

SDS - Societas Divini Salvatoris (The Society of the Divine Saviour) History Poland



From the very beginning of their existence, Salvatorians have been very much an international religious order. Among the members there was a significant number of Polish men. Out of about a thousand candidates who joined the order in the years 1881-1900, about one hundred were Polish. They did whatever their superiors sent them to do. Some of them joined a group of priests and brothers from other countries to help form an American Province of the Salvatorians, at the same time providing pastoral care to Polish people who emigrated to the USA. Others were sent to India to work at the newly established mission at Assam. A large number of them pioneered Salvatorian pastoral ministry in a number of countries in Europe. Only a small number returned to their motherland to lay the foundations of the future Polish Province of the Salvatorians.

The first Salvatorians of Polish origin arrived in Krakow (Cracow) in 1900. They were: Alfred Zacharzowski, Honoriusz Bugiel and Cezary Wojciechowski. The first Salvatorian Community House was opened in 1903 at Trzebinia near Krakow.

In 1918, after the First World War, Poland regained national independence. This situation created new opportunities for further development and growth of the Society. To achieve this task a formation house was needed. In 1923 a formation house was officially opened in Zakrzowek (outskirts of Krakow).

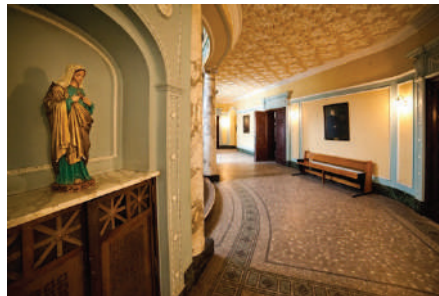
In 1927 the Polish Province of the Salvatorians was finally established. The Province had twenty seven members: eight priests, seven brothers, four seminarians and eight novices.

At the end of the Second World War the Salvatorians in Poland lived in five Community Houses. The new reality of life after the War created new challenges. There was a shortage of priests in the western part of Poland, so the Salvatorians tried to respond to the needs of the people. Within two years they had undertaken pastoral ministry at sixteen different places in the

western part of Poland.

Continuing growth in numbers allowed the Salvatorians to take new postings and face new challenges in an attempt to meet the needs of the people. In 1975 there were thirty one Polish Salvatorian Community Houses, out of which twenty seven were in Poland, two in USA and two in Canada.

At present Polish Salvatorians work and live in thirty five houses in Poland and in a number of countries all over the world. These are: Albania, Australia, Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, USA, and Zambia. Mission countries: Tanzania, Congo, Philippines and India. They are also present in England, France, Mexico, Germany and Switzerland.



Prompted and encouraged by the words of their Founder, Bl Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan: "As long as there is even one person in the world who does not know and does not love Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, you are not to take rest", Salvatorians continue the mission of Christ on all continents of the world.

The history of the Salvatorians in Australia began in 1961. A few years earlier the Archbishop of Perth, Redmond Prendiville, sent a letter of invitation to the head of our Society in Rome, Fr Bonaventura Schweizer. Replying to the invitation Fr Schweizer sent the first Salvatorian, Fr Paul Keyte to Australia in 1961. Fr Paul was asked to take pastoral care of the new parish of Bellevue. The beginnings were difficult. The parish community life centered around the local catholic school, as there was no church, and no parish

house or office facilities. In the following years a few more Salvatorians from the British Province joined Fr Paul.

In 1966 the new St Anthony's Church, together with the accommodation for priests and the parish centre were opened in Bellevue. The parish of St Anthony was the only Salvatorian centre in Australia until the year 1982, when Fr Aloysius McDonagh became the Parish Priest of Esperance, in the Diocese of Bunbury. In the late 70's, prompted by the shortage in numbers, the British Province of the Salvatorians seriously considered passing on their ministry in Australia to the vibrant Polish Province.

During the transition period (1979-1987) four Polish Salvatorians worked together with the British Province Salvatorians (who were mostly Irish). Over all there had been six Salvatorian priests and one brother from the British Province who worked in Australia in 1961-1987.

In 1987 the Polish Province of Salvatorians officially took over from the British Province. This decision created a need for new people who would continue the ministry undertaken by the Salvatorians from the British Province. As a result three volunteers from the Polish Province arrived in Perth in 1988. Since then, almost every year, we have been getting "new blood" from Poland. At present there are over twenty Polish Salvatorians sharing their lives and ministry in Australia.

Thanks to the wonderful personal support of the Polish Province, the Salvatorians have been able to expand and undertake pastoral care in a number of parishes in Perth and country areas of Western Australia. Since 2001 Polish Salvatorians have been working in our Diocese of Broken Bay, in the parishes of Pymble, Gosford and Pittwater. Since 2019, they have been in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Following the teaching of our Founder, Bl Francis Jordan, they try to take a broad approach to their priestly ministry. Therefore, they do not restrict themselves to the parish pastoral ministry only, as a few of our priests have been working as school chaplains over the last several years.

