Zofia’s Journey to Freedom

By: Matthew Adamowicz

There are a lot of things to talk about when it comes to Zofia Cybulski’s early life. Although Zofia is Cybulski, my grandmother, and her family endured an extended period of time with almost no food, much sickness, and brutal conditions, she survived because of her family’s support and praying to God. This is her story.

The war started with invasions and deportations. In September 1939 Poland was invaded by the Soviet Union, which is Russia. Then in February 1940 the Soviet Union began massive deportations of 2 million Poles to hard labor camps, or gaags, in Siberia. Zofia, who was 9 years old, her mother, sister and brother were put in a train car with 60 other people. All those people were put into cattle cars with no seats and a hole in the middle of the car that served as the bathroom. They had no privacy. Their train ride to Siberia took 6 weeks. They rode in the train cars like animals and only given watery soup every 2 to 3 days. People died during the journey. Zofia’s camp was called Pima and was located east of the city Krasnoyarsk. Her father, Stefan Cybulski, was taken away to a labor camp, crammed into living quarters, expected to survive on only 400 calories per day.

Then Zofia and her family made their way to England. She met and married her husband, Wiesław Adamowicz, and in 1955 she came to the United States with Wiesław and two children. Zofia’s journey to freedom was long and she suffered much.

By: Susan Agle, Matthew Adamowicz’s teacher

The students at La Purisima Catholic School in Orange were treated to a rare glimpse into life as a Polish deportee during WWII when Wes and Zosia Adamowicz spoke to the students last week. Wes and Zosia shared with the students how difficult life was for all Polish citizens during the war, not just the Jews. When Hitler and the Germans attacked Poland, they found they had no country to return to. Poland was still occupied and no one could tell them where to go.

Their chance for freedom came in 1942 when the Germans invaded Russia. Many of the Poles escaped from the camps and headed south toward Persia. Somehow, in what seems impossible, Zofia and her family were sent to a labor camp located east of the city Krasnoyarsk. Her father, Stefan Cybulski, was taken away to a labor camp.

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