

January 6, 2018

St. Augustine Cathedral

11:00 a.m.

Closing Comments at the Funeral Mass for

Rev. Wieslaw Lipka (Jan. 12, 1941---January 3, 2018 = almost 77)

- On behalf of the entire Diocese of Kalamazoo---all our priests, deacons, and lay faithful---and in the name of Bishop Murray (unable to be with us this morning) and in my own name----to ALL of Father Wieslaw's family, both those here present (Regina and Ray), and all those who are unable to be with us back in Poland---- we extend our Sympathy, our Prayers and our Gratitude.
- While Father Wieslaw was born, educated, ordained and spent the first 31 years of his priestly ministry in the Diocese of Makow in Poland, from his first days here in the Diocese of Kalamazoo and throughout these last 16 years here, Father Wieslaw was one of us, and one with us.
- Even though he spent the vast majority of his time at St. Monica Parish, he was well-known and well-loved by the people and

priests throughout the Diocese, both those of the Polish Community and beyond.

- Over the years as I came to know Father Wieslaw, I could see how much he loved being a priest. His Ordination Anniversary --- June 12, 1965---was more special to him than his birthday, I think, and of course the celebration of his Golden Anniversary just two years ago became the “liturgical event of the year”, and one that Fr. Wieslaw truly rejoiced in that he had been privileged to be a Priest of Jesus Christ for 50 years!
- And so, we extend to the family, and to our Diocesan Family, a sense of sympathy and an acknowledgement of sadness because we no longer have Father Wieslaw here to help bring us the Good News of Jesus’ Love and Mercy.
- We also extend our prayers—both to the family and to the Diocese, but also our special prayers for Fr. Wieslaw because he was the first to acknowledge his own human frailty and weakness and to realize his own need for God’s mercy. And so we

commend our dear brother to the Lord, asking the God of all consolation to fill us with God's comfort and consolation, and to shower Fr. Wieslaw with His mercy now that he has completed his earthly pilgrimage.

- And finally, we extend to the family, and to God, our gratitude for the gift that Father Wieslaw Lipka has been to the Church, in Poland and here, and the gift he has been to so many people.
- Over the course of this last year and a half, as he has walked his final part of his own way of the Cross, Father Wieslaw never stopped teaching, first himself, and then everyone around him, how to follow Jesus along the Way of the Cross.
- He carried his own cross with courage and joy, and he was a source of inspiration and joy for others.
- The last time I visited Fr. Wieslaw in the assisted-living facility at Brookdale, the day before he was to be moved to Kairos Place, there were a number of people in the room enjoying conversation with Fr. Wieslaw, when one of the facility's nurse's aides came in

to dispense Father's medication. She was very young, and she "bantered" with Father Wieslaw respectfully but playfully, like a granddaughter might do with her beloved Grandfather. After she explained his medications, and was ready to leave the room, she just reached over and gave Father Wieslaw a gentle kiss on the cheek---as though it was the most natural thing in the world to do. It was such a special moment for me to see, and to realize that Father Wieslaw had that kind of impact on just about everyone he met.

- And so, on this day when we return Father Wieslaw to our Loving God, the Source of all our blessings, we thank God and ask Him to take our friend, our brother, and this Priest of Jesus Christ to give him his eternal reward.
- "May he rest in Peace!"---"*niech spoczywa w pokoju*" (Polish):
Amen!

Let us now commend our brother to the Lord.