



19 PAŹDZIERNIKA

NARODOWY DZIEŃ PAMIĘCI
**DUCHOWNYCH
NIEZŁOMNYCH**

THE NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE STEADFAST CLERGY

In 2018, the Parliament of the Republic of Poland, established October 19 as the National Day of Remembrance of the Steadfast Clergy. It was a tribute to “the heroes, steadfast defenders of faith and independent Poland.”

On October 19, 1984, Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, currently blessed priest of the Catholic Church, resident of the parish of St. Stanisław Kostka in Warsaw, the chaplain of the health service, chaplain of the Warsaw "Solidarity", defender of human rights, was kidnapped by three secret service officers. He was brutally murdered by them between October 19-25, 1984. The body tied with a rope and weighted with a bag filled with stones was thrown into the Vistula River near the dam in Włocławek.



Has Father Jerzy Popiełuszko had to die?

Authors of the biography "*Father Jerzy Popiełuszko. Faith, hope, love*" - Ewa K. Czackowska and Tomasz Wiścicki believe that the priest died because he was telling the truth. During the martial law he defended those wronged, fired or interned. And he spoke the truth publicly, which in the communist system was the most dangerous weapon, because the system was based on a lie. His masses in the Church of St. Stanisław Kostka in Warsaw gathered thousands of people from various parts of Poland and were recorded, copied and distributed in the second circulation, so his words circulated around the country. Moreover, Father Jerzy travelled around the country and advocated for such values as: truth, justice, dignity and freedom - basic values that were repeatedly violated in the People's Republic of Poland. His extraordinary strength of character and great sensitivity to human harm were the cause of many direct and indirect threats to silence him. And when he did not bend and did not intend to remain silent, the members of secret service decided to commit the worst – killing him!



The murder of a priest adored by the nation, a moral guide for Poles, caused a gigantic wave of indignation and opposition and opened people's eyes about the communist's brutality.



Uroczystości pogrzebowe ks. Jerzego

(Father Jerzy Popieluszko's funeral ceremony)

The killers were given some ridiculous low sentences, later even lowered and have been free to leave the jail too soon. It should be added that during the trial there was an intense anti- church campaign conducted by mass media, especially Jerzy Urban, communist government spokesman. The Secret Service agents monitored all social reactions to the course of the trial and the testimonies of witnesses were structured in such a way as to arouse aversion to the church. Consequently, nothing happened to the communists - maybe it suffered from the image, but what is the significance of the image loss for the unpunished regime ...? No! It only has a symbolic dimension, nothing more. Because only the "little fish from the pound" were punished, the big fish could continue to swim being untouchables with the feeling of a job well done.



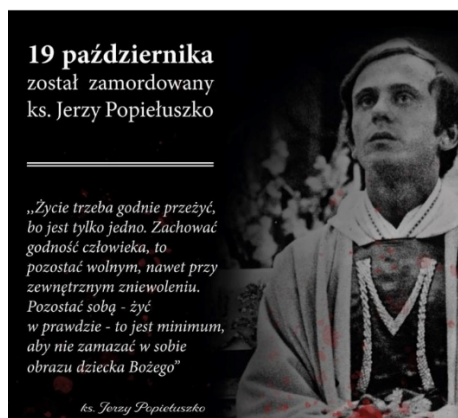
Direct murderers of priest Jerzy Popiełuszko: Waldemar Chmielewski, Grzegorz Piotrowski, Leszek Pękala and Adam Pietruszka

In retrospect- the brutal murder of Father Popiełuszko paid off to communists. Why? He was the last great anti-communist of a real kind. He was extremely inconvenient for communists precisely because he did not call for physical war with communists – instead he called for a spiritual fight against communism. He was also particularly inconvenient because he called for **overcoming evil with good**.

He did not teach his followers how to effectively attack ZOMO officers or he did not encourage (either openly or privately) to shoot Soviet minions. He taught how to live in inner freedom and how not to get infected with hatred of his persecutors, quite the contrary. Blessed Father Jerzy raised the concept of humanity somewhere high in the skies, restoring to the enslaved nation the dignity “buried with the uniforms” of officers in Katyn.

He raised the concept of patriotism, courage and goodness to a level that had not been seen in Poland since the times of Witold Pilecki. He gave way to Pope John Paul II by erudition, but he was in no way inferior to any of his contemporaries with heroism, love for truth and the ability to infect people with true, well-understood freedom.

He taught Poles what the world is unlearning the next generations today. He gave value to humanity, encouraged people to work on oneself, and taught them selfishness. And how many of us do anything to assimilate his teachings in our daily lives? How many of us train to be immune to the venom of communism? How many of us are actually looking for the TRUTH and not for comfort and holy peace? Who among us can honestly and with a clear conscience also say: I mean something more than just my good?



Jerzy Popiełuszko was not the only priest who died in the 1980s in previously unknown circumstances.

A similar fate befell other clergymen: Stanisław Suchowolec, Stefan Niedzielak and Sylwester Zych. All of them were murdered in 1989, and all of them were associated with the democratic opposition and supported independence activists in Poland. Before their deaths, many times secret service officers also intimidated them.



Fathers Stefan Niedzielak, Stanisław Suchowolec and Sylwester Zych

They were martyrs who restored Polishness to the enslaved citizens of the People's Republic of Poland in its real, objective, non-negotiable dimension. Polishness such as: freedom, respect for the achievements of our ancestors and the attitude: we are not for sale.

Today, millions of Poles sell their values for a broken penny – but they taught us that real values are priceless. They also taught us that what is good requires work and must cost even the highest price - life, because nothing is for free.



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Ksiądz Jerzy