


Father Jerzy Popiełuszko

Źródło: <http://en.popieluszko.pl/xje/documents/biography/1947-1965/380,1947-1965.html>
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1947 - 1965

 The small, poor village of Okopy in the Podlasie region is - according to church records on September 14, 1947 - the birthplace of a boy named Alfons (he changed the name in May, 1971), son of Marianna and Władysław Popiełuszko.

This and most of the other villages in Podlasie were patriotic and deeply involved in the anti-communist opposition. The Popiełuszko family was extremely active in the struggle, therefore the memory of this early life must have had a tremendous influence on the future priest.

Alek (a diminutive form of his second name, Aleksander) was raised in poverty, which was characteristic of the Polish countryside in the early years of introducing People's Power. He started education in 1954 and from very early age discovered his priestly calling. Every day, before going to school, he would visit the parish church in the nearby town of Suchowola. He became an altar boy at the age of 11.

Although not the best in his class he enjoyed his favourite subjects of - History, Polish and (in retrospect it seems obvious) Religion. He didn't

have much free time, as is usually the case in the countryside, where his time was taken by labouring on a farm. His mother recollects the period as follows: “[...] He would simply take the cows for grazing to the outskirts of the village during which time he talked with an old lady. He was a people person” (Kotański, J., Ksiądz Jerzy Popiełuszko, Lublin 2004, p. 17). He was an average student in the Suchowola high school, which he attended from 1961. However, it was not until years later, his colleagues had noticed he was particularly polite and sensitive to human suffering. He passed his high school finals, with no particular problems and was exempt History and Russian exams because of high marks received from those subjects. He would rather forget the results from his science subjects, especially in mathematics.

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