News



Archbishop Adrian Galbas of Warsaw, Poland, prays during Mass March 13, 2025, in Warsaw's Temple of Divine Providence. Archbishop 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)

by The Associated Press

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Warsaw, Poland — July 31, 2025

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The archbishop of Warsaw, Poland, has asked the Vatican to defrock a priest charged with the killing of a 68-year-old homeless man who was beaten with an ax and set on fire.

Prosecutors on Saturday charged the priest, only identified as Mirosław M. in line with Polish privacy rules, with murder with particular cruelty. He is being detained ahead of a trial and faces 15 years to life behind bars.

Investigators say the priest and the victim, Anatol Cz., were together in a car late Thursday when an argument broke out, according to Aneta Góźdź, a spokesperson for the Radom District Prosecutor's Office.

The fight stemmed from a donation agreement where the priest had agreed to provide lifelong assistance and care for the man, Góźdź said in a statement. The argument escalated over the homeless man's future housing.

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The priest allegedly struck the victim on the head with an ax, doused him in flammable liquid and set him on fire, the spokesperson said. The priest then drove away when he saw a bicycle light approaching.

The bicyclist found the victim engulfed in flames and called for first responders, Góźdź said.

"An autopsy showed that the victim suffered burns covering 80% of his body and head injuries caused by a sharp-edged heavy object," Góźdź said.

Warsaw Archbishop Adrian Galbas on Saturday requested the Holy See to dismiss the priest from the priesthood, the highest penalty in canon law for a cleric.

In a statement to the archdiocese on Friday, Galbas asked for Catholics to pray for the victim and his loved ones. The archbishop said he was "devastated" by the crime and pledged to cooperate with investigators.

The Vatican did not immediately respond to a request for comment.