



Father Jerzy Popiełuszko and Anna Walentynowicz.  
Saint Stanisław Kostka Church, August 26, 1984. Photo: Erazm Ciolek / C Agata Ciolek

lies were communist propaganda to counter his deeply religious, patriotic and peaceful sermons. His motto was taken from Saint Paul, "Fight evil with good."

**F**or defending Christian freedom and a free and just Poland, Father Jerzy was brutally persecuted by the atheistic regime of General Wojciech Jaruzelski and General Czesław Kiszczak ruling the enslaved nation.

One needs to suffer for the truth. People who have families, have children, are responsible, were in prisons, suffer, so why I, the priest, should not add my own suffering?

Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Służba Bezpieczeństwa) was heavily involved in what was known as Operation Popiel. Father Jerzy was followed constantly. His apartment was searched, windows were broken and explosives were thrown in and his correspondence was controlled. The Security Service fabricated evidence

against him planting weapons, ammunition and antigovernment printed materials. He was interrogated and harassed by the Prosecutor's Office. Father Jerzy was even indicted in July 1984, but later acquitted. Afterwards, the repressive measures intensified. On October 13, 1984, Father Jerzy narrowly escaped an auto-accident intended to end his life.

**O**n October 19, 1984, the Security Police killed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko. The Security Police officers, Grzegorz Piotrowski, Leszek Pękala, and Waldemar Chmielewski intercepted his car when he was returning home from the Church of the Holy Polish Brothers and Martyrs in Bydgoszcz. The priest was abducted and brutally beaten to death. The Chaplain of Solidarity died a horrible death full of suffering.

**F**ather Jerzy Popiełuszko's massacred body was dropped into Vistula River Reservoir in Włocławek, from where it was recovered on October 30, 1984. The murderers were convicted in a process held in Toruń between December 27, 1984 and February 7, 1985. They each were sentenced to many years in prison, however, they soon were released. To this day, no one knows who commissioned this crime.

**T**he abduction and death of Father Jerzy caused great agitation throughout Poland. There were large demonstrations of protest. Thousands prayed for the missing priest near the church in Żoliborz. Poland was prayerful and quiet. The funeral of the priest was held on November 3. It was lead by Cardinal Józef Glemp. It seems close to a million people attended, the mass was celebrated in complete silence.

**S**ince his death, people from all over the world have visited Father Popiełuszko's grave at Saint Stanisław Kostka Church. Pope John Paul II prayed at his gravesite in June of 1987. On June 6, 2010 Father Jerzy Popiełuszko was beatified by the Roman Catholic Church and the process of canonization was initiated in 2014.

Thus, his death became the source of a new life.



Last farewell to Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, about a million faithful participating, Parish of Saint Stanisław Kostka, Warsaw, November 3, 1984.

*It would seem that they annihilated him  
However, he rose to immortality.*

*Exhibition honoring  
the Blessed  
Jerzy Popiełuszko*



INSTITUTE OF  
NATIONAL  
REMEMBRANCE

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**B**lessed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko was born on September 14, 1947, in the village of Okopy, in the borough of Suchowola, near the city of Białystok. He was baptized with the name of Alfons which he used until 1972. Alfons was the third of five children born to Marianna nee Gnedziejko and Władysław Popiełuszko. His parents were patriotic farmers, who cultivated traditions of independence by remembering Alfons, Marianna's brother, the Home Army soldier, who was killed by the Soviets in 1945.



Seminarian Alfons Popiełuszko at the Higher Metropolitan Seminary in Warsaw.

Alfons attended elementary school and served as an altar boy in Suchowola, a small town four kilometers away from his family home. He received First Communion in 1956 and later was confirmed. From 1961 to 1965 he attended high school in Suchowola.

One cannot be quiet. Great things, great causes, come with the cost and, by nature, are difficult. Only small and meaningless things are easy.

Alfons was a conscientious but average student. As a boy and later a young man, he was devout, meditative and sensitive. He was representative of his generation in his adherence to the Great Novena, the spiritual program of Primate Stefan Wyszyński, which was designed to prepare the faithful for the celebration of 1000th anniversary of Christianity's arrival in Poland. As a young man, Alfons was very much interested in photography.

In 1965, Alfons Popiełuszko began his studies at the Higher Metropolitan Seminary in Warsaw to fulfill his dream of becoming a priest in the Archdiocese of the Primate

of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. As a seminarian, he was known for his acts of bravery in proclaiming his faith, focus on prayer, and devotion to Franciscan Father Maximilian Kolbe.

**F**orced military service was a form of repression used against members of the Catholic Church during the Communist dictatorship, and so Alfons's studies were interrupted from 1966 to 1968, when he was involuntarily conscripted into the 54th Educational Battalion of the Polish People's Army in Bartoszyce. But the brutal indoctrination practices and atheistic propaganda only strengthened the faith and spirit of the future priest. His unflinching devotion met severe punishment and painful injuries, which led to serious infections and hospitalization. He never fully regained his health, frequently suffered from illness, and sometimes even fainted during mass.



Seminarian Alfons Popiełuszko at the Higher Metropolitan Seminary in Warsaw.

To preserve human dignity one must remain free inside even when enslaved on the outside.

First, a Polish Cardinal was ordained Pope, and that ushered in many changes. Immediately afterwards, there were massive strikes, which led to the creation of Solidarity Trade Union (NSZZ Solidarność)

**I**n August of 1980, Primate Stefan Wyszyński personally asked Father Jerzy to celebrate Mass for the striking workers of the Warsaw Ironworks. Millions more were already on strike. Afterwards, the priest frequently held mass for the steelworkers, with regular services at Saint Stanisław Kostka Church in Warsaw beginning in April 1981.

**S**olidarność evolved into an organized movement with legal activities between August 1980 and December 1981. During this time period, Father Jerzy was very involved in supporting union members, striking workers, and students fighting for formal recognition of an Independent Student Organization. He celebrated Masses, organized group

Alfons Popiełuszko before his High School. Exit Exam in 1964.



On May 28, 1972, Father Jerzy Popiełuszko was ordained to the priesthood by Polish Primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

Wherever Father Popiełuszko served as a priest, whether at Holy Trinity Parish in Zabki near Warsaw, or at Baby Jesus Parish in Warsaw itself, he was known for his sincerity and devotion.

In 1979, he began his service to the medical community at the Academic Church of Saint Anna in Warsaw, where he held retreats and religious services for medical students and professionals. In June of 1979, he helped organize medical assistance for those coming to see John Paul II on his second visit to Poland.

**I**n May of 1980, Father Jerzy was transferred to Saint Stanisław Kostka Church in Żoliborz, Warsaw. He had been working extremely hard, and hoped to repair his already fragile health. However, several events prohibited his rehabilitation.



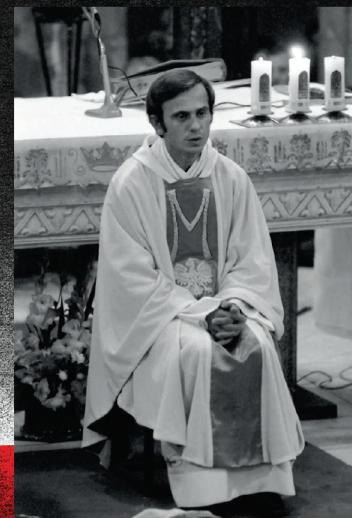
HOLY FATHER WE PRAY FOR YOU

prayers, provided spiritual support and took part in such important events as the blessing of the banners, and signs.

**M**arshall Law was in effect from December 13, 1981 through July 22, 1983. Father Jerzy was very active in providing assistance and spiritual support to those individuals who were arrested and persecuted, as well as to their families. He found time and strength to help everyone. He refused no one. He had tremendous respect for others, even for those "on the other side of the barricade," such as police (milicja), soldiers, and even members of the Security Service who often persecuted him. He became known as the Chaplain of Solidarity.

**F**rom 1982 to 1984, Father Jerzy instituted a special practice at the Church of Saint Stanisław Kostka. On the last Sunday of every month, he celebrated the mass of devotion to the Fatherland. Huge crowds gathered in the church, in front of the church, and even in the nearby streets. The enthralling homilies of the Father were broadcast both at home and abroad.

**C**ommunist authorities persecuted Father Popiełuszko for 'hate speech', claiming he incited protests and demonstrations. These brutal



Holy Mass for the Fatherland, prayer for the political prisoners, Saint Stanisław Kostka Church, Warsaw 1983.