

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bishop Thomas Paprocki

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
People of Faith Oral History project

Interview # PFM-A-L-2017-092

Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, the Roman Catholic Bishop for the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *People of Faith – Mosaic of Faiths* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Dec 4, Dec 11, 2017, Jan 8 and May 30, 2018

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Ed Schoenbaum, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:47 + 1:31 + 1:33 + 0:41 / 0.78 + 1.52 + 1.55 +
0.68 = 4.53 hrs

Session 1: Family history in Poland and the U.S., and early life in Chicago

Session 2: Roman Catholic schools, ordination, law school and first parish

Session 3: Overseas assignments, further education and years with Chicago Catholic Church

Session 4: Installed as Bishop in Springfield in 2010, and experiences in Springfield

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on Feb 19, 2019.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

Thomas Paprocki, *People of Faith*, PFM-A-L-2017-092

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Thomas John Paprocki was born on August 5, 1952 in Chicago, Illinois to Polish-American parents. Thomas had eight siblings; all seven boys worked in their father's pharmacy. He attended Catholic Schools, learning Latin, Polish and English at an early age. He was fourteen when he started studying for the Priesthood at Quigley Preparatory Seminary South in Chicago. He then attended Niles College of Loyola University, where he lived on campus, majoring in political science with a minor in philosophy. While there, he was elected president of the Young Democrats. Following his ordination in 1978 from Mundelein, he served as Associate Pastor at St. Michael Church in Chicago. Wanting a law degree to better serve the poor, Paprocki attended DePaul Law School and passed the Bar Exam in 1981 and co-founded the South Chicago Legal Clinic with Edward Grossman. In 1985 he became Vice Chancellor of the Chicago Archdiocese, and was sent to Rome in 1987, where he studied Canon Law. He also studied many languages (he speaks five) and earned several more degrees from a variety of schools. His specialty was immigration law.

At one point in his early ministry, Bishop Paprocki served eleven parishes in a six-block area in South Chicago, three Polish, and one each of Lithuanian, German, Slovenian, Mexican and Irish. In 1992, he became a Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago under Cardinal Bernadine, who died in November 1996. He was sent to Krakow in July 2000 for an intensive course in Polish. Cardinal George appointed him as Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago in January 2003, where he served for seven years, overseeing sixty parishes with 120 priests. Pope Benedict named him Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield in June 2010.

The Bishop's two patron saints are Thomas More and John Fisher, both 16th century religious figures from England. When he came to Springfield, there were only eleven men studying for Priesthood; at the time of the interview there were twenty-four. He has received many awards and recognition. His goal is Eternal life with God in His Kingdom. He "follows God where God was leading him." His hobbies include ice hockey, where he plays goalie, and running marathons, of which he has run twenty-three at the time of the interview.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Quigley Preparatory Seminary South, Chicago; Niles College of Loyola University; St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, IL; St. Michael Church, Chicago; Cardinal Joseph Bernadine; St. Joseph Parish, Chicago; Archdiocese of Chicago; Diocese of Springfield, IL; DePaul University College of Law, Chicago; Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome;

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