so he died – in odium fidei et vindictae (out of hatred of the faith and in reprisal)".

Another eye-witness, Mrs. Halina Darska completes the picture, saying: "On September 23 of the year 1944, before midday, the insurgents in Czerniaków who were still alive, together with the civil population, were gathered

by the Germans among the ruins of a factory in Solec. I saw a priest by a wall, wearing a habit, but without shoes, bareheaded. The people who were already there informed the others that it was the priest "Rudy" (that is, Fr. Józef Stanek)... Two girls were brought close to the priest... After a short time the priest and the two girls were taken among the ruins of the pavilion, where – from iron beams – some of the insurgents were already hanging. The Nazis began to speak with the three of them, but we could not understand what they were saying... At the moment when they led us away from the ruins, the nooses were already being put on the necks of the girls and the priest and the ropes were already being hoisted up. The priest visibly lifted one or possibly both of his hands as if he wanted to greet, bless or absolve all present in the pavilion of the factory, not less than two hundred people. This image of the priest has remained in my memory". Mrs. Małgorzata Lorentowicz adds: "Fr. Józef held his hand aloft as in the gesture of giving a blessing and moved his lips as if he were praying. He was in absolute silence, calm, fully resigned to death".

The body of the martyr, by order of the military, was left for some time on the gallows in order to frighten the people who were forced to pass close to it.

According to eye-witnesses, from the very beginning of our Blessed's Pallottine life Blessed, a constant commitment to dedicate himself entirely to the glory of God was notable. He distinguished himself by great trust in God and radiated this to others. He tried to convince those close to him to entrust everything to Divine Providence and, if necessary, to accept even death with dignity, believing that this was not futile but rather that it should be a message for others.

The wide circle of people who knew Fr. Stanek and those who were present at his execution, always interpreted his death as a martyrdom for his faith and his country. All of the witnesses called during his cause gave voice to this conviction. Different graces obtained from God have also been attributed to his intercession. His liturgical memorial, together with that of blessed Józef Jankowski, is celebrated on June 12.

2. National Coordination Council Elections:

- **Rwanda-Democratic Republic of Congo.** On July 8, 2011, the National Coordination Council of Rwanda-Democratic Republic of Congo met and elected the following members to carry out the following respective offices of service in the Union in that territory: Fr. Romuald Uzumbumwana, SAC, President; Fr. Jean Pierre Nsabimana, SAC, Vice-President; Sr. Marie Belancilla Mukandahiro, SAC, Treasurer; Sr. Marie Catherine Nikuze, SAC, Secretary.
- **Poland.** A new National Coordination Council was elected recently. On November 19, the new NCC met and elected as President and Vice-President, respectively, Fr. Marek Chmelnik SAC and Sr. Bernadetta Turecka SAC.

The results of both elections have been confirmed by the General Coordination Council of the Union. We wish all of the members of the new NCCs every blessing and inspiration of God's Spirit in this important role of service in the Union as they strive to coordinate the bringing to life of the charism of St. Vincent in new and creative ways in their respective territories. We thank the outgoing members of the NCCs for their years of service and wish them every blessing as they continue their walk with the Lord in the Pallottine family in new ways.

3. Brazil:

- **Campo Grande:** The LCC of Campo Grande is setting up a course called Pallottine Experience (Encontro de Vivência Palotina: EVIPAL) in the Saint Vincent Pallotti House of Formation from January 19-29, 2012, aimed at young people and adults interested in learning about the life and work of St. Vincent Pallotti and experiencing the following of Jesus Christ according to the Pallottine charism. It is hoped that this first EVIPAL meeting will be a time of gaining new knowledge and of sharing experiences, leading to a renewed commitment of service to the kingdom of God.
- **Curitiba:** Two young men discerning a Pallottine vocation were inspired by the charism of Saint Vincent Pallotti to begin a mission in their local area 'to revive faith and enkindle charity' in the lives of those around them. They began this local mission on April 9 in the city of Curitiba, and were subsequently joined by just eight other volunteers. However, altogether they visited over 250 homes, an asylum and also an orphanage run by the Baptist Church where they were warmly welcomed. One of the participants, a member of the Foursquare Evangelical Church, visited the homes of families from the Reformed tradition. No financial cost was incurred. The mission closed on October 23 at the parish Mass in St. Joseph's, but only for this year, because a similar mission is already planned for the city of Uberaba next year. Some photographs of the mission can be seen at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ioiM47aGXw>

4. We ask you to remember specially in your prayers:

- **The preparations for the General Assembly of the Union (January 14-17, 2012)**
- **Fr. Joji Babu Tuneti, SAC who continues his treatment**
- **Sr. Luciana Capretti, CSAC who celebrated her 100th birthday in the USA on October 25**