

1897 - 1950

A Short History of the Society of Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament

At the St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish of the Polish National Catholic Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

PNC Church Commission
History & Archives
1031 Cedar Ave.
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THE WORD OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT.

The manuscript of S. H. Nyczowa, containing a brief history of the first branch of the ANS Society, and of the Society of the Central Board, headquartered in Scranton was read carefully to me.

I believe that this little book may contribute to a better understanding of the purpose of the ANS Society in America and in Poland as well. And that is why I recommend it to the followers of the Polish National Catholic Church and members of ANS. And I wish you all the blessing of God.

Fr. Bishop FRANCISZEK HODUR,
Co-founder of the

Society of Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The Society of the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament is the oldest Society of Women in the National Church. Although the Society has been in existence for many, many years, its activity is marked by the greatest strength, youthful energy and spryness of its members.

When in 1897 Bishop Franciszek Hodur, together with a couple hundred working families, mostly miners, in the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania, worked on organizing the Polish National Church, he knew very well how difficult and threatened this new movement of the Free Polish National Church was. He saw that in order to sustain the struggle with the Roman Catholic bishops of Aryan and German origins and their Polish-Roman Catholic priests, the Polish people should take an active participation in the organization of the Church. In order for Polish people to improve spiritually and to make religious work according to the democratic principles and slogans proclaimed by the New Church there was the need to establish the proper associations in the parish, namely the Society of Women of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and then other associations in which every parishioner could

learn how to defend their own family, their own Church and their nation from dangers.

The first Polish Women's Society of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was organized in April 1897.

Father Bishop Franciszek Hodur, who organized the first ANS Society 53 years ago, and entrusted it to the care of Jesus Christ hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, predicted that a woman, drawing power from the marvelous mystery of love hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, would be best suited to the real, albeit, modest, persistent, slow-moving, reach towards the summits, working quietly with great love.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Each organization or association is formed for some specific purpose or task and in this regard, so was the ANS Society. The organizer wrote the constitution in which he included the rules and the goal in the following words:

“The purpose of the ANS Society is to celebrate and love the Lord Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, to support the members in the pursuit of Christian perfection, help in the event of illness or scarcity and the last service for the deceased member of the Society. “

During these 53 years, the constitution of the ANS Society was a compass for its members. It is therefore right that, on the occasion of the great feast, on the 53rd anniversary of the rise of the ANS Society, at least a brief outline of the work done and who did this work should be written. We recall the names of these sisters, many of whom have gone to the Creator for payment.

For living families and younger ones, this will be an encouragement when we look closely at how much they have done in the difficult conditions of life in America. They did so only because they were filled with a spirit of religiosity, a strong and passionate faith in God and the mission of the Polish National Church.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY

At the first organizational meeting in April 1897, 46 members joined the ANS Society, and the Management Board was elected, consisting of the following persons: Anna Siłakowska, Chairperson; Ludomira Kosiorek, Cashier; Wiktoria Kaczmarek, Secretary; Michalina Stankiewicz, Marshal.

The numbers below show how the Society grew in the number of Mothers - Polish women from the

moment they were organized to this day; in 1907, in 10 years, it rose to 171 members; In 1917 already 381 is recorded in the books of the Society; then in 1927 - 441 members, in 1937 - 461, in 1947 - 475, and in 1950 - 483 members.

PRESIDENT- OF THE ASSOCIATION

During the last 53 years the Society was presided over by: Anna Siłakowska, Agnieszka Świerkowska, Walentyna Wentland, Anna Przedzinkowska, Marja Stawna, Antonina Michałowska, Julia Hełstowska, Józef Sierniętkowska, Emilja Kosiorek and Marja Cwynar.

Despite the fact that the ANS is the oldest Society of the National parish in Scranton, PA, it is the most active because the Society is powered by younger sisters each year; along with their mothers come daughters to help in the work of the Society. There are also campaigns where organizers visit the homes of our sisters and encourage them to enter the Society.

CHRISTIAN or CHURCH WORK

In accordance with the rules of the Society's constitution, the members adore the Blessed Sacrament during services. On every quarter they go to confession and Holy Communion and participate in Friday services. They attend all matters concerning the parish and the church in general. They have distinguished themselves with devotion, willingness to cooperate, and sacrifice for the purposes of the work of the National Church.

Members of the ANS encourage their sons and daughters to belong to the Typical Youth Societies of the National Church; to attend the regular monthly meetings and take an active part in the program of these Societies.

We emphasize the important moment in the work of the ANS Society that assisted the bishops in creating and maintaining the Theological Seminary. The fervent members knew too well that the priest is the ensign of Christ, that the more priests who will be filled with the spirit of God, the fervent, the bright, ready to sacrifice themselves for the National Church, his fruits will be more abundant, and the victory surer. The effects of the cooperation of the ANS Society with Church leaders are visible because 14 candidates from Scranton entered the National Seminary and became priests.

This is an eloquent testimony of the influence of the mother, a member of the ANS Society, on the spiritual life of the Church, on its growth and at the same time for the future of this Church in America

and in Poland!

Our Society since the beginning of its existence has been trying to keep the interior of the church clean especially the altars, the presbytery and church linens. Items for church use like cassocks and surplices for altar boys, tablecloths for altars, albs, stools, carpets, etc. were always purchased by ANS Society.

Between 1911 and 1950, the Society offered \$ 7,695.00 for that purpose.

In 1911 the Society paid for the construction of new side altars for the sum of \$ 1,472.00. In the newly remodeled church, a stained glass window presenting the Most Holy Mary with Child Jesus was inserted at the cost of \$ 335.00 which was paid by the Society. The members of the Society donated \$ 650.00 for the remodeling of the church.

Whether it comes to buying new things for the church, rebuilding or repainting or decorating the altars during the year, for Christmas, Easter, Corpus Christi - the Society made sacrifices and does so today with joy.

When field services are celebrated on the second Sunday of July every year, or on All Souls Day, ANS members again adorn the caves of Christ the Crucified and Christ of Grace.

The Cave of the Crucifixion of Christ was built by the Society in 1907 as a memorial to the consecration of Bishop Franciszek Hodur, in Utrecht, Netherlands by Archbishop Gullo and Bishops Van Thiel and Spit. The donation helped to build the Grotto of the Grace of Christ in the new cemetery in 1929. A lot of work was done by the members in organizing the land for the new cemetery this year. They also made a donation to build a gate on the new cemetery.

As was told above no serious or even less work has been done that the ANS Society does not put its hand to the work following the Constitution and loving Christ the Lord, by making sacrifices affirming love for His Church.

THE HUMANITARIAN WORK

“The poor will always be among you,” said Jesus Christ. Also in our Society, there were many times when the households of members of our Society were struggling with sickness and miserable. During these times, the Society brought help to the poor and unhappy sister, proceeding in the proverb, “Let the left hand not know what the right hand gives”. The help was silently given. The Society fulfilled

Christ's teaching and followed its Constitution. For these purposes, a significant amount of money was spent.

In case the illness turns out to be serious, members of the ANS prepare the house and the sick for the visitation of the priest with Holy Communion. In case of death, the members of the Society meet in the mourning home to pray at the corpse of the deceased sister. On the day of the burial at the appointed hour, members are gathered at the deceased's home, to carry the corpse to the church, by leading the coffin of the deceased sister with burning candles in hands.

Who, as no mother, should take care of the child's education? So, members of the Association send their children to the Polish Parish School, daily or supplementary. The ANS together with the Society of Friends of the Polish National School participate in organizing Christmas box, holiday housing, school exhibitions, and helping the poor children. The Society hosts children receiving First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation. At the Congress of the United Societies of ANS in 1940 it was decided that every member should donate at least 10 cents for a chapel to be built at the Old Age House in Waymart, Pa., The Society transferred \$ 154.00 to the Caretaker's Committee.

When in 1941 Scranton was flooded, the ANS Board immediately assigned several dozen dollars to the National Parish Rescue Committee for support. The Society remembered about the Polish war prisoners staying in camps in Germany. Also about the soldiers from the parish, who served in the American and Polish armies. The ANS made donations to support committees and associations and the youth of the PNK. The Church during the war, and from November 1945 by the Society Emergency Aid, sent donations to help the work of poor people in Poland.

Members of the ANS Society belong to all committees that do this work. They cooperate with District 26 of the American Polonia Council. They do a similar job as they did in 1919 when they were preparing to clothe and took part in an exhibition under the aegis of the American Red Cross where they had a separate stand. Their work was so great that former President H. Hoover, the then administrator, sent a letter of thanks to Bishop Hodur and the Society for its humanitarian work.

During the last World War, members helped the Civil Defense Committee of the United States, attended American Red Cross courses, helped to agitate and sold war bonds for that work the parish received recognition and thanks.

In addition to the above-mentioned works, the ANS Society provides sacrifices to help Poland. They

bought and buy American and Polish bonds, make donations to the Polish House in Scranton, the House of Poles Abroad in Warsaw, and so on.

THE EDUCATIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND MISSION WORK.

The Synods are a very important factor in the life of the Polish National Catholic Church in America. This is the assembly of clergy and lay representatives of the whole Church. In these assemblies, very important resolutions are made. This is necessary for the life of the whole Church. Our representatives participated in these synodal assemblies in Scranton in 1904, 1906, 1909, 1921, 1928, 1946 and in 1949; In Wilkes-Barre in 1913; in Chicago in 1914 and 1935; in Buffalo in 1931.

We female members of the Society of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are grateful to the National Church for having given us equality in Christ's Church.

In its confession, established by all the General Synods in America and in Poland of the National Church, the followers of this Church may participate actively in the parish council, may sit in ordinary and extraordinary Synods, and participate in the constitution of the laws applicable to all members of the Church, such as clergy and laity.

There is a good saying in Polish that when you take one step forward you have to do the other. The second step in the life of the followers of the Polish National Catholic Church is the organization of the Polish National Spojnia.

When the management of the Polish National Union came to the service for Roman-Polish priests and began to disregard the members of the PNCC, there was no other way than to set up a new organization of Brotherly Help, in which followers of the PNCC wouldn't be humiliated. In 1908 Fr. Bishop Hodur, with a handful of brave and daring followers from the Scranton parish, helped to organize the Polish National Spojnia.

In this work were also distinguished Polish women from the ANS Society, and the first director of the Main Board of Spójnia was the late Regina Stankowska. Members of our Scranton Association cooperate with the Polish National Spojnia, and the best evidence is that are three female Branches of Spojnia: 41st Maria Rodziewiczowna, 4th Maria Konopnicka and 164th Eliza Orzeszkowa and the fact that almost every member of the ANS Society is a member of Polish National Spójnia.

About the current Sejm Competition, the Ladies Circle made up of members of our Society is engaged

in recruitment work for the Spojnia. Up to now, 77 new members have been gained.

Very important and fruitful was the convening of representatives of the ANS Society in 1933 in Scranton, PA. During this congress, attended by 17 representatives of our Society, the Union of Polish Women's Societies of the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament was formed, based in Scranton, PA. The Constitution of the Scranton Society was adopted and the majority of our Society members were elected to the first Board of Directors namely: Emilia Sznyter chairwoman, Marja Gorgol secretary, Helena Nycz financial secretary, Scholastyka Driscole cashier, Leokadia Palińska librarian, Justyna Kuzdrowa lector. Also, other sisters from other societies became members of the Board: Stanisława Placek deputy chairperson, Kraskowska and Diło guardians of the fund.

Now the Union counts 117 Societies in 4 Dioceses in the Church of America, and 57 Societies in Poland with central headquarters in Krakow, united spiritually and constitutionally with the Head Office ANS Society in Scranton, in America.

The result of the unification of ANS Societies was the Library opened on April 4, 1934. The cost of the reading room and the library was covered by our Scranton Society. Also our Societies made suitable donations for the purchase of books for the library.

Over a hundred members of our ANS branch today use nearly three thousand volumes of books. The library is open three nights a week, namely Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

A further blessing of the First Congress in Scranton, PA. was the organization and establishment of the POLKA quarterly, issued by the Central Diocese of United Societies ANS and Maria Konopnicka's. This is the first writing in America, and even in the whole world today, published by women - Poles and PNCC followers. And again, if this writing is supported for already 15 years and offers a beautiful and beneficial service, then again all credits goes to our ANS Society in Scranton, Pa, because members of this Society are the staff of the POLKA Publishing House - they are guarding and spending their time so our beloved POLKA goes to the home of every Pole, and brings the words of consolation, education, and ideas of the PNCC.

MISSIONARY WORK OF THE ANS SOCIETY IN POLAND.

How many times Fr. Bishop Hodur went to Poland and came back, saying that the moment was coming when our ANS Society would be able to start work in the Overseas Homeland in Poland. And so it happened when in 1931 Fr. Bishop Hodur came back from Poland, we started agitating for ANS

Societies in national parishes in Krakow, Warszawa, Bydgoszcz, Torun, Skarżysko, Boryslaw, Drohobycz and many other places.

In January 1937, at the first Congress in Krakow, the Central Board of the United Societies of Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Poland was organized under the direction of Fr. Bishop Padewski. The first president of ANS in Krakow was Ludwika Hodurowa, the wife of late Jakub, brother of the First Fr. Bishop. And when the opportunity came, in addition to agitation with the help of writings and brochures, in 1938 sister Helena Staruszkiewicz from Scranton went to visit many parishes of the National Church in Poland and brought many addresses and started really lively work. Unfortunately, the terrible World War interrupted this work.

After six years of destructive war, and after receiving reports from PNCC missionaries and Fr. Bishop J. Padewski, members of the ANS Society from Scranton again contacted the members of ANS Societies in Poland, especially through their work in the Emergency Aid Society.

At the end of May 1948, the headquarters sent two representatives, E. Sznytrowa and S. Dryskolowa to Poland for the Congress, which took place on June 13 and 14 in Krakow. American representatives of the ANS Society were enthusiastically welcomed with great joy. They were brought into various parishes, showing everything that Poland had done in difficult conditions for its rebirth. Our messengers saw ruined churches, demolished houses, thousands of sick people - elderly and children, undernourished people, but everywhere noticed deep faith in Divine Providence and the energy of a hardworking, good man, loving God and his homeland – Poland.

After returning to America, our representatives could not find enough words of praise for everything they saw and heard in Poland. It was certain to them that our help from America on the welfare of the Polish poor and our assistance to the National Church Mission is God's command and therefore they believe that in 1950 more donations will be sent to the missionary treasury of the Polish National Catholic Church.

For the travel expenses of the delegates, our Society had a total of \$ 200. And in 1949 \$100 was donated to cover the cost of the Meeting in Warsaw. Members of our Society have purchased for the sisters in Poland Badges of the Society of the Devotion Book, Subscriptions to God's Field and POLKA and donated money for the necessary items to the Church.

Our Society celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Society's inauguration with the solemn Academy,

and by purchasing for the parish in Poland the sacrifice chalice and canons and from Central United Societies, a monstrance.

The Meeting held in March 1943, decided that every member of the ANS Society will make at least one dollar donation for the PNCC Missions in Poland. Because we believe that we should spread the idea of our dear Church and that we should help our First Bishop in his work, as much as we can afford. \$ 875.00 was collected.

We will not describe here the work which was done by the Society's annual evenings, the Christmas Eve, the social trips to the Spojnia Farm, the Senior House, the Warsaw Settlement, the pilgrimages to surrounding national parishes for the purpose of agitating, or participation in the rallies, because all the members are very aware of those activities. We will however, add our participation in the religious rallies organized by the Central Society, and especially in religious meetings organized by the Church. We can say in a word that nothing has taken place without us, which concerned Poland, America, the National Church, the cause of God. We were always ready to do the assigned work. We also need to emphasize the important fact that our Society showed up most numerously at the 50th anniversary of the Scranton city in 1916, so that one of the main awards, designated by the city of Scranton, was awarded to our Polish National Parish. And so in every religious and national assembly, there is a part of our work and our efforts.

THE DEPARTED SISTERS OF THE ANS SOCIETY.

When people in the old country hear the sound of the bells for the Angel of the Lord, they stand, put aside their work for a moment, and send prayers to the throne of God for the dead. Let us do the same, as we will read the list of 172 deceased sisters, good mothers, good Christians who during the existence of the ANS Society in Scranton went for their reward to God the Creator. Here are their names:

Katarzyna Narodzonek, Karolina Turkowa, Józefa Orłowska, Krukarowa, Krysicka, Pelagia Rzymkowska, Mostowska, Kuczerska, Kornetkowa, Regina Stankowska, Stanisława Janus, Zenkwilowa, Zygmuntowa, Wiktoria Trudnowska, Grabowska, Frenckowa, Wróblewska, Michalik, Jankowska, Wacława Gorgol, Drażewska, Cupik, Sadłowska, Baczyńska, Nowicka, Łopatkowa, Zajkowska, Franciszka Golas, Zarembowa, Hyrzyńska, Mleczkowa, Namiotkowa, Nerowa, Ankiewicz, Weronika Nycz, Julia Martyńska, Lewandowska, Sulczyńska, Szymańska, Franciszka Łuczyńska, Józefa Pawlak, Maria Matelewicz, Rozalja Harwarzyńska, Woźniakowa, Franciszka Sławińska, F. Zychowa, Anna Bąk, Trygarowa, Kuźmińska, Gajewska, Medlowa, Żurowska, Magdalena Janus,

Szpajerowa, Fabrowska, Mleczek, Amejkowa, Maria Andrzejewska, Józefa Sarnowska, Stanisława Niedzielska, Wiśniewska, Szczepańska, Krystyniakowa, Bachrnurska, Czernikowa, Przedzinkowska, Trybusowa, Kat. Marcinkowska, Szczyglińska, Krystyniakowa, Zielińska, Katarzyna Jankowska, J. Pikulska, Pencakowa, Wiktoria Szczepańska, Wiktoria Sankiewicz, Katarzyna Kowalewska, Wiktoria Urbanowicz, Elżbieta Siekierkowa, Tekla Podkulska, Anastazja Proń, Maria Stawna, Kowalczukowa, Anna Jankowska, Maria Maraj, Łucja Maliszewska, Stefanowiczowa, Joanna Liszak, Torbowa, Maria Jarochowa, Cegielkowa, Otylia Zellowa, Helena Stankowska, Katarzyna Wysocka, Martyńska, Maria Stańczyk, Wielechowska, Zygmuntowa, Węgrzynowa, Zabawa, Walentyna Wentland, Franciszka Gazdowa, Jakubowiczowa, Maria Karbowska, Kasylda Kowalewska, Antonina Michałowska, Maria Jankowska, Maria Kwiatkowska, Ant. Filipkowska, Fran. Nieziałkiewicz, W. Kaczmarek, Magdalena Nycz, Apolonia Durowa, Posłuszna, Kryplowa, Dąbrowska, Antonina Sarnowska, Paulina Kuzdrowa, Urszula Wiśniewska, Anna Gołębiwska, Maria Williams, Walentyna Kowalewska, Weronika Grzywińska, Józefa Szajnowa, Karolina Gajkowska, Julia Lojek, Ewa Sławińska, Agnieszka Świerkowska, Katarzyna Janik, Maria Szewczyk, Zofia Zaczkowska, Feliksa Płocha, Maria Rochoń, Maria Zajkowska, Anna Stankowska, Maria Stankiewicz, Wiktoria Łazar, Maria Mietlicka, Julia Martyńska, Jadwiga Zielińska Rozalia Gondela, Marja Rochoń, J. Parcinska, A. Ptaszyńska, Berta Kornetkowa, K. Chrzanowska, Władysława Unsworth, K. Matuszek, Katarzyna Franus, Maria Łazienka, Józefa Hojnowska, Albina Śliwińska, Anna Wiśniewska, Anna Bogdańska, Józefa Ziemiak, Anna Pikulska, Agata Ostrowska, Aniela Gładysz, Walentyna Nowak and Helena Waško.

Stanisława Telleys, Anna Kupiec, Teresa Baczyńska, Michalina Janowska, Katarzyna Warena, Emilia Sikorska, Franciszka Krupińska, Aniela Stanie, Teodozja Grabowska, Ludwika Nycz, Bronisława Owcową, Katarzyna Wiśniewska, Bronisława Mazewska, Rozalia Juszkievicz, Maria Romanowska, Władysława Szewczyk, Elżbieta Nerowska, Klara Garbacz, Maria Augustyn, Franciszka Kwiatkowska, Balbina Kaczmarek, Władysława Zajkowska, Anna Kopacz, Klara Witkowska and Konstancja Karpińska.

Eternal rest give unto them O Lord!
Let the perpetual light shine upon Amen.

Supplement

These events and work performed by founders of ANS Society and partly by us, their successors, are not an exact picture of all that the Society has done during 53 years, but it is a mirror of faith and action flowing from the faith of our mothers, older sisters and friends of the Society of Polish Women ANS.

We are pleased and happy that we have, as founders of the Society and workers in the Polish National Church in Scranton, good and honorable mothers, venerable wives and faithful to Christ-making religion of the Divine Order.

Today we are celebrating the 53rd anniversary of the foundation of the Polish National Catholic Church and Society of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We are participating in solemn Vespers celebrated by Fr. Bishop Misiaszek, and the Academy, where the First Fr. Bishop Franciszek Hodur gave a speech.

For the encouragement and spiritual strengthening, participants received a religious image representing the establishment of the Most Blessed Sacrament. This painting was issued by the Central United Societies of Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament on the order of the last Congress of these Societies.

When we consider the past there is only one request; for God's grace and inner strength so that we can follow in the footsteps of our founders, our mothers, our older friends, and perform a small service to God and the Church as they did.

Praise be to God, and honor the founders and workers of the Society of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Scranton, Pa.

Honor and gratitude to First Bishop Franciszek Hodur, Founder and Head of the Societies of Polish Women ANS in Scranton, Pa., and the Clergy, who worked very hard together with the Central and with the various Branches of the Association of ANS. in America - and for Unity in the Polish National Catholic Church in the United States and in Poland.