



Stained glass window of St. Michael the Archangel, originally in St. Michael's Church, now residing at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, San Antonio, Texas. Donated by Theo and Pauline Magott. Photograph courtesy of Elaine Mazurek Stephens

Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria

Visitor Experience, #12 in
Series

St. Michael's Church, San Antonio, Texas

St. Michael's Roman
Catholic Church
by Allen & Regina Kosub

Overview

Polish immigrants from Upper Silesia came to San Antonio in December of 1854.ⁱ As members of the Roman Catholic Church they first attended the existing church of San Fernando

parish. Polish-speaking priests from Panna Maria, in Karnes County, ministered to the Polish community in San Antonio until 1863, during the American Civil War.ⁱⁱ In 1866, after the Civil War, Polish missionary priests from the Society of the Resurrection came to Texas to minister

to the Polish immigrants. St. Michael's Parish was created in November of 1866 to serve San Antonio's existing Polish population.ⁱⁱⁱ Its church and school would become the religious and social center for a community known as the Polish Quarter. Located at 424 South Street between Matagorda and Indianola Streets, St. Michael's Parish grew through the 19th and early 20th century. The parish that was created from 36 families in 1866 grew to 900 families by 1949.^{iv}

Context

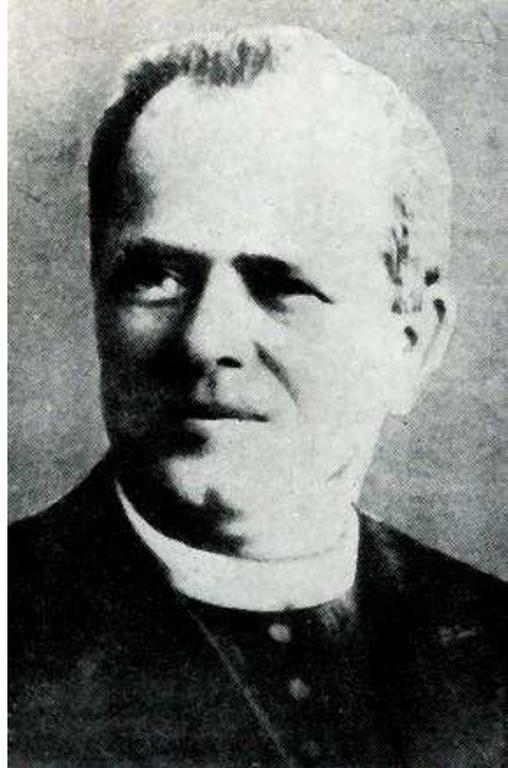
The Polish Silesian immigration of 1854 created several distinct Polish-speaking communities in South Texas. The isolated villages of Panna Maria in Karnes County and St. Hedwig (then called Martinez) in east Bexar County were comprised almost exclusively of Poles. The Polish communities in Bandera and San Antonio existed among other immigrant groups. Fathers Leopold Moczygamba, Anthony Rossadowski and Julian Przysiecki, associated with Panna Maria in Karnes County, served all these communities as travelling missionaries.^v By 1863, only Father Julian Przysiecki remained and served as the sole minister to all these communities. On 25 November 1863, he was killed in a riding accident at St. Hedwig leaving Polish Texans without a Polish-speaking priest.^{vi} Polish missionary priests from the Society of the Resurrection came to Texas in 1866. For about a decade they organized parishes and oversaw the building of their churches and schools. When founded the congregation consisted of 36 families: Jacob Zaiontz, Floryan Musiol, J. Halamuda, Carl Dobrowolski, Anton Cieslik, Isidor Zizik, Anton Pyka, Mary Brysch, Frank Pollock, Frank Oczko, George Halamuda, Sebastian Roswadowski, Jake Waczlawcwyk, Paul Panek, Thomas Dziuron, Albert Dlugosz, John Szaparczyk, Frank Felix, Emanuel Rzeppa, Albert Halamuda, Ignatz Faska, Albert Mondrala, Edward Kotula, Jake Brysch, Winfred Kedziora, Thomas Kiolbassa, Mrs. Kiolbassa (widow), John Kus, Mrs. Panka (widow), Anton Moczygamba, Susan Oczko, John

Moczygamba, Joseph Morawietz, Frank Wieczorek, M. Adamiec and Edward Kurka.^{vii} The Archdiocese of San Antonio for its Diamond Jubilee (1874 to 1949), wrote about St. Michael's:

"The actual organization of the parish began with the arrival of Father Vincent Barzynski of the Resurrectionist Order, November 8, 1866. Father Barzynski was the first resident pastor. The first mass of the newly organized parish was celebrated in the San Fernando Cathedral, November 18, 1866. Father Barzynski rented a building (about a block and a half from the present church) for religious purposes. Here the people attended services until the new parochial building, intended for church and school, was built. First services in the new church were held January 6, 1868...

...In 1873, Father Vincent Barzynski was succeeded by his brother, the Reverend Joseph Barzynski and the same year a school was opened by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Panna Maria, who conducted it until 1880. Subsequently, the Ursuline Sisters built a school on the church grounds at their own expense. This building was given to the parish on the condition that a Polish Sister would always be provided. The Sisters of Divine Providence took over later and are still in charge of the school...

...Father Joseph Barzynski was succeeded in 1876 by the Reverend Stanislaus Wojciechowski. Seven years later the Reverend Felix Zwiardowski was appointed pastor and remained there until the



Fr. Vincent Barzynski
St. Michael's Catholic Church 1866 –
1966 Centennial, 35th page



**1922 St. Michael's Church photo by Joe Bacon.
Image courtesy of www.silesiantexans.com**

*October of the same year...
Originally, St. Michael's was a national
parish for the Polish people. However, this
condition ended in the latter part of 1947
when new parish boundaries came into
effect...^{viii}”*

Significance

The Polish population of San Antonio coalesced around the church and school at St. Michael's Parish. It was a place where the Polish culture and language thrived. Through parish social organizations it placed on display the unique Polish character of its people to the greater population of

*appointment of the Reverend
Lodovicus Dombrowski in
September of 1886. Father
Dombrowski's pastorate lasted
26 years, until the appointment
of the present pastor, the
Reverend Thomas Moczygemba
on October 1, 1912. In 1922,
the old church was torn down
and a larger, beautiful building
of white brick was erected. The
cornerstone was laid on July 4,
and the dedication took place in*

**Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas Moczygemba
Pastor from 1912 to 1950**

Image courtesy of www.silesiantexans.com



San Antonio. St. Michael's provided the cohesive element for the Polish Quarter of San Antonio. Dr. T. Lindsay Baker in his comprehensive work *The First Polish Americans, Silesian Settlements in Texas* wrote: "Had the Resurrectionists or other Polish priests not arrived, the Silesian farmers most likely would have merged with the American, Mexican, and German populations around them and would have ceased to exist as distinct entities."^{ix} Until 1947, when territorial boundaries were assigned, St. Michael's Parish possessed no boundaries; any Polish-American Catholic could claim affiliation.

Conclusion

By the 1960s, changing demographics and the practice of "urban renewal" caused San Antonio government and business leaders to view the Polish Quarter as a suitable site for the Hemisfair Exposition of 1968. St. Michael's along with most of the Polish Quarter was acquired for use as the site for Hemisfair. St. Michael's Church and its surrounding properties were demolished. St. Michael's was located near the current site of the Hemisfair Tower.

ⁱ Baker, T. Lindsay, *The First Polish American: Silesian Settlements in Texas* (Texas A&M University Press: College Station, Texas, 1979), Chapter Two, "Founding the First Polish Colonies," pages 21-38.

ⁱⁱ Baker, Chapter 6, p. 103.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Diamond Jubilee 1874-1949: Archdiocese of San Antonio* (Schneider Printing Co., San Antonio, Texas), pages 21-32.

^{iv} *Diamond Jubilee 1874-1949: Archdiocese of San Antonio*, p. 32.

^v *Diamond Jubilee 1874-1949: Archdiocese of San Antonio*, p. 31.

^{vi} Baker, Pages 67-68.

^{vii} Dworaczyk, Rev Edward J., *The First Polish Colonies of America in Texas* (The Naylor Co.: San Antonio, Texas, 1936), p. 91.

^{viii} *Diamond Jubilee 1874-1949: Archdiocese of San Antonio*, pages 31-32.

^{ix} Baker, Chapter 6: "The Growth and Development of Silesian Institutions and Settlements," p. 99.

Thanks to Allen and Regina Kosub for this history!

St. Michael's Cemetery Burials

(Bounded by South Monumental, North Palmetto, and Paso Hondo Sts.)

Adams	Ducosh	Kowalski	Rilling
Aniol	Dzienglewicz	Kowalski	Rimavicze
Arlauckas	Ebrom	Kusch	Roche
Baade	Elzbut	Kush	Rockowitz
Bates	Englemann	Lamm	Rogvosky
Bednorz	Eschbach	List	Schaefer
Binz	Faska	Lobert	Sobieski
Bonewitz	Gaponenki	Lynd	Sonnen
Bowen	Gieszinski	Margozewitz	Southworth
Bresch	Gonshor	Morawietz	Sova
Briesch	Gorrell	Mulczynski	Szmet
Brys	Goryl	Mulczynskiego	Thomas
Bukowski	Grabarkiewicz	Mushall	Tullos
Bull	Halamuda	Niedt	Vander Straten
Burda	Halmuda	Notzon	Vrazen
Cardwell	Hering	Nowierski	Waclawczyk
Christians	Horejsi	Oczko	Wagner
Cieslik	Horendecki	Oñate (Priest), Rev. Toribio	O.S.A.
Cieslip	Horvath	Orlowski	Watzlavzick
Cieszynsk	Hynes	Palitza	Wazlawzyk
Connelly-Hahn	Jaegly	Paluka	Weiss
Coryl	Janosowski	Panek	Wieczotek
Crost	Jehl	Petry	Wofford
Czernicki	Kelley	Pikos	Wojciechowskieco
Czweneczki	Kelly	Pobukoski	Woltersdorf
Dabroski	Keraga	Pollock	Worswick
Danysh	Kinas	Pollok	Wrzeciono
Dausin	Kiolbassa	Potchernick	Wrzyszc
Dausin	Koscielski	Pyka	Wyrwich
Dilla	Koscieski	Pytel	Yourzik
Dresch	Kosub	Rabke	Zajac
Dobrowolski	Kotula	Rakowicz	Zimmerman
Drys	Kovalski	Read	Zink
			Zizik

Surnames extracted from *Cemeteries of Bexar County Texas, Vol. 4 (San Antonio Genealogical And Historical Society)*

*May they rest
in peace!*



Top is St. Ignatius (In Memory of Ignatz and Mary Burda and their son Joseph)

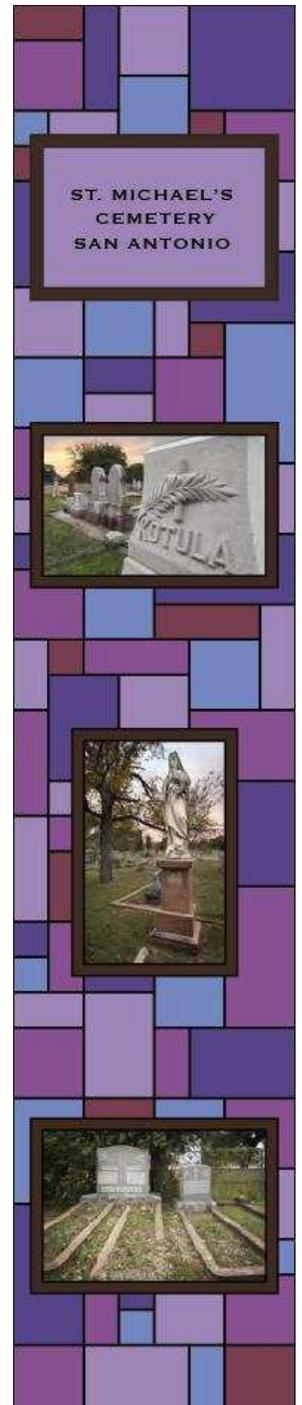
Bottom left is St. Joseph (In Memory of Valentine and Frances Gorrell, Sr. and Family) and bottom right is St. Thomas (In Memory of Thomas and Anna Kielbassa)



Images on left furnished by Elaine Mazurek Stephens

On the left are two more of the original stained glass windows of the old St. Michael's Church now residing at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in San Antonio, Texas. These are only some of the **28 ORIGINAL** stained glass windows; to view nine of them, please visit: <http://silesiantexas.com/st-michael-church/>

To the right is the simulated stained glass window that will represent St. Michael's Parish in the Polish Heritage Center.



YOU ARE INVITED!
150TH ANNIVERSARY
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

San Antonio's 3rd oldest parish (there are now 92 Catholic Parishes in San Antonio) was founded in 1866. The first parish was San Fernando founded in 1731 (Spanish), St. Mary's founded in 1852(English), and St. Michael's in 1866 for those who spoke Polish. For the first 80 years, St. Michael's was a parish for the Polish, and for the last 70 years it has been a territorial parish for the neighborhood.

Sunday, November 20th at 10:00 a.m.

The principal celebrant for the Anniversary Mass at St. Michael's Church will be Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller. Concelebrating will be Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta and Father Heliodoro Lucatero, Pastor. Mass will be in English, Polish, and Spanish. Reception to follow! A 150th Anniversary Banquet will be 5:00 p.m, tickets 210-532-3707.

OUR COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

We, the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation, will soon be publishing a 150th Anniversary of St. Michael's Parish Booklet. The parish already published a beautiful, excellent well done booklet available at the St. Michael's Parish for \$10. For more information, call the parish office at 210-532-3707.

Our version will complement the parish version, include the names of all the burials in St. Michael's Cemetery, a history of the former Polish Quarter, many excellent works found on www.silesiantexan.com, and the 100th Anniversary booklet published in 1966, the year of the Polish Millennium of Christianity. Poland became a Catholic nation in 966 A.D. The establishment of St. Michael's parish was the way the pioneer Polish Texans celebrated the 900th Anniversary of Catholicism in Poland. Prince Mieszko I, highest prince of Poland, after falling in love with a

Catholic Czech girl, Dobrawa, wanted to be baptized in the Catholic Church. All of this happened, thanks to missionaries Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Greek brothers, who evangelized the Slavic peoples. St. Pope John Paul II declared them Co-Patrons of Europe in 1980. You can become a sponsor of the souvenir booklet for \$150 (a dollar for each year). The sponsors will receive two complimentary copies. Our Anniversary book featuring especially the Polish historical events and the great works of the Father Leopold Moczygamba Foundation will be available for \$20. For more information, contact John Wojtasczyk at either 210-387-7472 or wojtasczyk@sbcglobal.net.

POLONIA, TEXAS

In 1891, some Polish settled 65 miles NE of San Antonio. Father Edward Dworaczyk in his book, *Polish Colonies in Texas*, writes a one page (pg. 149) article that is unknown to almost all Polish Texans. I satisfied my curiosity Saturday, October 22nd, and visited the Polonia cemetery where the local pastor of St. Mary's in Lockhart, Father Edward Karasek, offered an annual Mass for their deceased. Afterwards they gathered at St. Mary's Church Hall in Lockhart, 6 miles away, for the famous Lockhart barbeque, their annual meeting and impressive attendance prizes. I was touched with their fervent faith and love for their Polish deceased!



Thank You!

Thanks to the FELICIAN Sisters in Our Lady of Hope Province, Sister Mary Christopher Moore, of Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania for a beautiful letter:

"I have been reading with great interest the progress reports on your ambitious project of building a Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria. I hope and pray that it will come to a successful completion.

As you may know a number of Felician Sisters of the former Rio Rancho Province in Albuquerque, NM, are daughters of the parishes in South Texas that you hope to memorialize (see enclosed list). In their name I am enclosing a check for \$2000.00 to support your project.

The Sisters are proud of their Polish heritage and we join them in applauding you efforts to keep the stories of their ancestors alive."

Sister also included a second page:

"Vocations to the Felician Congregation from South Texas

Panna Maria: †Sister Mary (Gualberta) Angelee Kowalik, Sister Mary Martha Janysek; **Cestohowa**: †Sister Mary Bernardia Jendrush, †Sister Mary Gerard Jaskinia, †Sister Mary Estelle Waclawczyk, †Sister Mary Angela Gawlik, Sister Danat Marie Brysch, Sister Jane Mary Gawlik; **Kosciusko**: Sister Mary Loritta Korzekwa, Sister Mary (Marilia) Lucy Korzekwa, Sister Mary (Janella) Janelle Korzekwa, Sister Mary (Stanislaus) Carol Marie Wiatrek, Sister Mary Barbara Kopecki; **Falls City**: Sister Mary (Roselyn) Dorothy Ann Mary Moczygamba."

Letters like Sister Mary Christopher's are so supportive, energizing, and appreciated! Thank you and to all the Felician Sisters!

In Remembrance

A Czech priest friend, Father Joseph Vrana, Pastor in Nada, St. Mary's parish, Victoria Diocese, died October 14th. He was the key part of a group of us priests and bishops who hunted, fished, and played TAROCKS for 40 years. Father Joe was very witty and incisive. His holy card had these wise, prophetic words: *"FAITH and FREEDOM of RELIGION are never more than one generation away from extinction. They have to be believed and defended by each generation. Thank you for your prayers."* I am worried about our nation and its godless, secular culture which is contrary to the values of our ancestors and parents, and I pray every day that the USA returns to God, His holy teachings, and to the American Constitution. The Polish Heritage Center was created for that very reason.



Board of Directors receiving an update report from Supervisor Sean James at the Polish Heritage Center construction site.

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 Kosciuszko 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

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE!

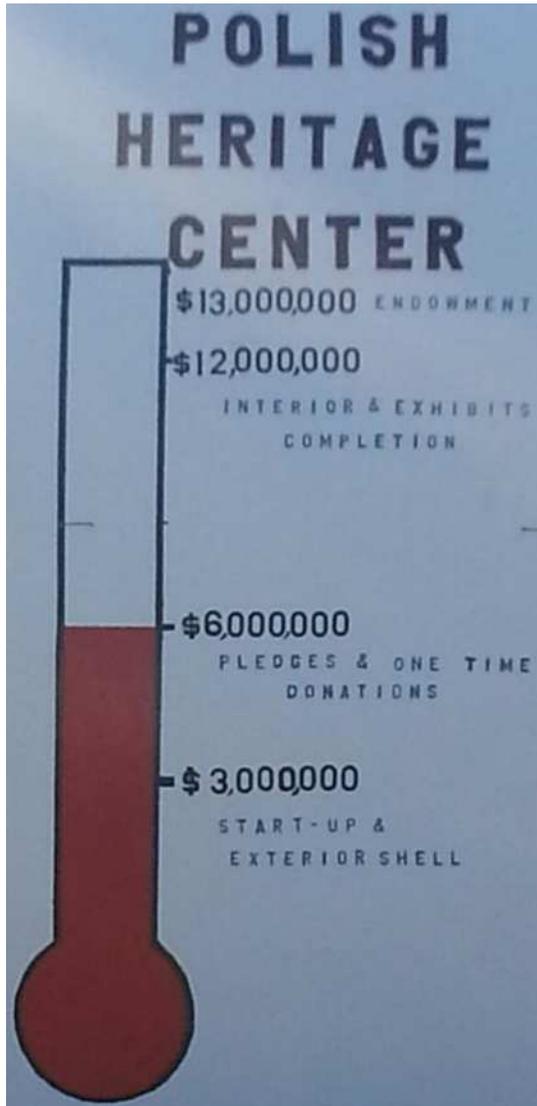


Aerial shot from a drone on September 28th
Picture courtesy of MJ Boyle Construction



Picture taken October 24th from the slab

Please prayerfully consider your legacy of becoming a benefactor or patron by memorializing your deceased loved ones and ancestors!



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, Betty & George Kowalik, Randy Pawelek, Sam & Susie Kotara, Fr. Wieslaw Iwaniec, Pat Hoffmann, Msgr. Frank Kurzaj, Susan McKinsey, Loretta Niestroy, Cheryl Pruski, Dr. Martha Respondek, Joyce Rives, Lambert & Rosalie Titzman and Joe Yanta.

To keep you informed: We paid our first Interest payment of \$1,057.65 at the bank on 10-21-16. We borrowed \$188,225.13 for the construction payment for September.

May God Bless You and Yours,

Our Lady of Czestochowa, St. Hedwig, St. John Paul II, all the Saints, and our deceased relatives in heaven, pray for us!

Bishop John W. Yanta