



An Open Letter to the People of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark

Three years ago, former Archbishop (now Cardinal) Theodore McCarrick mandated termination of all Polish Masses and the ministry at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in Jersey City. The Polish people had supported this Polish parish for 100 years. Protesters opposing the termination of the Polish ministry were threatened with arrest by Pastor Iwanowski. What an irony that those who enjoyed the fullness of Catholic faith and life under communism, find themselves being persecuted, discriminated, and threatened with arrest by this parish pastor in the United States.

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church is a symptom of a much larger problem in the Archdiocese of Newark. Archbishop John J. Myers has continued Archbishop McCarrick's plan to ethnically cleanse, close, or consolidate ethnic Polish parishes. This is **discrimination** of the Polish ethnic group. He has rebuffed all requests for a meeting, and like his predecessors, has told us through the press to "move along." He has even ignored letters sent by Vatican officials and his own priests, who have asked that he meet with us and seek resolution.

With the pandemic of corruption and scandal throughout the Church, including here in the Newark Archdiocese, why should the Archbishop be so threatened by faithful Catholics who simply want to express their love for God and neighbor through the Polish language and traditions with which they are most comfortable?

Polish people did not come to this country to be homogenized; we came here to be free. Our history has given us a deep commitment to our Catholic faith and fierce determination to resist all oppression. During the dark days of World War II, when Poland was overrun and lost, Winston Churchill observed, "***the soul of Poland is indestructible, and ... she will rise again like a rock which may for a spell be submerged by a tidal wave, but which remains a rock.***"

We, who have not been bowed by Lenin, Hitler and Stalin, do not intend to let Archbishop Myers deny us our faith and culture. We have long and patiently explored every channel to seek redress without public scandal and embarrassment to our Church.

Our efforts have been mocked and rejected. Therefore, our Polish brothers and sisters, and all people of good will, join us today in a demonstration of solidarity in front of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, NJ.

We want Archbishop Myers and the public to know that we vehemently protest the destruction of Polish parishes, the elimination of the Polish ministry, ethnic cleansing, the suppression of our language and our culture. We will not tolerate the Archbishop's failure, and that of many of his priests, to treat us with the respect and concern due us as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We will resist injustice for as long as it exists. We ask your prayers and support in our efforts.

**The Committee for the Defense
of Our Lady of Czestochowa R.C. Church, Jersey City, NJ**

May 23, 2004