Archbishop Adrian Galbas of Warsaw, Poland, prays during Mass March 13, 2025, in Warsaw's

Archbishop Adrian Galbas of Warsaw, Poland, prays during Mass March 13 in Warsaw's Temple of Divine Providence. Galbas in a July 25 statement said that he was "devastated and crushed" by the arrest of a diocesan priest in the brutal murder of a homeless man July 24 and the priest's confession to police he did it. (OSV News/Courtesy Polish bishops' conference)

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Warsaw, Poland — July 26, 2025
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A diocesan priest has confessed to the brutal murder of a homeless man in a village about 30 miles south of Warsaw.

The victim, a 68-year-old homeless man, was found dead in the village of Lasopole in the Mazowieckie province. According to the Radom District Prosecutor's Office, the crime was committed by a 60-year-old parish priest from a local village. Prosecutors allege that the priest and the victim, who had previously signed a donation agreement transferring a property to the priest, got into a heated argument while driving through rural roads.

During the argument, the priest allegedly struck the man with an axe and then set him on fire while he was still alive.

The Archdiocese of Warsaw said it will cooperate fully with law enforcement and initiate all necessary canonical procedures. In an appeal to the clergy, Archbishop Adrian Galbas of Warsaw called for acts of personal penance and reparation.

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Police were alerted at about 10:20 p.m. local time on July 24 when a cyclist discovered the burning body. Investigators quickly identified the suspect through license plate numbers, leading them to the parish rectory. The priest was arrested by a counter-terrorism unit due to his possession of firearms as a licensed hunter.

Prosecutors stated that the motive behind the crime was a dispute over housing arrangements promised to the victim as part of the donation deal. The priest had pledged lifelong care for the man in exchange for the property. The conflict arose over where the man would be relocated. The suspect has confessed to the crime, according to prosecutors. Authorities plan to upgrade the charges to murder with exceptional cruelty. If convicted, the priest faces life imprisonment.

In a message to the diocese, Galbas released a statement July 25.

"I have no words of comfort for you today, let alone any explanation or justification," wrote Galbas. "I am devastated and crushed by the news that one of my priests has brutally murdered a man — a poor and homeless man."

Galbas emphasized his moral responsibility as shepherd of the church in Warsaw.

"As bishop of the Church in Warsaw, I feel morally responsible for everything that happens in this Church -- both the good and the bad. Also for this terrible crime. I apologize to you," he wrote.

"I ask all the priests of the Archdiocese of Warsaw to undertake personal penance and prayer of reparation starting today," Galbas stated. "This Sunday, let us do this communally — after every Holy Mass throughout the Archdiocese."

He concluded his message with a poignant spiritual plea: "The blood of our murdered brother cries out to God. Let us beg God for forgiveness — and beg forgiveness from people. I myself beg for it."

The archbishop also asked the faithful to pray for the soul of the deceased and his family.