

Gaj, Rev. Zygmunt

The Rev. Fr. Zygmunt Ignatios Gaj, 86, passed away at his home on Saturday, May 19, 2001. He was born Sept. 16, 1914, to the late Joseph and Anna (Tomalka) Gaj in Policzko, County Konskie, Poland. He received his education in Poland attending Sandomierz Seminary at Wisla. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 10, 1941, at the Basilica of Blessed Virgin Mary in Sandomierz by the Bishop of Sandomierz, the Most Reverend Kanthy John Lorek. He was very proud to celebrate his 60th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood in May of this year. On Oct. 2, 1941, six months after he was ordained, while visiting his parents he was arrested by the German Gestapo and placed in concentration camps of Oswiecim and Dachau where he spent the next four years before the American Army liberated the camp on April 29, 1945. After the liberation he was assigned as chaplain of the British Army of the Rhine working with displaced persons and former prisoners of war. Fr. Gaj was given the opportunity to come to the United States in 1950 and served the Saginaw Diocese under the leadership of Bishop Stephen Woznicki. He served as assistant pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Bay City, St. Helen Church and St. Andrew Church, both of Saginaw. Fr. Gaj served as pastor in the Gaylord Diocesan parishes of St. Dominic Church in Metz, St. Ignatius Church in Rogers City, Sacred Heart Church in Oscoda, St. John's Church in Ubly and Holy Family Church in Klacking Creek. He retired in the summer of 1987. Fr. Gaj was a member of the Knights of Columbus Klacking Creek Council No. 8948. Surviving are one sister, Lucjia Gaj of Poland; one brother, Marian Gaj of Poland; many nieces and nephews; and close priest friends in the Saginaw and Gaylord Diocese. He also leaves a special friend, Rita Lutomski and many other dear friends. A funeral mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2001, at the St. Stanislaus Kostka Church at 1503 22nd Street in Bay City. Presiding will be the Most Reverend Patrick R. Cooney, Most Reverend Kenneth J. Povish, Rev. Fr. William J. Rutkowski, Rev. Fr. Raymond Mulka and Rev. Fr. Arthur Mulka with burial in St. Stanislaus Cemetery. St. Stanislaus parish will pray the rosary at 2 p.m. on Wednesday at the church followed at 7 p.m. by a parish vigil service. Visitation is from 5 to 8 p.m. today at the Ambrose Funeral Home, 1200 Garfield Avenue in Bay City and from 1 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday and from 10 a.m. until the time of Mass on Thursday at St. Stanislaus Church. Memorials may be made to St. Stan's Stained Glass Project or the donor's favorite charity.