

**FOR
GOD'S TRUTH
AND
HUMAN RIGHTS**



ANNA MARIA KOWCZ – BARAN

Translated from the original Ukrainian and edited by Emil and Olena Baran with much support and valuable advice from family and friends.
With special thanks to Sylvia Baran for her technical contributions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION	v
Emil and Olena Baran	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
FOREWARD	xi
1. FATHER EMILIAN KOWCZ	1
• Biographic Summary	3
2. PROFESSIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE	
• Yugoslavia: The Parish in Kozarec	5
• Ukrainian Galician Army	8
• Peremyshliany and Korosno and the Peremyshliany District	13
• Sermons and Speeches	21
• Feast of the Epiphany	29
• Pilgrimages	34
• Eucharistic Congresses	35
3. ARRESTS, PRISONS AND FINAL END	
• Polish Administration	43
• Soviet Occupation	48
• German Occupation	54
• Divine Liturgy behind Prison Walls	63
• Majdanek	67
4. ANECDOTAL FAMILY HISTORY	82
PEARLS, THORNS AND GOOD DEEDS	
• Ilko, Turn around those Horses	83
• The Crime of Father Kowcz	85
• Church in One Night	87
• Even if Only One – I Am Lucky	91
• Neighbours	95
• Musician from Russia	96
• Katrusia	98

• Unforgettable Journey	99
• Whose Land Is It?	101
• Man from the Mountains	102
5. HIS FAMILY	
• Maria Anna Kowcz (Dobrianska), Wife of Father Emilian Kowcz ..	104
• Their Children	112
6. FAMILY EPITAPH	115
APPENDIX I:	118
LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS RELATING TO HIS LIFE IN THE LONTSKYI STREET PRISON AND MAJDANEK	
APPENDIX II:	130
LIST OF REFERENCE SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THE ORIGINAL EDITION	
APPENDIX III:	131
DOCUMENTS QUOTED	
APPENDIX IV:	132
MAP OF THE REGION	

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION

EMIL AND OLENA BARAN

The original publication of *God's Truth and Human Rights* was the result of growing interest in the life of Father Emilian Kowcz and of the dedicated commitment of his daughter, Anna Maria Kowcz-Baran, to putting his compelling story into print. With his Beatification in 2002 by Pope John-Paul II during the Pope's visit to Ukraine, the recognition accorded to him by the Ukrainian Jewish community and the rapid renewal of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in an independent Ukraine, interest in his life and times has once again increased, well beyond the limits of Ukrainian language readers, the original language of her publication. It is for this reason and our own deep personal respect for the life of Father Kowcz that we undertook to translate, edit and publish *God's Truth and Human Rights*.

To understand his life and his very special place in the history of his community it is important to keep in mind the broad outlines of the political, military and national developments of his time. The cataclysmic events of the first half of the 20th century had a particularly direct, violent and bloody impact on Galicia (Halychyna in Ukrainian) and on the lives of its people. Situated on the edges of major empires and on the invasion routes between Europe and Asia, Galicia suffered severely throughout its history as a consequence of its geography and of the bloody competition between imperial aspirations. Tatars, Turks, Austro-Hungarians, Poles, Russians and Germans all laid claim at one time or another to this relatively small region about the size of Portugal populated mostly by

Ukrainians but which included significant minorities of Poles, Jews, Germans and others. This competition was particularly intense during the life of Father Emilian Kowcz, the period between his birth under the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1884, and his death under Nazi Germany in 1944.

Father Kowcz was ordained as a priest during the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russia's Tsarist Empire and the Ottoman Empire, all which disappeared by the end of the First World War. Many of the territories belonging to these empires were re-distributed in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles and Galicia was granted as a mandate territory for 25 years to the newly re-created Poland. Many Ukrainians strongly disagreed with this decision, declared Ukrainian independence and formed the Ukrainian Galician Army (UGA) to defend this independence. At about the same time, the Socialist Revolution in Russia, which destroyed the Tsarist Empire, was spreading its communist ideology west toward Europe and collided with the aspirations for an independent democratic Ukraine and of Poland which intended to defend its new mandate territory. And thus, the newly created and inexperienced UGA found itself fighting on two fronts. It was not surprising that at one time, Father Kowcz was captured both by the Bolsheviks/Communists and re-captured by the Polish Army all within a few days.

In 1919 Father Kowcz joined the UGA as Chaplain and served until he contracted typhus in 1921. Of the 23 chaplains who died during the campaign for an independent Ukraine, 21 died of typhus. The UGA chaplains played an important and heroic role in the life of the inexperienced, unprepared and poorly equipped UGA and shared with the soldiers the hardships and risks of daily life during the war years. To this day, these chaplains hold a revered place in the history of the UGA and the Ukrainian Catholic Church

During the period of the Polish mandate over Galicia, 1919 to 1939, the Ukrainian population suffered much discrimination. The intent of the Polish Administration was to forcibly integrate the Ukrainian people into Polish society and the Ukrainian Catholic population into the Polish Roman Catholic Church. Various methods were used including severely restricting the teaching of the Ukrainian language, limiting the activities

of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, reserving most employment and higher education opportunities to Roman Catholics and to ethnic Poles. Anyone who objected and fought against these policies was subjected to harsh treatment by the Polish Administration. In his community, Father Kowcz was at the centre of this struggle to protect the rights of the Ukrainian people and their Ukrainian Catholic Church.

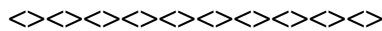
In 1939, the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression treaty between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany divided Poland between the two with Galicia falling into the hands of the Soviet Union. During this brief but bloody Soviet occupation, 1939 – 1941, Soviet authorities began to implement the destruction of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (which they completed upon their return in 1944). When the Germans broke with this treaty in 1941 and invaded the USSR, Galicia was occupied by Nazi Germany until the defeat of the Germans and the return of the Soviet armies in 1944. It was during this three year period of German occupation that Father Kowcz fought against the brutal actions of the occupiers, a fight which eventually cost him his life.

And finally, it is important to note the very extensive role played by Ukrainian Catholic parish priests in the life of the Ukrainian people in Galicia. The mandate of the parish priest went well beyond the spiritual and moral leadership of his flock. The parish church was usually the centre for community life and the parish priest was expected to provide important leadership in the social, cultural and economic activities of his parishioners. Consistent with this role, Father Kowcz was involved in establishing cooperatives, community centres and community organizations. He also challenged the various occupying authorities when their actions were contrary to the interests and well being of his parishioners. His opposition to the actions of Nazi Germany in Galicia eventually led to his death.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who contributed so willingly and in so many different ways to the publication of this book. Particular gratitude is extended to those who made their memoirs and reminiscences freely available to be included as part of this publication or which served as invaluable original background documents. Without this support, the publication of this book would not have been possible. We are now able to pass to future generations this biography which includes a collection of unique documents and photographs about the life and times of Father Emilian Kowcz.

Anna Maria Kowcz-Baran
Author



FOREWORD

This book, *God's Truth and Human Rights* is dedicated to the memory of my father, Emilian Kowcz and is published on the 50th anniversary of his martyr's death. It is being published in response to the wishes of those who knew him personally, heard about his life and deeds and in some cases provided reminiscences with the request that these be included in this publication. As early as 1978, Father S. Bachtalowskyi, (Redemptorists), who knew my father when they were students together in Rome, wrote in one of his letters that the Redemptorist Fathers had reserved space for a biography of Father Kowcz in their annual publication for 1979. Other similar letters of encouragement followed and after so many years, with God's help, I am happy to finally publish this book.

God's Truth and Human Rights, was a labour of love. It was also a deeply painful experience. I made every attempt to be factual and not allow my personal sorrow to detract from the story of my father's life. Some of this sorrow, nevertheless, crept into these pages.

Over the years I was very fortunate to have been able to collect many personal reminiscences about his full life during this complicated period of European history and to include several in this publication. I am especially grateful to those whose reminiscences I was able to include in this book because their words described parts of his life which would have been too painful for me to write personally.

In Chapter 4, "Anecdotal Family History" I tried to show, through examples, his responsive nature to the daily difficulties faced by his parishioners, the reaction of some of his parishioners to the baptizing of Jews and the deep personal and religious significance this act had for my father. Indeed, his entire life was dedicated to God's truth and to human rights.

Anna Maria Kowcz-Baran,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1994

