

Fr Bogdan Wera

This was a time of great uncertainty for the Parish. For almost a year, the Parish battled on, being guided by Mgr John Maguire from St Mary of the Angels in Canton Cardiff, who acted as Administrator. Various priests from other parishes came to celebrate the weekend services and conduct Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. However, the number of priests of working age in the Diocese was getting smaller each year and many St Patricks parishioners feared that our days of having a resident Parish Priest might be over, but then Fr Bogdan Wera arrived with the Polish people.



Fr Bogdan was responsible for this rapidly growing community which soon outgrew their base at the time in Nazareth House and Archbishop Peter Smith suggested in 2009 that he move to St Patrick's Grangetown and become Parish Priest responsible not only for the Polish Community, but also for the English-speaking Community, celebrating Masses both in English and in Polish. However, in addition to this responsibility he also needed to travel to Merthyr, Hereford and other towns in South Wales to celebrate Mass and minister to the Polish communities there. Initially, he had curates from Poland to help him with his responsibilities and he encouraged these priests to learn English. Several parishioners helped with English lessons and many of the curates attended 'School' where they studied the finer points of the language. As time went on having had invaluable experience in St Patricks, they moved on to have Parishes of their own in other Dioceses. Unfortunately though, as the years went on, the number of Polish priests wanting to come to the UK became fewer and fewer until there were none.

The Parish had hoped that the building of the new Hall envisaged by Fr Fahy might be approved by the new Archbishop, the Rev George Stack. However, though the funding was in place, from the sale of the Memorial Hall and land, the Archbishop felt that a project of this nature at this time might be unwise and that it was to be postponed. Relationships between Fr Bogdan and the Archbishop became very strained.

Great discussions took place and though at the time it was very disappointing not to have the plans realised, the Parish has had to draw on its savings to undertake major roof repairs and other maintenance work needed around the Church. Fr Bogdan was very dismayed by the outcome of these discussions but even though a hall was out of the question, a tent was not. A large marquee was purchased by the Polish Community and this was erected in the garden by the side of the Church. Teas and coffees were served after Mass and also delicious Polish cakes.

Even though his workload was heavy and Fr Bogdan often spent much time on the road travelling to Polish people in other areas he often referred to St Patrick's as his UK home and was very pleased with the support and help given to him by both the English and the Polish Communities. However, his health began to deteriorate and the strain of coping with two very different communities began to take its toll. In May 2017 he realised that he would have to leave St Patrick's and began exploring other options. However on September 9th 2017 after a short time in hospital Fr Bogdan passed away at home in St Patrick's Presbytery. He was just 61 years old. His Solemn Requiem Mass was attended by more than 50 priests and deacons, family members and parishioners from both communities, after which he returned to his native Poland to be laid to rest. Fr Michal Ozczudlowski was appointed by the Polish Catholic Mission to minister to the Polish Community.