



Polish Heritage Center



Visitor Experience, #23 in Series



Reverend Theodore Joseph Thaddeus Janysek

"...traveled the quiet way"

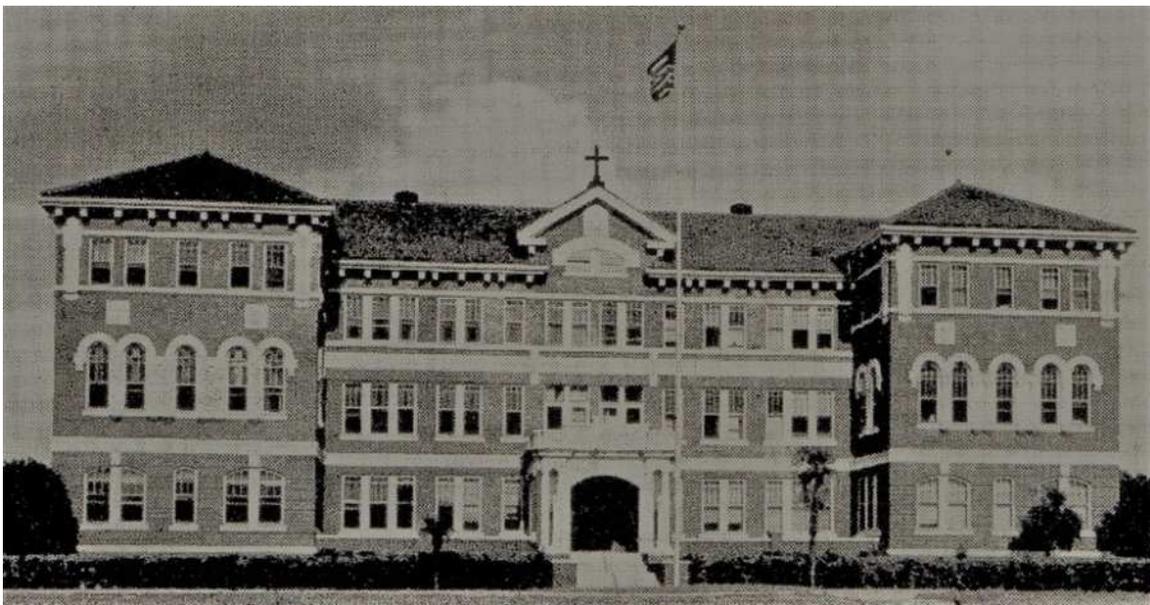
1905 - 1989

By Janet Dawson Ebrom

Photograph from *Priest Forever: History of St. John's Seminary, San Antonio, Texas 1915-1965*, page 74.

A second-generation Texan, **Theodore Joseph Janysek**, was born on April 19, 1905, to **Joseph Janysek** and **Carolina Reiman**. Both the **Janyseks** and the **Reimans** emigrated from Upper Silesia in present-day Poland. The **Joseph Janysek** family resided in Helena, Texas, and took their eighth baby to nearby Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church to be baptized. **Paul Mika** and **Anna Snoga** had the honored position as godparents. The pastor in Panna Maria, **Reverend Thomas J. Moczygemba**, performed the Baptism on May 28, 1905, and recorded the sacrament in Latin with the infant's name [*Nomen Prolis*] as "**Teodor Joseph**" (p. 10, entry #72). Later, perhaps at Confirmation, he added the name **Thaddeus**.

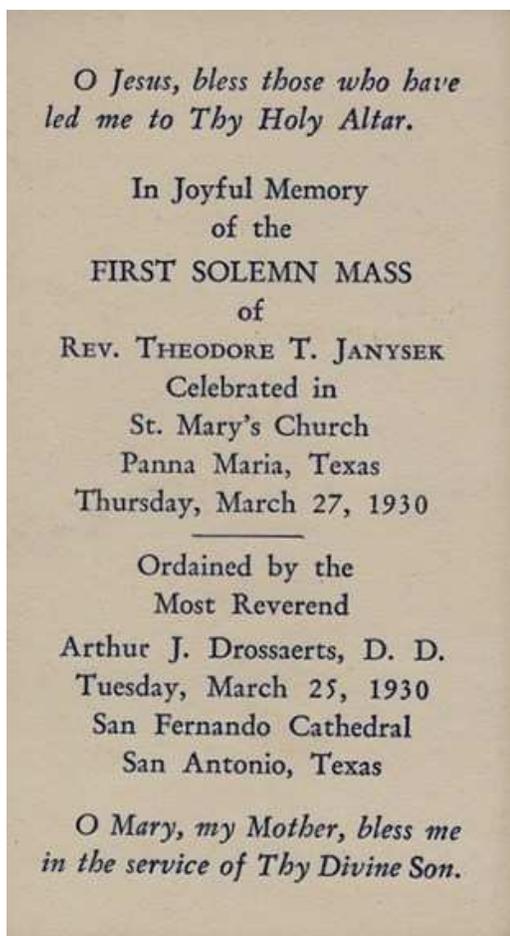
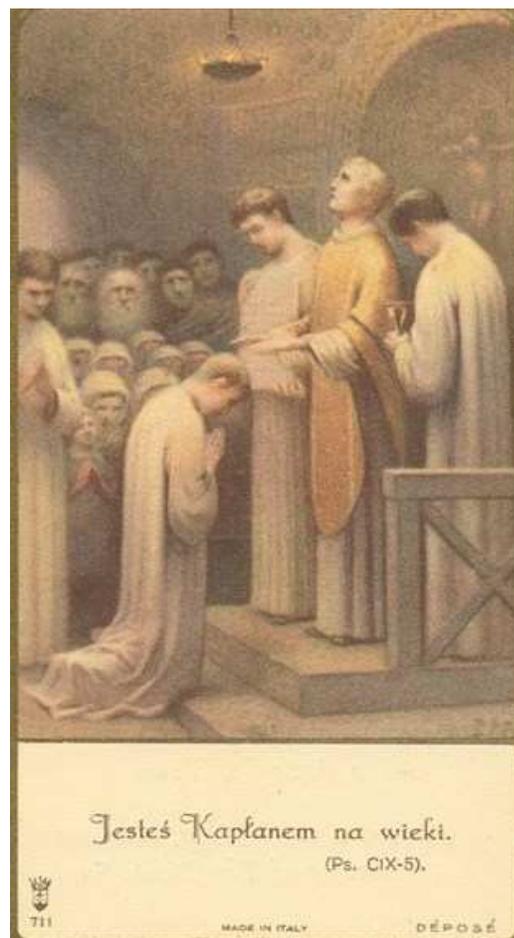
Theodore attended school in Helena from 1912 – 1914 and for the next six years went to Panna Maria Parochial School where his vocation was nurtured. Upon graduation, he left home in the fall of 1920 to begin studying for the priesthood at St. John's Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. Then he spent the scholastic year of 1927-1928 in Indiana at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology to continue his education as a candidate for the Roman Catholic priesthood. Finally, he returned to the diocesan seminary from 1928 – 1930.



St. John's Seminary

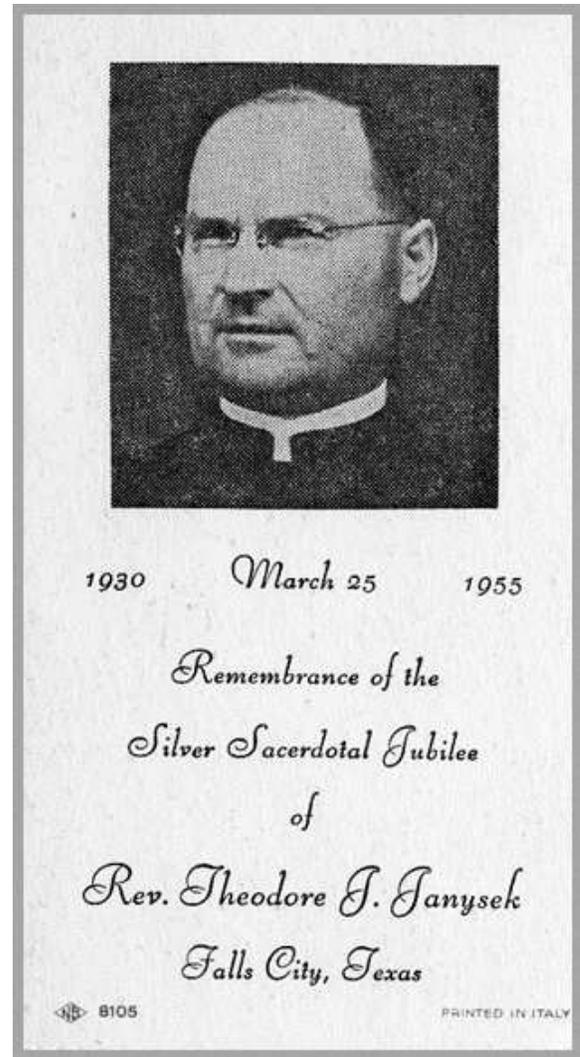
Photograph from *Archdiocese of San Antonio 1874-1974*, page 185

On March 25, 1930, **Thaddeus Janysek** was ordained to the priesthood by **Archbishop Arthur J. Drossaerts** at the San Fernando Cathedral. Two days later, with his family and fellow parishioners in attendance, **Rev. Theodore T. Janysek** celebrated his first solemn Mass in Panna Maria on March 27, 1930. Those in attendance received a card as shown to remember this special occasion. The Polish inscription *Jesteś Kapłanem na wieki* means, “You are a priest forever.” [Ordination card a family keepsake from Rosie Reiman Yosko, 1904-1981]



Soon after his ordination, **Rev. Theodore Janysek** was appointed assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in San Antonio on June 7, 1930. Next, he was named Administrator of Saints Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Cistern, Texas, on December 31, 1934, where he subsequently became the pastor. He remained in Cistern for 14 years, and much later in a newspaper interview, he revealed how sentimental he was about his years there. “I spoke Polish, but Cistern is a Czech community,” he said. “But after 14 years I did pretty well in Czech” (*San Antonio Express News*, September 17, 1983, page 16-J).

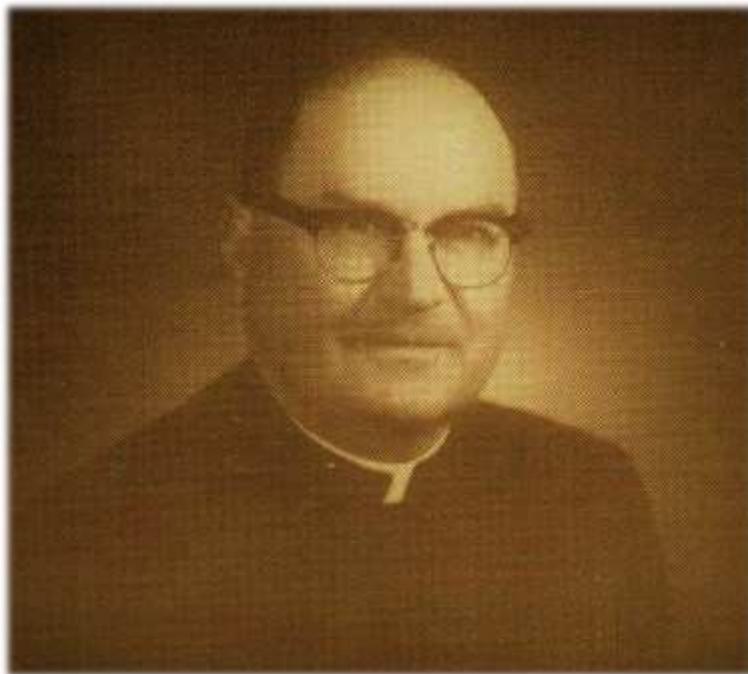
Father Theodore was appointed pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Falls City, Texas, on January 10, 1948. Under his leadership, the parish flourished, and a new church, rectory, and convent were built. His Falls City parishioners esteemed Father Theo as their shepherd upon his Silver Sacerdotal Jubilee on March 25, 1955.



[Jubilee card courtesy of Casper and Rosalie Moczygamba, Falls City, Texas]

Surrounded by his extended family and faithful parishioners, he humbly marked other milestones in his ministry including the fortieth anniversary of his ordination in 1970 and later his golden jubilee in 1980.

When Holy Trinity Catholic Church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1977, **Father Theo** wrote, “Often one hears that great beauty and size of church is witness to the living faith and hope which the forefathers have passed on. It was the work and prayers of the pastors and pioneers which laid the foundation for the accomplishments of today. Their example did inspire us to even greater effort for Christ and our Blessed Mother.” **Father Theo** was well aware that his father, **Joseph Janysek**, had relied on his unwavering faith from the place of his birth and Baptism in Świbie, Silesia, now in Poland, when he came to America in 1889. Thus, **Father Theo** knew first-hand of the devotion brought from the Motherland by his own family and many of his parishioners’ ancestors.

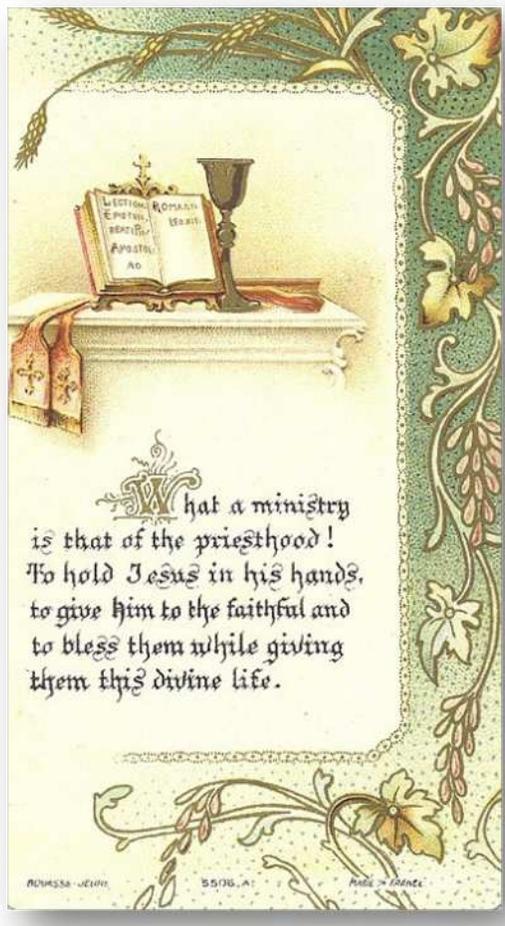


Photograph from ***Diamond Jubilee Celebration 1902 – 1977 Holy Trinity Catholic Church - Falls***

The Archdiocesan **Chancellor, Reverend Msgr. Patrick J. Murray, J.C.L.**, noted, “Over a period of exactly forty years **Monsignor Theo** gave an outstanding example of fidelity in his attention to his flock and during this time he also fulfilled a number of deanery assignments especially that of Dean of the Floresville Deanery, an appointment he received on March 26, 1973. On April 4, 1984, he was named a *Prelate of Honor* by **His Holiness, Pope John Paul II**.”

Msgr. Janysek died on August 7, 1989, and the next day his Rosary was recited at 7 P.M. at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Falls City, Texas. On Wednesday, August 9th, the Mass of the Resurrection was concelebrated in the **Janysek** family's home parish in Panna Maria in the same church, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where he had been baptized 84 years earlier. The principal celebrant of the funeral Mass was the **Most Reverend Bernard F. Popp, Auxiliary Bishop**, and a number of his fellow priests concelebrated. **Father John**

Yanta, pastor of St. James Catholic Church in San Antonio, was the homilist. **Msgr. Theodore Joseph Thaddeus Janysek** was laid to rest in the Panna Maria Cemetery.



Reverend Msgr. Patrick J. Murray captured the spirit of Msgr. Janysek in a letter addressed to his brother priests and deacons on August 11, 1989, “Certainly it must be said that in the conduct of his priestly ministry **Monsignor Janysek** traveled the quiet way. He had the wellbeing of his brother priests at heart so many of whom cherish memories of the special day of dove hunting and feasting he provided for them annually to the very end. It suffices to say that he well deserved the respect and affection of clergy, religious and laity. The attendance of so many at his obsequies provided the best testimony.”

Sources:

Diamond Jubilee Celebration 1902 – 1977- Holy Trinity Catholic Church Falls City, Texas. September 4, 1977.

Dworaczyk, Rev. Edward J. The First Polish Colonies of America in Texas. San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1936.

Gilbert, Rev. M.J., compiler and editor. Archdiocese of San Antonio, 1874-1949: An illustrated record of the foundation and growth of parishes, missions, and religious institutions in that part of Texas under the spiritual jurisdiction of the See of San Antonio. San Antonio, Texas: Schneider Printing Company, 1949.

Murray, Rev. Msgr. Patrick J., letter to “Dear Brother Priest/Deacon,” Archdiocese of San Antonio, Chancery Office, San Antonio, Texas, August 21, 1989.

Wangler, Rev. Msgr. Alexander C., editor. Archdiocese of San Antonio 1874-1974. San Antonio, Texas, 1974.

Memorializing Opportunities

Msgr. Theo Janysek was one of many special vocations to religious life encouraged by his devoted parents, and it would honor his legacy to have him memorialized in the Polish Heritage Center. Just as Msgr. Henry Moczygemba has already been memorialized by his brother, Lucian Moczygemba, each religious vocation from our immigrant families can be recognized. They have been our role models to follow Jesus and his Blessed Mother. They have embraced their parish families, baptized our babies, performed our weddings, taught our children, and consoled us in times of mourning. If you would like to memorialize a priest, nun, monk, or religious brother for a \$10,000 donation, please contact John Wojtasczyk at 210-387-7472 or 210-733-1979.

In a note, retired county judge from Karnes County, **Robert Thornhoff**, wrote to Bishop Yanta-

Lieber Bischof Yanta:

I think of you often and hold you and the Polish Heritage Center Project fast in my thoughts and prayers. It is certainly a "Grand Leap of Faith" to honor God and His Children, especially our Polish Texans!

I immensely enjoy receiving your periodical updates on the progress of the noble Polish Heritage Center, which features a different Polish church in every issue, the latest being Issue #22 about the McCook Catholic Church.

It is amazing how the Polish Texans have built a new Catholic Church wherever they chose to settle in Texas — from the Rio Grande to the Panhandle and all the space between. It is obvious that their lives are centered on and revolve around their churches.

Gladys Janysek – Tribute Story

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings ... to each and every one. We truly wish all of you good health and happiness.

When you concentrate on the word 'heritage' you realize that the definition means something to every single person in God's world. This means every single person in our world is precious in the eyes of God. Jesus has given gifts and talents to all the people in His world. And, for this we can be most thankful. With this thought in mind, we want to spread the word that a very large group of our Polish people that are, right now, working diligently to portray the culture and history of the heritage of their ancestors. Heading our group is, the very honorable and hardworking **Bishop John W. Yanta**. **Bishop Yanta** was born and raised in the Panna Maria area. We are, indeed, thankful for all his insight, encouragement, and character for leading us so far to where we are today. Thanks be to God.

Bishop Yanta and many other leaders are proud of our ancestors of the past and present time.

For many months now our group has been working diligently to build an over 16000 square foot building in Panna Maria, Texas. This building will primarily feature a mission to help retain, for posterity, the values, beliefs and traditions of the first Polish Silesian settlers and their descendants, and will inspire, engage, inform and educate all visitors.

It is our privilege at this time to announce the construction of our very beautiful Heritage Center located in Panna Maria, Texas. When it is completed, we urge all of you to come and see this wonderful testimony of the lives of our people.

In closing, we also wanted to invite those persons who have the calling to be a part of the gift giving for our Heritage Center to do so. Call us at 210-263-7270 or 210- 387-7472. Visit us on the web:

www.polishheritagecentertexas.org/

Asking Jesus to bless you abundantly, *Gladys Janysek*

Grateful Acknowledgment!

First, I would like to acknowledge **Elaine Mazurek Stephens** for her indispensable help in setting up a **DONATE NOW** button on the Polish Heritage Center Facebook page! This hopefully will be an easy way for people to donate online. Of Course, those who prefer to write checks, we thank you! In the near future, we expect to have on the Polishheritagecentertexas.org website, an option that will allow those who wish to donate on a recurring basis to do so. Stay tuned for more on that!

Now, we wish to acknowledge with gratitude, those who have supported the Polish Heritage Center since the last newsletter:

Susan M Ashley

Doretta L Checote

Paul & Laura Dylla

María Oralia Elizondo

*Jesse, Susie, Annette, Jeannette
Estrada*

Janice M Flanigan

Deborah Stanush Gomez

Eric Holland

Jerry & Ann Janecka

Fred E & Catherine Lyssy

Roger Moczygomba

Hans & Minerva Nadler

James & Helen Krawietz Noll

Al & Angela Notzon

Guadalupe & Carlos Ontiveros

Eric Opiela

Scott Owens

Carolyn Rapstine

Chris & Linda Kay Rapstine

Shavano Family Practice, PA

Jimmy & Mary Jean Sims

Gene & Janice Skrobarcek

Suzanne L & Tammy L Thomson

D.D. & C. Varella

John & Christie Wojtasczyk

Gerí & Lester Yanta

*John A & Mary Pollok Yanta
Memorial Trust*



The shell of our wonderful Polish Heritage Center is nearing completion! This new home is where our ancestors' memories will live and give testimony to their strength and faith. Our children, and their children, will come to learn and not forget the values that made them stand out in a rough and troubled time. It is in our hands that this worthy project comes to completion. Many of us have pictures of our ancestors hanging on our walls at home. This Polish Heritage Center is hanging on this entire community. But unlike the pictures in our homes, the Polish Heritage Center will be open to all who come down the hallway that is FM 81 off of State Highway 123.



Welcome to our Community Champions!

Many of you in your communities already know some of these people. They will be our extended eyes and ears in helping the continued development of the Polish Heritage Center. They will aid in getting the word out, help to answer questions, and be your local resource to assist us better communicate with you on the Heritage Center. So reach out and say hi!



** those not present*

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| * Alicja Wcislo | Austin | Elaine & Al Kolodziej | Floresville |
| * Rosalie and Lambert Titzman | Cestohowa | Gladys Janysek | Karnes City |
| Dr. Martha Respondek & Larry Haas | Corpus Christi | * Shelby Dupnik | Kenedy |
| * Eddie & Debbie Skrobarcek | Corpus Christi | Judy Scheffler | Kosciusko |
| * Gene Skrobarcek | Corpus Christi | Bertha Korzekwa | Kosciusko/Gillette |
| * James Skrobarczyk | Corpus Christi | Dr. Matthew Kraus | San Antonio |
| * Marta Morawaka | Dallas | Genny Kraus | San Antonio |
| * Joanna Sikorski | El Paso | Laura and Paul Dylla | St. Hedwig |
| * Elaine & Archie Wiatrek | Elmendorf | Gerry and Robert Piegza | St. Hedwig/Marion |
| Roger Moczygemba | Falls City | * Carolyn Rapstine | White Deer |
| Rosalee Moczygemba | Falls City | Elizabeth Burda | Yorktown |

Polish "**FUN FACTS**" by Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, President of PACT (Polish American Council of Texas)

First Polish settlers to North American - **Jamestown 1608**

Father of the American Calvary - U.S. **Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski**,
American Revolutionary War, US Service 1777-1779

Architect of West Point - Brevet U.S. **Brigadier General Tadeusz
Kosciusko**, American Revolutionary War, US Service 1776-1784

First Polish Parish in the United States - Panna Maria, Texas 1854

The Texas Battle of **San Jacinto** (Spanish) - Namesake is **St. Hyacinth** (Greek),
St. Jack (English) or **sw. Jacek** (Polish), a ***Polish Silesian*** Saint canonized
in 1594

The Father of Astronomy - Polish Scientist **Nicolaus Copernicus**

Two time Noble Prize winner - Maria Skoldowska Curie (First women to win a
Noble Prize and *the only person to win it twice!*)

Famous Polish Composer - **Frederick Chopin**, 1810 to 1849

The first Polish **POPE - KAROL JÓZEF WOJTYA, ST. JOHN
PAUL II**, 1978 to 2005

There are over **10 million** people of Polish Descent in the United States

The **second oldest constitution** in the world and the oldest in Europe -
Poland's Constitution 1791

Poland was partitioned (Prussia, Austria & Russia) and wiped off the map of
Europe - 1792 to 1918

2018 marks the 100th Anniversary of Poland's Independence -
After World War I, Poland was reunited as a country

1989 marked the Collapse of Communism, the end of World War II for Poles and
the beginning of the Third Polish Republic

1999 Poland joined NATO

2004 Poland joined the European Union

2016 Poland bought and received the first shipment of Texas LNG (Liquid Natural
Gas)

St. Pope John Paul II with Polish Texans

His Holiness met with Polish Texans at Assumption Seminary, San Antonio, TX,
September 13, 1987



Fr. Goebel, pastor of Panna Maria, welcomes his Holiness, as pastor of the first and oldest Polish parish in America



Pope John Paul II addresses 1,300 Polish Texans, including the parishioners of Panna Maria, who received a special invitation from his Holiness since his crowded schedule did not allow his visit to Panna Maria

St. Pope John Paul II with Polish Texans

His Holiness met with Polish Texans at Assumption Seminary, San Antonio, TX,
September 13, 1987

**Fr. Frank
Kurzaj**
leading the
Polish choir



His Holiness
greeting **Mary
Yanta Mika**
accompanied
by her
grandson,
Mark Mika



St. Pope John Paul II had a busy day in San Antonio and his last event which was our Polish gathering at 8:30 P.M.



Holy Father blessing a child, Msgr. Janysek partially visible behind the Holy Father back

Holy Father greeting **Fr. Casey Jarzombek, Henry Urbanczyk** of Pampa, TX, to his right, and **Msgr. Juraschek** in edge of right frame

Holy Father greeting **Sisters Maria Lodziana OLS and Alphonsa Bobek OLS** with Bremond, TX, well represented under sign





Our Polish Pope said to us;

“In Poland, Panna Maria, Texas is very famous. Everyone knows of Panna Maria and those first Polish immigrants who responded to the call of their pastor and spiritual leader, Father Leopold Moczygemba...All of our great American Polonia credits its origin to you, Panna Maria, as the first nest built on American soil by Polish immigrants inspiring others to follow in your footsteps.”

St. Pope John Paul II with Msgr. Henry Moczygemba and Rev. Canon Bernard Goebel

Our Response to the Holy Father is our Polish Heritage Center!

Fr. Leopold Moczygemba is buried next to the church in Panna Maria near the famous oak tree. Fr. Leopold Moczygemba is the Patriarch of American Polonia. There are over 12 million Polish Americans in the United States. Our Polish Heritage Center complements Fr. Leopold, a saintly, noble renowned national leader who has many relatives in Texas. We are indeed blessed.

Our building looks wonderful. I hear people ask, “When will it be opened?” Our ancestors built churches without modern technologies and machineries – magnificent buildings that praise God to this day. God has also blessed our undertaking. Please pray that everyone gives financially as they have been blessed! Memorialize your ancestors. And prayer – the greatest power on earth! Let’s make our Polish Heritage Center of **national and international stature** – the best or at least one of the very best Polish heritage centers in America!

A happy Easter season to you and yours,

+Bishop John W. Yanta