The first Polish immigrants to arrive in the city of Stamford were Stanisław and Franciszka Podrazik who settled on Liberty Street in the west end of Stamford in 1874. There followed shortly thereafter Wojciech (Adalbert) Mróz, and a little later Władysław Salamon. By 1896 the number of Polish immigrants in Stamford was large enough to occasion thoughts of organization. Thus, in October, 1897 an informal gathering of these immigrants began to discuss ways and means of forming a typical Polish mutual aid society. Less than three months later, on January 23, 1898, twenty-nine Polish immigrants gathered formally to found the Mutual Aid Society of King John III Sobieski.

Memories are now hazy as to why the original membership chose to honor the name of the seventeenth century Polish king. The choice, nonetheless, is very significant. It shows, first of all, a group with a sense of history. King John continues to occupy a prominent place in the pantheon of Polish heroes as the defender of Vienna against the Turks. He is, moreover, honored in the Christian world for this selfless act, jeopardizing even the safety of his own kingdom to defend Christian Europe against the Moslems. For these Polish immigrants, now thrown into a hostile anti-Catholic environment, he was the symbol of the defense of Holy Mother Church against its enemies. These were Polish immigrants with a sense of national consciousness which they brought with them from their peasant villages in Poland. Honoring a national, albeit non-religious and unsainted, personage all the more dramatizes that sense of patriotism which was from the beginning a marked characteristic of the Polish immigrant in America.

It is also a safe assumption that the twenty-nine original members of the King John III Sobieski Society were not in any sense an "intelligentsia", experienced in organizational matters. They sought the advice of Father Lucyan Bójnowski of New Britain, Connecticut as to the next steps to be taken in their organizational progress. Father Bójnowski advised them to join the national organization of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, based in Chicago, which was formally accomplished on September 17, 1898. This first mutual aid society among the several which were eventually founded among the Poles of Stamford reflected another characteristic of the Polish immigrants which set them apart from the dominant majority Anglo-Saxons and Irish. Mutual aid societies were fraternal, charitable and insurance societies, closer in spirit to the medieval guilds than any comparable American organizations. They maintained a set of religious and charitable obligations to their members which sharply contrasted with the "self-help" mentality of the frontier culture of America. These mutual aid societies were another of several examples of the differences between the Christianity of the Roman- Mediterranean cultural world and that of the Anglo-Saxon world. This difference was noticed even by their Irish-American co-religionists, especially when a delegation of Polish immigrants, already well-organized into a mutual aid society, arrived at the door of a rectory of an Irish-American parish in order to seek advice, permission to see the bishop, and sometimes funds to establish their own parish church.
Although the pastor of the only Roman Catholic church in Stamford was always concerned about the spiritual welfare of everyone in his flock, be they Irish, German, Italian, or Polish, Father John O’Brien was apparently not happy when a delegation from the King John III Sobieski Society sought permission from him to approach Bishop Michael Tierney about the formation of a new parish. Even though there were only four Polish priests in the entire state of Connecticut, Father O’Brien managed to get one of them to come to Stamford periodically to hear confessions. Whatever the reasons for Father O’Brien’s lack of enthusiasm, he did not oppose the suggestion openly, so that a delegation of members of the King John III Sobieski Society composed of Władysław Balerński, Franciszek Leśniowski, Stanisław Leśniowski, Szymon Bieleń, and Piotr Salamon approached Bishop Tierney sometime in 1902 with a petition to send a Polish speaking priest to Stamford. Bishop Tierney's answer is nowhere recorded but we may surmise that the right reverend bishop advised them to wait a while longer for there was shortage of Polish speaking priests in his diocese. Another reason may have been that, in the bishop's eyes, the small group of Poles then living in Stamford was simply not numerous enough to maintain a parish even though the economic picture in Stamford in 1902 was fairly promising. Such a picture, when applied to the Polish immigrants in Stamford may be misleading as a careful study of the city directory of Stamford would seem to indicate. Of the 160 adults with distinctly Polish names listed in the Stamford City Directory for 1903, ten percent of these were unemployed laborers, whereas eighty-four percent of these adults were employed in unskilled, menial labor. Thirty-eight percent of these adult Poles were boarders which indicated an intention to return to Poland once they had saved enough money to improve their family's lot in Poland, or they were waiting for their wives to join them from Poland. The latter statistic indicates at least some indecision as to permanent residence.

Whatever else transpired between the delegation and Bishop Tierney is unknown. We do know that Bishop Tierney did not procrastinate very long in sending a priest for Stamford's Poles. A Father Jegliczka, of Slovak ancestry, arrived in Stamford in January, 1903. In spite of his earnest desire to serve Stamford's Poles, his Polish was too poor to be understood, and he finally suggested to Bishop Tierney that only a Polish priest could fulfill the responsibility of pastor to them. It was Father Jegliczka's recommendation that determined Bishop Tierney to send the newly-arrived Father Zdzisław Luczycki to Stamford early in 1903.

Father Luczycki had spent several months as a curate under the pastorate of the later patriarch of Connecticut’s Polish clergy, Father Bójnowski of New Britain, and came to Stamford with the highest recommendation. He was outwardly the perfect choice for his roots went back to “Ziemia Lubelska” (Lublin region) of the Russian dominated part of Poland. A study of the early marital records of Holy Name Parish indicates that, in the first decade of the parish's existence, sixty-two percent (62%) of those contracting the marriage bond listed their place of birth as Russian Poland, whereas twenty-eight percent (28%) came from Polish Galicia or Austrian Poland. Though there were some minor differences in speech and religious customs between Poles arriving from Russian Poland and those from Polish Poland, which caused difficulties for parishes in the Midwest, this factor was not present in Stamford, for very few Polish immigrants came from Prussian Poland, according to the early marital records.

The certification of organization of the new parish was legally formalized and filed with the secretary of state of Connecticut on July 19, 1903. Even before this formal legal act, the parish
began to function with tremendous zeal and energy. After having decided on a location and having purchased a plot of land for a church building near the intersection of South and Atlantic Streets, the small congregation of Fifty families found its resources depleted. Father Luczycki, confident that the future of the new parish was bright, gently goaded his parishioners to extend themselves beyond their means in order to build their new house of worship as quickly as possible. His confidence was grounded in the steadily increasing number of immigrants arriving to Stamford. Unlike the earlier ones, who lacked direction and advice, at the turn of the century Stamford's growing Polonia community was fortunate to receive the aid of one of its own: after the death of Stanisław Podraziak, his wife, Mrs. Franciszka Podraziak (Parker) became assistant immigration officer for the Stamford district. In this highly responsible position, "Grandma Parker," as she was affectionately known, was instrumental in welcoming and settling Polish immigrants into the Stamford area.

The new structure, a modest one, combining a church, a rectory, and classrooms for a school was finished at the beginning of 1905 at a cost of $25,000. It was only a beginning for Father Luczycki. Energetically moving toward the organization of the parish into a network of societies, the pastor formed a Perpetual Adoration Society in order thereby to tie himself more closely to his parishioners, for the membership was required to gather before the Most Holy Sacrament at the altar once a week, and he, as their spiritual mentor, joined them. A later pastor of the parish, Father Francis Wladasz, in his private chronicle of the parish, described Father Luczycki as "a model priest."

Unfortunately, Father Luczycki, sincere, pious, loving pastor to the flock committed to his care, was naive to the realities of the American business world. His desire was a much larger church which could accommodate the growing congregation, but his financial acumen did not match that desire. He conceived a scheme—one can label it a "get rich quick" scheme—by which he sold his parishioners non-interest bearing bonds in the parish at ten dollars each which were in turn raffled twice a year, the winners receiving only the amount of money they had actually paid for the shares. By this means Father Luczycki was hoping to finance the building of his dream church and other parish structures.

Murmurs and protests began to reach the ears of Bishop Michael Tierney in Hartford. Since Father Luczycki's scheme was a violation of diocesan regulations, Bishop Tierney quickly removed him from his pastorate on April 30, 1906, an action that was later criticized in Father Wladasz's chronicle as "impulsive." The financial records of the "bond scheme" were never found and it is possible that Father Luczycki never kept any financial records of the scheme. In spite of these seeming indiscretions, Father Luczycki was always held in high esteem by most of his Stamford parishioners for he had left them a legacy of unity in the face of the great financial burdens they had incurred. He had truly laid the spiritual, social and material foundations of the parish.

Bishop Tierney designated the young, handsome Father Ignacy Kruszyński as the second pastor of the Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus. Ignacy Kruszyński had arrived as an immigrant boy in Detroit with his parents and the major portion of his education was received in American schools, culminating with the Polish Seminary at Orchard Lake, Michigan where he was ordained to the priesthood. He had never held a pastorate anywhere before and warned to his task with great enthusiasm. He quickly established a reputation among his parishioners as a spell-binding
preacher. The parish under Father Kruszyński's leadership was poised for remarkable growth as the number of Polish immigrants to Stamford continued to flow, necessitating more serious thoughts of building a new and larger church to accommodate the increased numbers. Attesting to this increase was the formation of three new affiliates of the Polish National Alliance and one affiliate of the Polish Roman Catholic Union.

Peace seemed to reign in Stamford's Polish parish in the first three years of Father Kruszyński's pastorate. However, another series of unfortunate incidents under this well-meaning but naive young pastor halted the progress of the parish and embittered relations in the parish for a generation. Like his predecessor, Father Kruszyński had visions of a complex of parish buildings financed through an even stranger, more naive business scheme. All that was needed was to wave a magic wand and the money would begin to flow.

Father Luczycki's ill-advised venture had left the parish in poor financial condition.\(^ {31}\) Father Kruszyński apparently attempted to dig the parish out of the financial difficulty by a stroke of business daring. Without the legal sanction of the city of Stamford or the permission of Bishop Tierney, he invested the remaining bonds from the Luczycki pastorate in a cooperative store dealing in dry goods. Enthusiastic parishioners, influenced by the glowing message of their pastor, began to invest their savings into the cooperative. The management of the cooperative was in the hands of Father Kruszyński's brother and sister, whereas the mastermind of the entire scheme as well as other speculative ventures was Father Kruszyński's nephew, August Ferry Wansierski. According to the Władasz chronicle, none of Father Kruszyński's relatives had had any business experience, management was poor and competition from Jewish merchants in downtown Stamford was very effective.

The inevitable reckoning finally arrived when expenditures became higher than sales and creditors began to demand payment. The first such creditor was the Stamford Realty Company which owned the building on Main Street where the J. F. Ferry Clothing and Dry Goods Company was located. A day later, C. O. Miller Dry Goods Company and Bell Brothers also brought suit against J. F. Ferry & Company.

The action of the realty company opened the eyes of those parishioners who had invested money in the cooperative and some of them decided to join the legal action against Father Kruszyński and his nephew. An investigation had meanwhile revealed that Father Kruszyński and his nephew had engaged in extensive real estate manipulations since Father Kruszyński's arrival in Stamford. Two plots of land, one on South and Oliver Streets, the other, a twenty-three acre plot on Pepperidge Road, were purchased by Father Kruszyński, the first plot being transferred to the name of the parish, the second plot to the name of August Ferry Wansierski.

The lawsuits and the consequent warrant for the arrest of Father Kruszyński for misuse of parish funds served to polarize the entire parish-community. Father Kruszyński had many friends among his parishioners and these collected the necessary one thousand dollars bail money to set him free. The newly-installed bishop of Hartford, the Most Reverend John J. Nilan arrived in Stamford personally after receiving a report from the procurator of the State of Connecticut concerning the misuse of parish funds. He had no other choice but to remove Father Kruszyński from his pastorate, but this action created a wave of recriminations, charges and countercharges that
threatened to destroy the parish itself. Bishop Nilan became the object of scorn and derision, followed by "Irish" and "Yankees" in general.

Father Kruszyński sought a temporary haven with Father Bójnowski in New Britain after his removal. Shortly after his departure, a meeting of his friends, but billed as a parish meeting, was held at which a committee of fifteen members was appointed to investigate the charges against the deposed pastor. According to the Stamford Advocate, three committeemen travelled to Hartford carrying a letter to Bishop Nilan "which is said to represent the feeling of a majority of the parish." This letter, according to the spokesman of the pro-Kruszyński faction, Mr. Leon Lesnowski, was intended to counteract the charges made in another letter to Bishop Nilan in which, Lesnowski charged, some names were forged. The committee's letter to Bishop Nilan deplored the excessive publicity given to the case, sought to allay the fears of those parishioners who had invested money in the Kruszyński-Wansierski ventures by assuring the bishop and the parishioners that "they will get every penny of it back," and promising that Father Kruszyński would come back to Stamford to make a complete accounting of his financial affairs.

Father Kruszyński's friends engaged the services of the distinguished law firm of Cummings and Lockwood to defend him. They also requested that an accountant representing the former pastor, a T. F. Tipper, be allowed to study the priest's financial records in order to determine whether and to what extent any irregularities had been committed. At the same time, Bishop Nilan had also sent Father Joseph M. Raniszewski, an energetic young pastor from St. Casimir's Parish in Terryville, Connecticut to study the same parish records and serve as a temporary administrator.

On December 19, 1910 a bench warrant from Superior Court was issued for the arrest of Father Kruszyński. The warrant contained the names of twenty-three parishioners "who alleged that he embezzled money totaling about ten thousand dollars." Father Kruszyński was located at the hotel, of his uncle, on Tower Hill, West Brighton, Staten Island. He waived the extradition process and was returned to Stamford under police escort. When news of his arrival spread throughout the community, according to the Advocate account, "a somewhat moving exhibition of devotion, respect, and confidence... was given here last night at the Town Hall by upwards of fifty of his former parishioners." In order to avoid a chaotic scene, Police Chief Brennan decided that it would be more convenient for Father Kruszyński to meet with all his parishioners together. The lobby of Town Hall was filled with his supporters who listened to his explanations with tears in their eyes, expressed confidence in his integrity, then filed one by one before him and, with bowed knee, kissed his hand.

Father Kruszyński was remanded to custody to await a special term of Superior Court in Bridgeport on December 27, 1910. Bail was set at $10,000 by Judge Wheeler of Superior Court, this sum having been paid by Mr. & Mrs. Leon, Lesnowski, Mrs. Antonia Baleński, and Mr. Michael Bender, all parishioners of Holy Name. The bill of particulars against Father Kruszyński listed twenty-three counts of embezzlement, among which was the charge that $15,000 invested by parishioners was still unaccounted for and that he had used that money for his own purposes by purchasing real estate.

Meanwhile, both Accountant T. F. Tipper and Father Raniszewski, who had been busy studying the parish's account books came to somewhat different conclusions concerning, Father
Kruszyński's financial stewardship. Mr. Tipper, employed by the pro-Kruszyński faction, exonerated Father Kruszyński, admitting at the same time that he "was guilty only of careless and unbusinesslike methods in keeping his accounts ..." Father Raniszewski, on the other hand, would not directly contradict the Tipper statement, but left no doubt that he saw the matter differently. "Father Kruszyński does not yet I realize the gravity of the situation," he told an Advocate reporter. He travelled to Hartford to render his final report 1 of the affair to the chancellor of the diocese, Monsignor John G. Murray on February 15, 1911.

There is no record that the trial was ever held in Superior Court, Bridgeport which leads one to the conclusion that the entire affair was quietly laid to rest by the two sides in out-of-court settlements. The Stamford Advocate suddenly became silent over the contention after February 15, 1911. The Władasz chronicle, however, mentions that the Most Reverend Bishop Nilan lost the case on all counts and had to settle all accounts amounting to a total of $45,000." Bishop Nilan then laid this crushing financial burden on the young parish, an action which the Władasz chronicle labeled an "unjustified and illegal burden." The future pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish had expressed the widespread sentiment of his time, more than a decade later: that the people of the parish were innocent of any wrongdoing and should therefore not have been held responsible for the indiscretions of one naive and unwise priest. The Władasz chronicle went further and, in a final comment on Father Kruszyński, opined that "he had the best intentions but not the luck to carry them through."

To assess the consequences of the Luczycki and Kruszyński pastorates is easier than determining the causes of the turmoil. As for the determining causes, the task is complicated by the paucity of evidence. However, certain indications do appear which would seem to indicate difficulties between pastor and people in the Luczycki pastorate. Several questions come to mind: why did two successive pastors, both high-minded spiritual leaders, find it necessary to enter questionable business ventures? Can one simply dismiss the ordeal of the parish as the result of the inordinate ambition of two priests? The personalities of both Fathers Luczycki and Kruszyński which came through both in the news articles of the Stamford Advocate, a contemporary source, and in the Władasz chronicle do not indicate personal ambition. The cause of the turmoil might possibly be ascribed to a conflict between priest and parishioners over the role and function of the laity in controlling the finances of the parish. An interview of Leon Lesnowski, a loyal Kruszyński supporter, recounted in the Stamford Advocate, lends some credence to this interpretation even though that evidence is fragmentary and inconclusive.

Thus, in the midst of the Kruszyński affair, Mr. Lesnowski revealed that Father Luczycki had formed a parish building association to direct the successful progress of the building of the parish church. Originally this building association had a board of directors under the chairmanship of the pastor. When Father Luczycki refused the suggestion that the building association be incorporated according to the laws of the state of Connecticut, all the members of the board of directors resigned and Father Luczycki, left to his own devices, was forced to raise the money for the new church through the medium of an illegal bond sale.

Father Kruszyński continued the practice of forming a building association, but invited further misunderstanding. At issue apparently was the role of the building association itself in parish affairs. Penetrating through the mist of incomplete information, one offers the hypothesis that the
The origin of the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus is associated with a sign of Independency, so prevalent in the nascent Polish parishes of that day. The Independent movement insisted that in some sense, the parish belongs to the people and that at least a role in parish finance may be assigned to the people through the medium of elected bodies like the building association. This may be regarded as the first sign of the gradual Americanization of the parish, for it suggests a congregational rather than a hierarchical structure of church government. Independency goes further and implicitly, though probably unwittingly, attacks the ancient Roman principle of paterfamilias wherein the bishop and pastor lie at the top of a pyramid possessing the jurisdictional authority granted to the Apostles and their successors by Christ Himself. If this hypothesis stands, then it must be concluded that both Fathers Luczycki and Kruszyński could not incorporate the building committee, could not associate the laity of the parish in parish affairs to the extent demanded by the Independent movement, and thereby compromise the jurisdictional authority of the bishop and pastor, and finally, as a consequence, were forced into unwarranted financial schemes once a significant portion of the parish refused to cooperate with their pastor in the spirit of Independency.

The consequences, not only of the Luczycki-Kruszyński schemes but also of Bishop Nilan's harsh verdict in saddling the struggling young parish with the debt incurred illegally by two pastors, bedeviled the parish for at least two decades. If the bishop is truly the head of the parish, then the bishop cannot shirk his responsibility, cannot transfer his pastoral obligation through his designated pastor onto the parishioners. That pastoral obligation, so it was argued, extends beyond the spiritual into the temporal affairs of the diocese and its component parishes. But then, if not Holy Name's parishioners, who would eventually bear the financial burden? The bishop and his pastor depend on the contributions of the faithful. Certainly it could not be the revenues from the cathedraticum or annual diocesan assessments on each parish! Other parishes had nothing to do with the unfortunate tangle of financial imprudence of Holy Name's pastors.

Bishop Nilan had taken a calculated risk in his decision to saddle Holy Name of Jesus Parish with the huge debt. Recognizing the potential explosiveness of the situation—the Poles seeking their scapegoats in the Irish, because Bishops Tierney and Nilan were Irish, and the "Yankees" because Stamford businessmen had originally brought the affair to public view—Bishop Nilan chose as the next pastor of Holy Name a priest who had already won the confidence of many of her parishioners. Father Joseph M. Raniszewski assumed the vacant pastorate in March, 1911.

The Stamford Advocate welcomed Father Raniszewski as the new pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish with a laudatory article reciting his accomplishments in St. Casimir's Parish in Terryville, Connecticut. Quoting the Bristol Press with approval and citing the "tremendous success" of his Terryville pastorate, the Advocate concluded that "Father Raniszewski was very popular among all the residents both in Terryville and Bristol and in fact everywhere he went, regardless of creed." Father Raniszewski's "genial and kindly greeting will be missed by many who loved him for his genuine Christian spirit ...", the Bristol Press editorialized.

He had been chosen pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish because of his tact and geniality. Under more normal circumstances, his pastorate would have been successful. There were, in fact, some favorable indicators. Stamford by 1910 had grown into a city of 25,000 people, an increase of fifty-seven percent in the previous decade. Much of this increase was the result of immigration
from East-Central and southern Europe. Holy Name Parish benefited from this increase in population for it now became a parish with 3,000 parishioners, a large parish by the standards of that day. However, a minute study of the *Stamford Directory* for 1913, a decade after the founding of the parish, shows a rather pathetic picture of a struggling parish-community, little different, if much larger than the parish-community in the year of the parish's founding. The only significant change in ten years, besides numerical growth, was a sharp decline in the percentage of boarders which would indicate that the population of Holy Name Parish was acquiring stability and permanence. However, even allowing for margins of error in determining Polish ancestry by means of surnames which were recorded in anglicized form by clerks who found the Polish language exotic, a dismal picture appears. Of the 337 adults listed with distinctly Polish names, 187 were unemployed or fifty-five percent of those listed as employable. Furthermore, of those who were employed, only nine percent were in the skilled or semiskilled category, an increase of only one percent in one decade, whereas only three percent were self-employed as business and professional people.

The unemployment figure of fifty-five percent would have dissuaded most men from costly endeavors. On the other hand, the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus had grown large enough to justify the establishment of a parochial school. Father Raniszewski's major achievement, it seems, was the establishment of a parochial school in 1910 with a teaching staff of two lay women and one hundred pupils. A year later, Father Raniszewski brought four Sisters of the Resurrection from Chicago to instruct 118 pupils. The school gradually grew in the four classrooms located in the combination church, rectory and school building on South Street. In the pastorate of Father Raniszewski, the school reached a peak enrollment of 181 pupils taught by five Resurrection Sisters, an average of thirty-six pupils per teacher.

Having launched the parochial school which, under the economic conditions then prevailing among Stamford's Poles, together with the lingering distrust of the first decade, was a brave, yet necessary move, Father Raniszewski was unable to rally the parish-community behind him. Indeed, the only significant achievement of his pastorate, besides the school, was the organization of the Third Order of St. Francis, a group of spiritually motivated women whose services to the parish were always spiritually great, though not materially so, because of its numerical size. His particular talent was tact and urbanity, but the parish in the aftermath of the difficulties of the first decade needed far more than that. It needed strength and commitment, and Father Raniszewski, for all his appealing qualities, was lacking in the very qualities of leadership which the specific situation demanded. Thus, the Wladasz chronicle renders perhaps too harsh a judgment against him when he wrote that "what was needed was work and personal commitment, but this was totally lacking." From the hindsight of another generation, one must modify somewhat (his harsh judgement by reminding ourselves that Father Raniszewski's fine work in Terryville, in far less demanding circumstances, indicated a priest of sincerity and spiritual devotion. The tact and geniality which must have impressed even Bishop Nilan covered an essentially weak personality, one placed in the wrong place at the wrong time. Not authority or command were his style but "fun and games." Thus, the Wladasz chronicle again seems to bear down heavily on the impropriety of Father Raniszewski's behavior when he was accused of "cards, revelry, night life."

Father Raniszewski's pastor's account book indicates considerable disorganization and inattention to detail. Thus, no profile of the spiritual health of the parish is possible because he
failed to record either his own or his parishioners' performance of religious duties. The financial condition of the parish, on the other hand, did not improve, in most years, revenues barely covering expenses. As the Wladasz chronicle relates, it gradually began to dawn on many parishioners that something drastic had to be done to remedy this situation, for parishioners, "seeing their parish weakly administered, closed their pocketbooks." Committee after committee went to see the right reverend bishop, the Wladasz chronicle relates, until finally even Bishop Nilan from afar had to admit that Father Raniszewski's continued presence in Stamford was a danger to faith and morals.

Human nature dictates a harsh antidote to an illness. Thus, when Bishop John Nilan finally decided to remove Father Raniszewski, he sent in his place a tough-minded, authoritarian personality. Reverend Louis Rusin. If the assignment of Father’s Rusin to Stamford may be regarded as another in a series of errors in judgment by the bishops of Hartford, it was at least an error often committed. What could be more natural than to follow laxity with rigor? Such a remedy does not always work as the history of the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus demonstrates.

Father Rusin was a Polish priest, born and educated in his boyhood town of Rzeszów, in Polish Galicia, then at the distinguished Jagillonian University in Cracow and finally abroad. After his arrival in the United States in 1911, he spent several years as pastor of St. Casimir's Parish, Terryville, and then was appointed to remedy the deteriorating situation in Stamford. His arrival in Stamford was greeted with no great enthusiasm. Wariness might well describe the emotion of Stamford's Polish parishioners at the arrival of another priest.

Father Rusin arrived in Stamford on July 15, 1917 at a time when the United States had just entered World War I. The economic well-being of Stamford was improving but young men were beginning to disappear in the military draft while others volunteered for the Polish army of General Haller. There is no evidence that Father Rusin encouraged his parishioners to bear arms for either their native land or their adopted country. He took a curious stance for a priest born and educated in Poland. Father Raniszewski was born in the United States, educated here exclusively, but maintained the Polishness of the parish even to the recording of all parish transactions in the Polish language. Father Rusin, on the other hand, was the first pastor to record all transactions in English. Whether this indicated an Americanizing attitude cannot be determined. Nevertheless, in all other respects the traditions and liturgy of Polish Catholicism were maintained with not even a hint that any changes were being contemplated. Father Rusin was far more concerned with the material and organizational problems of the parish and addressed himself to these problems with great energy. The parish continued to outgrow its physical facilities since the flow of Polish immigrants continued unabated until the Johnson-Reed immigration act of 1924 closed the gates to further massive immigration. Father Rusin began to think about the construction of a new church to accommodate the congregation which had by 1922 grown to 511 families. This included 1273 children, most of whom were of school age, a factor which produced serious overcrowding in the parochial school, less than satisfactory sanitary conditions for both teachers and pupils, thereby driving many of Holy Name's children into the public schools. It is true that Father Rusin's arrival brought the school enrollment from its dismal low of eighty-seven in 1917 to a high of 300 in 1919. However, in the next few years the school enrollment began to decline again to 227 in 1921.

The declining school enrollment at a time when the number of children was increasing was symptomatic of a growing malaise in the parish. At issue was the parish's dissatisfaction with
Father Rusin's approach to parish problems. Whatever Father Rusin did was probably unappreciated because he had assumed the role of the paternalistic taskmaster who did not consult with his flock. In terms of the solution of the parish's space problems, Father Rusin had no other choice but to institute stringent economics for he knew that, so long as the heavy debt remained on the parish, he would not receive permission from the bishop to build either a church or a school. Gradually the dissatisfaction of many parishioners with his austerity program was in direct ratio to his financial successes in reducing the debt on the parish. In the year 1919 Father Rusin paid $8,000 to reduce the debt on the parish, whereas in the following year, the final $2,000 was paid, freeing the parish of debt. Yet, while Father Rusin's successes were applauded by many older parishioners, the younger ones became increasingly dissatisfied because he provided them with no new facilities. According to the Wladasz chronicle, "during his time, many young people left the parish and wandered over to the Irish."

The Wladasz chronicle probably assessed Father Rusin's pastorate most accurately: "he was a model priest, perhaps a bit too severe, therefore our youth disliked him." It is at least a reasonable assumption that, not unlike that paragon of an ancient, paternalistic priestly virtue, Father Bojnowski of New Britain, Father Rusin did not or could not adjust to the changing psychology of young people born in this country, educated in American schools, conditioned by a lifestyle quite different from that of their immigrant parents. One must reckon with the fact that there were 853 baptisms in the parish in the first decade of the parish's existence and that, by the time Father Rusin arrived, enough of these younger parishioners had grown to maturity to require a re-orientation of his pastoral approach to them. Instead, Father Rusin chose to cling to the rigidity of his Polish background, suffering the consequences of growing alienation of the youth of his parish. As the Wladasz chronicle concluded, this sincere, dedicated, model priest was unappreciated in his time. Not only did he liquidate the huge debt bequeathed to him by his predecessors but he left his successor with a surplus of almost $9,000 for the new church which most parishioners prayed for years to achieve.

The crowning blow to Father Rusin's pride came at the end of the 1922 school year when the Resurrection Sisters announced their intention to leave the parochial school they had directed since the beginning in 1910. Deeply wounded by this decision and also by his growing estrangement from the younger parishioners, Father Rusin formally requested a transfer in May, 1922. Bishop Nilan approved his transfer to the pastorate of St. Joseph's Parish in Suffield, Connecticut where he continued in his old, rigid style for two years before deciding that he could no longer function effectively amongst the young, American-born generation. He resigned his pastorate and continued his priestly duties in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

With the departure of Father Rusin, the formative period in the development of the Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus ended though, of course, no one had then suspected that the parish would enter a new era in its development. The formative period, the first two decades of the parish's existence, could also be labeled the Polish period inasmuch as the mentality, the liturgy, the organizational structure of its secondary institutions bespoke close ties to the motherland of her culture. For instance, of the 537 marriages performed at Holy Name of Jesus Church in the period 1903 to 1922, all but seven of them were endogamous (i.e. both parties were Polish and Roman Catholic). The one percent exogamous marriages (i.e., where one party was of a different nationality) had involved only a single instance of a canonically mixed marriage wherein one party
was of a different religion and that instance was a Russian Orthodox schismatic, a natural enough occurrence since Stamford's Polish immigrant population came from areas of Poland where Orthodox schismatic were numerous and freely mingled with the Polish population. Another example of the maintenance of traditional ties to the motherland of the culture is afforded by the study of baptismal registers of the parish. Of the 1777 baptisms recorded in the period 1903-1922, the most popular male names were Joseph (144), John (118), Francis (74), Stanislaus (127), and Ladislaus (43). The leaders in the female category were: Helena (114), Maria (103), Anna (68), Zofia (50), and Stanislawa (47). Thus, the Holy Family—Joseph, Maria, Anna—were conspicuously honored as well as the martyred bishop of Cracow, St. Stanislaus, in both male and female versions of the name. Moreover, if we pursue our analysis a step further, even the less popular names are of traditional Polish provenance—Casimir, Czeslaus, Boleslaus, Adalbert follow in that order on the male side; Franciszka, Genowefa, Józefa, Marianna, Jadwiga on the female side.

It is ironic that the history of the parish in these first two decades of its existence should begin with such a prevalent show of energy and good will, yet precede from honest mistake to honest mistake, committed by men, all of them, who were highly motivated and sincere. After the chronicler, the historians have had their opportunity to understand and profit from a study of human foibles, the final verdict rests with God. But for those who are committed to the future of their parish, there must surely be a human "lesson" in this irony.

The Wladam Years (1922-1945)

The arrival of the Reverend Francis M. Wladasz as the fifth pastor of the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus in Stamford on June 22, 1922 began a new, more hopeful period in the history of the parish. He came unheralded as the local newspaper did not take notice of his arrival. Perhaps also, it was because he wanted it that way. He was entering upon a task which had proved too difficult for his four predecessors, and was asked to restore confidence in a parish-community which had been seething with discontent since the departure of Father Luczycki. The Stamford parish-community was like a slowly simmering cauldron of water close to the boiling point. The situation demanded neither tact alone nor a show of authority alone, but both of these qualities judiciously blended and exercised. It demanded a pastor cut in the mold of the ancient paterfamilias—authority tempered by love.

No one congratulated him on his appointment except perhaps his bishop. He was accepting an assignment for which there could be no prior preparation. He was asked to calm a parish which had lost trust in its priests. Indeed, even his background and education might have proven damaging to him had the occasion arisen to have blamed and defamed his work. Many times throughout Polish America, the scars of the Partitions had marred the relations between priests and people. Epithets like "Prusak" and "Rusak" and "Galicijak" rolled naturally from the lips of excited parishioners, and only a year previously did such a scene occur in the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New London, Connecticut.

Whereas ninety percent of Stamford's Polish immigrants were "Rusaki" or "Galicijaki," the bishop had sent them a "Prusak." For Father Francis M. Wladasz was born in the village of Saband, in that part of partitioned Poland ruled by the Germans, on September 27, 1884. After completing
his primary education in Poland, his secondary school education was completed at a Salesian Fathers Academy in Italy where he acquired a conversational facility in the Italian language to go along with the excellent Polish and German which he had learned as a boy in Poland. He completed his education at a seminary in French-speaking Fribourg, Switzerland where he was ordained on July 2, 1911 by the Right Reverend Julius Mauritius Abbet of Sion, Switzerland. Four months later he arrived in the United States and was assigned as a curate at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, New Britain, under the watchful eye of Father Lucyan Bojnowski. A warm, life-long friendship developed between these two immigrant pastors in the five years Father Wladasz remained in New Britain. On March 8, 1916 Father Wladasz assumed his first pastorate at St. Joseph's Church in Suffield, Connecticut as that parish's first pastor. A year and a half later, he was transferred to St. Joseph's Church in Rockville, Connecticut. Finally, the call came to assume direction of the Stamford parish.

Stamford in 1922 was a larger city than either Suffield or Rockville, though not as large as New Britain. According to the census of 1920, Stamford had grown into a city of 35,000, an increase of almost forty percent in the last decade. As in the previous decade, much of the increase must be assigned to immigration from East-Central and southern Europe, which also explains the fact that, upon Father Wladasz's arrival, demands for a new church were persistently being heard as the small quarters of the church-school-convent were becoming increasingly inadequate. Both a new church and a new school were clearly needed, but the financial ability of the parish to raise the necessary funds had to be determined.

Church and school were material needs which ultimately depended on the trust and goodwill of the parishioners. In the turmoil of the previous two decades, Stamford's Polish community had even lost the trust and confidence of the city's business and professional establishment. This loss of trust and confidence was so serious that when the new pastor, Father Wladasz, tried to deposit the receipts of collections on the first Sunday of his pastorate, the First National Bank of Stamford refused to accept the deposit on the ground that Father Wladasz was not legally the pastor of the church. It required the intervention of Father John O'Brien, pastor of St. John's Church to convince the bank management that he had, indeed, been duly designated the pastor by the bishop of Hartford.

The restoration of confidence in the priesthood required both tact and firmness. Father Rusin's departure unannounced had left the community rife with wild rumors and condemnation for priests in general as he was unjustly suspected of having absconded with the parish's funds. Father Wladasz had to defend him from the pulpit and privately before the suspicions dissipated. His chronicle and correspondence reveal that a major cause of Father Rusin's departure was a serious rift with the Resurrection Sisters who decided not to continue teaching at the school after 1922. The school did not operate in the school year 1922-1923.

Father Wladasz wrote a letter to the last principal of the school. Sister M. Monica, C.R. inquiring as to the reasons for the decision not to return to the Holy Name School. Sister Monica's reply cited a shortage of teaching sisters, but perhaps more revealing, the Sisters were dissatisfied with the inconveniences in both the school and their convent. The letter took pointed exception to Father Rusin's claim that they had been removed by the State Department of Education. Two months later, Father Wladasz received another letter from Sister Mary Zybulewicz, C.R., delegate
general at the Provincial House of the Resurrection Sisters, Norwood Park, Illinois which provided Father Wladasz with a more explicit explanation of the Resurrection Sisters' departure. They left the school, she testified, because of the "general inconveniences in the parish—the school was cold, and other shortcomings—two young sisters in one year contacted tuberculosis in Stamford, both of whom are not able to teach.

The finality of the Resurrection Sisters' replay forced Father Wladasz to look elsewhere. He persuaded the Bernardine Sisters of Reading, Pennsylvania to teach at Holy Name School and purchased a new convent for them on the corner of South and Henry Streets where the present school is now located." The school was the easiest of Father Wladasz's many problems to solve. Far more serious was the general restoration of confidence in the pastor and to this problem Father Wladasz addressed himself immediately.

Although Father Rusin's pastorate had ended in a size file financial surplus, it was apparently achieved at the cost of the neglect of the repairs to existing buildings. It was therefore necessary to borrow $15,000 from the First National Bank of Stamford to purchase a new convent for the Bernardine Sisters and to repair the existing buildings. However, the problem of a new church became more imperative with each passing year. Realizing this, Father Wladasz decided to confront the problem head-on in spite of the many risks involved.

Involving the parishioners in a common effort to build a new church would at the same time serve to unite the pastor and his parishioners thereby gradually restoring the shattered confidence in pastoral leadership which is so necessary for the creation of a unified community. Unfortunately in 1923 the Stamford Polish community still did not benefit from the nationwide prosperity which had raised the wages of industrial workers twice what they had been in 1914. How does one explain the fact that, of the 440 adults with distinctly Polish names listed in the Stamford Directory in 1923, 237 of them, or fifty-four percent were unemployed? Historians and social scientists who rely on mere statistics to explain a phenomenon such as this are faced with a serious dilemma, for no single overt act of human prejudice may be singled out as proof that the Polish worker in Stamford was being discriminated against. Human prejudice is seldom overt, it is rather more subtle, silent, and thereby more devastating psychologically since the victim in silent frustration must accept the verdict of his unemployability without protest. There may be, after all, various legitimate reasons cited as to why a particular person is unemployable, especially in the skilled and semi-skilled occupations. These reasons narrow considerably when applied to the unskilled and the Stamford Directory clearly depicts a Polish labor force in 1923 that was overwhelmingly unskilled.

Two explanations are here offered for the unusually high unemployment rate among Stamford's Poles in a period of high prosperity. First, it lends considerable weight to the assertion in the Władasz chronicle that, as a result of the parish community's continuing malaise, which at times involved the wider Stamford community, the reputation of Stamford's Polish residents suffered. The practical result was unemployment.

Such an explanation must be placed in a wider perspective. The entire nation was undergoing a psychosis in the aftermath of World War I, A recent textbook in American history summarizes the temper of the twenties as "marked by narrowness and provincialism as well as by prosperity and
complacency... Among many Americans there lingered an intolerance of all—isms, a distrust of foreign nations, and a dislike, often bordering on hatred of people of foreign origins.

There is enough evidence of an implicit nature to support the assertion that the unruly behavior of the Polish immigrant in Stamford and elsewhere in the nation was caused by the frustration of knowing he was the victim of subtle prejudice without the means of defending himself against it. How else can one explain the seemingly irrational and unjust charge of these Poles, during the so-called "Kruszyński episode" in 1910-1911 that the "Irish" and the "Yankees" were in a conspiracy against them? When one considers the phenomenon of these intergroup relations, based on stereotypes, fears, often profound differences in cultural values, the magnitude of Father Wladasz's task becomes apparent.

To attack the problem of deteriorating inter-group relations—his parishioners in relation to the wider Stamford community—was a task beyond the competence of any single individual for the phenomenon was not local but national. However, Father Wladasz considered it his duty as a Christian pastor to repair the damage done by two decades of turmoil. The building of the new church and new school was therefore symbolic of his intention to bring his parish-community gradually into the mainstream of the life of the American Catholic Church and the wider Stamford community. The prescriptions of this gentle, dedicated priest for the Americanization of his parish-community stand in sharp contrast to the demands of a variety of Americanizes who insisted on rapid, unnatural solutions to a complex historical-cultural problem.

Father Wladasz was the first pastor of Holy Name Parish to make the first necessary compromise with American reality—he intended to consult with his parishioners by calling a parish meeting to consider the new parish church. It was a concession which a priest trained in the paterfamilias mold would find difficult to accept. That fateful meeting, on Sunday, February 18, 1923 was held in Mission Hall, and as expected, became unruly. The reverend pastor explained the purpose of the meeting which was; how best to raise enough money to build the new church. The question as to whether to build the new church at all was never considered in spite of scattered sentiment against the idea of a new church. After having duly elected Mr. Anthony Leczycki as secretary of the meeting, the congregation debated several proposals for raising money. The first proposal was offered by Mr. Stanislaw Karwowski, to assess each parishioner above the age of eighteen an annual tax of six dollars. After several friendly amendments, Mr. Józef Lasko arose to deliver a highly inflammatory speech in which he accused the clergy of the wide gap that had developed between priest and people, using what the secretary of the meeting referred to as "unparliamentarily and inappropriate" language and was warned that he faced the loss of his parliamentary privilege to speak for such behavior.

Once the meeting had returned to normal procedures, the motion of Mr. Karwowski was accepted by a voice vote. At this point Father Wladasz reminded the meeting that the plot of land on which the new church was to stand still was not clear of debt and it would be proper if the parish could clear all financial encumbrances to the land so that construction could begin as soon as permission could be granted by the bishop. Mr. Józef Lasko rose to object to the proceedings but others refused to allow him to continue speaking, and the collection of the funds necessary for paying the debt on the land proceeded without further incident.
Father Wladasz must have impressed his parishioners with his quiet, confident efficiency. In the first two full years of his pastorate, the revenues of the parish improved considerably so that between the years 1922 and 1924 there was an eighty-four percent rise in the surplus which occasioned Father Wladasz's private comment in his diary which he attached to the last page of his yearly financial summary that "the coming year (1925) will be one of great prosperity for all parishioners of Stamford." Indeed, he sensed a new spirit of peace and concord among his parishioners. Even though his parishioners were poor, he continued, they do not spare their pennies for a good cause.

The parish's membership rolls indicate that his optimism was justified, for families which had left the parish in the Rusin pastorate for St. John's Parish began to return. In the year 1924 sixty-one families had increased the parish's rolls, a ten percent increase over the previous year. There were also conspicuous successes in the field of organizational work. During the Rusin pastorate, several interesting organizational developments occurred, another branch of the Polish National Alliance, the Henryk Sienkiewicz Society (1920), and the League of the Sacred Heart (1921), but only the latter could be said to have been due to the intervention of Father Rusin, whereas the Henryk Sienkiewicz Society was the result of a natural expansion of P. N. A. membership.

It may be said that Father Wladasz was really the first pastor of the parish to become involved in the life of the "Polska Ziemia" community beyond the strictly religious life of the parish. This factor implicitly points to the conclusion that the Stamford Polonia community was seeking to end its ghetto isolation, in a word, to "Americanize." In 1923 there were significantly no boarders listed in the Stamford Directory as temporary residents of Stamford. Indeed, to add to the claim that Stamford's Polonia was here to stay, sixteen per cent of those listed in the Directory with distinctly Polish names were home owners.

Three new organizational developments before the building of the new church point in the direction of the acculturation of Stamford's Polonia. In 1924 Father Wladasz was at least indirectly involved in the formation of the Polish Business and Professional Club and also the Youth Club, whereas the Holy Name Athletic Club was organized in 1925. Unlike most of the previous organizations founded in the parish, these three clubs bear witness to the Americanization process that inexorably proceeds in any community. It might well be argued, on the contrary, that they represent an attempt to perpetuate the Polish ghetto. However, just as one does not step off a human cargo ship one day to become an instant American the next day, so one could not expect even the sons and daughters of immigrants to feel comfortable in American organizations without first passing through the experience of their own American-style organizations. They had to create their own typically American organizations attached to the milieu that they were still familiar with as a necessary transition from Pole to hyphenated Polish-American to the American of Polish ancestry. Father Wladasz himself, the new church about to be built, and all the characteristic organizations formed in the 1920's were examples of the hyphenated mind of "Polska Ziemia." The liturgical services in the church maintained their traditional Polish peasant village flavor, the "Polish" school taught the Polish language and the history of Poland, but it also taught all the typically American subjects in the English language, whereas the organizational life of the secondary institutions of the parish-community was moving toward the typically American emphasis on social camaraderie and sports even though Polish may have been in use at meetings.
It is not without significance that Father Wladasz, different in background from his predecessors only in the fact that he was born in the "wrong" part of Poland, should have the prescience to understand that in this crucial decade of transition—the 1920's—a different pastoral style was required, one which applied both flexibility and compromise along with the traditional image of the Catholic priest as paterfamilias and sacerdos. The 1920's were the true test of a priest's ability to cope with the different life style. The building of the new church and the attendant rhythm of life which grew around the new structure in the late 1920's and 1930's demonstrate the transition. It was a sign of the times that every one of the twenty-six couples married at Holy Name Church in 1923 were born in the United States. It further merits attention that, of the 143 marriages at Holy Name Parish in the period 1923 to 1929, twenty-two marriages were exogamous (mixed nationality) or fifteen percent of the marriages had crossed ethnic lines, though not yet religious lines. A careful scrutiny of the baptismal records reveals a similar trend: in the same period there were 575 baptisms and the most popular male given name was the traditionally English Edward (35), followed by Joseph (30), John (26), Stanislaw (21) and Francis (19). These figures surely reflect the transitional nature of the 1920's, for although the traditional names of the Holy Family have become outnumbered by "American-English" names, the older traditional names like Joseph, John and Stanislaw still continued to be popular. The same comment applies to female names: the most popular continued to be Helen (47), Mary (16) and Zofia (10). However, not only did their popularity sharply decline, but for the first time, in both male and female categories, names, which could not be considered traditionally Polish began to appear: Henry (17), and Robert (6), Norman and Reginald; Dorothy (9) and Barbara (6), Genevieve, Elizabeth and Eleanor.

Father Wladasz was also a far-sighted man. The decision to build a new church was arrived at with his parishioners but there were still two more decisions that had to be made. He was not entirely convinced that "Polska Ziemia" and the area around South Street was the best location for the church for he was thinking ahead to the time when his parishioners would be scattered throughout the Stamford area and the South Street area would become increasingly industrial. He took a careful survey of available areas throughout the city and the west side area off Fairfield Avenue as well as the area near the present Stamford Catholic High School appealed to him. In this instance, discretion won over desire for he realized that "Polska Ziemia" held strong emotional attachments for his parishioners. He was also mindful of the fact that it would have been difficult for most of his parishioners to travel to the west side or Springdale. The second problem related to the best architectural style for the new church. He was said to have consulted numerous pastors in Connecticut and New York who had had practical experiences in the building of churches, including his long-time friend, Father Lucyan Bojnowski of New Britain. Ultimately the decision to build the new church in the Romanesque byzantine exterior and Italian baroque interior style was his own and reflected his early seminary experience in Italy. To build such a church required the importation of Italian Carrara marble, a consideration which did not raise any visible protest from his parishioners. This structure was to become Stamford Polonia's pride and joy, a monument not only reflecting the depth of their faith but their pride in what they, as a parish-community could achieve through unified effort.

The actual construction of the new church commenced on April 5, 1925. Both the increased size of the parish and demands on the pastor's time in overseeing the construction of the new church justified the pastor's request for a curate to lighten the burden. Bishop Nilan assigned the
Reverend Stanislaus Nalewajk, a native of Bridgeport, to assist Father Wladasz. Both the ceremonies of the laying of the cornerstone and the blessing of the church are auspicious events in the life of a parish, the one symbolizing birth, the other symbolizing maturity. The laying of the cornerstone was celebrated on Sunday, August 24, 1925 with Bishop Nilan officiating in the presence of many distinguished clerical and civic leaders. Among these were Mayor John F. Keating of Stamford, Revs. Lucyan Bojnowski of New Britain, Joseph Janowski, C.M. of New Haven, Joseph Studzinski, C.M. of Derby, A. Wojcieszczuk of Meriden, L. Nowakowski of New Britain and Eugene Sullivan of East Port Chester, New York. The keynote speech, delivered by Dr. B. L. Smykowski of Bridgeport, in both English and Polish to the throng of 3500 parishioners and friends, emphasized the hyphenated character of the Polish American community: he urged them to remain loyal to the religious traditions of their Polish motherland and to the civic traditions of the United States which was the adopted fatherland of the immigrants who founded the parish.

The euphoria created by such an occasion did not remain, for the stark fact was that a heavy financial obligation had to be met. Father Wladasz called a meeting of the parish on Sunday, October 4, 1925 in order to discuss the financial condition of the parish and especially how to finance the construction of the new church. Several motions for the proper procedure to be used in financing the building project were introduced and rejected. During the course of the meeting it became clear that the old animosities generated by alleged clerical mismanagement had reared their ugly heads. The issue now became: who was to manage the financial drive for the new church? Mr. Jan Chmielewski proposed that a committee composed of presidents of all the parish societies should direct the drive. When the proposal was rejected, Chmielewski criticized the pastor for his failure to explain the financial problem adequately before the decision to build the church was made. In his own defense. Father Wladasz explained that Chmielewski's proposal was, in fact, rejected at a meeting of February 26, 1925, that at that meeting he expressed his preference that a committee should be involved in the financing process and that those who attended Sunday Mass regularly were informed weekly concerning the financial problem.

When Mr. Jan Kondracki proposed that the parish meeting give the pastor the task of raising the necessary funds for the building of the church, an altercation occurred with great significance for the future. Mr. Tomasz Ogiba arose and challenged the pastor: "to whom does the parish belong—to us or to the bishop?" Father Wladasz carefully explained that the church is "a corporation of souls belonging to no particular person, but the bishop is its head, because in every home and organization there must be a head." Both the Ogiba challenge and the pastor's response indicated an intellectual divide between the spirit of Independency with its congregational view of church government, and the ancient Roman principle of paterfamilias-sacerdos wherein the hierarchical view of church government is its logical extension. Indeed, at this point Father Wladasz was caught in the horns of a dilemma which he could not avoid. On the one hand, to rule a parish in the style and methods of Holy Name's previous pastors, which is to apply the ancient Roman principle rigidly and uncompromisingly would simply have invited chaos and open revolt. Some concession to American reality was necessary and Father Wladasz was willingly conceding this point in holding parish meetings and inviting his parishioners to form the committee to manage the building of the new church. When they threw that "hot potato" back in his hands, he was assured that enough of the traditional mentality was still alive that he did not have to make any further concessions to modernity.
On the other hand, the parish meeting also fanned the emotional fires of Independency and the potential for serious confrontation between priest and people escalated. Father Wladasz, as a Roman Catholic priest and pastor was an effective practitioner of the art of balance. Given the democratic context in which his parishioners lived in American society, he had to seek an accommodation with that reality. It is a dilemma that has faced every Roman Catholic priest since at least the end of World War I. In this sense, Father Wladasz and the thousands of Roman Catholic priests like him, and by extension the Roman Catholic Church herself, were performing the task of "Americanization" within their parish-communities far more intelligently than the variety of "americanizers" like the America First movement could ever do. For, these movements insisted on the mass-produced American, the American who was asked to develop a cultural amnesia about his past. Cultural change is a slow, evolutionary process not given to sudden transformations.

The role of the so-called ethnic or national parish in America was a necessary one. Father Władasz's role, and that of the ethnic pastor wherever he may have been was by far the more difficult one inasmuch as the problems of acculturation were compounded by a number of circumstances which did not exist in the so-called "Irish" parishes. It is a human drama yet to be fully appreciated. That process of acculturation into American society continued apace in Stamford under Father Wladasz's pastoral guidance. Through the next three years of nationwide prosperity, the Stamford Polish community was beginning to share the fruits of that prosperity. Father Władasz's private diary reflected the optimism of the times. At one point, at the end of 1925, he asked rhetorically: what priest, especially of Slavic ancestry, does not experience frustration in his parish? With what gratitude do people repay him? Everywhere there is the same thought, the same ideal and the same labor and with this same dedication, there is also a sad and bitter ingratitude from our people." While praising his parishioners for their generosity, he felt the heavy burden of the parish's many problems on his shoulders and expressed sorrow that a minority could not appreciate his efforts in their behalf.

By the end of 1928 Father Wladasz exulted that the parish had achieved a surplus of $33,534, a figure to be proud of for that time. Yet, his diary indicates a deep foreboding that all was not well with the world. In the midst of this prosperity of the "roaring, fitful twenties," he wrote in his diary that a great depression is brewing in various countries. Maybe the same will occur in America?" He went on to predict the coming of World War II for wars are caused by "starvation, poverty and misery."

By Easter, 1927 the lower portion of the new church was ready for use for the sunrise or Resurrection service so that the parish was able to transfer its religious life toward the new church, it had been decided to convert the old church into a school. However, the parish received an unexpected setback when Stamford city authorities refused to allow a permit for its use as a school, citing both health and fire hazards. Under the circumstances, this decision left no other choice but to build a new school building near the new church. This decision increased the parish's indebtedness by another $175,000 which was the cost of the new school. This new construction delayed the completion of the new church for several years as the children had no other place to be educated whereas religious services could be conducted indefinitely in the lower church. Thus, work on the new school was rapidly completed and was ready for occupancy by the beginning of the 1930 school year.
During the fateful year of 1930 when the lengthening shadows of the great depression began to extend toward every phase of life, Stamford witnessed the founding of a parish of the Polish National Catholic Church. Little is known of this parish except the information provided by Father Wladasz's diary. Services were held in a Protestant church on Greenwich Avenue for seven families whom Father Wladasz described as never having belonged to Holy Name Parish. In any case, they planned to build their church on the plot where the present Holy Name Athletic Club is now located. The severity of the depression doubtless, as well as Father Wladasz's warning to his parishioners about the dangers of religious apostasy kept the new church down and within a few months it collapsed.

The founding and rapid collapse of a schismatic church within Stamford's Polonia may be regarded as one of the consequences of the great depression. However, there were other consequences as well. There was also a sharp decline in membership in the parish, from a high of 755 families in 1928, the last year of prosperity to a low of 445 families in 1934, a decrease of 310 families in a period of six years, or an average of fifty-two families per year. A less dramatic, more gradual decline in school enrollment is visible from the statistics of the same period: from a high of 482 pupils in 1929 to 423 pupils in 1934. Nevertheless, Father Wladasz complained that the school was literally devouring whatever surplus revenues could be diverted toward the completion of the new church. On the brighter side, perhaps, is the statistic that, during the depth of the depression, in spite of declining membership, declining revenues and considerable gloom, the parishioners of Holy Name of Jesus Parish were performing their obligatory Easter duty, as prescribed by the precepts of the Church, in greater numbers than ever. Again, during the period of the depth of the depression, the number of Easter observants rose from 1404 in 1928 to 3081 in 1930, and then declined slightly in succeeding years.

The upper portion of the new church was finally ready for occupancy and Christmas, 1934 masses were performed in the upper church for the first time. The completion of the Structure for use as a house of worship represented one milestone in the history of the parish and in the life of its pastor who, according to his private musings as recorded in his diary, praised his parishioners for their faith and generosity, but was weighed down by the continual criticism of a small minority. At one point in his diary he complained that "pastoral work in America is unusually difficult" because there is "more noise and slander in our people." Yet he quickly followed that with the comment that "offerings always keep flowing willingly and sincerely into the parish treasury, proof that the people are good and generous."

The new church, blessed in an impressive ceremony on May 19, 1935, was visible proof of the generosity of Holy Name's parishioners. The cost of erecting the beautiful romanesque structure was $210,000. Again, as in the cornerstone laying ceremony of 1925, a distinguished body of clergy and citizenry descended on Stamford to marvel at the beauty of the structure and to congratulate Stamford's Polish parish for its perseverance in the face of the most discouraging circumstances caused by the great depression.

The last four years of the decade of the 1930's were years of great anxiety for Father Wladasz. He had frankly wondered whether he was the right person to minister to the spiritual needs of his parishioners. Ominous changes were taking place which saddened him. Ironically, although the year 1933 was perhaps the most difficult year of the great depression, the percentage of
unemployed Polish Americans in Stamford's work force was eleven percent lower than in the prosperous year of 1923 when Father Wladasz was relatively new to the parish. The Stamford Directory for 1933 portrays Stamford's Polonia as having spread out into the various currents of the American mainstream. Forty-three percent of Stamford's Poles were home owners, but the percentage of skilled and semi-skilled workers had significantly decreased from thirty-six percent of the total Polish American work force in 1923 to twenty percent of the total Polish American work force in 1933. 101 Obviously this lack of progress was influencing their perception of their status in American society. Was it their "Polishness" which was retarding their progress upward? The rush to "Americanize," to shake off the last vestiges of a foreign visage is unmistakable.

This drift toward "melting into the American pot" was vividly demonstrated in the crucial area of marriage. There were, in the period 1930-1939, 263 marriages performed at Holy Name Church. Of this total, 85 marriages were exogamous or thirty-two percent of all marriages in the decade of the thirties were along mixed nationality lines. What is even more striking is the gradual incidence of canonically mixed marriages along religious lines. The eight mixed marriages would not normally cause anyone alarm as it represented only three percent of the total number of marriages. To Father Wladasz, ever watchful and skeptical, they represented a harbinger of the future. A further breakdown will demonstrate the gradual breakdown of the homogenous character of the Stamford Polish community. Fourteen percent of the marriages in the first five years of the 1930's were exogamous, whereas that figure rose to seventeen percent in the last five years of the decade.

A similar trend is observable in the baptismal records. Whereas the more traditional names like Joseph (28), John (22), and Stanislaw (17) on the male side and Mary (20) and Helen (14) have retained their popularity in this hyphenated cultural atmosphere, Barbara (12) and Dorothy (7) have become increasingly popular. In the last half of the decade, very untraditional names began to appear: Doreen, Beverley, Marilyn, Maureen, Brigitte, Nancy, Sally, and Sandra.

These were signs which disturbed Father Wladasz and he made the preservation of the faith, loyalty to the Church and tie possibly destructive consequences of mixed marriages the subjects of sermons on periodic and appropriate occasions. He was traditional enough at this juncture in the parish's history to fear the disintegration of family and community. In 1936 he expressed the deepest pessimism yet concerning the future of tie parish-community. "What will happen," he asked, "to our school in the near future? What will happen to our societies in tie distant future?" With obvious bitterness, he mused that his Polish compatriots were flocking to the "Irish churches" because there everything is short and quick and our (Polish) churches are beginning to be empty—our schools will become almost empty."

As the decade moved on, Father Wladasz's pessimism became more pronounced than ever. He attributed this change in fortune and the swing away from the Polish parish to the territorial parish to two related factors: the gradual passing of tie immigrants who made up the core of its membership and tie qualitatively different upbringing of the younger generation of parishioners. These young people, he wrote in 1937, 'Interest themselves very little in parish affairs."

Father Wladasz reached the final crescendo of pessimism when filing his report on the condition of his parish at the end of 1938. In a mood of bitter irony, he concluded his diary for 1938
with the observation that "in this land of gold and silver, tie poor populace has little to eat. Such is the order of the day i» this great American democracy!" The consequences of this, as he saw it, that only communists profited from it since poverty eventually affects religious faith. The Poles of Stamford, he lamented, no longer possess that "pure religious- national spirit" as they once did because the young people no longer follow in the footsteps of their parents, but are snatched into a worldly whirlpool.

It is clear from the foregoing evidence that Father Wladasz had temporarily lost perspective on his parish, on the changing times. He had, both in word and deed, moved the Americanization process forward without realizing the consequences of his own actions. Thus by no stretch of the imagination could a Drum Corps which was organized in 1930 be considered Polish. A Pulaski Democratic Club was organized in 1930, then in succession the following organizations which are as "American as apple pie": Polish Army War Veterans of World War I (1923) and its Ladies Auxiliary (1932); and the American Veterans of World War I (1933) as well as the American Boy Scouts (1935). It is difficult to juxtapose these organizations which catered to American tastes with the formation in 1934 of a Youth League, popularly known as the "Krakowiacy," who«: stated purpose was the "preservation of the Polish language and Polish dances among our youth." It is at least implicit evidence that Father Wladasz was committed, as many other pastors of his generation were committed, to the maintenance of a hyphenated Polish-American community, neither Polish, nor American, but having a character of its own.

There were other evidences of the survival of traditional cultural values. The most interesting of these was the Opieka Spoleczna (1934) or the Polish Welfare Society. Whereas the older mutual aid societies of the parish still continued to exist, they had already lost their original character and were transformed into insurance benefit societies in the American style. The traditional European Catholic slogan: "God helps those who help others" was being replaced by the American and Protestant slogan of "God helps those who help themselves." The Polish Welfare Society went counter to this trend by providing material aid to the poor, unfortunate victims of the great depression, especially widows and orphans. However, it is significant to note that both the Polish Welfare Society and the "Krakowiacy" or Youth League did not survive more than two years, overwhelm«! by changing values and interests.

The American Protestant emphasis on faith rather than deeds without the necessity of the priest as mediator began to penetrate the religious mentality of the parishioners of Holy Name Parish in the decade of the 1930's. The poor box (skarbonki) was a symbol of European Catholicism's commitment to good works for one's fellow man as a means of redemption. The poor box was an intensely social act demonstrating a parishioner's love for the least of God's children. By 1933 there is a gradual shift away from the poor box toward the votive lights, an act of worship, to be sure, which is public but lacking that direct commitment to "the least of my brethren" which the poor box represented. Both the poor box and the votive light were acts of the will, not motivated by any necessity to keep the commandments of the Church. Yet, the difference in the religious mentality between them is crucial in assessing the gradual Americanization of the ethnic parish. The votive light represented in most instances an individual's search for peace with God. The poor box involved others, and was one of the many symbols of the social character of European, and thus, of traditional Polish Catholicism. The decline in its popularity pre-figures the gradual "de-romanization" of the ethnic parish, and its gradual Americanization.
Another sign of the changing religious mentality of the 1930's was the formation of the choir of St. Cecilia at Holy Name Church in 1931. Again, the contrast between traditional Polish Catholicism and the Catholicism of the American Church is striking. Polish immigrants who worshipped in the English-language churches at the turn of the century noticed a three-part drama of the Mass being acted out. While the priest at the altar moved through the various stages of the Mass, the congregation sat silently while the choir in the loft sang the responses. The Polish peasant village church, on the other hand, resounded to the echoes of an entire congregation singing the responses, participating without division of function between choir and people. If a choir were necessary at all, it was to lead the congregation in the responses. The formation of the choir of St. Cecilia again symbolizes the changed religious mentality, from the intensely social act of congregational singing to the American Church's habit of silent, individual participation in the drama of the redemption being enacted at the altar.

By the end of 1939 Father Wladasz had apparently come to terms with the continued Americanization of Holy Name Parish. For the first time his diary at the end of that year was written in two languages which bespoke the hyphenated character of the parish. He was able to muster enough optimism that year to praise his parishioners "as hardworking people (who) fully realize the needs (of) giving generously to the support of the church."

The coming of World War II had temporarily stopped the development of the parish, as it had everything else in the life of the nation. However, the signs of the future direction of the parish were already visible in the 1930's. Holy Name and its pastor were poised for the next period of development—the transition from the hyphenated Polish-American parish to the American parish of Polish ancestry.

From Polish-American to American (1940-1978)

The decade of the 1940's was dominated by World War II and its immediate aftermath. The war had taken away many of Holy Name's young men, among them the Reverend Francis Rząsa, Holy Name's curate, who had volunteered for the chaplain's corps. Father Rząsa's tenure as curate of Holy Name Parish was the longest of any curate. He had arrived in Stamford in 1929, then was transferred for three years before returning in June, 1937 to spend the next five years with Father Wladasz guiding the development of the parish's youth program. The accent during the war years was on youth. With the departure of Father Rząsa, a newly-ordained priest, whose roots, like those of Father Rząsa, were in the Connecticut River valley, arrived in Stamford. Father Boleslaus Rarus, native of Thompsonville, Connecticut, organized that characteristically American Catholic organization, the CYO or Catholic Youth Organization. He was typical of the younger generation of Polish American Priests, grown to manhood in the hyphenated decade of the 1930's, still expressing pride in the fact of his Polish background, still able to deliver a Polish sermon, but spreading his activities out beyond the Polish community toward the mainstream. These young priests—Fathers Rząsa, Werpechowski, Rarus, Curzydło, Papiak, Radzewicz, Kukuć, A. Fiedorczyk, Biakowski, and Sienkiewicz—typified the parish of the 1940's: Boy Scouts, Drum Corps, Veterans organizations, athletic clubs, Mothers' clubs, chaplains of police and fire departments. At first glance it would be difficult for an outsider to guess that this was a parish founded by Polish immigrants. But, the physical signs of the parish's Polish past still remained in
the interior accoutrements of the church. It was a richly adorned church with beautiful stained glass windows from Munich, Germany, installed at a cost of more than $26,000, a baldachin of marble from Italy above the main altar, richly ornamented with mosaics and marble pillars with imbedded mosaics throughout the church. But the immense gold copy of the Madonna of Częstochowa which hangs over one of the side altars reminds a visitor immediately of the historic roots of this church.

Yet, as the war in Europe had brought news of the brutal maltreatment of the Polish nation by the Nazis, Stamford's Polish-American parish paused at times to remember the cultural ties that once bound its people to the motherland of their parents' culture. One such particularly poignant occasion came in 1942 when it was learned that a bell cast especially for the Polish exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1939 was for sale. In December, 1940 Father Wladasz proposed to his parishioners that the parish needed a new bell in the church's belfry befitting the richly ornamented church itself. A bell fund was begun and negotiations with the Polish authorities resulted in the purchase of the so-called "bell of freedom" for the church.

The bell itself artistically depicts the religious and cultural history of Poland. At the top of the bell are six bronze figurines of Polish saints: St. Adalbert, St. Hyacinth Odrowąż, St. Casimir, St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, St. Andrew Bobola, and St. Stanislaus Kostka. In the center of the fourteen foot bell are inscribed the words: "bell of the struggle for independence," then Wow this on one side is a quotation from Adam Mickiewicz, epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz*, on the other side a quotation from one of the poems of Krasicki. On all sides of the bell are sculptured the coats of arms of the major Polish cities and between them are the sculptured profiles of the great political, military and cultural heroes of the Polish past: Romuald Traugutt, Józef Piłsudski, Kazimierz Pulaski, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Adam Mickiewicz, Prince Józef Poniatowski and others. Above them all is the figure of the young Queen Hedwig with her royal crown, with Polish legions standing guard over her with the inscription taken from the Polish national anthem, "Poland is not yet lost." Beside the Hedwig sculpture is the figure of the Madonna of Częstochowa at whose feet a mother and her children lay prostrate before her, praying: "O Mother, do not abandon us." It is an impressive artifact which would remind future generations of the historic roots of Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

There were other reminders of the ties that bound this parish to its Polish past. In November, 1939, after the collapse of Polish resistance to the German Nazis, the parish participated, as in World War I, in the Polish Relief campaign. The campaign was resumed in 1945 but was suddenly ended in 1948 by political developments in Poland. St. John Kanty Preparatory College in Erie, Pennsylvania, conducted by the Polish branch of the Vincentian Fathers, the Polish Seminary at Orchard Lake, Michigan and the Madonna of Częstochowa altar at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC. were all recipients of the generosity of Holy Name's parishioners in the post-war years.

During World War II the material and financial condition of the parish gradually improved, due in large part to the prosperous times induced by the war. In 1941 Father Władasz scored a minor financial coup when he was able to transfer the mortgage on the parish which was then with Travellers Insurance Company at five percent interest to the Boatmans National Bank of St. Louis, Missouri at two and a half percent interest. It represented a considerable reduction in the parish's
financial burden, so that Father Wladasz was able to make necessary repairs and improvements on
the ninety-year old rectory. His diary during the war years expresses a continuing confidence in the
financial and moral health of his parish. He expressed particular satisfaction in 1942 that mixed
marriages amounted to only one percent of the total number of marriages."

His diary ends abruptly in 1944 so that his impressions and reactions to the continued
Americanization of the parish are not recorded. However, his parishioners of more recent vintage
have expressed the thought that in the 1950's he frequently reminded his parishioners of the
dangers of mixed marriages. This was apparently the one by-product of the Americanization
process that he was unable to accept as a Catholic pastor. In the decade of the 1940's, sixteen
percent of the marriages were canonically mixed marriages and thirty-nine percent of the
marriages were exogamous. Indeed this latter figure would soon become superfluous in a parish
where a trickle of non-Polish marriages was being recorded already in the 1940's.

The same trend is also visible in the baptismal records. There is a small infusion of Polish
immigration after World War II, but this hardly affects the total picture of a parish which is on the
threshold of complete Americanization. The rising percentage of exogamous marriages
undoubtedly influenced the choice of given names. Although traditional given names still
outnumbered the "non-traditional" ones, the "non-traditional" names are the more significant
inasmuch as they point out the inexorable direction that the parish was moving.

The most popular names given to children in the decade of the forties were; John (36); Caroline or
Carol (29); Barbara (28); Edward (24); Robert (22); Patricia (22); and Richard (21). However,
there is in this decade a spirit of adventurous search for the unusual or "American" names which
would make these grandchildren of the Polish immigrants more acceptable in American society.
Names like Percy, Roger, Allen, Gary, and Darrell; or Beverley, Audrey, Lesley, Lorena, and
Gayle are not very numerous but they do anticipate a trend away from the traditional names of
Christian saints that was once the normal mentality of parents. Was the parish of the Holy Name of
Jesus being Americanized and did this indicate a simultaneous secularization of the life and
mentality of its parishioners? There is no question about the Americanization of the parish, but
whether Americanization means secularization is difficult to say.

During the 1950's the Americanization process continued apace. Both exogamous marriages
and canonically mixed marriages percentagewise were approximately what they were in the
previous decade. All the signs pointed to the inevitability of the transformation of the ethnic parish
into an American parish little different from the other territorial parishes of the Stamford area.
Father Wladasz could accept the inevitability of this fact. What he never accepted was the rising
incidence of mixed marriages along religious lines. From that point of view he was a priest of the
"old school," pre-Vatican II Church. Ecumenism during his lifetime was merely a word.

It was fitting that in his final, declining years at the helm of Holy Name Parish, his local
ordinary, now the bishop of Bridgeport, His Excellency Lawrence J. Shehan recognized his record
of achievement for his parish, for his community and for the Church in Connecticut. Father
Wladasz was named to the diocesan board of consulters in 1958 and at the same time as area
coordinator for the high school building fund drive. These were honors richly deserved for a priest
who had spared none of his energy or spiritual gifts for his parish. In the twilight of a lengthy
career in the service of God, His Church, and the people of God, on recommendation of Bishop Shehan, Father Wladasz was named a domestic prelate with the title of "Right Reverend Monsignor" by His Holiness, Pope John XXIII. Unfortunately, on the day of his installation, in the beautiful church which, more than any other monument left behind by him, was representative of his personality, he was stricken during the installation ceremony with the illness which had plagued him for several years. He died on the way to the hospital, leaving a grieving congregation which was cheated by the hand of God from finally living proudly with their pastor as Right Reverend Monsignor.

The death of Monsignor Wladasz on July 26, 1959 ended an era in the history of Holy Name of Jesus Parish. Although the parish had changed considerably in the final three decades of his pastorate, it is a tribute to his wisdom that he was able to adjust mentally to every change as it occurred. In his long thirty-seven year pastorate, he had experienced many a pessimistic moment. Only once did he express deep misgivings about the future of his parish, in the late 1930's, when some of his parishioners were leaving the fold and going over to other parishes. Yet, he was able to ride out the temporary period of community unrest, to leave his successors at his death a flourishing parish of almost a thousand families.

The history of "Father Wladasz's parish" under his two immediate successors, Father Felix Werpechowski and Monsignor Alphonse J. V. Fiedorczyk is really anti-climactic. Both pastors adjusted to the reality of change wrought by the continued Americanization, a changing life-style, the changes in the Church decreed by Vatican Council II. One need only read the minutes of the parish's leading societies in the 1960's and 1970's, like the Holy Name Society or the parish bulletins of the same period to realize that this parish now seems little different from any other Stamford parish.

It is in the memories therein contained and the experiences garnered that the Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus is different and this difference may not be visible to the naked eye but it is a difference that will permeate the parish's life for a long time. She has been presented, both by her unique experience and the circumstances surrounding the church's location in the midst of an industrial-residential neighborhood, with the Opportunity to be of service to the latest wave of poor immigrants seeking to acculturate into American society. Since the 1950's, marriages between non-Polish partners have become more frequent, the roster of the parish in 1975 contained 130 non-Poles, whereas the parochial school in 1978 listed eighty-one pupils whose dominant language is other than English, led by Spanish (29) and French (22). Whereas other parishes in the Stamford area have gradually acquired a comfortable, middle class look, in comfortable middle class neighborhoods, St. John's and her ethnic daughter, Holy Name, seem poised for another generation of service to a new immigrant arrival. Their solid core of parishioners, third and fourth generation children of the economic immigration of the early twentieth century have now joined the American mainstream. It will be for these generations to decide whether the experiences chronicled in this history of the Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus of Stamford, Connecticut will be relevant in helping the new immigration adjust to a new culture, at once American and ecumenical.
Post Seriptum

A final assessment of seventy-five years of history is in order. Such an assessment must focus on the purposes for which an institution was founded, whether and how successfully it has fulfilled the purposes for which it was founded. If we prescient from the religious purpose for which a parish exists, which flows from Our Lord's command to His Apostles "to teach all nations," and focus on the parish as a human institution, a *congregatio fidelium*, or a visible gathering of the faithful, the dimensions of the task of assessment become manageable.

Because the religious purpose for which parishes are founded is, in the final analysis, the same for all parishes, there would, therefore, be no need for the Polish immigrant population of Stamford to secede from St. John's Parish in order to form their own parish. That religious purpose was presumably adequately being fulfilled by the pastor and people of St. John's, according to the perception of St. John's pastor at the turn of the century, Father John O'Brien. For he was providing the Polish immigrants with all the necessary opportunities for them to fulfill their obligations as Roman Catholic communicants—Mass, sacraments, instruction in the Faith. If, at first, the language barrier prevented them from appreciating the fullness of the life of St. John's Parish, the immigrants were obligated by their commitment to permanent residence and eventual citizenship in the United States to learn the English language quickly. Thus, the English-language parish justified its opposition to the formation of the ethnic or national parish on patriotic and practical grounds: it was an effective schoolhouse of Americanization. Behind this implicit claim lay the widely-held belief that the strength of the American Republic lay in unity—linguistic, cultural, and eventually religious—and that the creation of ethnic parishes delays the progress toward that unity. It was not possible, it was widely held, to achieve unity through diversity. Unity and uniformity were more logical bedfellows.

The Polish immigrants' perceptions of their place in their Church and in American society in general differed sharply with this analysis. Because the historical and cultural roots from which the Americanizing tendencies of the Irish-American clergy and hierarchy sprang were, to say the least, different from those of the Polish immigrants, both Father John O'Brien, as a typical representative of that Americanizing tendency, and the Polish petitioners at his door entered a cultural no man's land. Father O'Brien could not understand the Polish immigrants' emphasis on language along with religion as a determinant of national identity. The Polish immigrants could not understand why anyone should wish to counsel them to abandon their identity as Polish Roman Catholics in order to become American Roman Catholics.

The Poles' reaction to the suggestion that they become Americans was powerfully conditioned by the cultural shock of recognition that they had entered a world whose values were at variance with their own and that somehow they would have to shelter themselves against its unchristian and dehumanizing tendencies, thus their insistence on their own ethnic parish. It would be an exaggeration to claim that these immigrants understood the social and psychological illness known as anomie wherein the victim suffers a loss of perspective about himself, becomes rootless, loses his sense of values and priorities, which condition manifests itself in his abandonment of responsibility, above all to his family, then finally in the pursuit of happiness in the glitter of money through gambling, prostitution and bootlegging. That a significant portion of any immigrant community is threatened with such disorganization is a fact attested by a study of police
blotters, court records and newspaper accounts. There is, however, in this effort of the immigrant to reconstruct as much of the familiarity of his peasant village as possible that unconscious, in articulated conviction that somehow what was considered "American" would lead ultimately to that very social disorganization predicted by Znaniecki and Thomas in 1918.

It is now obvious that these two distinguished scholars had not sufficiently taken into account the powerful hold that Poland's ancestral faith had over its peasant masses. The history of the Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus in Stamford, Connecticut demonstrates a problem of an entirely different kind from that foreseen by Znaniecki and Thomas. Because of incredibly naive pastoral leadership in the first two decades of her existence, the parish-community of the Holy Name of Jesus may have been on the threshold of a religious schism, but far from any real semblance of social disorganization. The problem of religious schism was to be joined to the problem of the ghetto community's relations with the wider Stamford community. For all the disclaimers to the contrary, religious independency among the Poles represented the first obvious influence that American culture would exert on the ghetto community. Congregational self-government is an appealing idea, rendered even more so in an American setting. Indeed, it may be regarded as the heart of the American ethos.

Those parishioners of Holy Name who had asked their pastor to incorporate a building association, presumably without the participation of the bishop of Hartford, who is the legal head of the parish, were really seeking some means by which the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the Roman paterfamilias and American Protestant Congregationalism could be reconciled. What could be more innocent than a concession to Americanization in the non-religious sphere of property ownership! In this way, could not the experience to be gained in the participation of the management of a parish be the first certain step in the gradual crumbling of the barriers to understanding between the ghetto and the mainstream?

Neither bishop nor pastor could contemplate such an idea which was premature for its time. To suggest a different solution to these vital inter-group relations between the ghetto and the mainstream required either a pastor of the stature of a Bójnowski in New Britain or an experience in the art of compromise neither of which the Stamford Polonia possessed. If the strength of the Polish peasant village culture was its social cohesion, its weakness was first manifested in the liberal and industrial setting that the peasant immigrant had to function in America. Lacking a lay intelligentsia of any significance, the Stamford parish-community was left with the leadership of four pastors in the first two decades of its existence who were as naive in the ways of American business and political practice as the simplest parishioner among them. Bereft of intelligent leadership by its natural clerical leaders, Stamford's parish-community reacted in a manner reflecting its immaturity by charging "Irish" and "Yankees" with some sort of conspiracy against them in the now infamous "Kruszyński episode." Inter-group relations were poisoned for a generation afterwards, and Stamford's Polish labor force had to pay the heavy price of unusually high unemployment in the prosperous years of the early 1920's.

Nor does one condone, justify, rationalize this seeming act of vengeance on the part of Stamford's professional managers and captains of industry. In effect, they assumed, vis-a-vis the immigrants and their children, the stance of the tyrant perched in his seat of power: either Americanize on our terms or suffer the consequences of unemployment. There was always that
nebulous idea of what the ideal American should be to which the immigrants and their children were asked to conform. Because they were "foreigners," they were denied entrance into social camaraderie with the mainstream. For, it cannot be said that the first generation children of Stamford's Polish immigrants wished to perpetuate the tightly-knit culture of the Polish ghetto. Given the bitter memories and the political inexperience of Stamford's Polonia, it would seem highly unlikely that any movement to break the impasse could originate in such an atmosphere. Nor could one expect men firmly in control of the reins of social, political and economic power to come forth with a solution to the impasse.

If the solution of this impasse in inter-group relations seems like an insignificant problem in the larger panorama of the history of an American city, it is at least an instructive one for future generations to ponder. An outsider, almost totally unfamiliar with Stamford's explosive situation, was asked by Bishop John Nilan to assume a pastorate which had broken the health of the third pastor and driven its fourth pastor away in bitterness and frustration. Father Francis M. Wladasz was not a dynamic, commanding personality, ready, willing and able to assume direction of a volatile situation. He was not a weak personality who would wilt under the pressure of one or another interest group. He could be described as a typical parish priest, going about his day-to-day pastoral duties quietly and efficiently without fanfare or public adulation.

It is to this quiet, unassuming priest that the weight of two decades of sincere, though naive, misdirection fell. His parishioners eventually recognized the magnitude of his achievement when they erected a monument in his honor near the main entrance to the House of God that he had so dearly loved. Typical parish histories recite the obvious achievements of each successive pastor in terms of brick, mortar, stone and marble. They neglect too often the human drama associated with the life of the parish. For if the parish is a congregation or body of believers associated in the pursuit of salvation, and then their most intensely human acts should be the subject of that parish's history. The construction of a church, a school, a convent, a cemetery is all a part of that history. Yet, they pale into insignificance beside the human problems which a pastor confronts in his daily performance of his duties.

If the achievement of Father Wladasz is to be justly assessed and celebrated, it must relate to the awesome task of calming the passions of a parish on the verge of revolt against its priests, as well as the heart-rending impasse which developed between the Stamford Polonia and the wider Stamford community. Though the two problems are related, the first is the more dramatic, the second the more important. The construction of the new church for an ever growing parish was a matter of sheer physical necessity as also that of a new school building. Father Wladasz used the issue of the new church to bind the wounds of two decades, both in the parish and its relations with Stamford's wider community. He used the parish meeting as a device to cool passions, then to unify the parish in a common effort. Although the parish meeting was essentially consultative, it bore the appearance of a concession to American democratic procedure. Yet it was neither a drift toward congregational church government as advocated by the Independent church movement nor a weakening of the paterfamilias-sacerdos concept. Like so much of the life of the Polish immigrant ghetto of the 1920's, the parish meeting as a device was essentially transitional in nature. America's super-patriots of the 1920's had pressed for a revolutionary transformation of the immigrant from a "foreigner" into a full-fledged American. Father Wladasz had sensed the importance of preparing his parishioners in the art of participation in the affairs of their
community. If the major institutions of the Stamford community were to be closed to the younger generation of his parishioners due to social ostracism, the parish and its secondary institutions would have to become the school house for the "foreigner" Pole now gradually moving toward Americanization. The children of Stamford's Polish immigration, led by a small number of freshly minted professional laymen, of whom Attorney Francis Jamrozy must be given special recognition, slowly began to transform the older societies and to create the newer societies which became the school houses of the transitional, hyphenated character of the Stamford parish-community of the Holy Name of Jesus. The hyphenated character of the parish and its organizations may be seen in the minutes of their meetings. All religious exercises were in the traditional vein, and the official language of the meeting was still Polish, though a steadily corrupted patois, whereas the agenda of the meetings bore a resemblance to any other American social or political club.

Nevertheless, there was still something different about that hyphenated parish-community. It was no longer Polish in the strict sense, nor did it yet reach the status of an American community. Old and new jostled one another for two decades in the 1920's and '930's and it is interesting to note that Father Wladasz, once he had made the first steps in the direction of the hyphenated parish-community, and urged his parishioners to reach out into Stamford's business and political life, was quite content to allow the process to terminate at that point. The Polish-American parish-community, combining the best of two worlds was for Father Wladasz and for thousands of Polish-American priests of that period the ideal solution for the immigrant community now turned into a hyphenated community.

The enormous impact of the great depression on the life of these hyphenated communities is still not adequately understood. However, the experience of the Parish-community of the Holy Name of Jesus of Stamford sheds some light on the enormous pressures on the youth of the community. Once, in the 1920's, it was the super-patriot's taunt against the "foreigner" in their midst to conform. It was relatively easy for Father Wladasz to parry the thrusts of this misguided Americanism by simply pointing out that not all that is American is good or worthwhile. But, the reality of grinding poverty was a challenge for which there was no easy answer. Thus, both marital and baptismal records show a steady, unmistakable drift toward accommodation with at least the trappings of Americanization. The argument in the eyes of a parishioner faced with poverty was a simple one: if, by changing my name, or giving my children typically "American" names will ease the burden of economic deprivation, I have really given up very little for very much.

The movement of the first and second generation children of the Polish immigrants in the late 1930's away from the traditional ethnic parish toward the American territorial parish, which disturbed Father Wladasz and which led him at one point to question the results of his own work as a priest and pastor, was really the reaction of the impatient youth of his parish with continued second-class status. Not the depression, but the hyphenated community they lived in was culprit. There must be another, better way. That better way was the abandonment of "Polska Ziemia."

Ironically, it was not the great depression but ultimately World War II and its affluent aftermath which impelled the children of the Polish immigrants to abandon "Polska Ziemia" in favor of the more inviting greenery of Stamford's suburbs. A by-product of the war and its aftermath was the increasing incidence of mixed marriages which disturbed Father Wladasz in his
last years as pastor. However, it is a tribute to the wisdom of this mild-mannered priest that he was able to see something beneficial about each of the transformations of the parish-community he served for thirty-seven years. His parish at his death was moving rapidly toward its final transformation, into an American parish with a Polish background. Aside from the incidence of mixed marriages, he would undoubtedly have accepted that eventuality as the beginning of the end of a normal process of development.

There is, indeed, one enigma for which no answer can be given because it may be too early to understand. Holy Name Parish was the recipient of a significant number of new Polish immigrants, the result of the vast dislocations of World War II. This new "political immigration" settled in the area of "Polska Ziemia," drawn there by the presence of the "Polish church." Better educated, possessing only a few of the disadvantages carried by the older "economic immigration," one could reasonably expect this immigration to make a significant impact or contribution to the character of Holy Name Parish. The record suggests no such conclusion. Indeed, the tendency seems to be unmistakably toward rapid absorption into the prevailing American milieu, toward a pursuit of suburban affluence, toward the gradual neglect and final abandonment of the parish to newcomers of other cultures.

Meanwhile, the sons and daughters of Polish immigrants of an earlier day today look with justifiable pride on seventy-five years of struggle, commitment and achievement. The Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus of Stamford, Connecticut today still remains officially an ethnic, Polish parish, and there is no disposition on the part of the present heirs of the traditions of the parish to change that designation. If the necessity for a Polish ethnic parish has now largely diminished, the fond memories and fierce loyalties have not. The present pastor of the parish, Monsignor Alphonse J. V. Fiedorczyk, as Polish as any American priest can be, and as American as any American priest should be, judiciously fondles and nurtures these fond memories and fierce loyalties. To this extent, the "Polishness" of Holy Name remains a guideline for the foreseeable future.

Fairfield, Connecticut, August 4, 1978