



Stronica Proboszcza



The Pastor's Page

October 20th, MMXIX

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Month of the Holy Rosary

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Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!
Praised be Jesus Christ!

Tuesday, October 22nd – Feast of Saint Pope John Paul II

Karol Józef Wojtyła (1920-2005) was born in Wadowice, Poland. His mother died when he was 9 and his older brother Edmund died when he was 12. He and his father moved to Kraków in 1938 where he attended the Jagiellonian University, showing interest in languages, sports, theatre and poetry. When the Nazis closed the university in 1939, he worked in a quarry (1940-1944) and then in a chemical factory. In 1942 he began secret studies for the priesthood and was ordained a priest on November 1st, 1946 by Adam Cardinal Sapieha, the primate of Poland at that time. After further studies in Rome for a doctorate in theology (1948), he returned to parish work and student chaplaincy in Kraków until 1953 when he received a second doctoral degree and an appointment as professor. He gained notoriety for his many theological writings and also published his plays under various pseudonyms. Pope Pius XII named him Auxiliary Bishop of Kraków in 1958 and he actively participated in Vatican Council II (1962-1965). Pope Paul VI made him Archbishop of Kraków in 1964 and then a Cardinal in 1967.

On October 16th, 1978 after the deaths of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I, Wojtyła was elected Pope on the eighth ballot, the first non-Italian pope in more than 400 years. A charismatic figure, he traveled the world, making 104 pastoral visits outside Italy and 146 within Italy to spread his message of faith and peace and to encourage political and social change. In 1981, he was shot twice in St. Peter's Square. He recovered and later forgave his assassin. In his later years, his health declined due to the effects of Parkinson's disease. He died on April 2nd, 2005, at the age of 84, after almost 27 years as a Pope. He was the second longest serving pope in the history of the church and the first non-Italian pope since 1523. In July of 2013 Pope Francis, after recognizing the evidence of a second miracle, confirmed Pope John Paul II's canonization as a saint for the Church. He was canonized a saint on Sunday, April 27th, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday, by Pope Francis.

The world loved Pope John Paul II dearly and was deeply saddened by his death. Here in our parish he will be remembered lovingly forever, especially by the monument erected to his memory on the corner of Tenth Street and the street that actually bears his name, Pope John Paul II Avenue! His feast day is not celebrated on the day of his death but on October 22nd, the day he became Pope.

“Remember that nothing important ever happens until someone takes a chance.”

October is Polish American Heritage Month! Be Proud to be Polish!

2008 was the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Polish settlers in America. On October 1st, 1608, the English ship *Mary & Margaret* arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. Aboard the ship were several persons of Polish descent: Michal Łowicki, an organizer of industry and businessman and the leader of the original five; Jan Bogdan, an expert in pitch tar, and ship building; Jan Mata, a prominent soap producer; Stanisław Sadowski a lumber and clapboard production organizer; and Zbigniew Stefański, a specialist in glass production. They had been hired by the Virginia Company of London, at the request of Captain John Smith. John Smith also became the leader of the Jamestown Colony. Smith learned of the fine work of Polish craftsmen while traveling in Eastern Europe.

The colonists viewed the Poles as hard-working and respectful. The Poles first impressions of Jamestown were not as positive. "Seldom has one seen such lack of resourcefulness as we found in Virginia. Not even a spoonful of drinking water... the people here marveled when we dug a well and presented it to them," remarked Stefański. The water well provided a source of fresh drinking water, stopping the spread of dysentery and death due to drinking swamp water. Later Stefański and Bogdan saved Captain John Smith when he was attacked by Indians.

The Poles also set up sawmills and built a glass furnace – making it the first factory in America and the beginning of industry. The glass items produced in these factories became the first exported goods to England.

The work done by the original group allowed them to repay the Virginia Company for their passage to America, and become free citizens of the colony. Within a few years, there were fifty Poles living in Jamestown.

On July 30th, 1619, the Polish settlers accomplished another noteworthy achievement in the Jamestown colony by staging the first labor strike in America. After being denied participation in the first Virginia assembly, the Polish settlers conducted a labor walkout; not for wages or better working conditions, but for democratic rights. The newly-formed House of Burgesses quickly acknowledged the vital role of the Poles in the settlement's well-being and granted them the same voting privileges and equal rights as the English settlers by a document issued on the 31st of July in 1619. This honor was not bestowed upon the colonists of any other nation. The arrival of the first Polish settlers in America marked a humble, yet significant event in American history. And the saving of Jamestown after its first disastrous year was due in a large part to the efforts of those original Poles!

Recently an historical marker was finally dedicated on the roadside near the entrance to the site of the historic Jamestown Settlement. The words: FIRST POLES ARRIVE, can be read from a distance! This important marker joined others in the vicinity devoted to German and African settlers of Jamestown and the Indian Princess Pocahontas. It is a significant and perhaps surprising recognition given to courageous and adventurous Poles who first set foot on the ground of this nation.

Over the years, people from Poland continued to immigrate to America. Today Poles are the sixth largest ethnic group in America, residing in all fifty states and participating in every aspect of American life. Poles comprise a significant portion of the tens of millions of immigrants who have come to America from all over the world and now proudly call this nation their home. The 400th anniversary of the first Poles in America in 2008 provided an excellent opportunity for persons of all national origins to reflect on the journey of their immigrant ancestors who continue to add shape and color to the American mosaic.