

Polish archbishop tells dissident nuns to leave convent

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — A Polish archbishop told a group of nuns to leave their convent after the Vatican expelled them from their order for refusing to accept a new mother superior.

“There are no private religious orders in the Catholic Church where everyone can set their own rules,” Archbishop Jozef Zycinski of Lublin told Poland’s Catholic information agency, KAI, in early December. “We should pray for these lacerated, lost and highly strung sisters.”

Father Mieczyslaw Puzewicz, a spokesman for the Lublin Archdiocese, told KAI tensions had surfaced after Sister Jadwiga Ligocka, the former mother superior of the Sisters of the Family of Bethany, claimed to have “private inspirations from the Holy Spirit.”

A Vatican delegate dismissed the mother superior from her position at the Kazimierz convent in 2005, but Sister Jadwiga continued to occupy the convent with 10 nuns and an unknown number of novices.

In late October, a decree from the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life expelled the nuns from the order.

Archbishop Franc Rode, prefect of the congregation, said in a letter to Sister Barbara Rodek, the official mother superior, that he saw “no readiness for dialogue or signs of good will” from the nuns.

Sister Barbara has been staying in Lublin with other nuns from the order while waiting for a resolution.

Father Puzewicz said: “Unfortunately the sisters in Kazimierz did not wish to acknowledge the resolutions of responsible church authorities, nor did talks with archdiocese representatives and local parish priests help.”

The Polish Press Agency reported Dec. 1 the nuns refused to accept the ruling and hired bodyguards.