

Zylla, Reverend Paul, Interview

This is an interview with Father Paul Zylla of Mary of Immaculate Conception Church in Rockville, Minnesota. This tape deals with Rev. Zylla's family background, his education, the various churches where he has been pastor, and what he sees as changes in people and the church in the past 35 years.

Interviewer: John LeDoux

Date: February 14, 1978

Subjects Covered: Tape 1 side 1

018 Family Background:

- 018 All of his grandparents were <sup>imm</sup>igrants from Poland, ~~the~~ section of Poland that was occupied by the Germans.
- 029 His maternal grandparents' names were John Gapinski and Anna Balcer.
- 038 His paternal grandparents' names ~~are~~ were Frank Zylla and Mary Kampa.
- 054 His paternal grandparents were married in Poland; that is also where their first two children were born.
- 061 His maternal grandparents were possibly married in Chicago.
- 067 All of his grandparents came over in the early 1880's possibly.
- 074 Both sets of grandparents were farmers.
- 078 His maternal grandfather worked on the street cars in Chicago.
- 085 His father was born in Morrison County, near Swan River.
- 095 His father was born on April 14, 1891.
- 114 His father possibly only had 2 or 3 years of education.
- 118 His parents were married November 25, 1913 in Gilman, Minnesota.
- 124 His father was a barber in St. Cloud.
- 160 He had his own barber shop until the depression, but then he closed it up and barbered at other shops and then retired in 1968.
- 173 Reverend Zylla was born on September 12, 1921 in St. Cloud Mn.
- 188 There were 7 children in his family, 5 boys and 2 girls.

194 Education:

- 194 He went to grade school at St. John's Cantius, then he went to 4 years of high school at Cathedral High school in St. Cloud, where he graduated in 1938. After high school, he attended <sup>Crossier</sup> ~~Crossier~~ Seminary for two years. Then it was on <sup>St.</sup> St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul from the years of 1940 to 1945.
- 209 He was ordained a priest on September 2, 1945 by Bishop Bush <sup>e</sup> at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud.
- 224 He worked after school to pay for his books, tuition, spending money <sup>etc.</sup> ~~etc.~~
- 237 He always wanted to be a priest. He was always interested in religion, he had a religious family, and had had a Catholic education.

260 The Depression Years:

- 260 He was in the later half of grade school, and high school when the depression was on.
- 280 During the depression few people had jobs or money, and a penny was a great deal of money.
- 331 He was a shoe shine boy during the depression.
- 400 Shaves were more common than haircuts were as many people had to learn to cut their hair.

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- 458 A lot of places managed to get through those dark days.  
 484 He worked in the barber shop until he was a sophomore in high school.  
 490 He then got a job as a paper boy , and held that job until he graduated.  
 515 His senior summer he got a job as a stock boy in the A & P Grocery store for 12¢ an hour. Soon after that minimum wage boosted his wages to 25¢ an hour.

589 World War II:

- 589 He was at St. Paul's Seminary when World War II broke out.  
 597 Communication with the outside world was very restricted, but they were aware of what was going on. They all knew that Pearl Harbor would push the US into the war.  
 650 Food became hard to get and rationing began.  
 722 He noticed an obvious lack of men on the streets.  
 733 Gas and tires were hard to get.  
 771 Death notices started to come in.  
 811 They began to hold bombing drills.  
 825 During the latter part of the war, priests were becoming scarce due to the fact that many were becoming army chaplains. Because of this fact the seminarians were ordained early.  
 880 1944, the school eliminated summer vacation.

Subjects Covered: Tape 1 side 2

010 Early Priesthood:

- 010 He knew that the Bishop would place him some where in central Minnesota.  
 026 His first parish was Assumption Parish in Morris, where he acted as assistant pastor.  
 041 He was there for 1 year.  
 051 The area up there was only apx. 20% catholic. The nationalities were mixed.  
 070 The he went to Holy Angels and became an assistant. He taught religion at Cathedral High School. He was also the ~~chaplain at~~ *chaplain at Newman Center* for 1 year. 1946-1947.  
 127 He was then sent to the Catholic University in Washington D.C. where he ~~received~~ *received* a master degree in history. He was there 1 year, 1947-1948.  
 136 He came back to Holy Angels and taught American history.  
 144 In 1948, the Bishop sent him to Rome for 2 years. He studied theology at the Anglican University and ~~received~~ *received* a doctorate in theology.  
 161 He was impressed with Washington, D.C.  
 209 He saw a growing negro problem in Washington, D.C.  
 355 Washington taught his some racial lessons, for example that it is the person and not the color.  
 409 His impression of Rome was one of a struggle to regain and steady out the economy.  
 427 Many marks of the war still visible in Rome. There was lots of poverty and some people were still living in the caves around Rome.  
 453 He liked the historical aspects of Rome. He was fortunate enough to be in Rome for the Holy Year in 1950.

487 Later Priesthood:

- 487 After he came back from Rome, he was sent to St. John's Seminary where he taught the classes on how to teach and preach religion. 1951-1960.
- 568 The enrollment in the seminary was then filled to capacity, but since then enrollment has steadily declined.
- 661 In 1960, he became Vice Chancellor of the Diocese until 1968. In 1968, he was made Chancellor upon the death of the present Chancellor. He remained in the position until 1970.
- 692 1970 he was transferred to Rockville.
- 698 His duties as Vice Chancellor <sup>to</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> to handle the marriage documents of the diocese.
- 800 One development that he saw as a step forward was the raising of the marriage age from 15 (for girls) and 16 (for boys) to 18.
- 973 He saw the change from Latin to English as another greatly appreciated step.

Subjects covered: Tape 2 side 1

- 090 He also liked the longer term of waiting to get married.
- 115 The rule in Minnesota is for a waiting period of 3 months.
- 130 The people in Rockville are primarily German. Most of the people work either in St. Cloud or Cold Springs.
- 160 There are not many farmers here.
- 188 Rockville was larger at one time, but the population has gone down.
- 237 The drought of the 1930's was very bad and lasted for 3 years.
- 268 The dust storms were like rain storms but they were made of dust instead.
- 355 The WPA relief effort was not taken very seriously.
- 440 The Womens Guild attempted to help the poor.