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## St. James the Apostle Catholic Parish

in Tolkmicko

The Salesians

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The construction of the first wooden church in Tolkmicko began in 1296-1300 AD. Due to many difficulties it was completed as late as 1344. Since then until 1466 the church belonged to the Holy Spirit Hospital in Elbląg. After that period the town of Tolkmicko was under the Polish king's rule and became the seat of *starosta*.

Soon, a new brick Gothic church was built thanks to the generosity of the people of Tolkmicko.

On October 28th 1376 Henry Sorbom, bishop of Warmia, consecrated the church and dedicated it to the Victorious Cross, Virgin Mary and St. James the Apostole, the patron saint of fishermen.

Over the years, the city and the church were often consumed by fire.

Among most distinguished priests of the parish was Johann Schwahn. At the time of his service the church suffered from one of the greatest fires that left the building severely damaged.

The poor condition of the church was mentioned in two records (1716 and 1738) following the visits of two bishops of Warmia, Potocki and Szembek. Bishop Szembek's description should be mentioned as "the form and material from which the main altar was built is "not worthy the church".

The marble main altar, side altar, pulpit, and new windows were sculpted by Christopher Perwanger, an outstanding young sculptor, who had come to Tolkmicko from Tirol in 1735.

Another two sculptures, Virgin Mary on the globe and St. Nepomuk, were made by Christopher Perwanger, which originally stood on pedestals in front of the church. Now they can be seen in the eastern porch.

In 1750 Christopher Perwanger made a beautiful metal crucifix decorated with amber. Corpus Christi was carved out of ivory. The sculptor donated the crucifix to the parish priest Johann Schwahn. In 1966 the crucifix underwent restoration work and now is kept in a small apse above the main altar's tabernacle.

Unfortunately, in 1767 the city and the church were partially destroyed by another great fire. The only Perwanger's works that survived were the crucifix and the sculptures of Virgin Mary and St. Nepomuk.

As a result of that fire, the church tower was damaged. It had to be partially demolished and rebuilt. Its reconstruction was not possible before 1782. Then the tower was covered with a new tented roof, which has still remained in the original form.

At the end of the 19th century, when Theodor Mathee was the parish priest, the number of Catholics in Tolkmicko significantly increased and the size of the church was not sufficient, and it had to be enlarged.

After all construction work was completed in 1902, the church was a beautiful three-nave basilica with a transept. Both the north and south walls were decorated with huge stained-glass rosettes. The pulpit, choir stalls and two sacristies were also new. The presbytery is enclosed by three walls. Their upper parts are decorated with gorgeous stained-glass windows. The window depicting the figure of Jesus (Sacred Heart of Jesus) can be seen in the center of the presbytery, with St. Catherina of Alexandria and St. Andrew on the left, and St. Jacob and St. Roch on the right side.

The church was decorated in the style of Neo-Gothic revival: The main altar and two side altars of St. Anne and Virgin Mary were sculpted by O.Roemer from Elblag.

The main altar is composed of five parts. It has two wings: The left one shows Annunciation, the right one the coronation of Virgin Mary. Four statues are located in both parts near the centre of the altar: St. Elisabeth of Turin, St. Barbara, St. Francis Xavier and St. Georg. The wings can be closed, and then the scene of Christ consoled by an angel in the Garden of Gethsemane can be seen.

In the altar antependium there are three images painted on wooden planks: The Sacrifice of Abraham, deer drinking water (a symbol of the catechumen who thirst the baptismal water) and the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham.

The pipe organ, which was made in 1902 by the firm Terletzki-Wittek from Elblag, is placed on the higher of the two choirs, above the eastern entrance. This pipe-organ is one of the most valuable instruments in the area.

There are two statues at the main church entrance: St. Nicolas, the patron saint of fishermen and St. Anthony of Padua.

Next three sculptures are located in the main nave, at the round great columns. The one in the middle of the church depicts Jesus Christ, and the other two closer to the presbytery: Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.

The church is covered with the diamond vault.

There is a beautiful relief on the northern outer wall. It represents suffering Christ consoled by an angel in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The church did not suffer great damage during military operations carried out during the Second World War or soon afterwards. Generally, the altars, pulpit, choir stalls, sculptures, two choirs, church pews and organ survived in their original shape. Some organ pipes had to be replaced.

### **Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Marianna Schwahn, Rev. Johann Schwahn's mother, funded the Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Tolkmicko cemetery in 1738. The chapel has a flat wooden ceiling and is enclosed with Baroque gables from the West and the East.

During the Second World War the chapel was heavily damaged. The chapel was partially restored in 1959. In recent years, thanks to the financial support of former German inhabitants of Tolkmicko, restoration work has been completed.

Salesian Fathers have taken care of the parish of St. James since 1967. Their main vocation is to care for children and the youth.

### **Service**

SUNDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, AND HOLIDAYS:

7.00; 9.00; 10.30; 12.00 (DEDICATED TO CHILDREN), 18.00

WEEKDAYS:

7.00 and 18.00

### **Office**

Tuesdays: 9.00 to 12.00

Thursdays: 13.00 to 16.00

After each service or – if needed – at any time, it is possible to talk with the priest.

## **Bed and Breakfast**

### **YOU ARE WELCOME!**

We offer single, double, four- and five-bed en-suite rooms. Bigger groups can be lodged in private houses. We provide full board, with fresh and wholesome ingredients home-made food, including fish.

Tolkmicko is a picturesquely situated village, surrounded by woods and waters of the Vistula Lagoon. Nearby, there is a beautiful town of Elbląg, Frombork (Cathedral and Copernicus grave), Malbork, Gdańsk, rich in monuments and other tourist and sightseeing attractions.

## **Parish of St. James the Apostle**

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