

COMMUNITY  
FAITH·FAMILY



POLISH  
HERITAGE  
CENTER  
PANNA MARIA, TEXAS

## Visitor Experience #37



# *Boże Narodzenie!*

*The "Pasterka" or Shepherds' Mass at Midnight of Christmas  
Image by Wood, Ronsaville, & Harlin, Annapolis, MD*

# Double Your Impact

## Here is a challenge!

A group of donors have anonymously committed to a \$500,000 “matching gifts challenge.” They will match, dollar-for-dollar, any gift of \$25,000 or more between October 1 and December 31, 2019. This is an opportunity for you to double the impact of your gift. Here’s the caveat: We don’t get the matching money if we don’t get the gifts! **As of this time, \$125,000 has already been received and matched, thus there is only \$375,000 left in “the matching pot.” Please hurry to claim your “match.”**

## Families, please get together.

Pool your resources. Many of our existing donors have increased the size of their gift by getting together with sisters or brothers, aunts or uncles, or grown children. That has enabled them to elevate the Society in which they will be recognized. These are the relevant Societies with this matching gifts program.

- The HERITAGE CIRCLE: \$100,000+
- The St. Hedwig Society: \$75,000 to \$99,999
- The Marie Skłodowska Curie Society: \$50,000 to \$74,999
- The Nicholas Copernicus Society: \$25,000 to \$49,999

## What will HERITAGE CIRCLE recognition look like?

Heritage Circle recognition features lighted glass panels in the Lobby, 18” wide, etched with the names of donors, the loved ones they choose to memorialize, and elements of the Heritage Center they have sponsored. This is one of the first things visitors will see.

## What will recognition of the three Societies look like in the Donor Gallery?

Each Society in the Donor Gallery will be in framed glass, 40” by 48”, etched with the Society name and significant graphics in the life of St. Hedwig, Marie Curie, and Nicholas Copernicus. This will serve as the foreground for a parchment with the names of donors and loved ones they choose to memorialize. The Donor Gallery is located between the Lobby and the Rotunda.

## Why “now” with the Matching Gifts program?

We want to step on the gas, accelerate, and get the job done. Consider this a “fertilizer program” to increase our “yield.” All you farmers and gardeners out there will understand that. Everyone, including all our vendors, contractors, suppliers, and professionals, are “chomping at the bit” to finish this job.

## When is the Center going to be done?

Opening date is dependent on gifts and donations. We are a “pay-as-you-go” outfit. All of our construction is dependent on the rate and the size of donations. We’re just like a small farmer or rancher; we don’t spend until we have the funds in hand. Our goal for a grand opening is this time next year. So far, so good!

## Where is my gift going to go?

Your gift will go to completing the Exhibit Area, the crown jewel of the Center. Look at this photo of the bare-bones Exhibit Area, and one of the exhibit designer’s views of a portion of the Exhibits. Your gift will enable the final design work, the fabrication, the assembly, and the installation of over 3,000 sq.ft. of high-tech, interactive exhibits.



### Create a Legacy.

Support for the Heritage Center draws a straight line from your heart to your descendants. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit. Your gift is tax deductible. Our Tax ID# is 46-0561240. Your family, and visitors from all over America and from Poland, will note your support.

### A Fundamental Teaching.

Bishop Yanta notes that in Pope St. John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *On the Family (Familiaris Consortio)* we read;

**The future of humanity passes by way of the family. It is therefore indispensable and urgent that every person of good will should endeavor to save and foster the values and requirements of the family.**

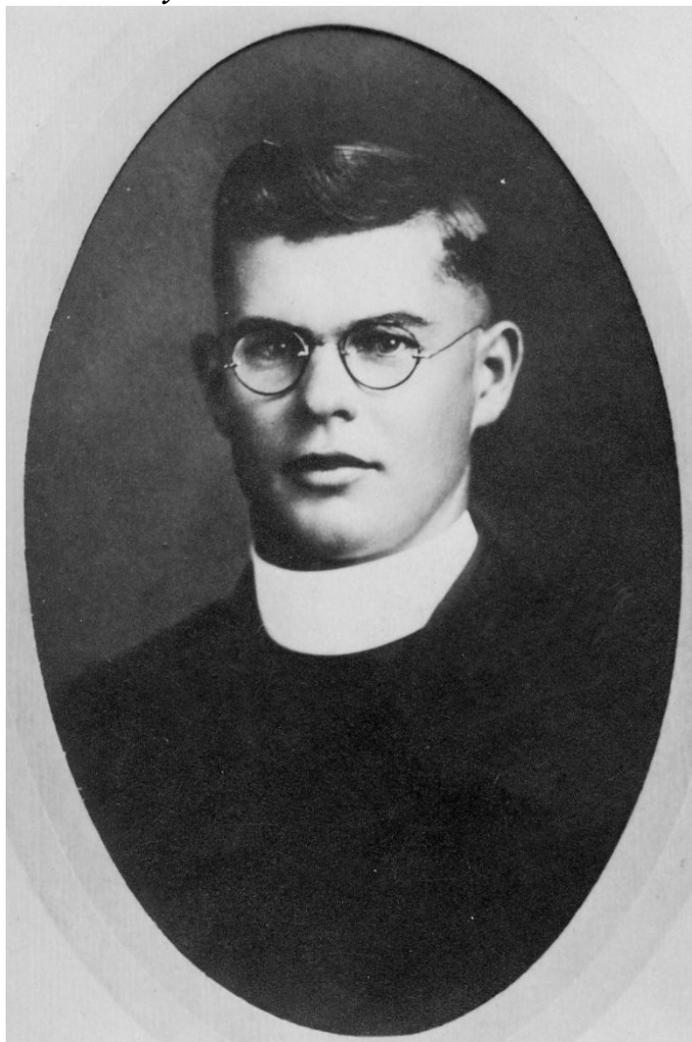
This is what we are endeavoring to preserve and hand on within the Polish Heritage Center. This project is a giving to the next generation what was given to us. And in doing so, we continue to learn about ourselves. We ask that you continue your support so that we may not fail in handing on what was handed to us. Thank you!

# Reverend Leon (Leo) Vitalis Stanislaus Moczygemba

*“...kindly pastoral sympathy...”*

1894 – 1959

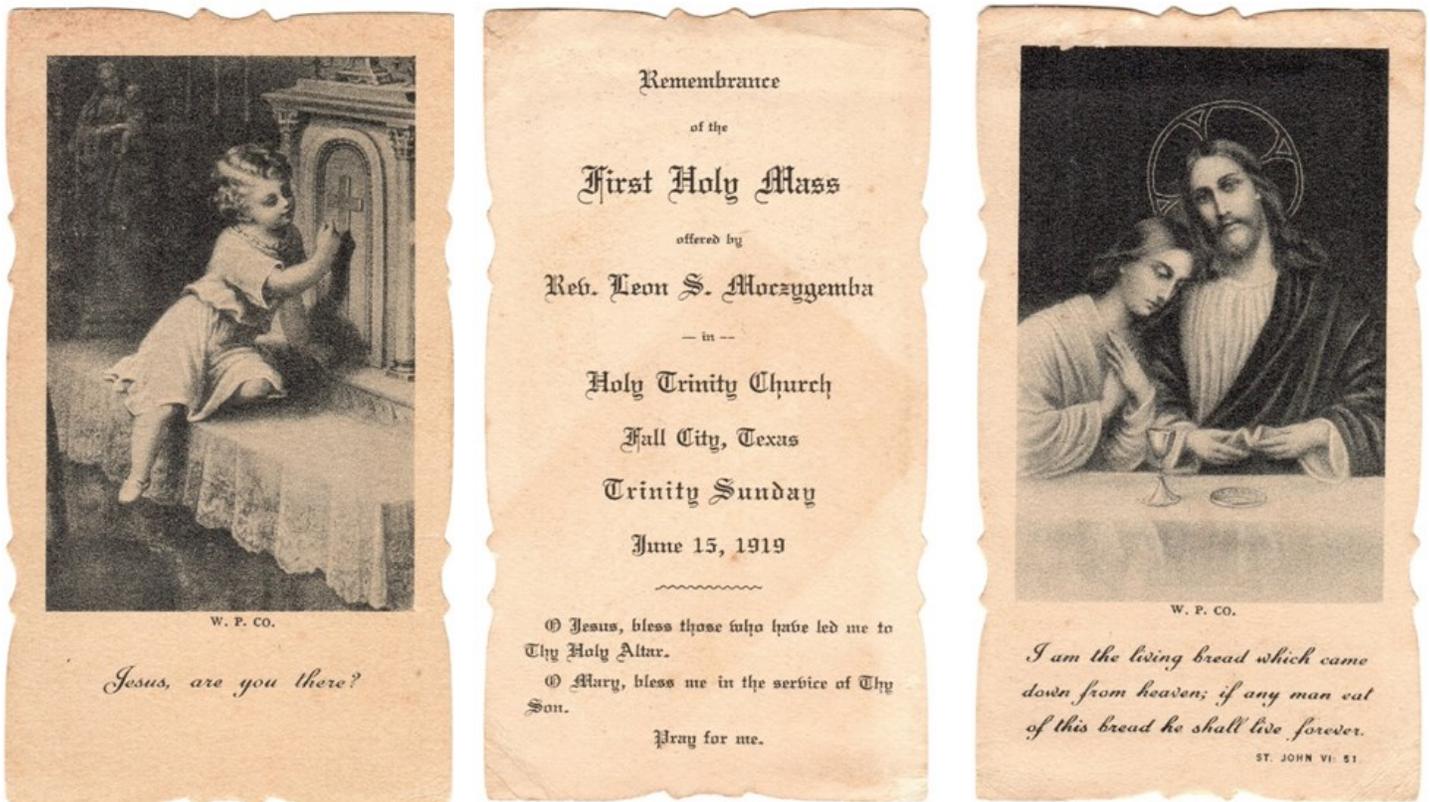
*By Janet Dawson Ebrom*



*Photograph courtesy of Casper and Rosalie Moczygemba, Falls City, Texas*

When he was only one day old, **Leon Vitalis Moczygemba** was baptized in Panna Maria’s Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church on April 9, 1894. He was the son of **Jacob Moczygemba** and **Johanna Keller** whose parents had emigrated from Upper Silesia in present-day Poland. The Baptism was performed by the infant’s uncle, **Reverend Thomas Moczygemba** (p. 118, second entry). Later, perhaps at Confirmation when he was a student in the Panna Maria parochial school, Leon added the name Stanislaus.

Like his great uncle, **Reverend Leopold Moczygamba**, and his uncle, **Monsignor Thomas Moczygamba**, Leon was called to religious life. His preparatory classes were at Sacred Heart College in Oklahoma, St. Joseph's Seminary in Louisiana, and SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. He also studied philosophy and theology at St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana (Dworaczyk, p. 69). On June 9, 1919, he was ordained in Panna Maria, Texas. After embracing the priesthood, **Reverend Leon Moczygamba** offered his First Holy Mass at Holy Trinity Church in Falls City, Texas, on June 15, 1919. First Holy Mass cards with exquisite images were distributed as mementos which are now a century old.



*First Holy Mass cards are family keepsakes from Rosie Reiman Yosko, 1904 –1981.*

Following his ordination in 1919, **Father Leo**, as he was known, was selected as assistant to **Reverend F.X. Wolf** in Shiner, Texas. In 1920, he was appointed pastor of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in St. John, Texas. Three years later, he became pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church where he had offered his first Mass in Falls City, Texas. From 1923 through 1943, he shepherded his parishioners in Falls City. During that time, his personality traits were portrayed:

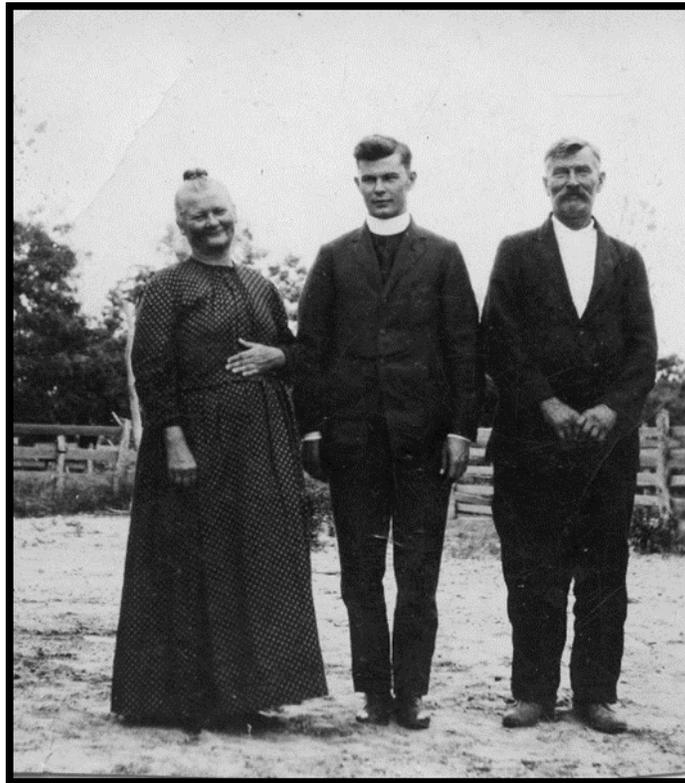
“As **Father Leo** is quite a linguist, he is welcomed among the many nationalities of Texas. His kindly, pastoral sympathy lightens the burdens of his faithful parishioners,



and his wise counsels encourage each member of his flock to live upright and virtuous lives” (Joyce, p. 32).

**Father Leo** had high aspirations for the children’s education in his parish and secured the services of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1924. Holy Trinity School was thriving, and in 1931, a new parochial school was built under his leadership.

Also, when Holy Trinity Church was 40 years old, **Father Leo** realized the need for a new church and began a building fund. He had raised approximately two thousand five hundred dollars before he departed the parish in 1943. He had left an indelible mark during his pastorate in Falls City.

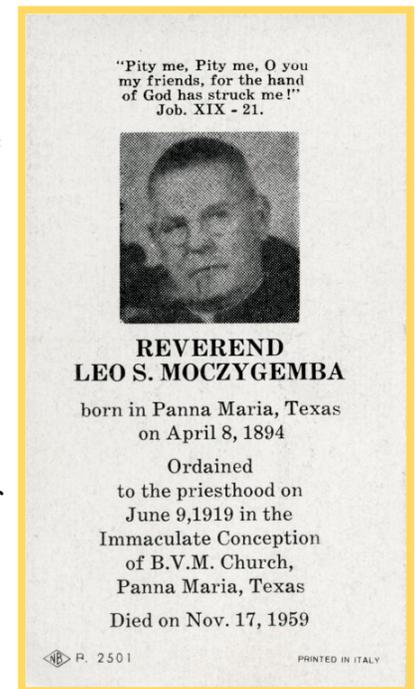


**Reverend Leon (Leo) Vitalis Stanislaus Moczygemba with his parents,  
Johanna Keller and Jacob Moczygemba**

*Photographs courtesy of Casper and Rosalie Moczygemba, Falls City, Texas*

His next assignment was in San Antonio where his uncle, **Monsignor Thomas Moczygemba**, was pastor of St. Michael Catholic Church. In 1945, **Father Leo** was an assistant pastor at the downtown Polish parish and later served as a chaplain at St. Francis Home in San Antonio and Yorktown Memorial Hospital. He temporarily was vicar substitute in Falls City and Hostyn.

Finally, while assisting **Father Lazarsky**, O.M.I. chaplain at Santa Rosa Hospital in San Antonio, **Father Leo** passed away on November 17, 1959, at age 65. He was buried in Panna Maria, Texas, the place of his birth, following a Requiem Mass attended by sixty-six fellow priests (*Shiner Gazette*). In the sanctuary of San Antonio's St. Michael Church, a beautiful stained-glass window depicting Jesus as the Good Shepherd was dedicated to four priests including **Rev. Leo Moczygemba** with the fitting inscription: "I am the Good Shepherd."



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.

Joyce, John A. *Our Polish Pioneers.* San Antonio: St. Michael's School, [1937].

*Shiner Gazette* [Shiner, Texas], 3 December 1959.

The legacy of **Reverend Leon (Leo) Vitalis Stanislaus Moczygemba** has already been honored by having him memorialized in the Polish Heritage Center by **Fred & Catherine Lyssy** of San Antonio, Texas. 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 or 210-733-1979.

## ARCHITECT & DESIGNER NOTES FROM AL NOTZON



What an honor to report on the progress of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, an incredible project envisioned and headed up by Bishop Yanta with so many of us recruited to be a part of this wonderful team.

Yes all of us on this winning team are working hard and seeing so many blessings. The Center continues to move ahead with construction of multiple phases of construction and design elements. Under the guidance of our Architect, Morkovsky + Associates, there is always a phase of interior construction in process and we have completed the Administrative offices and conference room, the library, the concession

area and restrooms along with initial landscaping and sprinkler system as well as a break area and event preparation space.

We are currently constructing the Theater where the main video will be available for all visitors. This venue will also be used for movies, classes and presentations. The next phase will be the Rotunda and rotating exhibit space. On the design elements, please read the excellent article by Steve Harding of SHDI on the facing page.

The Polish Heritage Center Board is excited and energized by our progress and about the Major Donor Challenge Gifts which generated \$250,000 in just a week after the announcement.

As we come to a close of 2019, please consider the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, honoring our courageous and hardworking ancestors as a major part of your philanthropic strategy. The Center is definitely a worthy legacy to give to our children and grandchildren.

God Bless you this Christmas Season. Thank you for your support in the past and for helping the Polish Heritage Center in the New Year.

# DESIGNER NOTES BY STEVE HARDING



## A Current View by Steve Harding

On October 10, I had the pleasure of addressing a group of -volunteers and supporters of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria and walking the group through the planned exhibits – one by one, area by area. -

Before we began the walk through, we took a moment to reflect on what the Center represents. First, the Center is a reality because of **Bishop Yanta's** vision, dedication, and generosity. Without him there would be no Polish Heritage Center. Second, descendants of those first Polish immigrants have retained their history and culture through stories, photographs, documents, research, and memories. The work of noted historian **T. Lindsay Baker** has been truly valuable as has the work of community and parish historians and historical societies such as the Panna Maria Historical Society and Bandera Historical Society. The Silesian Profiles Committee has dedicated nearly 25 years to documenting and recording the families of the first Polish immigrants who came to Texas from 1854 through the 1890s. Those who attended scanning sessions and provided photographs, family histories, and artifacts enhanced the store of history that is now a part of the Center's archive. We are fortunate to have these recollections, items, family letters, and images to preserve this rich heritage. The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria thanks each of you who made, and continue to make, these significant contributions to our collective history.

We are now in the process of assembling and finalizing the many graphics, stories, audio programs, and video presentations that will make up the exhibits in the Center. Final filming for the Center's eleven movies will begin in November. Preliminary voicing of the more than 130 audio programs is underway. Copy is in the process of being merged into graphics, while conservation efforts for selected artifacts is proceeding. Exhibit design drawings for use in fabrication are in their final stages and the design phase of the donor graphics is nearing completion.

It has been a long road for many. Exhibits craftsmen, artists, designers, architects, technicians, builders, writers, researchers, and editors are now seeing the result of many years of dedicated effort. However, it is your greatly appreciated involvement and continued generosity that remains the true keystone of the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria.

# Wigilia

From [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wigilia#The\\_Wigilia\\_Supper](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wigilia#The_Wigilia_Supper)

(Polish pronunciation: [vi'gilia]) is the traditional Christmas Eve vigil supper in Poland, held on December 24. The term is often applied to the whole of Christmas Eve, extending further to Pasterka - midnight Mass, held in Roman Catholic churches all over Poland and in Polish communities worldwide at or before midnight. The custom is sometimes referred to as "wieczerza" or "wieczerza wigilijna", in Old Polish meaning evening repast, linked to the late church service, Vespers from the Latin.

The word Wigilia derives from the Latin vigil. The associated feasting follows a day of abstinence and traditionally begins once the First Star has been sighted.[1] Christmas is also sometimes called "Gwiazdka", "little star".

## Traditions and Customs

Children usually decorate the Christmas tree. Sometimes a handful of hay is placed under the tablecloth of the dining table to symbolize Jesus's birth in a manger. One old tradition states that when children playfully remove a piece of straw from under the tablecloth, its color has meaning: Green indicates wealth or possibly a marriage, while black augurs bad luck for the year.

Another tradition, is to make an extra place-setting for the "unexpected guest", to celebrate hospitality. The feast begins with Grace and breaking of the "Christmas wafer" opłatek - to symbolize the gift of daily bread and wishing each other blessings for the coming year. In the country, it was customary to share a special (pink) wafer with livestock and dogs and cats as the animals of the household were to be treated with special reverence on that day, in honor of the animals in the Bethlehem stable. There was a belief that at midnight they were granted the power of human speech.

## The Wigilia Supper

A Christmas Eve dinner excludes meat, as abstinence is required and should comprise twelve distinct dishes in memory of the twelve Apostles. It begins with a soup, either Borscht with Uszka (tortellini), or wild mushroom consommé (grzybowa), followed by herring in different forms. Fish provides the main dish of the Christmas Eve feast across Poland. There are variations of carp fillet, carp in aspic, gefilte fish (Jewish-style carp), sweet with onions, carrots, almonds and raisins. Accompaniments consist of cabbage, cooked red or Sauerkraut with apple salad. The bread served at the meal is often Challah, doubtless borrowed from Poland's centuries long Jewish fellow countrymen.

Then there is an array of desserts, including dried fruit compote, followed by cake: poppy seed cakes, babka, makowiec, and other delicacies including edible Christmas ornaments. Regional variants include, żurek (sour rye soup), siemieniotka (in Silesia), Kulebiak, pierogi filled with cheese and potatoes as well mushrooms and cabbage, stuffed cabbage with mushrooms and rice, gołąbki (cabbage rolls), kluski with poppyseed, and makówki (in Silesia). There is in places a belief that whatever happens on Wigilia affects the incoming year; if a quarrel should arise, it foretells a quarrelsome and troublesome year.

## The Shepherds' Mass

Some families as well as individual worshippers attend the traditional midnight mass/ Shepherds' Mass (pasterka), where Christmas carols are also sung.

A major part of the Wigilia festivities is the opening of gifts. The children often open their gifts and hand out the gifts for the adults from under the tree. The gift-givers in Polish tradition are "Aniołek", an angel, "Gwiazdka", a star – Saint Nicholas' feminine counterpart – or the Gwiazdor (masculine), which is either a Pagan tradition, or represents the little Star of Bethlehem. Saint Nicholas traditionally used to bring gifts on December 6. This varies and in some families Saint Nicholas bring presents both on the 6th and at Christmas.

## The Christmas breakfast

Christmas Day is a national holiday in Poland and most Poles spend the day with their family. After (Wigilia) there are two more days of celebrations. Christmas breakfast often consists of scrambled eggs, cold-cuts served with horseradish sauce, smoked or fried salmon, marinated salads, and cakes, especially, pierniki Toruńskie (a gingerbread), cake, and decorated biscuits.



### Recipe for the season

From the *Immaculate Conception Church, Panna Maria, Texas  
Sesquicentennial (1854-2004) Anniversary Cookbook*

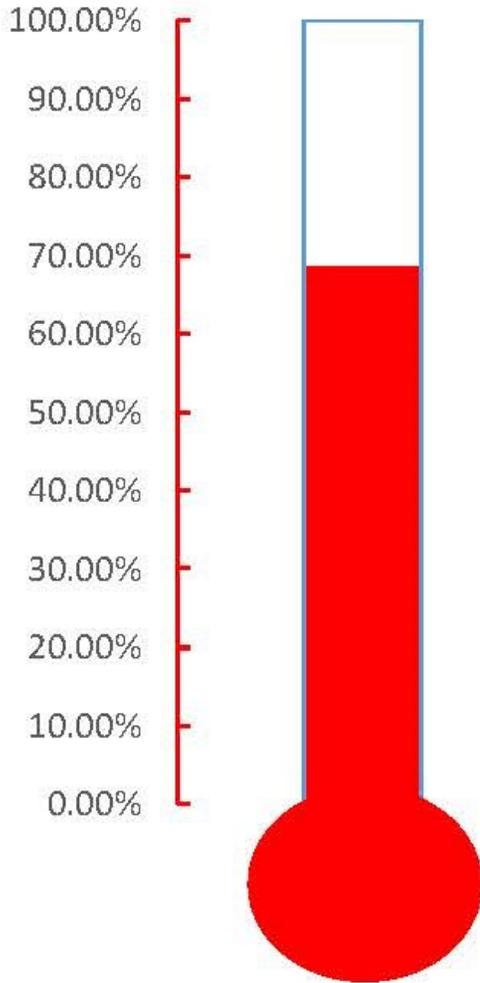
Bigos (Polish Stew)

*By Shirley Lyssy*

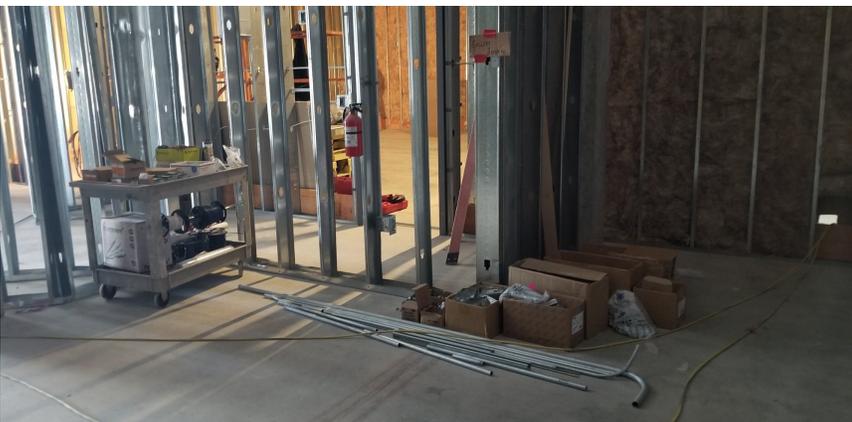
- |                                     |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 lb. beef, cubed                   | 1 lb. cabbage, chopped |
| 1 lb. pork, cubed                   | 1 sm. Can mushrooms    |
| 1 lb. sausage, cut                  | 1 lb. canned tomatoes  |
| 2 slices, bacon, fried and crumbled | 1 T. flour             |
| 1 lb. sauerkraut, rinsed            | 1 c. water             |

Brown beef, pork and sausage in large saucepan. Add water and cook, until tender, 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Add bacon, sauerkraut, cabbage, mushrooms & tomatoes. Cook until tender. Brown flour in bacon drippings and add to stew. Add salt & pepper to taste. Simmer 5 minutes. Serves 6.

# PROGRESS AT THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER



We are knocking at 70% of our goal of \$14M. Good job and help us to keep it up! Let's finish the year strong!



Above: **Leon & Vivian Migura Respondek** of Yorktown, Texas, pictured with **Bishop John Yanta** during the Turkey Dinner in Panna Maria this last October.



Dear Readers,

As Poland's Ambassador and chief representative in the United States, it gives me great pleasure to witness this nation's far-reaching Polonia preserve and honor all facets of our shared Polish identity. In the spirit of such solidarity, I would like to extend my warmest regards to the Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria, Texas for its commendable efforts to promote Polish culture in the Southwest, and for the upcoming opening of its physical Heritage Center. It is my sincere hope that the Center will serve as a space where Poles and Americans alike will gather to appreciate our community's lasting legacy in this great nation. I wish the Center every success in the furthering of its mission, and I look forward to one day setting foot in the completed, vibrant Heritage Center.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Piotr Wilczek". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sincerely,  
Piotr Wilczek

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United States

**New Heritage Circle Members!**  
 We thank and introduce these two newest members to the Heritage Circle!  
**Leon & Vivian Migura Respondek**  
 &  
**Alphonse & Elaine Kolodziej**

*Donations & Gifts*

**Anonymous Donations**

T Lindsay Baker, Rio Vista, Texas  
 Bari Bett, West Salem, Ohio  
 John Bordovsky, San Antonio, Texas  
 Marvin R & Janet M Boroski,  
 San Antonio, Texas  
 Mike Canales, Pflugerville, Texas  
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 Martha Respondek, Corpus Christi, Texas  
 Fernando Rodriguez, San Antonio, Texas  
 Kim Schumacher, Amarillo, Texas  
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 Donald and Catherine Varella,  
 San Antonio, Texas  
 John & Chris Wojtaszyk, Panna Maria, Texas  
 Susan M Wolanic, Hamden, Connecticut  
 Julia & Mariam Yanta, Houston, Texas  
 Myles & Mary Yanta, Alton, Illinois

**From Facebook:**

Anonymous Donations	Natalia Korotkova
Robert Alvarado	Kathy Long
Dorothy Bond	Eddie Mazurek
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San Antonio, Texas	Sharon Mazurek-Denney
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Jody Czajkoski	Shirley Pokorney
Theresa Helbert,	Charlene Smolik
Bandera, Texas	Graham Sowa
Laura Howard	Elaine Mazurek Stephens,
David Jureczki	La Vernia, Texas
Bryce Kindla	Ronny Stephens,
Nio Kindla	La Vernia, Texas
Toby Knight	Martha Weynand

## Memorials & Tributes

In memory of the Polish Immigrants of Johann Dlugosh 1854 by  
Elenora Dlugosh Goodley, Helotes, Texas

In memory of Florence (Flo) A. Kolodziej by  
Alphonse & Elaine Kolodziej, Floresville, Texas

In memory of Rev. Leon Moczygamba by  
Fred & Catherine Lyssy, San Antonio, Texas

In memory of Leon V. Padalecki by  
Peggy Padalecki, Saint Hedwig, Texas

In memory of our Polish ancestors; Tam, Warzecha, Biemer, Jendrzey, Sprencel, Dlugosch by Paul & Iris  
Tam, Yorktown, Texas

In honor of Richard Allan Sowa by  
Regina Sowa, San Antonio, Texas



**Sister Martha Janysek**, left, a 55-year member of the Felician Sisters, is currently on a four-year assignment to the Polish home in Rome, Italy. She visited with our Champion, **Laura Dylla**, at the St. Jerome's Turkey Dinner on Sunday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, at our table where Bishop Yanta was also available to visit with supporters.

*From around the community!*

Below right: One of the residents at the John Paul II Nursing Home was treated to a visit to the Polish Heritage Center! We are glad you dropped by, Mr. Budziejewski! Thank you for bringing him, Sister Agnes Bochenek !

Below: Jubilarian Mass was held at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church, St. Hedwig, Texas, on Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



# BISHOP'S CORNER



*Bishop John Yanta gathered with members of the Polish American Council of Texas (which he established) and others in front of St. Stanislaus Church, Bandera, Texas, before Mass to kick off the organization's annual meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*

## *Boyhood remembrances of Christmas over the years*

I remember as a little boy going down to the Ecletto Creek and gathering moss that was placed around the manger scene in our home. And we would cut down a small tree from the pasture for our Christmas tree. There was great joy in attending Christmas Midnight Mass. And I counted the years by Christmas as the highlight of each year.

I wish all of you and yours a blessed and holy Christmas. May the spirit of the Christmas season be with you all during our new year of 2020.

†Bishop John W. Yanta