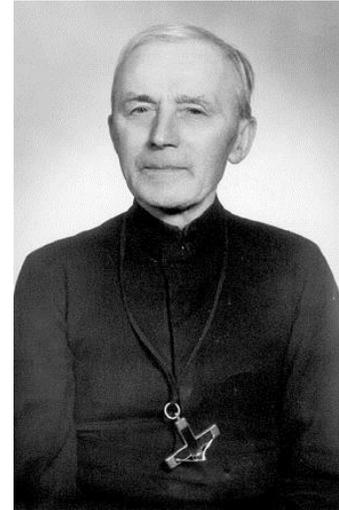


Venerable Antoine Kowalczyk, O.M.I. (1866–1947)

Born on June 4, 1866, in Dziersanow (Poland) from a poor, but very religious family, Antoine is a smart boy. He begins working when he is thirteen, to help his family. He becomes a blacksmith and, when he is sixteen years old, leaves for Hamburg (Germany) to find a job. It is rough here for Anthony who has to undergo constant provocation on the part of his co-workers who do not share his faith. He therefore decides to move to Cologne where a Catholic family welcomes him as a son and helps him find his vocation, introducing him to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



Anthony enters the novitiate of the Oblates and lives his first few years in the community in Holland. He then volunteers for missions and in 1896 his superior general brings him to Canada. He is sent to Lac-la-Biche in Alberta where he works in a sawmill. On July 15, 1897, he has an accident at work and loses his hand.

After fourteen years in Saint-Paul-des-Metis, he arrives in Edmonton where a school was opened to train the young future-missionaries. He stays here for thirty-six years. With his simple and joyful attitude he gives an admirable example of a lifestyle humbly, totally and lovingly dedicated to service and, above all, to the intense search of God. He takes care of the central heating in the house, assists the nuns in the kitchen, does the cleaning, breeds chickens, cultivates vegetables, sharpens the pupils' skates and repairs their hockey sticks. He is always available to the young for a prayer or a word of encouragement.

He has a special devotion to the Virgin Mary and finds money to build a replica of the Lourdes Grotto in the courtyard of the school. He will spend hours there, praying the rosary with the students. Many people around him trust in his powerful intercession and obtain favours while he still is alive. They call him "Brother Ave", because he always asks those who solicit his prayers to pray an Ave too. He becomes paralysed and dies in Edmonton on July 10, 1947.

LINK :

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