NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

Branches on the Vine

SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 3, 2025

Father Edward Ziemnicki serves golabki at the annual Polish Day celebrated at St. Faustina Parish. This year's event will be held on Sept. 28. Credit: SUBMITTED PHOTO

A TASTE OF POLAND

A parish is preparing to dish out pierogi, golabki and more favorites.

Ada Mierzejewski went to her first Polish Day as a teenager back in the 1970s at St. Stanislaus Church in Meriden, and years later, she still enjoys the celebration of fine food, music and culture.

That food, which an expected 300 people will be enjoying on Sept. 28, is homemade by Mierzejewski, Amanda Edwards and Father Edward Ziemnicki, pastor of St. Faustina Parish, made up of St. Stanislaus Church and SS. Peter & Paul Church in Wallingford.

For weeks, the trio have been preparing, shopping and cooking everything from pierogi (stuffed dumplings) to golabki (stuffed cabbage), using the treasured old world recipes of Father Ziemnicki's mother Genowefa.

Pastor for 20 years, Father Ziemnicki says St. Stanislaus is the oldest Polish parish in Connecticut, and this year marks its 134th anniversary.

The original Polish celebration, known as June Fest, was three days long. But since the formation of St. Faustina Parish, it evolved into Polish Day.

"Polish Day is about bringing the parish together as a community," Father Ziemnicki says. "We start with noon Mass in Polish, then we have music and delicious food that is all homemade from the recipes of my mom. You cannot buy this kind of food in the store."

A proud native of Poland, he says the country's culture has historically been inextricably linked to the Catholic faith.
"We were always successful because we built our society on Catholic values, so you cannot talk about Poland without talking about the Catholic faith," Father Ziemnicki adds. "The motto of Poland is God, Honor, Country."

This year's Polish Day will also observe the 45th anniversary of the founding of the Solidarity movement in Poland, a non-violent social movement aligned with the Church, which led to the collapse of Communism.

Amanda Edwards, who has worked at the parish for eight years, is also proud of her Polish heritage. She attended St. Stanislaus School, as did her children before it closed.

"I enjoy the festival because it brings me a lot of joy, and I'm so excited to see people enjoying the food we prepared for them. We put a lot of love into making the food, and it's a real homemade Polish meal," she says. "Everybody loves Polish Day, because it lets the whole parish get together to celebrate with music, dancing and good food."

For Mierzejewski, whose daughters, sons-in-law and even grandchildren volunteer at the event, Polish Day is a family affair. A lifelong parishioner, she was brought up immersed in Polish culture and observing its traditions.

"I went to St. Stanislaus School and the church, and I married a Polish man, who worked at the church cemetery for 41 years," she adds. "Our parish family of St. Stanislaus and SS. Peter & Paul is everything to us, so I'm here celebrating my Polish heritage — even though I'm 100 percent Italian."

- Story by Joe Pisani

Upcoming Events

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With questions, contact:
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