

Father Gerard Rogowski SDS

VII Superior General
of the Society of the Divine Saviour

* 1 January 1931

+ 17 June 2022



Fr. Gerard Paul Rogowski was born on 1 January 1931 at Rosenberg O/S Oberschlesien, at that time Germany and since 1945 Olesno, Poland. After his basic education in Rosenberg and Leipzig, he went to the novitiate in 1949 in Bagno. After an intense year of introduction into the religious life as Salvatorian, he was admitted to profess his first vows in Bagno on 8 September 1950, the anniversary of the death of Blessed Francis Jordan. Already being a Salvatorian, he went to the Salvatorian School at Mikolow where he concluded his high school studies. From 1952 until 1958 he studied Philosophy and Theology at the Dominican Philosophical-Theological College at Cracow. He was ordained a priest in the Salvatorian Church at Mikolow by Mons. Herbert Bednorz, the bishop of Katowice.

Being an excellent student, Fr. Gerard was sent in 1959 to Wroclaw, where he studied German Philology at the University of Wroclaw and obtained the degree of Magister in the German Philology. Once having concluded this academic career in 1964, Fr. Gerard continued to study at the Northwestern University in Chicago, from 1965 until 1967, where he studied English.

At apostolic level, Fr. Gerard started after ordination to serve in parishes in Poland. Once he was doing his Philological studies, he became a lecturer of the German language at the Salvatorian Major Seminary in Bagno. He taught this subject from 1963 until 1965. Then he was sent to Merrillville in the United States, and served from 1965 until 1975 the emigrants. Meanwhile he was from 1968 until 1970 the treasurer of the community, from 1970 until 1972 the local superior and from 1972 until 1975, he was the regional superior of the Polish Salvatorians working in the USA.

At the General Chapter of the Society in 1975, he was elected Superior General, a task he carried out for the next 12 years until 1987, with care, dedication and an enormous commitment and love for the confreres. Through his kindness and gentleness, he focussed very much on the importance of the unity of the Society, trying to bring and keep different opinions and tendencies together. As a Superior General, he was open to all and worked together with confreres of different nations. His studies of the German, English and Italian language and knowing Polish, made it possible to him to be in touch with many of the confreres in their own language. His mild and comprehensive character and patience converted him into a real cornerstone of the Society. It was Fr. Gerard who went as the first Superior General to India and the Philippines, making first contacts with the bishops and preparing the ground to open the door for future possible foundations in Asia.

After having finished this important service in the Society, Fr. Gerard went to Switzerland, where he decided to step into the pastoral care in different parishes in the German speaking area of the country. The first two years, he was mainly assisting priests, replacing and helping them. In 1989 he became the Parish Administrator of Btilach, a task he fulfilled for more than a year. From 1990 on he was appointed Parish Priest of St. Martin at Meilen, at the so-called "Gold Coast" at the zuricher Lake. In these years, he was a beloved pastor of the people. In 2006, Fr. Gerard turned 75, and he decided to retire from the parish. He went to the Salvatorian community at Zug, where he kept very active in the pastoral care, replacing priests, celebrating Mass wherever he was needed. His availability and good sense of humour made him not only a well-liked priest, but moreover a very pleasant and faithful confrere in the community, with a big sense of responsibility.

His weakening health condition, mainly caused of two strokes, obliged him and the community to come to the conclusion that it would be better to go to a nursing home. In February 2019 they decided to bring him to the Saint Francis Nursing Home at Menzingen, and later on that same year, he was transferred to the Salvatorian Nursing Home "Salwator" at Mikolow in Poland. Having lived at different places during his life, now Fr. Gerard, according to his own opinion, had reached the place where he wanted to live the evening of his life: the place where he joined the Salvatorians, where he was ordained and where he would die. After a life of faithful witness as an authentic Salvatorian, he died at Mikolow on 17 June 2022. He was 91 years old and had been a Salvatorian for 71 years.