

Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria

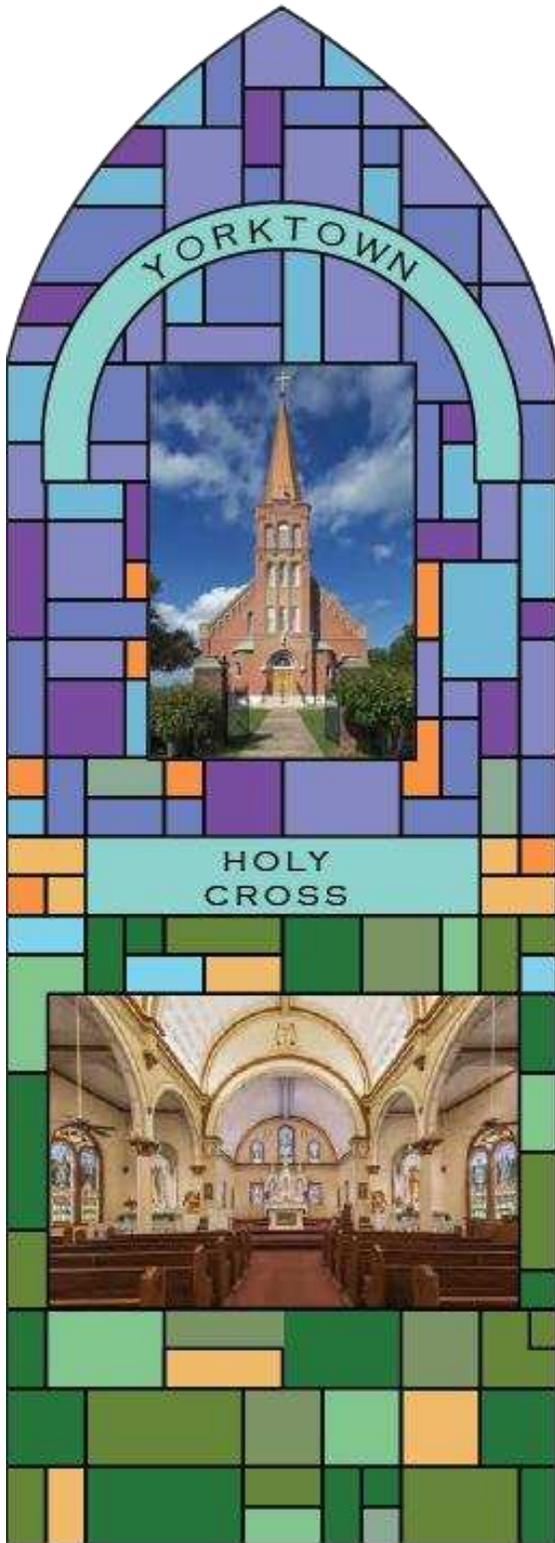
Visitor Experience, #11 in Series

Yorktown, Texas, Holy Cross Parish

Excerpts taken from "A History of Holy Cross Catholic Church, Yorktown, Texas" composed by Lillian Tam Warzecha, September 2000 at age 87 – Summarized and updated by Martha Respondek 2016 and condensed by Bishop Yanta

Holy Cross Catholic Church was originally a mission of Meyersville and Panna Maria in 1866, some 150 years ago. The Civil War had just come to an end in 1865.

The first parishioners that came from Meyersville as well as from Panna Maria originally were Polish families who came from villages in Upper Silesia, then under German/Prussian rule. These early settlers arrived in Texas between 1854 and 1856 – they left Silesia in September 1854 and made the nine-week voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, landing in Galveston on December 3, 1854. Then they traveled to Indianola where



they secured the services of local Mexicans and their ox carts to transport them to San Antonio. Their belongings rode in ox carts, while the men, women and children walked most of the way. With help of Father Leopold Moczygemba, they secured lands and some settled in Karnes County, some in Panna Maria, and some turned toward Meyersville.

Because of a severe drought in 1856 lasting fourteen months, also continuous harassment by cowboys in Karnes County, and the discontent with the German language used in services in Meyersville, several families moved to the small but growing community of Yorktown. These families had learned about the Polish settlement in Yorktown from the Polish priests who rode horseback to Yorktown from Panna Maria in order to minister to the Catholics. Masses were held for the early settlers by these visiting priests at the Anton Kozielski log home which was built in 1862 which was not too far from the present Holy Cross Church.

Priests Serving Yorktown

After the Civil War ended 1865: Fr. Anthony Rossadowski, Fr. Julian Przysiecki, Fr. Henry Chichocki (of Paris), Fr. Josef Barzynski, Fr. Kubutowicz, Fr. Felix Zwardowski, Fr. F. Smelcer, Fr. Henry Gerlach, Fr. John Frydychowitz 1868, Fr. Adolf Snigurski 1872-77, Fr. Anthony Heinke 1877-88, Fr. R. Magott 1888-92, Fr. Wolenczewicz 1892-1897, Monsignor Thomas Moczygemba 1897-1912, Fr. Stanislaus Przyborowski 1912-14, Fr. John Jachtly 1914-1921, Fr. Peter Grzesiak 1921-1932, Fr. Vincent Kloseck 1932-33, Fr. Peter A. Votanis 1933-37, Fr. Benjamin Kaminski 1937-69, Fr. John Mullally (in residence/Chaplain at the hospital) 1953-67, Monsignor John Matocha 1969-74, Monsignor Henry Moczygemba (associate pastor) 1970, Fr. Joseph V. Hamala 1974-75, Fr. Edward C. Bartsch 1975-82, Fr. Casimir (Casey) Jarzombek 1982-88, Fr. Alphonse Padalecki 1988-92, Fr. Daniel P. Kahlich 1992-94, Fr. Thu Van Nguyen 1994-96, Fr. Francis "Frank" B. Lenz 1996-2002, Fr. Piotr Kaplinski 2002-03, Fr. Donald Hayden 2003-06, Fr. Roger Hawes 2006-current.

Parish Development 1867-1915

On February 1, 1867, Anton Kozielski and his wife, Lucyia, deeded three acres of land to the Catholic Church to be used in building a church. Father John

Frydychowitz, a Resurrectionist priest, arrived in Yorktown sometime before Easter 1868 and started the campaign to build the new church.

In September 1868, the people completed a small wooden church with two towers. On September 14, 1868 the new church was blessed by Bishop Claude Dubois of the San Antonio Diocese. It was blessed under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception and therefore named St. Mary's.

In 1867, there were 17 Polish households in Yorktown, and then 30 years later in 1897, Father Thomas Moczygamba came to pastor St. Mary's and found 100 Polish families in his congregation, along with 35 Bohemian families and a few German families.

On August 11, 1897 Isidore Kozielski, son of Anton and Lucyia, deeded sixty-seven hundredths of an acre for the church to have a cemetery. Again on February 23, 1898 he deeded one more acre of land for the rest of the Catholic cemetery.

On May 1886, a hurricane damaged the church. It was through the efforts of a parishioner, Kaspar "Jessie" Kasprzik (Lillian Warzecha's great-grandfather, Martha Respondek's great-great-grandfather, and the great-grandfather of Bishop Yanta) who collected a large amount of donations which financed the church expansion. The church which was previously 40 feet long was now 90 feet long. This was recorded by August Styra in 1900.

In 1901 another addition to the church was made as well as a new altar, new vestments, and new statues. And – a new rectory was built for living quarters for the priest – all done under the pastorate of Monsignor Thomas Moczygamba. By 1909, 160 families belonged to St. Mary's.

Present Church

On April 7, 1915 Yorktown's St. Mary's Catholic Church burned to the ground. Father John Jachtly desperately tried to reach the tabernacle to remove the Sacred Hosts but was unable to do so because of the intense heat. Fortunately he was able

to save the monstrance and a few vestments. Miraculously, the cross atop the steeple survived the fire.

Under Father Jachtyl's guidance, the new brick church was built for \$28,000.00. The furnishings cost \$20,000.00. Parish families donated the beautiful stained glass windows of various saints which cost \$100.00 each. Many were donated in memory of loved ones and inscripted in Polish. Beautiful Stations of the Cross with sculpted detail and vivid colors and also inscripted in Polish were hung on the walls between the stained glass windows. The ornate main altar with the breathtaking sculpted picture of the Last Supper was donated by Edmund and Barbara Kasprzik Respondek. The larger Angelus bell weighing 1100 pounds was donated by Frank Gaida Sr. and Edmund Respondek. The second bell weighing 800 pounds was donated by the St. Joseph's Men's Society, and the third and smallest bell was donated by Francisek Kolodzie. Anton Tam Sr. is remembered to have helped place the cross on the steeple.

Members of the building committee were F. J. Kolodzie, Stefan Ledwig, Frank Kolodziejczyk, Frank Gaida Sr., A.R. Dworaczyk, and Joseph Broll.

The cornerstone was blessed on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14, 1915 by Bishop John Shaw of the San Antonio Diocese. The Pope at this time was Benedict XV. The architect was F.B. Gaenslen and the contractor was Falbo Bros. of San Antonio.

Bishop Shaw blessed the new Holy Cross Catholic Church on May 19, 1916. The surviving cross is now atop our present church.

Building of Rectory, Sisters' home, and School

In 1926 the present Holy Cross rectory and the Sisters' house was built for \$12,000, under the guidance of Father Peter Grzesiak, pastor.

Father Grzesiak died on March 16, 1932 at the age of 51 and was the first priest to be buried in the parish cemetery.

Father Ben Kaminski was appointed pastor on January 11, 1937. The first years after his arrival were devoted to bringing financial order back to the parish. The Great Depression years had led to financial and physical hardship on so many and, too, the church itself was in dire need of funds. During his pastorate the cemetery was enlarged and the new Holy Cross School was dedicated on September 21, 1947.

Father Kaminski remained at Holy Cross until 1969, after 32 years of service to Yorktown when he retired and settled in Victoria. Father Kaminski died May 1, 1974 and is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Later changes and renovations

In 1962 – Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on October 11, 1962 and adjourned under Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965. This brought about many changes in the Catholic Church. Among them was the decision to have Mass celebrated with the priest facing the congregation. Some people of the parish believed the main altar should be removed and replaced by a smaller one. But Father Kaminski and a large majority of the parishioners wanted to preserve the beautiful altar, including Lambert Respondek, whose parents, Edmund and Barbara Respondek donated the altar when Holy Cross was built in 1915.

August (Doc) Kozielski and Paul Stepanski, who were skilled carpenters, had a good idea on how the altar could be saved. As a result, they carefully cut away the front part of the altar with the replica of the Last Supper, and moved it a few feet forward and a new altar built around it. The larger original altar was filled in where the Last Supper replica was and blended it in with the decor.

The crucifixion monument made from different types of marbles was constructed at the cemetery making Holy Cross Cemetery one of the most beautiful in Texas. It was donated by Frank and Florentyna Jendrzey.

In 1976 Holy Cross Church was renovated during the pastorate of Father Edward Bartsch at a cost of \$55,650.00.

In 2010 and 2011, another renovation of the interior of the church occurred under the pastorate of Father Roger Hawes –current Shepherd of the Holy Cross flock.

On Sunday, September 13, 2015, the Holy Cross Catholic Church celebrated its 100th centennial anniversary. A centennial Mass was celebrated with the Most Reverend Bishop Brendan J. Cahill and Reverend Roger Hawes officiating.

St. Mary's Parochial School 1897-1947

Holy Cross Parochial School 1947-1969

In 1894 Father Thomas Moczygamba made application to the Incarnate Word Convent for good parochial school teachers.

In 1947 land in back of the old school was purchased and then the old school was torn down. An efficient functional brick building was constructed under the pastorate of Reverend Ben Kaminski who chose to serve as general contractor and supervisor saving the parish thousands of dollars.

The Felician Sisters taught at the schools of St. Mary's and Holy Cross for a combined thirty-four years from 1935 until its closing in 1969.

After the school closed, the Felician Sisters from Yorktown Memorial Hospital taught religious education, assisted by lay people.

During the pastorate of Father Casey Jarzombek, the school building was converted into an Activity Center for the parishioners and as a center for the Religious Education program.

Holy Cross Parish today – 2016

Holy Cross Parish now has a very diverse ethnicity – some 225 families of many different ethnic backgrounds all come together to honor and praise God – and we sing in English, Polish, and Spanish. Holy Cross parishioners all cherish the Polish beginnings of our beautiful church. We celebrate the anniversary of our

(Continued on page 8)



Top left is an example of the Stations of the Cross in Polish: the 12th station; *Jezus Na Krzyzu Umiera* (Jesus dies on the Cross).

Top right is the stained glass window of St. Hyacinth, born 1185 in Kamien, Upper Silesia. He was a great Dominican Missionary. His home today serves as a retreat and conference center, and spa. Monsignor Frank Kurzaj's tour

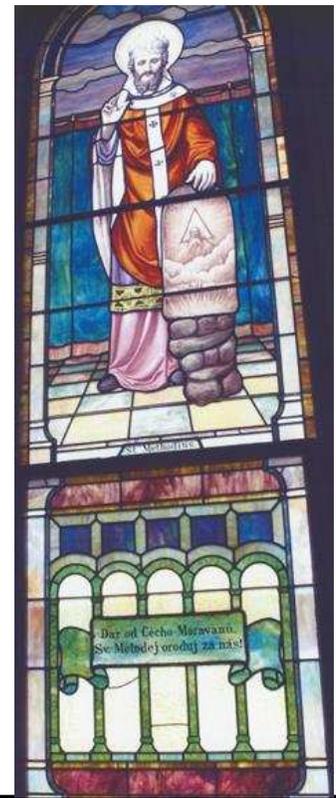


of Poland includes this famous site. He is more widely known by the Spanish version of his name: San Jacinto! *Donor Filip & Tekla Kasprzik Tam, Frank & Mary Dlugosch Tam, Anton & Annie Styra Tam, Tom Tam.*



Bottom left and bottom right are the stained glass windows of the brothers Sts. Cyril & Methodius, the Apostles of the Slavs. It was through their tireless missionary effort that the Gospel was brought to the Slavic peoples. As a result of their work in Bohemia, when the Christian Princess Dobrawa was wedded to the Polish king Mieszko, not only did Mieszko become a Catholic Christian, so did all of Poland in 966! This year 2016 is the 1050 year anniversary of Poland becoming a Catholic nation.

Donors: The Czech Moravians.





(Continued from page 6)

church every 2nd Sunday in September with a special Mass sung in Polish followed by the church picnic and festival.

Truly even now Holy Cross Parish continues to be a cornerstone of God's building of our spiritual life as it did so for our Polish ancestors some 100+ years ago!!

GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD! PRAISED BE JESUS CHRIST!

Lillian Warzecha, wife of Edward Warzecha.
Born 1913, died 2013. Daughter of Antonius Tam & Anna Styra.

The First 17 Settler Families Listed in Church Records (~1867)

Anton Kozielski (wife Lucyia), J. Kolodzie, Simon Kolodzie, Valentine Jendrzey, V. Simon, J. Richter, J. Ledwig, Ignatz Tam (wife Josefa), Philip Tam, P. Z. Bekowski, Joe Dworaczyk, Vincent Zowiada, Kaspar Kasprzik (wife Maria), Jan Warzecha, J. Skrobarczyk, Fr. Gregorczyk, and Jo Dlugosch.



From Upper Silesia to Yorktown

Vocations from Yorktown, Texas

Sister M. Wenceslaus Dworaczyk (deceased), Sister M. Margaret Dworaczyk (deceased), Sister M. Ellen Sturm, Sister M. Philomena Ibrom (deceased), Sister M. Methodius Broll (deceased), Brother William Ivon Broll (deceased), Brother Basil Ibrom (deceased). Father Kirby Garner, Father Emmet Kolodzie (deceased), Father Francis Ledwig (deceased), Father Edward Dworaczyk (deceased).

POLISH AMERICAN
COUNCIL OF
TEXAS

You Are Invited to join us in Panna Maria
on Saturday, November 19, 2016, for our
Annual Meeting, along with Holy Mass, Lunch,
a Polish Independence Day Parade and a
Lifetime Achievement Award Presentation to
the Most Reverend Bishop Emeritus
John W. Yanta, D.D.

Performances by the Wawel Dance Group
Music by Edward Winiarski, and Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz and his Band
Tours of churches at Panna Maria, Cestohowa and Kosciusko

Process into Mass under YOUR parish or organization banner!

Polish Independence Day Parade at 11:45 a.m.

Holy Mass at 2:00 p.m. at

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church

Concelebrated by the Most Reverend

Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta, D.D.

And Rev. Wiesław Iwaniec

Singing by the Polish Choir of Panna Maria

Reservations requested by Nov. 15 for Sausage & Beef Lunch
\$10 in advance - \$15 at the door - To make a reservation call
830-779-2636 or mail check to PACT, P. O. Box 1357, La Vernia TX 78121
or email PACofTexas@yahoo.com
- Event day schedule and more on reverse -

SCHEDULE

- 9:00 a.m. Directors meeting in historic Panna Maria School
- 9:45 a.m. Membership meeting for all members, in historic Panna Maria School
- 10:15 a.m. Tours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church and museum *and* the Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria
- 11:45 am In front of church: Greetings, introductions and brief address about Polonia in Texas. Singing of the U.S. and Polish National Anthems.
- Noon **"Polish Independence Day Parade "** from church to dining hall to include all churches, Polish dancers, Polish organizations, with banners, led by the marching band
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch, with live Polish music and dance performances by the Wawel Dance Group
- 1:30 p.m. Award presentation
- 1:45 p.m. Leave hall to attend Mass. Process into Mass under parish and organization banners
- 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass begins**, with Polish choir, concluded by procession around the church
- 3:30 p.m. Leave for tours of churches in Kosciuszko and Cestochowa in your own vehicles
- 4:30 p.m. Refreshments bar in dining hall closes
- 5:00 p.m. Conclude

*Our Special Thanks to the Koscuiszko Foundation and Dr. & Mrs. Waldemar Priebe
for their generous donations to help with this special event!*

The events are open to the public, except for the meetings.

To join PACT, visit PolishAmericanCouncilofTexas.org. Annual Dues are \$50 for individuals, \$100 for nonprofits, \$100 for businesses (no voting rights). All Members are included in the annual PACT *Directory of Polish American Culture in Texas*. The PACT is a 501-C-3 nonprofit organization, founded in 2012. **Our Mission is to further knowledge of Polish culture, traditions, history, language, arts, current affairs, and statewide events in Texas; and to facilitate networking among Polish interest groups in Texas.**

PACT Founder, Most Rev. Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta, D.D.

2016 Directors - Maureen Brown, Colton Cunov, Angelika Firlej, Art Gmurowski, Elenora Dugosh Goodley, Susie Kotara, Genny Kraus, Michael Kurtin, Dr. Witold Lukaszewski, Dr. Robert M. Malina, Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, Sue McCarthy, Eric Opiela, Dr. Waldemar Priebe, Dr. Piotr Przybylski, Elaine Mazurek Stephens, John Wojtasczyk.

2016 Officers - President, Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz; Vice Presidents, Elaine Mazurek Stephens and Dr. Piotr Przybylski; Secretary, Susie Kotara; Treasurer, John Wojtasczyk; Youth Vice President, Colton Cunov.

Polish American Council of Texas

Post Office Box 1357, La Vernia, Texas 78121

PolishAmericanCouncilofTexas.org PACofTexas@yahoo.com [Facebook.com/PACTx](https://www.facebook.com/PACTx) 830-779-2636

Memorials and Legacies

Congratulations and thanks to Judge Alfred Pawelek and wife Edna for their gift of \$50,000 for the *Folk Architecture in Poland, Wooden Country Style Church* exhibit in memory of their partents: Jerome & Pella Pawelek and Alois & Agnes Kowalik.

Our Current Donors of \$25,000 to \$3,000,000

Please consider prayerfully joining those who believe that our Polish Heritage will be a great proper memorial tribute to our strong ancestors.

- Building – *Founding Donor Bishop Yanta Trust in memory of his parents John and Mary Pollok Yanta, \$3,000,000*
- Archives Room – *Founding Donor Bishop Yanta in memory of his parents John and Mary Pollok Yanta, \$500,000*
- Cattle Brands, Ranching, Farming, Family Community and Church – *Found Donor Sam & Susie Kotara & Mary Ann Schirmer, \$300,000*
- Accordion Graphic of all Silesian Polish Families that came to Texas (1854-1870) – *Founding Donor by George and Betty Kowalik, \$150,000*
- Library and Genealogy Research Room – *Founding Donor Father Leopold Moczygemba Foundation – Msgr. Frank Kurzaj, President, \$100,000*
- Panna Maria Pastors (A listing of all priests who served in Panna Maria) – *Founding Donor Barbara and Patrick Hoffmann, \$100,000*
- Display Case for Rotating Exhibits (e.g. Historic Prayer Books, Certificates, etc.) – *Found Donor Lorraine Ponish, \$100,000*
- Image of stained glass window - Immaculate Conception , Panna Maria – *Founding Donor Andy and Joyce Rives, \$75,000*
- Image of stained glass window - Nativity of BVM, Czestochowa – *Founding Donor Lambert and Rosalie Titzman, \$75,000*
- Folk Architecture in Poland, Wooden Country Style Church – *Founding Donor Andy and Joyce Rives, \$50,000; Judge Alfred and Edna Pawelek, \$50,000*
- Renaissance Period in Poland – *Founding Donor Virginia S. Janysek in memory of Joseph Janysek and Carolina Reiman, \$50,000*
- Image of stained glass window - Holy Cross, Yorktown – *Founding Donor Dr. Martha Respondek, \$50,000*
- Image of stained glass window - St. Ann, Kosciuszko – *Founding Donor Mark Hoffmann, \$50,000*

- Image of stained glass window - Holy Trinity, Falls City – *Founding Donor Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann and 3 brothers, \$50,000*
- Fr. Moczygemba Sculpture – *Founding Donor family of Msgr. Henry Moczygemba, \$50,000*
- Image of stained glass window - Immaculate Conception, McCook – *Founding Donor Joyce Skloss family et al, \$50,000*
- Image of stained glass window - St. Peter & St. Paul Cemetery, Meyersville – *Founding Donor Dr. Martha Respondek, \$25,000*



Current Heritage Circle Members - \$100,000 or more

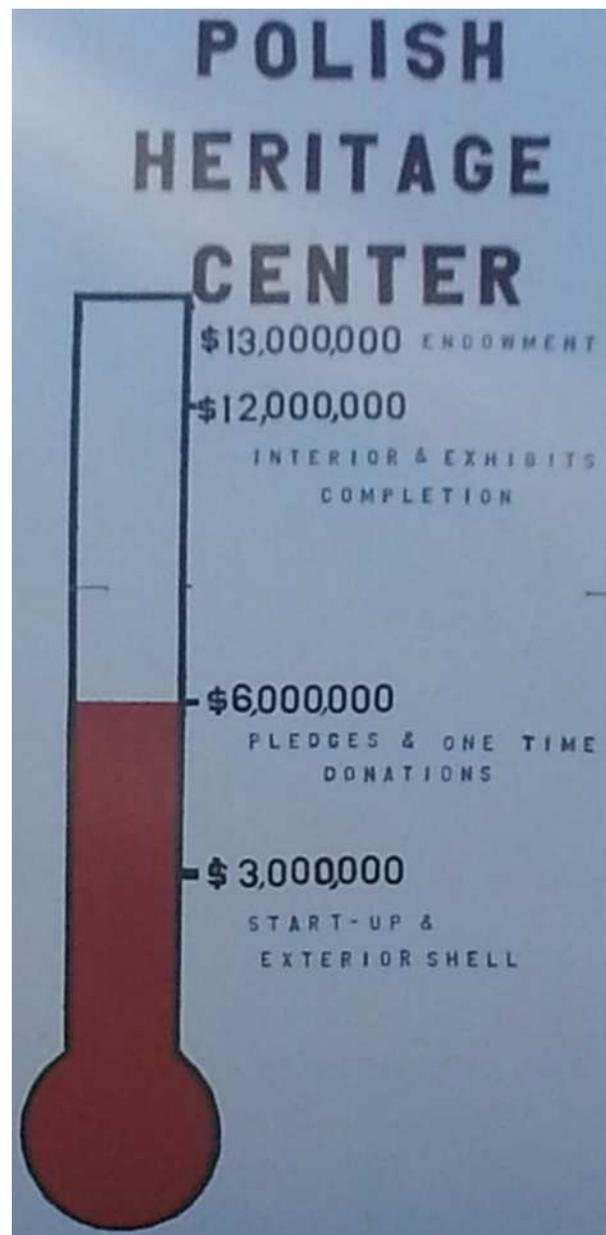
- In loving memory of Sam, Sr. and Faustina Woytasczyk Kotara by their children
- Kenedy Memorial Foundation
- In memory of Melchior & Anna Kowalik and Thomas & Hedwig Czerner Kowalik by the George Kowalik Family
- In memory of Lambert and Lillian Plasczyk Respondek by Dr. Martha Respondek
- Pat and Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann
- *In memory of Vincent and Leona Zezula Janysek by children
- The Father Leopold Moczygemba Foundation
- In memory of our grandparents Louis & Anastasia Janysek Pawelek and Theodore & Eleanora Dragon Labus by Randy & Debbie, Ryan & Rebekah Pawelek
- The Andy and Joyce Rives Family in memory of Alvin James Pawelek
- In memory of Lambert and Rosalie (Pawelek) Titzman families
- In memory of John and Mary Yanta by Joe and Joyce Yanta
- In memory of Philip Dziuk and Mary Ann Moczygemba by great-grandson Bishop John W. Yanta
- In memory of John Pollok and Anna Gorzel by great-grandson Bishop John W. Yanta
- Valero Energy Foundation
- In memory of John and Mary Yanta by Ernest Yanta
- In memory of John A. and Mary Yanta by Valeria, Ernest, John, †Fabian and Joe
- In memory of Fabian Yanta by Family
- John A. and Mary Yanta Memorial Trust by Bishop John W. Yanta, Trustee
- In honor of Joseph Felix Manka and Lucy Sally Ploch Manka by Loraine & Howard Ponish

* = acknowledges a second \$100,000 gift

All benefactors (Gifts of \$100,000 and over) will be recognized in the Polish Heritage Center Lobby. Patrons (Gifts of \$25,000 to \$99,000) will be appropriately recognized in the gallery.

OUR GOAL!

There are 86 Naming Opportunities available. For more information please contact: call me (Bishop John Yanta) at 210-733-1979, or my assistant, John Wojtasczyk at 210-387-7472. You can also contact any of the following: Al Notzon, Joe Yanta, Randy Pawelek, Betty/George Kowalik, Sam Kotara, Fr. Wieslaw Iwaniec, Pat Hoffmann, Msgr. Frank Kurzaj, Susan McKinsey, Loretta Niestroy, Cheryl Pruski, Dr. Martha Respondek, Joyce Rives, and Lambert & Rosalie Titzman.



Next Newsletter!

Will feature St. Michael's Parish in San Antonio:

- 3rd oldest Parish in San Antonio (after San Fernando Cathedral for the Spanish speaking in 1731 and St. Mary's downtown founded 1852 for the English speaking)
- St. Michael's founded 1866 for the Polish
- Remained a national parish for the Polish until 1947 when it became a territorial parish
- Beautiful big church, school, convent, and rectory were torn down for more room for Hemisfair '68
- The Tower of the Americas stands very near where St. Michael's existed
- St. Michael's Cemetery remains intact a mile or so to the ENE.

You are invited to the 150th Anniversary Mass and reception Sunday, November 20th at 10pm at the "new" St. Michael's, 418 Indiana St.



Working at the October 9th Turkey Dinner Homecoming in Panna Maria at the construction site for the Polish Heritage Center was Maureen Brown, great-great-granddaughter of John Kush, famed Silesian stone mason, in San Antonio's early and St.

Michael's early history. Maureen provided up-to-date info on the progress of the construction, our goals, displaying samples and giving away "keep sakes"!





***THE CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES ON!
AND SO DO THE BILLS!***

After a few slow months brought on by the summer rains, which the farmers truly appreciated, construction is now moving ahead at full steam. This month, our bill is \$188,225.13. We are so grateful to God and those who are part of this project to preserve our rich Polish heritage. Pray as a family and remember your loved ones. All gifts are appreciated! Gifts for the short term, like now to help pay the construction bills, and gifts for the long term, to help maintain and run the center are needed. Consider our Polish Heritage Center for your planned gift giving and wills. For more information, please contact your attorney or our attorney Kevin Kennedy at 210-824-0771, Al Notzon at 210-846-1717, or me at 210-733-1979.

God Bless You and Yours,

Bishop John W. Yanta