



Polish Heritage Center

Visitor Experience,
#27 in Series



Entering the Exhibit Area!

Main Exhibit Hall, Early Poland by Steve Harding

As visitors enter the main exhibit hall from the rotunda, they are met with a beautiful message that has been artfully created in calligraphy and displayed within a lighted case. This calligraphy, in English, Polish, and Spanish, was specially commissioned for the Center. The text is an excerpt from a moving speech on Poland given by Saint Pope John Paul II on June 3, 1979:

From its beginnings Polish culture bears very clear Christian signs...Polish culture still flows with a broad stream of inspirations that have their source in the Gospel...You are hearing these words from a man who owes his own spiritual formation from the beginning to Polish culture...Remain faithful to this heritage.

Following the calligraphic art, visitors will encounter a large gold-framed painting depicting the marriage of Piast clan leader Mieszko to Dobrawa, the daughter of Duke Boleslaw I of Bohemia. Their union, along with Mieszko's conversion to Christianity on April 14, 966, is known as the "Baptism of Poland." Traditionally considered to be the nation's founding event, it is the beginning of the Piast Dynasty. Silesians were a part of the Piast Dynasty, a royal dynasty that would rule for almost 400 years.

Unfolding before the visitor on the opposite wall is a room-size tableau of the history of early Poland. A combination of video, audio, illustration and text presents the Gothic Era; the reign of the Jagiellonian Dynasty; the Renaissance Era; the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the three Silesian Wars, which resulted in Silesia becoming a province of Prussia; the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the Three Partitions of Poland; Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a Polish and American Hero. Above, the ceiling displays a beautiful, internally illuminated replica of the Baroque painting *Allegory of the Holy Cross* by Jonannes Kuben, a Jesuit priest and master of Baroque style. The original painting, completed between 1740 and 1746, exists in the vaulted ceiling of the Church of the Holy Cross in Brzeg.

The main exhibit hall is designed to engage visitors in the rich history of early Poland and to draw them forward through the complex and important subsequent years as they unfold at the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria.

Other Polish Communities

To this point, we've covered the present core Polish parishes: Panna Maria, Bandera, St. Hedwig, Yorktown, Cestohowa, Falls City, Kosciuszko, White Deer, McCook, and one that once had a Polish presence, St. Michael's of San Antonio. There are other parishes throughout south and central Texas that once were centers of a thriving Polish life that now have either melted into the local community or simply evaporated altogether. Including **St. Michael's of San Antonio**, there were four communities that were once significant centers of Polish life; these are the communities of **St. Joseph in Las Gallinas** (*between San Antonio and Poteet*), **Sts. Peter and Paul in Meyersville** (*between Yorktown and Victoria*), and **St. Joseph in Inez** (*just north and east of Victoria*). It is our plan and intention that these, and the other yet smaller communities, settled by our ancestors are not forgotten. When we can, we contact local people who may have a Polish connection and try to record and capture the same information that we gathered in your own communities. A great joy is connecting the dots along the journey of our ancestors who so boldly branched out into the untamed Texas frontier establishing new lives for their families. Each one wanted to make a better life for his progeny. In each of these communities, the faith and values of our ancestors still live today. So beginning soon, we plan to feature the community of **St. Joseph in Las Gallinas, the hens!** In addition, we will visit other Polish communities that came from other areas of Poland and those who are more recent immigrants to Texas. In this issue on page 8, we visit the beautiful parish of **Our Lady of Czestochowa** in **Houston, Texas**.

Margaret Moczygemba: Sister Charlotte

“...dedicated, cheerful, fun-loving”

1912-1991

By Janet Dawson Ebrom

Margaret Moczygemba, was born on August 28, 1912, in Falls City, Texas, to **William Moczygemba** and **Barbara Jarzombek**. They took their three-day-old daughter to Holy Trinity Catholic Church to be baptized, and **Rev. Arthur A. Huebsch** recorded the infant’s name as “**Margaretha**.” Her godparents were **Joseph Jarzombek** and **Elizabeth Dziuk** (page 11, entry #1). **Margaret**, who was called **Maggie** as a child, was surrounded by close relatives whose lives revolved around their parish where her vocation was inspired. Her life was enriched by the deep Catholic faith handed down from her **Moczygemba** and **Jarzombek** ancestors who came to Texas from **Pluźnica Wielka**, Upper Silesia, in present-day Poland.



Margaret Moczygemba, circa 1928

Photograph courtesy of Barbara Moczygemba Hoffman, San Antonio, Texas

Margaret made the decision to enter Nazareth Convent as a candidate on May 28, 1928, and attended Nazareth Academy in Victoria, Texas. When the census enumerator for Victoria County visited Nazareth Academy on Church Street in the spring of 1930, he recorded all of the residents including the teachers, novices, and candidates; **Margaret Moczygempa** was listed as a 17-year-old candidate (stamped page 144).



According to an addendum in her Baptism record in Falls City, she joined the convent at Nazareth Academy on August 17, 1930, and her parish of Holy Trinity sent her Baptism record (page 11, entry #1). Following her postulancy, **Margaret** received the habit and the name **Sister Charlotte** on August 6, 1931, and made her profession of vows on August 17, 1932.

*Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament
Victoria, Texas*



Sister Charlotte Moczygempa is in the front row, second from right, 1932

Photograph courtesy of Roger Moczygempa, Falls City, Texas

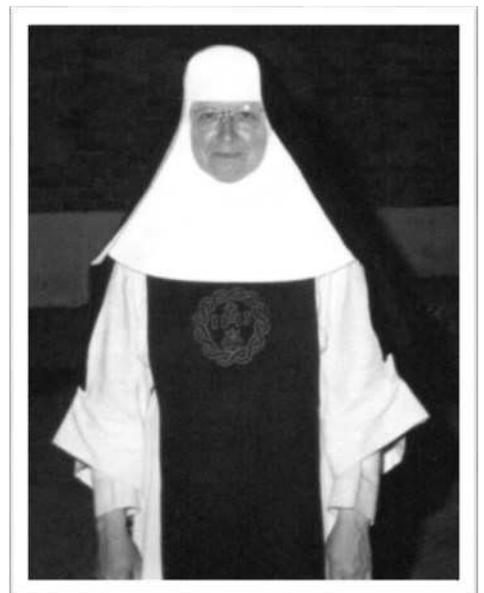


Sister Charlotte attended Victoria College, in Victoria, Texas, Incarnate Word and Our Lady of the Lake colleges in San Antonio, Texas, and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Novosad, pages 108-109).

According to **Sister M. Alberta Novosad** who composed biographical stories about Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, **Sister Charlotte**, "... was assigned to many parochial schools where she developed her teaching skills, becoming a gifted elementary teacher, especially with the very young children. Her gifts were not limited for teaching elementary school children.

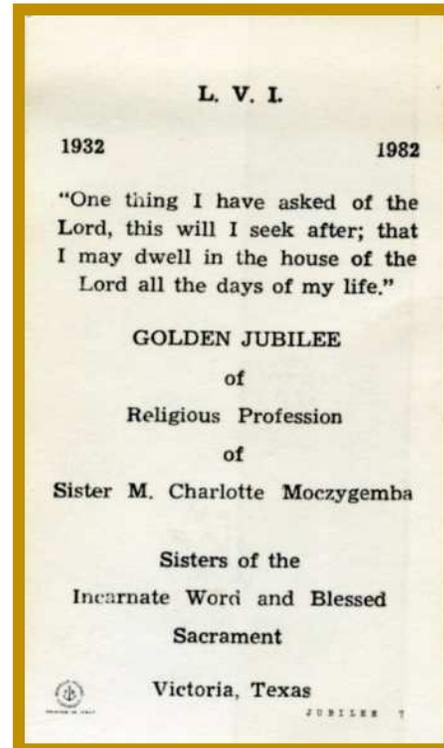
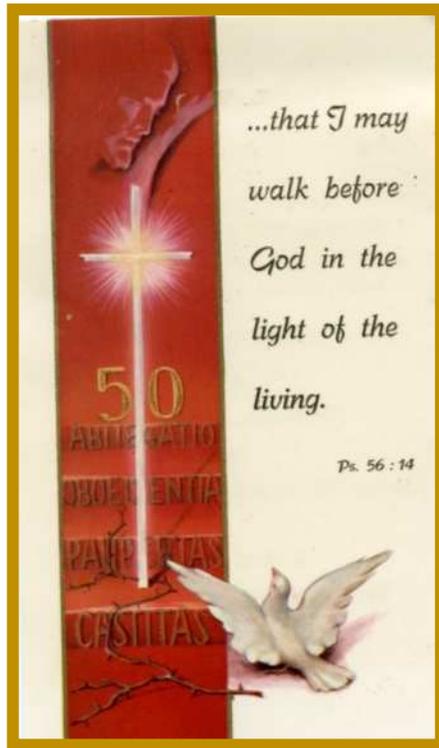
Sister taught classes in high school, especially Home Economics. She was also on the faculty of Annunciation College, teaching the young professed Sisters. Sister was an expert in candy making, contributing greatly to the Nazareth Academy Fall Festival.

"**Sister Charlotte** was a dedicated religious, cheerful, fun-loving and always ready to give a helping hand. After her retirement from classroom duties, Sister busied herself at Incarnate Word Convent until Parkinsons' disease limited her activities and she slowly became incapacitated" (Novosad, page 109).



Photographs courtesy of Roger Moczygamba, Falls City, Texas

Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession
of Sister M. Charlotte Moczygemba



Golden Jubilee card courtesy of Roger Moczygemba, Falls City, Texas

Sister Charlotte celebrated fifty years of her religious profession as a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1982. On December 26, 1991, **Sister Charlotte Moczygemba** bid farewell and died peacefully. She is buried in Victoria, Texas, in the Catholic Cemetery #3.



Photograph from www.SilesianTexans.com

Source: **Novosad, Sister M. Alberta.** *Lives of Dedication and Service: Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Victoria, Texas 1866-1939*, Victoria, Texas, 2016.

The legacy of Sister Charlotte Moczygemba has already been honored by having her memorialized in the Polish Heritage Center by her nephews and niece: Clifford Moczygemba, Roger L. Moczygemba, Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann, and William L. Moczygemba. Each departed religious vocation from our immigrant families can be recognized. If you would like to memorialize a nun, priest, monk, or religious brother for a \$10,000 donation, please contact John Wojtasczyk at 210-387-7472.

Our Lady of Częstochowa, Houston, Texas



*Article and images provided by **Piotr Przybylski**, member of
Our Lady of Częstochowa Church, Houston, Texas*

Introduction

The Polish Parish of **Our Lady of Czestochowa** (pictured right) is the center of Polish religious, cultural, and social life in Houston. It was established in 1982 and is considered to be one of the most vibrant



Polish parishes in the USA. The Polish Parish is a place where Polish values are proclaimed and upheld and also a place where Poles and non-Poles can express fully their fidelity to God. There are approximately 55,000 Polish-Americans in the Houston Metropolitan Area. It is open not only to those of Polish heritage, who appreciate the priceless treasures of Polish culture, traditions and customs steeped in over 1,000 years of devotion to the Catholic faith, but to all Americans and ethnic groups of the Catholic Church.

Parish History

The election of the Polish Pope in October 1978 and the creation of “Solidarity” labor movement in 1980 in Poland initiated global political changes. It was the beginning of the end of communism. However, in the early 1980s, the Marshall State in Poland was proclaimed by the communist regime in Poland and the “Solidarity” movement was suppressed. This resulted in the new wave of Polish emigrants who left their home country to gain political and religious freedom.





Many of them came to Houston. At this time, the need for a Polish parish increased, where it would be possible to celebrate in Polish the religious and national Saints' Day, and to teach children the religion and the Polish language. On August 18, 1982, **Bishop**

John Morkovsky (of Czech origin) granted permission to found the Polish Catholic Mission in Houston. The mission was to be run by the Society of Christ – a Polish Catholic missionary order who was established by **Cardinal August Hlond** to provide religious service for people of Polish origin abroad. The first priest of the Houston Mission was **Fr. Wojciech Baryski**. The creation of this Mission was a historic moment in the life of Polonia in Houston. In 1984 the Mission obtained the approval of the purchase of the parcel at 1731 Blalock Drive for the construction of the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa. The Mission was transformed to the Polish Parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa in 1997 thanks to the efforts of **Fr. Jerzy Frydrych**. The permission was granted by **Bishop Galveston-Houston Joseph A. Fiorenza**. The church was completed in 2001, and the current Pastor is **Fr. Waldemar Matusiak**. On April 27, 2014, the day of **Pope John Paul II**'s canonization, a statue of him was erected in front of the church and was blessed by **Archbishop Fiorenza** (*pictured above*). It is probably the most impressive statue of JPII in Texas, and it makes, along with recently finished memorial wall and memorial plaques, a beautiful JPII Plaza, an astonishing landmark of Houston Polonia.

Polish Organizations

OLOC is the center of several Polish organizations and place of cultural events that help cultivate Polish language and tradition. The most important are:

- The **Nicolaus Copernicus**

Polish Saturday

School with 100 students from age 4 to 15 (school Principal: **Hanna Tomasziewicz**)

- The **Wawel Dance Group** (*pictured above*) with over dozen of adult pairs and dozen child dancers (**Youth Wawel**) perform traditional Polish folkdances during cultural events statewide (Wawel Director: **Elzbieta Winiarska**)



Article and images provided by **Piotr Przybylski**, member of Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, Houston, Texas

Celebration of Service and Song



The Polish Choir in San Antonio - 1995

In 1970, two sisters of the Daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows, **Sister Alphonsa Bobek** and **Sister Helen Haladyna**, arrived in Texas. They came to Texas at the invitation of **Rev. Peter Kolton**, who in 1966, to commemorate the millennium of Christianity in Poland, built a Shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa in San Antonio. The sisters took on the responsibility to take care of the Shrine and promote devotion to the Blessed Mother. The Shrine is located at 138 Beethoven in San Antonio [seraphicsisters.org].

Twenty-five years later, the Seraphic Sisters celebrated their **Silver Jubilee, 1970 - 1995, in Texas**. Conducted by **Sister Emilia Rzeznik**, the Polish Choir in San Antonio [shown above] rejoiced in song at the special event! Centered in front is the recently departed **Sylvia Gawlik Griffith** [1922-2018], so we pay tribute to her memory as a vibrant member of this choir. The talented women and men of the Polish Choir, who were from various parishes, performed publicly throughout San Antonio in churches, halls, and river boats. They were especially honored to sing for **Pope John Paul II** when he visited San Antonio. We applaud the historic Polish Choir and also gratefully recognize the continuing compassionate dedication of the Seraphic Sisters in their two nursing homes in Texas.

Photograph courtesy of Dorothy Gawlik Moy

Thank you for your generous support!

Rose Mary Albert *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Velmon & Peggy Buehring *(In memory of Lorraine Pieprzyca Chandler)*
Elizabeth Burda
Robert & Geraldine Manka Bonner
LTC Marvin R & Janet M Boroski
Catharine Cebrowski & Oscar Guajardo
Jerry Dworaczyk
Paul & Laura Dylla
Jesse, Susie, Annette, & Jeannette Estrada
Wayne D & Betty W Ferrill
Cynthia A & James L Fischer
Antoinette M Gustafson & J. Sean Habina
Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann *(Memorializing Sr. Charlotte Moczygemba)*
John & Joyce Marie Horner *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Stephen & Marilyn R Jendrusch *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Ronald C Keller *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
Sam P & Nancy Kolodziej
John & Chris Kotara *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Anthony Kruciak *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Margaret McMahon *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Jean McGarr & Terri Moran *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
Arthur R & Ellen Mika
Clifford Moczygemba *(Memorializing Sr. Charlotte Moczygemba)*
Roger L Moczygemba *(Memorializing Sr. Charlotte Moczygemba)*
William L Moczygemba *(Memorializing Sr. Charlotte Moczygemba)*
Johnnie J & Dorothy M Moy *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
Guadalupe & Carlos Ontiveros
Alex D & Shelley Opiela
James & Edna Otto *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Dorothy P Pawelek & Suzette P Daniel *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
Ethel Pawelek *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Thomas M & Bridget M Pawlik *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Patrick & Evelyn Penski *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Elaine M & Steve G Persyn
J Lee & Deborah D Pettigrew *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
John H & Patricia Picacio
Theresa Pieprzyca & Family *(In memory of Lorraine Pieprzyca Chandler)*
Howard & Lorraine Manka Polish *(Memorializing Fr. Lawrence Swierc)*
Cecilia Pruski *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Gerry Lee & Linda S Pruski *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Jerry L & Marilyn R Pruski *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Louise A Rabenaldt *(In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith)*
Mr. & Mrs. John R Rogers
Graham Sowa
Donald & Evelyn Starnes *(In memory of Annie F Pruski)*
Edward C & Shirley D Stolarski
Lambert & Rosalie Titzman
Diana Walls *(In memory of Alvin Victor Snoga)*
Adrian F & Rose Mary Wiatrek
Jeffrey J & Lorine M Wiatrek
John A & Mary Pollok Yanta Memorial Trust



In memory of Lorraine Pieprzyca Chandler
(photo courtesy of Velmon Buehring)



In memory of Annie F. Pruski (photo from
mysoutex.com/karnes_countywide/)



In memory of Sylvia Gawlik Griffith (photo
from legacy.com/obituaries/sanantonio/)

PHASE III-A BEGINS!

One of our own is the onsite supervisor for this project. Introducing John Ebrom, Jr., of Karnes City, Senior Superintendent for Keller-Martin. He will be overseeing this exciting phase!



Tuesday, September 4, 2018, marks the beginning of the next step in the ongoing work of the Polish Heritage Center. In the last two issues of our Newsletters, we have been sharing with you the continuing work behind the scenes for the next phase of construction. “Phase III-a” involves the initial build out of the interior spaces of the conference room, offices, restroom, genealogical/research area, and library. This area overall is referred to as the administrative area and will be our first foothold into actually using the Heritage Center. Here we will be able to conduct presentations, provide a limited tour of the inside of our impressive Center, and continue the work of bringing this project to its complete fruition! This phase of the construction is expected to be completed within 90 days. This will be our launching pad into the next phase of the project. How much and how fast this proceeds, of course, depends on the rate of receiving your charitable donations. As mentioned before, it is our goal **NOT** to have to borrow money to complete our Heritage Center. It’s a Polish thing! We are excited for you because of your continued generous support. With trust in God and those who have gone before us, you will continue to make this tribute to our ancestors a reality!

Sto Lat!

Great time in Kosciuszko!

Bishop Yanta putting in an appearance at the Kosciuszko Festival this past August 5th



Bishop Yanta with Fr. Bill Zadora of St. Hedwig



Bishop Yanta with Tony Kowalik (right) and Gladys & Fabian Janysek (above)

Bishop Yanta with Suzanne Moczygemba Sheppard and her grand-daughter

Bishop Yanta with other friends



Bishop's Corner



From left to right: Bishop Yanta, Al Notzon, Fr. Wieslaw Iwaniec, Robert Hoyland (of Keller-Martin), Laura Dylla, Rick Smith (President of Keller-Martin), Joe Yanta, Robert Morkovsky, Mark Morkovsky, John Cebrowski, and Mickey Schott.

At the August 20th Monday Kitchen Cabinet meeting, the central point was a *question-answer* session with **Rick Smith**, President of Keller-Martin, and **Robert Hoyland**, Senior Project Manager for Keller-Martin Construction. Keller-Martin is the construction firm that will begin the first part of Phase III, the building of the Administrative and Support Offices for the Polish Heritage Center.

Our condolences and prayers go out to **Judge Alfred Pawelek**, an Honorary Director of our Polish Heritage Center, on the death of his beloved wife, **Edna**. Upon hearing of her death, I offered Mass for her in my private chapel in my home. Our Polish Heritage Center is an outward expression of what we believe as Catholics in the Communion of Saints. We pray for our deceased, knowing that the Saints of Heaven are interceding with our Lord Jesus and His Blessed Mother. Each one of us begins a pilgrimage of faith at our Baptism. Most people are called to sanctity through marriage and gift of children. I offer at least one Mass weekly for all the members of the Polish Heritage Center, both living and deceased, and every member in the Prayers of the Faithful in all my daily Masses.

God Bless You and Yours,

†Bishop John W. Yanta