

# Father Richard Jozwiak

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## SPEAKERS

Tyler Provow, Mark Prindiville, Father Richard Jozwiak

### **Tyler Provow** 00:00

You know, so that way you can see it, tell people about it or whatever you want to think so. You know, you've touched a little bit on what it was like growing up here in the area. But when you were growing up, what did, did you always want to be a priest? Or what did, what was your first love? What did you want to be?

### **Father Richard Jozwiak** 00:18

Well, as long as I can remember, like from the second grade, my grandparents, my paternal grandparents, lived right next door. And grandpa and I would play church. Of course, I was the priest. And he was the congregation. And in those, you remember Mother's Oats? those big boxes of oatmeal used to come in every, every whenever they came, they always had a either a plate or some kind of a, some kind of a thing inside.

### **Tyler Provow** 00:48

Okay

### **Father Richard Jozwiak** 00:48

And this time, they had a big, a big, a big, like a goblet. That was my chalice.

### **Tyler Provow** 00:54

Okay.

### **Father Richard Jozwiak** 00:55

And orange pop or something was usually the wine.

### **Tyler Provow** 01:00

Yeah.

### **Father Richard Jozwiak** 01:00

And grandpa was the congregation. And do you ever seen Necco Wafers?

**Tyler Provow** 01:05

Yeah

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 01:06

They're still around somewhere. Those were the hosts.

**Tyler Provow** 01:09

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 01:10

And we played, we played church. And then one day I said to Grandpa, you know, I says Father always wears. He wears a chasuble when he has mass. So he helped me cut a hole in one of Grandma's tablecloths. So we could have, I could have a chasuble.

**Tyler Provow** 01:27

That's funny.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 01:29

And that continued until, well, second or third grade, probably. But the idea was always in the back of my head. I always thought about it, but never did anything about it. And then I went to grade school. St. Rita's was our parish, that's been closed for a number of years now. They had, it was an elementary school, and then we always went to St. Joe's for high school. I graduated there in 1948. And, that sounds like 100 years ago.

**Tyler Provow** 02:02

Almost.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 02:04

And all the while this idea of the priesthood is in the back of my mind, but I'm not doing anything about it. So I graduated in '48 and went to the St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake, in '52. So I began, when I was getting out of the eighth, going into the, into high school, I got a job at Freuh's Greenhouse, out in Saginaw by the fairgrounds. And I worked there all through high school, for two years of college. And I probably, the Freuh's had no, um, Charlie had his son, but he wasn't interested in the business. And there were two old maiden sisters. And if I had not gone to the seminary, I probably would have ended up in a nursery business at Freuh's, but that never happened. And then it was toward the end of second year of college, I got a letter from Cardinal Hickey. Father Hickey, our our vocation director. And I opened it and has said, "we're thinking about sending you to Rome, for philosophy, and in four years of theology, but you haven't been confirmed yet by Rome. So in the meantime, keep this to yourself." Well, I almost fell off the chair, I folded up the letter, put it back, and the envelope and laid it down. And course, we're sitting at tables, there were five of us at a table. And they also wanted, they want to know what's going on. I says just a little letter from the vocation director. So that weekend, I hitchhiked home.

And my mother, till the day she died, she never knew that because, of course, hitchhiking in those days was a lot different than today.

**Tyler Provow** 03:47

Sure.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 03:48

Hitchhiked home that weekend. And I told mom and dad, of course, they were overjoyed and talked to my pastor, and got back to Father Hickey later and said, at home, everything is fine. So whatever you need to do, just let me know. So eventually, he called back and said, it's all set. So in September, you're heading to Rome. So we sailed on the Constitution from New York, in September of '54, a nine-day trip to Naples. And there were probably about, about 30 or 35 of us all heading to the North American college on that, on that ship. And we arrived in Naples, and the seminary wasn't ready for us, yet, so the older men that met us, kept us busy for about 10 days. We went to Capri and, and stayed in Naples and we were like tourists for, for 10 days. Then we went, eventually, went it, went, went into Rome and to the seminary. And that was the beginning of, that was, that was '54 and 1960 I came home and oh my gosh those six years were the greatest years of my life. I loved every minute of it.

**Tyler Provow** 05:01

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 05:02

And there were all kinds of opportunities to see Rome because we would have a museum walk every now and then, you had to be out of the building and into a museum, or you had to be, and then twice a week, we had, had to be out of the building for at least two hours. And then we went around the city and visited different places. Plus during Lent, there are the station churches, there's a certain church established each day for the Lenten season. And we did those, so we got to visit almost all the shrines just not like being a tourist where you have a week or 10 days and you got to do the whole city.

**Tyler Provow** 05:41

Yeah

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 05:41

So it was a wonderful experience. I came home in July of, on the Cons... on the Constitution this time. Went over on the Independence came back on the Constitution. And again nine days out of Naples to to New York, got on the train and in New York and took that took to the New York New York Central Station it was on Genes...where...where the railroad tracks crossed Genesee street. That's where the New York's so when I got off the train, one of the guys who, who met me right there was from St. Hyacinth in Bay City, and that was going to be my first assignment. And so he was the first parishioner to meet because he said, I knew about your assignment he says I'm here to meet you. So I'd be off the track off the train and into into a cab home. And my first assignment was St. Hyacinth in Bay City, when I went there in August of '60. And I stayed till May of '65 with Monsieigneur Skoronski. And he was elderly priest, a very Polish and quite who wasn't too well. So really being with him, was kind of like running the parish where it was a wonderful experience for me. And finally, in he had a stroke, he had

his 50th in May of like '64. And he had his celebrate his 50th in '64 came back from his 50th and he had a stroke that fall. He stayed on at the parish until May of '65, when he retired, and I went on to Pinconning to St. Agnes, my first parish, so I couldn't wait till the bishop was there and told, told Monseigneur, you know, he would retire and he told me I'm gonna send you to Pinconning. I couldn't wait till the bishop left, jumped in my car, drove up to Pinconning to check this place out, that's my first parish. So I looked it all over and came back to Bay City and then in September of or not rather, in July, in July of '65, I left St. Hyacinth and went to Pinconning, St. Agnes. And I was there for about five years and we did a lot of good stuff there; the the parish needed some remodeling, I asked the bishop, are you going to keep it open? Are you going to close it or what's going to happen? He says, Well, he says if you keep it open, we've got to do some remodeling. So he says no, go do it. So we did. The 50th anniversary was coming up. So we put on some new siding on the church that had that artificial brick stuff and build on, built a front entrance on because used to walk out of two steps and you were in the church. So we put a put a front end on, put a front entrance on the church and the ladies were terrific there. They had a chicken dinner every year in the summer. And we did a lot of things raising money to pay the, pay the, pay the, pay the, pay for the renovation. And within within two years the debt was all paid. And there was an article in the paper in the, in let's see, that would be July of '70. July of '70. An article in the Saginaw News said the diocese was accepting applications to replace the pastor at St. Stan's in Bay City, because Povish had been named a bishop, that he was pastor St. Stan's. He was the Bishop of Crookston, Minnesota. And I called Monseigneur Forbes, who was on the personnel board. And I says, I said Monseigneur there's an article on the Sag...in the Bay City Times saying you're accepting applications for the for to replace Povish at St. Stan's? I said "is that true?" And he said are you interested? And I said, well, I might be interested but what are what what chance do I have going there? Well, he says, uh, "put it in writing and send it to me." So I put a little note together and send it to him. And they began meeting. And they interviewed all the priests in the diocese that they thought would be suitable for St. Stan's, not only they had to know, at least a little Polish. Well, he got back to me. In that time, we had representation on the personnel board by ages. And Terry Yule was my rep. So he called me right before Labor Day. And that would be September of '70. And he said, you know, he says, we've met several different times, we've interviewed every priest in the diocese that we thought will be good for St. Stan's. And we always kept, we kept coming up with you. So the personnel board is putting your name. It's on the bishops desk right now. So I didn't I didn't do much that weekend. I'm hung around close to the phone waiting for a call and, if, a call never came. So then we're having a meeting I was when I was on the consultants, in those days. We're having a meeting at the bishops house. And I had called Monseigneur Forbes in the meantime, and he said, "Well, he's probably waiting, he'll see you at the meeting. He'll probably tell you there." Well, that didn't happen. So I saw Forbes again after the meeting, and I said, "the boss say a thing about St. Stan's," well, just hang on, we'll wait. So on the way out, I was driving out and the bishop had come out and Monsieigneur Forbes. And Forbes says to him, I suppose I stopped the car and roll the window down and the bishop was there with Forbes. And Forbes says to him, "Dick was expecting you to say something." And Reh, Bishop Reh, put his hand in my collar and he says, oh he says don't worry, he says "Dick knows I love him." Well, whatever that means. So anyway, never got a word. So Povish was being ordained in Crookston in September, around the middle of the month. And we had a chartered plane from Saginaw with people from St. Stans and the priests, we filled that plane. So I was one of the last ones to get in, to get on rather. And I was sitting way in the back. So we get on, we get on, we get up in the air, and

the bishop, Bishop Reh gets on the intercom. And he says, "is Father Jozwiak here?" Well, he knew I was because he ignored me in the terminal.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 12:37**

Anyway, so you know, and he knew I was there, so I go up to him and he says, he says, he looks at these people from St. Stan's, and he says, are you willing to...And I was 39 years old..."are you guys willing to accept this young guy as your pastor requested rah rah rah" the and so that was it. That was October of '70. And I was there from till October, till July of '79. And in those days, I never dreamed I would see the day that Hyacinth and St. Stan's would try to combine under as one parish like they are today. Because they were both thriving parishes and big. St. Hyacinth had over 1200 families in St. Hans....St. Stans had about 1400. And we had the 9:30 and 11:30 masses on Sunday, downstairs was full and two balconies were full plus the choir balcony every Sunday 9:30 & 11:30. Standing room only, unbelievable. And today, it's... Well, anyway, that's the story of St. Stan's and Hyacinth, of today. But, uh, I left St...St. Stans, and after nine years, and nine years was our max in those days, so I'd left after nine years and went to St. Michael's in Pinconning. That was the other parish and originally, St. Agnes was Polish and St. Michael's with French.

**Tyler Provow 14:11**

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 14:11**

And the history of that play over St. Agnes, the French priest, French pastor of St. Michael's always read the gospel in French...in French, and English. And then he preached usually in French and English. Well, there were a lot of Polish people and that are in that area too. So they said, "Can we have somebody at least read the gospel for us in Polish?" And the pastor says, nah, he says you people are foreigners. You come, you come to the church. You're welcome. But it's everything in English and French. So a group of people went three blocks south of St. Michael's, bought property, built a rectory, built a house, built a church, and call in the bishop, we were under Grand Rapids at the time, Grand Rapid diocese, he called, a call to the Bishop of Grand Rapids and says, we've got a priest we need, we got a church and a house, send us a priest. And they send Father Shipper. And Fr. Shipper was a pastor there for a number of years. And he left and he came back again later on. And that was be, the origin or St. Agnes, which has been closed now for a long, long time. And so I was at St. Mike's. I planned on I've had done six years. And the personnel board said, Well, how are you? What are you thinking about three more years, guys? Yeah, I'm fine with the people. And I think they're, they're willing to put up with me for another three years. So I was planning on a nine years at St. Michael's. Bishop Ken Untener was our bishop then, he called me one day and he said, "I'm coming over in the evening," and this is January. "I'm coming over in the evening to meet with your confirmation kids. And it says, can I talk with you after?" I say, yeah, sure. That's fine, I'll be, I'll be home. So when he was done with the kids, he came over to the house. And he said, "I need to make a change in Mount Pleasant. Would you be willing to go to Mount Pleasant?" And I said, geez bishop, as you know, I just got confirmed for three more years here. I'm thinking about staying the full nine. I said the people were willing to allow me to have me on for another three. Well, he says I can take care of the personnel board. But I need to, I need to have you respond about Mount Pleasant? So I said, well, give me give me a couple of days to think about it. Well, the next morning at Mass the psalm response was, I never

forgot this. "Here I am, Lord. I come to do your will." So I called him and I said, Bishop Untener, Bishop Ken, you set me up! The psalm response this morning. "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will." So okay, if I need to, if you need to send someone to Mount Pleasant, I'm willing to go. So that was in January. And in July, I moved to Mount Pleasant. And there, they had a wonderful foundation started for the school. And I remember when I when I first got there, I called the president of the foundation and I said "when you're when you have a meeting, I'd like to come to it." Well, she thought I wanted to come because I'm going to absolve or dissolve the foundation. I said no, no, I don't want to close you down as long as you're part of the parish as you're working for the good of the school, fine, great. All the more power to you. So then from then on, we were on good terms. Today, that foundation is I think close to five and four or 5 million and they contribute a big chunk of money toward the, toward the school budget. Father Loren Kalinowski is there now, he's got no problem, so. But I was there...It was a challenge. So then, when I left saint...in meantime, we remodeled the church, put in new lighting and 10 foot woodcarving of the risen Christ. We moved the tabernacle over into the side chapel and, and replaced the carpeting...it never been replaced for yumber...number of years. And they had a water main break, the water ran all night until in the morning, somebody opened the church, the whole church was just sopping wet. And when the, when the carpet dried it shrunk and pulled apart in the seams. When we replaced the carpeting, did the pews and new lights in the ceiling, and then I left there was also a nest, nest egg for Father McNamara when he came in and replaced me. And then I came into St. Josaphat's in Carrollton and I stayed there for 10 years until I retired in 2001. That's a story of my life.

**Tyler Provow** 19:26

That's quite a history and I'm impressed that you remember all those details.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 19:30

Well, some of those things you can't forget.

**Tyler Provow** 19:34

Yeah, no kidding. Tell me about what it was like being a young 20 something kid going over to Rome and leaving home for the first time. I mean, born and raised in Saginaw, back in Saginaw.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 19:44

Well

**Tyler Provow** 19:44

I'm sure that had to be exciting, like you said, but also...

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 19:48

Well..

**Tyler Provow** 19:49

...scary at times.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 19:50

There were, in our parish, our parish was St. Rita's, which has been closed for a number of years, it's a black church today. And we had elementary, elementary school there with the Grand Rapids Dominicans, and that's where I went to school elementary. And Harry Sikorski was the senior priest who just died a couple of years ago, he was the oldest priest in the diocese. And he was in Leuven. And Ray Michalski was a priest from Sag... from St. Rita's. Matter of fact, we were friends, he lived on the next street over from us. He was in Rome! So, and Leo Lynch was also in Rome, and he would he grew up in Munger. And I knew him and, uh, his family. So going over there with these guys that I already knew, it wasn't like going into something, you know, unknown.

**Tyler Provow** 20:41

Sure.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 20:42

And I remember they, when we finally got to Rome, they were all there. And kind of old home reception or hometown reception.

**Tyler Provow** 20:55

Gotcha. Yeah. So there's some people over there that you could fall back on, you know connect with in the area.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 21:00

I was going on for six years. So there were about eight of us. And that would be the third year of college. They had, the rest of the guys were in first year theology. But the philosophers my, the eight of us, we kind of stuck, stuck together. And then we did our two years together, and then moved on to theology. So the the eight of us kind of, we stuck together throughout, throughout all the time there. And we never, we never felt that we were alone. And at holiday time was always something to do. And they kept us busy. So of course, in those days, if you wanted to call, you had to reserve a time and stand in line. And you might be lucky enough to get through. Today, of course, you just with a cell phone or whatever you just open up and that's it.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 21:54

That was I never I never did call because I didn't know if I could do it. And I didn't want to put my parents through that, kind of, kind of system.

**Tyler Provow** 22:06

Yeah, I gotcha. How were your parents always supportive of you going over there?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 22:13

Yeah. We, the mailman, when the mailman. And of course, it was...home delivery then. Anytime there was a letter from Rome from me, he always either rang the bell or he whistled as he walked up the steps. If the door was open, he whistled so mom, knew, there was a letter.

**Tyler Provow 22:30**

Gotta have their own little code there.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 22:31**

Yeah.

**Tyler Provow 22:33**

That's funny. So were there any were there ever any times during like your early journey through the seminary, or even early on in your career that you maybe had second thoughts about? Is this really what I should be doing?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 22:44**

Never did. Never did. I always felt secure in what I've decided. And Lord was good to me and never had that, that some guys did.

**Tyler Provow 23:02**

Yeah. Okay. That's something I was curious about.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 23:04**

Even today, after 63 years. If I had to do it again, I'd do the same thing. All over again.

**Tyler Provow 23:11**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 23:12**

No, no regrets.

**Tyler Provow 23:14**

That's good. That's good. It's nice to always have God on your back. You know, it seems like it's always been a big impact on your life. Like you were saying all the way from second grade when you were, you know, playing church with your dad. How, you know, that early influence in the church did that come mostly...I'm sure your parents played a big role. But were there we're your grandparents, also very active in the church?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 23:13**

Yeah, and they're matter of fact, grandma and grandpa went to Holy Rosary. Holy Rosary was the big Polish parish on Annesley Street in Sag... on the east side of Saginaw. And they gave birth to St. Casimir's, St. Rita's, St. Josephat, and St. Mary's at Nine Mile in Pinconning. And that was all, they all came out of Holy Rosary. It was the Polish parish and their Polish people all migrated to the same to the, to the Polish parish. The Polish church.

**Tyler Provow 24:11**



Yeah, it seems like back in that day. You'd be going wherever your language was right, because that's how you

**Father Richard Jozwiak 24:17**

Grandpa always went to Holy Rosary. And we live next door and we went to St. Rita's.

**Tyler Provow 24:24**

Interesting how once you find a parish that you connect with you kind of stick there. That's for..

**Father Richard Jozwiak 24:29**

And we had, we had always crossed the Norman street tracks. We had to leave, leave hou...leave the house for eight o'clock mass, at least by 7:30 or earlier, because you never knew if there's gonna be a train on the Norman tracks. That's why I used to kid Father Sikorski, they lived right across the street from the, from the school, on Mercer Street. And I said my gosh, you guys can sleep and Father would ring the bell at five minutes before Mass. And I said you guys can sleep till the first bell rings, we've got to get up a half hour before that, to get across the Norman tracks.

**Tyler Provow 25:07**

That's funny. Um, kind of going back to your time in Mount Pleasant. That seems like a pretty challenging time in your career, one of the most challenging times, how did you think about, you know, so quick on your feet, all this stuff's thrown at you and all of a sudden, you just have the idea of, we're going to try to have the parishioners help us out, you know, where did that idea come about? And how did you think so quick, through all that stuff?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 25:32**

Well, you know, I knew... And the bishop didn't tell me all this stuff. I told him later, I said, If you had told me everything that was going on at Mount Pleasant, you would have had to look for somebody else, because I don't think I would have been up to it. But I said, the way you worked it you didn't give me any options. But anyway, I had all this stuff before me. And you know, they're not about to close the pipe...the parish, the school is not about to close. What can we do to keep it open? And I talked to, we had, we had five wonderful people on the finance council, and they knew some of the stuff but then when I told them what's going on, that the school had no credit and and we needed \$100,000 right now. When I suggested I was gonna have I had a plan, as well, they had none. So let's try it.

**Tyler Provow 26:26**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 26:27**

And that's also the only time I always use...I never, I never beat on the pulpit when I tried to make a point. But that, that weekend, when I gave a talk that all the masses, asking for 5, for 20 people to be friends with Sacred Heart, I beat on the pulpit and I said, you cannot ever allow, to happen again, what is taking place here. An embezzlement and all this stuff. Boy.

**Tyler Provow 26:55**

Yeah, pretty serious message in some pretty serious circumstances. But I'm sure it showed some good faith, you know, in the bishop to tap you on the shoulder for that one. And, you know, God to kind of send you a message the next day, like you said, so even though you might not be back...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 27:10**

And that was a psalm response just a couple of weeks, a couple of Sundays ago. And I told the people that in Mount Pleasant, or rather at St. John Vianney, you know, that psalm response means a lot to me.

**Tyler Provow 27:22**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 27:23**

Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will.

**Tyler Provow 27:28**

Yeah, that's, and I suppose that we, you know, for all of us, it rings true. But it's interesting that that's what you heard the next day. What do you think looking back was your favorite assignment? Or what was your? You know...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 27:42**

I get that asked so often.

**Tyler Provow 27:45**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 27:46**

And you know, you can't, it's hard to pick on one place. And because the other people all, the other parishes all have people too, and they're all concerned. And they, I loved every one of them, and they loved me. And all my assignments. But of course, St. Stan's would stand out, they had the men's, the men's, they still they still have the men's choir. Stanley, the Deacon Stanley is...directs that thing and does a beautiful job. Today, they don't have all the activities that we had in my day. But that certainly stood out as one of the big places. That was just wonderful. And with the men's choir and all the activities, and the people who are so interested, like in every parish, people are interested in their parish. They always want to do what's right. And do a little bit better than they did the year before that. And they've always done that.

**Tyler Provow 28:47**

I'm sure given your heritage that was probably a pretty special place to go. I know, with St. Stan's Festival and everything. It's a pretty...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 28:55**

My gosh...

**Tyler Provow** 28:55

Pretty historic church to Polish people kind of gravitate towards there.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 28:59

Two or three years ago, before the pandemic, we had all that rain in June and the festival is always like the last weekend of June. And there was so much, so much rain that weekend. The dance floor in the beer tent was floating.

**Tyler Provow** 29:18

That's funny I'm sure they didn't care.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 29:20

Imagine that. Oh my gosh. It seemed everywhere I looked. I met Steve Javinski with his great big truck hauling sawdust to cover the...cover the puddles of water and the picnic grounds. And that thing still goes on every year.

**Tyler Provow** 29:37

Oh yeah. It's huge in Bay City and that's what they always look forward to, that and the fireworks.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 29:40

And they get at all the polka bands from the country and...

**Tyler Provow** 29:48

What's been kind of, what're something that you kind of learned in your early days as a priest that helped you later on in your career or kind of how were you different as a younger priests than um what you are today or what you work towards in your career?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 30:05

Well, I guess I never was afraid of work. And then my first assignment with Monsignor Skoronski, I know when I first met him, August 16, 1960, I rang the doorbell, and he answered. He came to the door and, secretary was away or something, and we sat down that day, and he welcomed me. And he says, though, you're a priest, and I'm a priest, I'm not going to be checking on you. You want to know anything? Ask. I'm willing to help you. And that was kind of the relationship we had. And he wasn't, he was never breathing over my shoulder. And he would, if he wanted me to do something, he would suggest how I do it. And if you want to make any changes, I'd say, well, Monsignor I tried this, but it seems to work better this way. Go ahead, try it. Go ahead, do it. And so he was, he was a good mentor. And I enjoyed him.

**Tyler Provow** 31:05

Yeah, it's nice to have someone that can kind of like, carve your own path and, you know, have some failure and struggle and work through it on your own versus kind of telling you this is how it's got to be.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 31:15

Like I said, I know some guys. Well, in those days, the diocese went all the way up to Rogers City and Posen. That was before 1970 when, when Gaylord became a diocese, and I know a priest, who was one of our, Terry Yule, who was a priest in a diocese, he was in Rogers City, couldn't do a thing there. He'd have mass in the morning and that was it. Pastor didn't allow him to do anything. And not, not me, boy. We called, affectionately called Monseigneur Skoronski, he was called by the priests "Fr. Skow," and he, whatever you wanted to do, fine with him.

**Tyler Provow** 31:58

Yeah, that's nice to work for someone like that.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 32:00

He was a good mentor.

**Tyler Provow** 32:01

Makes a big difference. Kind of an aside, I'm curious. Because I've heard his name came up a few times, and he was my pastor when I was younger, but was Monseigneur Forbes like?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 32:13

Oh, Forbes?

**Tyler Provow** 32:14

Was he a good guy to work for?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 32:16

He was wonderful. Yeah. I remember. I remember filling in for him in Auburn, and he was, he had MS. MS, did he?

**Tyler Provow** 32:29

I, I'm not sure he...I was in grade school. So I think '03 was when he passed and that, I was in third grade, so I had him for those first few early years. And he was always someone that me and my family connected with and got along well with, but I only had a few early memories.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 32:46

But yeah, it was either MS, or one of those things. He was...had, well its, gave him...he had a speech impediment as a result. And so I know I filled in a few times for him there. And in those days, let's see. Yeah, it was Auburn, and Fish...because Fisherville was a separate place, wasn't it?

**Tyler Provow** 33:08

Yeah, so they're St. Anthony's in Fisherville. And then St. Joseph is in Auburn.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 33:12

And now it's St. Gabriel's in Auburn now, isn't it?

**Tyler Provow 33:15**

Yes.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:16**

Yeah

**Tyler Provow 33:17**

They're both into one.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:19**

Yeah. Now is Tom Sutton out of the hospital yet?

**Tyler Provow 33:22**

I, to my knowledge, no, but I don't know.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:27**

Cause you know, he's...

**Tyler Provow 33:28**

I know he's in kinda rough shape, right now.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:29**

Yeah he is, he's real bad. His, his ambition in Auburn was to build a new church.

**Tyler Provow 33:27**

Oh really?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:37**

Because really, the church there is. That's the that's that's the auditorium for the school.

**Tyler Provow 33:43**

Right, yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:45**

And they're supposed to build and that's why the rectory is so far off the highway, it's way in the back because the church is going to be between the rectory and, and, and...what is that? Midland road.

**Tyler Provow 33:56**

Midland Road, yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 33:56**

Midland Road, yeah. And there was enough room there to build a church on.

**Tyler Provow 34:00**

I didn't know that.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 34:01**

The bishop never let him do it. Because, you know, the other thing is, if you needed more than put out a little addition to St., St. Anthony's in Fisherville. That church, is just standing vacant, I believe.

**Tyler Provow 34:15**

Right, yeah. Yeah, they used to have some classes over there. Because the K-6 school was split between both parishes. But I believe it's all just at one now. So yeah. Interesting, interesting. As far as the church and the diocese goes, how do you think the church has changed since your early years to now. I know, in some people's opinion, it's kind of, I know schools are declining a little bit and it seems like it's almost like sometimes...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 34:48**

The schools or schools that are open, like Nouvel, Nouvel Elementary. S'course, of course in the old days, every parish had a school and it's hard to imagine that Saginaw is down to one elementary school. They should have twice the enrollment I think but but I think over it over time, they're building up. And All Saints, when I was at St. Stan's the freshmen and sophomores were at our campus, and juniors and seniors at St. James. And we were responsible for Barney's Bakery becoming a millionaire. Because every now and then they would change classes. And then just a few blocks, St. Stan's is 22nd Street and Columbus is 12th Street. So a few blocks between, the kids, kids would, would go back and forth, and run into Barney's get a doughnut and a pint of milk.

**Tyler Provow 35:44**

Sure.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 35:45**

And oh my gosh, imagine 100 kids or 200 kids coming in on a regular basis. So we were...Barney did okay by, by, by All Saints. But All Saints, for some reason has never taken off, like, like Nouvel.

**Tyler Provow 36:02**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 36:03**

But it's, it's, it's coming along, but it's gonna take some time.

**Tyler Provow 36:07**

Sure. Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 36:10**

So, but in the old days, what I admire today is all the, the lay people, the involvement of lay people. We've got the commissions and parish councils, and all these things that, that we took care of before, which, which was just as the people today are really involved in.

**Tyler Provow 36:32**

Yeah, that's interesting. I didn't know that back in the day. It was mostly on you guys. Not necessarily on the lay people

**Father Richard Jozwiak 36:37**

See was, in those days, we had what they called a church committee. But the church committee on, got appointed this way, the pastor would send in seven names to the bishop. And he would appoint the first five, okay, but the pastor knew that the first five that he wanted, were there. And they all got appointed. They're appointed by the bishop today, there's an election, there's rotation terms, so that you're not all moving out at the same time. And so there's a lot of good things that happened as a result of as a result of Vatican II.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 37:21**

And then, in those days, Father Hickey was with us, he was a big, a big help in the diocese. I remember we started English, in the mass, every place where there was Dominus Vobiscum. We responded "The Lord be with you." That was the beginning. And at St. Hyacinth, let's see, at Thanksgiving of, I left there in '60...Thanksgiving of '64, we used the altar facing the people. And that was the first time.

**Tyler Provow 37:55**

Oh, wow.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 37:56**

Thanksgiving of, November of '64. And I left there in May of '65.

**Tyler Provow 38:01**

Okay. What was that like going from? You know, preaching facing, you know...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 38:08**

Well, that was great. I enjoyed it.

**Tyler Provow 38:09**

Yeah.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 38:10**

Because, you know, we, we Vatican II, had, had, had gotten into the, into the church by that time. And we knew it was in John, John, John XXIII, his purpose in doing it was to let in, "open the windows and let in some fresh air," and we kind of adopted that, that, that motto. And it was, it was interesting to see the result. And then the people responded, they responded.

**Tyler Provow 38:40**

Yeah, I'm sure the I'm sure the congregation liked, you know, you preaching to them and not staring at your back for the whole mass there. So I'm sure that was an nice change for them, too. Is there anything, Mark after hearing father's story that you're curious about? Or want to ask about?

**Mark Prindiville 38:56**

Oh, I don't want to ruin the groove, please. Continue, by all means.

**Tyler Provow 39:00**

What are you, oh go ahead. So, what now, you know, today, do you have any hobbies? Or, you know, I know you're still active in the church, but since your retirement, is there anything that you, that takes up your time?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 39:13**

I have a green thumb.

**Tyler Provow 39:15**

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 39:16**

I'm famous for, well, when I, when I went to Mount Pleasant, you needed something for recreation. So I remember I was, I came there in July and the, we lived in the rectory. And, and the rectory is out, not to the parish offices plus living quarters, but that whole one wing, the South Wing of the rectory, had, was overgrown with shrubs. So one of the first things I did is, the organist had five boys at home. I send out send me over a couple of your boys. We pulled out those shrubs and got a roto tiller and worked up, worked up the ground. And Dave Nyer had a, had a dairy farm, and I said to Dave, I need some cow manure. But I said not the fresh stuff. I don't want to drive the neighbor, the neighbors crazy. No, he's got a nice pile. It's like, like peak moss. Brought me over a truckload and dumped it in that area that we had worked up with the roto tiller. And I had a cousin who was into roses, she actually belonged to her, she was in the St. Casimir neighborhood. And Lucille gave me a contact in Canada, for roses. So I called there and I got bunches of four of each variety, like, like 100 different bushes, and we had, like 25 sections, four of a kind, all along that, all along the rectory there. And I remember we had a meeting there in the summer in the summer. These roses were planted, they're growing, and John O'Callahan was a priest of our diocese who died a couple of years ago, living in Florida. He said "Dick, how did you get those roses growing up like?" I says, to John, "it's the cow manure." And anyway, these roses were, they were, they were, you know, normally they're just little thin, but these were up about four feet, five feet. And that's so now it's hard to raise roses now. But I went into, went into begonias.

**Tyler Provow 41:34**

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 41:35**

And I live in a, I'm in a condominium out there in in..uh...at Gratiot. And so I've got I'm a pot gardener. We've got these big pots, and so I've got three big pots under my window, and the sun porch. And then



several on the other side. I fill those with, with dirt and with manure and fertilizer, and grow begonias, what they call a whopper, whopper begonias. W-H-O-P-P-E-R. And they're really whoppers. They grow tall, big clusters of flowers like grapes. They come in pink and red.

**Tyler Provow** 42:18

Huh, I'll have to check this out.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 42:20

So I'm, I'm a begonia, begonia fan, now.

**Tyler Provow** 42:22

I got you. Is that, what's your favorite flower?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 42:26

Well, as if it's in a vase than roses, but for growing begonias.

**Tyler Provow** 42:34

Okay. What's been the most challenging to grow out of all your....

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 42:39

The roses. We had to get the ground ready. And pull out the ro...the old shrubs, and the cow manure and all that stuff.

**Tyler Provow** 42:47

Yeah. My wife planted a couple of rose bushes, when we were down in Illinois in our backyard. Real small, and we only had him for a year before we moved and, I think you got two flowers on the first one. So it was a good start. But it was, it was definitely a challenge and they weren't alive for long.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 43:02

Do you live in Auburn now?

**Tyler Provow** 43:04

So right now we're at her parents house, over on Four Mile Road. We're searching for a house right now.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 43:06

Oh.

**Tyler Provow** 43:11

Yeah. We'd like to stay in the Bay City, Auburn area.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 43:14

Well, you want to start a rose garden, then I'll help you.

**Tyler Provow 43:18**

Okay. I'll keep you, I'll hold you to that.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 43:21**

Because the Nyers still have, still have a dairy farm I think.

**Tyler Provow 43:25**

I think so. Yeah. Yeah. So you go get manure from them. I'll have to keep that in mind.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 43:29**

But, but remember that you get the old stuff.

**Tyler Provow 43:33**

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 43:34**

Yeah, not the fresh stuff.

**Tyler Provow 43:36**

Okay. Good to know, good to know. So what, um, I guess what would you like people to...what's something that you would like people to know? What's something about you that, you know, kind of your maybe legacy or mission or what's something that that you'd love for people that were hearing this to know about you?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 44:07**

I was never afraid of work wherever I went. And never afraid to start a project and always got plenty of cooperation. Maybe a catalyst who gets people started, who gets people interested. And gradually who can step aside and let somebody else do the job?

**Tyler Provow 44:31**

Sure. So kinda, I mean, pretty good leader, I would say you know, you you help the people below you or better with you, and you kind of train them on the job. So you effectively train yourself out of a job and then you can move on to the next project. So that's good. I think, you know, from what I've heard over your time, it sounds like you've, you know, done quite a lot of things and had quite a, for someone who's, you know, been in this area for their entire life, you've certainly got out and...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 45:01**

6...63 years.

**Tyler Provow 45:02**

Done quite a bit of stuff and, you know, quite a few amazing experiences. It seems like.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 45:05

I'd like to think I'm not done yet.

**Tyler Provow** 45:07

Yeah, no, it's I mean, you're...I'll tell you what, I don't know how you stay so young, because you're recalling stuff. And, you know, you certainly look good.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 45:17

I'm 91. December, December 9th, I couldn't believe it. Because none of my family, my grand, my grandparents, my mom and dad, my sister and brother, everybody lived into their 80s. But 91?!

**Tyler Provow** 45:32

What do you think your secret is?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 45:37

I like ice cream.

**Tyler Provow** 45:39

Yeah. I mean, I'm sure staying active and, you know, having a purpose helps, you know. Obviously serving God and serving the church is kind of a never ending journey and a never ending purpose. So I'm sure having, having some of that helps with you...

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 45:56

Three years ago, I...I'm the chaplain to the KCs on Shattuck Road here. And were there for some 20 some years now. And I've been up and through that stairway, or through that doorway, a million times. And there's one time I tripped over that little tiny step and fell and broke the femur in my left leg.

**Tyler Provow** 46:23

Ouch.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 46:25

That's, has that's been, it's healed pretty well, but it's left me with this buddy. But I'm still able to get around.

**Tyler Provow** 46:37

Yeah. Was there anything else that you'd like to talk about? Or you'd like to like to touch on here?

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 46:44

I don't know. You really covered all the bases? I don't know what else we got.

**Tyler Provow** 46:47

I got one other question for you. And I'm not going to let you take the easy answer here. If you could go back and meet any, any historical figure, saint, biblical figure, outside of Christ, because I think that's the easy answer, who would you go back and meet and why?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 47:13**

Well, John Paul II, St. John Paul II. He was the first Pole to be elected to the papacy in over 400 years. And he never forgot his, his roots. He went back to Poland, several different times. And the Communists, they, they were beside themselves when he was elected. And when he went to Poland, he stirred the people up and eventually, eventually, he broke that Iron Curtain. And he did that just by being himself, a true Pole. And working for the good of the people. And I, I had a contact Mons...his name was Monseigneur Machowski. And he was actually at St. Stan's in Rome. And if I knew I was going to be enrolled, I'd call him, let him know I'm going to be in Rome. And he'd get tickets for the the, audiences that the Pope has, like on Wednesday or whatever day it is. There are 100 tickets in the front row, they call it a prima fila.

**Tyler Provow 48:39**

Okay?

**Father Richard Jozwiak 48:41**

If you're in that prima fila, you know you're gonna get to talk to the Pope. Because he comes down, he always came down and went through that whole line. I remember being there with John Nyer from Mount Pleasant. And John and I, I called monseigneur and he got us two tickets, prima fila. And John didn't know if he's beside me. And I said, John, you know, eventually, the Holy Father's gonna come down, and we're gonna, you're gonna, you're gonna talk to him. And John says, No, he, I said, yes, it's going to happen. And sure enough, all of a sudden, after the audience, this whole front row, and he comes down and the photographers are snapping pictures like crazy. So John Paul II was really, really, and even today his, his when he died...I remember his funeral. The casket was in front of the funeral mass was in St. Peter's Square. And the casket was an on, on, on a, on a carpet in front of the altar. And the Gospel book is a real heavy book. And they had it open and all of a sudden during that mass the, there was a terrific wind that came along, and fluttered the pages of that book. And I'm sure that was the Holy Spirit putting his approval on JP II's life.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 50:23**

I never forgot that. And so he really, really, and he influenced the church. And the wonderful things he did. You ever see, sometime, looking for something to do, get The Shoes of the Fisherman. The Shoes of the Fisherman. Uhm, oh, who is the guy that portrayed the pope? He, he led the he portrayed of the pope, regular movie star, he's gone now. I can't think of his name. But he portrayed, he got so involved in that, in that role, that he he had to take some time off after, after the filming. Because he couldn't, couldn't get back to reality. But this, he's this, he begins, the pope begins as a prisoner in a Russian labor camp. And the announcement comes through, no names, but numbers, numbers so and so and so come to the office. So he goes to the office. And he says, he finds out he says, The Pope has, has reached an agreement with us, you're going to be released, you're going to be sent to Rome. And of course, you couldn't, couldn't believe it. And he gets to Rome. And he meets with the Pope. And the Pope has a red hat on the little table next to him. And before he leaves, he picks up that red hat and puts it on his head and makes him the first Cardinal that he's going to make, that he's going to create later on. And then there was an opening in the papacy, the pope dies, and this guy is elected...Anthony Quinn, Anthony Quinn was the guy!

**Tyler Provow 52:25**

Okay.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 52:26**

He was, he was the guy. And he becomes Pope. While he's, he's in, he's pope and his, he doesn't like this business of just everybody doing things for him and he wants to go out. So he says to his his, one of his aides get me a plain black cassock. That's a, that's an outer garment that priests wear, instead of the Pope's white. And he goes out and and he's walking around the city. Nobody knows who he is, he's just dressed like a priest.

**Tyler Provow 52:58**

Sure.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 52:59**

And he passes a house and a doctor just came out and she she sees him. She didn't know who he was. She hands them a prescription, go to the drugstore, go to the drugstore, get this prescription and bring it up here. So he does and he takes it and goes to the drugstore. Hands the, hands the prescription over, the drug is...the pharmacist fills it out, hands it to him and tells him that that'll be 200 Lira. And the guy said, "Oh my gosh, I don't have any money." He says you priests, they're all the same. You never have money. You want all your stuff for free. That...later on the guy, the guy's looking at the paper, opens the paper and there's the picture of the new Pope on the front page. Oh my God, that's the guy that was just in the drug in the drugstore. Anyway, he takes that prescription up to the apartment. And, and, and, and it's a Jewish family. And he knew the the special prayer that the rabbi would say over a Jewish person when they're when they're dying, and he he does that. He holds his head and chants that prayer. And then in the meantime, they find out where he is in they, they said "Holy Father, you got to come home you can't, you can't do what you're doing." But that's the shoe, Shoes of the Fisherman.

**Tyler Provow 54:24**

Okay. I'll have to check it out.

**Father Richard Jozwiak 54:26**

Yeah.

**Tyler Provow 54:26**

So...

**Father Richard Jozwiak 54:27**

You'll love it!

**Tyler Provow 54:29**

All right. Would you say that Pope John Paul had a pretty significant influence on you and your teaching style and all that.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 54:36

Oh yeah. Even today, his his tomb. Now, he when he was first buried, he was he was in the lower one level low, one level below St. Peter's main floor. After he was canonized, he was brought up and his chapel is always busy. People are always there. There are always flowers and candles and burning, so on. Yeah.

**Tyler Provow** 55:03

Yeah, the People's Pope right? Is what I read in that article. So that's kind of interesting. I mean, I know especially in today's day and age, I'm sure it's nerve wracking at times to get out...

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 55:13

Sure

**Tyler Provow** 55:14

If you're that high of a public figure, but for someone to kind of step out amongst the people, because that's what you're really serving, you know, kind of says a lot about him.

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 55:25

Okay. Very good.

**Tyler Provow** 55:27

Well, Father, I appreciate your time and...

**Father Richard Jozwiak** 55:29

Well, I appreciate meeting both of you.

**Tyler Provow** 55:32

Yeah, absolutely. You uh...