



Visitor Experience #49



FAITH & HERITAGE



In an excursion that was long past due, **Bishop John Yanta** visited the Polish Heritage Center on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. After being sequestered at home for over a year, it was time for an onsite tour. On this special occasion, members of the

Board of Directors and staff of the Polish Heritage Center were present to facilitate the tour for **Bishop Yanta**. Above is **Betty Kowalik**, the Foundation Treasurer, presenting a portion of the Heritage Circle donor glass display. Behind Bishop is **Aloys Notzon** who is Vice Chairman of the Board. Assisting Bishop Yanta is caregiver **Brenda Flores**.



Next right, **Bishop Yanta** is touring the library and is receiving an update from newly hired librarian, **Lauren Robinson**. Executive Director, **Angelica Docog**, is in attendance. The library is the Heritage Center's heart and soul for those who are researching their immigrant ancestors who settled in this area. Much information is in the process of being gathered and is hoped to be model for other heritage centers



striving for their communities. What is being attempted does not seem to have been done anywhere else, yet! To the left, Angelica is showing **Bishop Yanta** some special regional costumes featured in the display case.

As his guided tour continues, with **Aloys Notzon** on his left, **Bishop Yanta** faces a special niche housing a rendition of the famous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Enshrined in a place of honor, under a gold-trimmed



arch, is the image of Our Lady of Czestochowa who has been the beating heart of Poland for centuries. For about 700 years, this beloved image of the Blessed Mother has been housed in the monastery in Jasna Góra. As in times past, today Poles from all over make their pilgrimage to this shrine, entrusting their prayers and petitions to her to be presented to her son, Jesus Christ.

Continuing on, **Bishop Yanta** views first hand the large image depicting the *Pasterka* below. The *Pasterka*, or *Shepherds' Mass*, is the Christmas Mass celebrated at midnight. After about a nine-week voyage by ship, two weeks walking from Indianola to San Antonio, just to walk three days back to what would become their new home, those first immigrants on December 24, 1854, celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for surviving and arriving at their new home. They worshiped under the *famous oak tree*, which would become for Poles in



America, their *Plymouth Rock*. This famous oak stands today still alongside *Immaculate Conception Church* as a witness to time and faith in God's providence.

Around the corner, in the image to the right, **Aloys Notzon** explains to **Bishop Yanta** the panel showcasing numerous images of life in and around our Polish communities.



No doubt, you too may find pictures of someone you know here! This might be the favorite area of the Exhibits.

On the right, **Bishop Yanta** poses next to the life-size statue of *Father Leopold Moczygemba* in the “chapel” that commemorates the original core communities founded by our immigrant ancestors. There are simulated stained glass windows honoring *Panna Maria*, *Bandera*, *St. Hedwig*, *Yorktown*, *Cestohowa*, *Kosciusko*, *Falls City*, *White Deer*, and *McCook*. Also honored are four communities that existed early on and now no longer have a Polish presence; they are *St. Michael* in San Antonio, *Sts. Peter and Paul* in Meyersville, *St. Joseph* in Inez, and *St. Joseph* in Las Gallinas. There are many other pockets of Polish families in cities, towns, and communities throughout south and south-central Texas! The profile of the statue is based on family member, **Ross Moczygemba**.



On the right, is perhaps **Bishop Yanta's** favorite image, the *Five Moczygamba Priests!* This image honors the multi-generational contributions that the **Moczygamba** family made to the vocations of priesthood and the men and women of religious life. It is difficult to separate our Polishness from our faith. This is why our Christian faith permeates the Polish Heritage Center. Faith is what kept our immigrant families together.



On the left, **Bishop Yanta** sits in front of a display that is special to him. In World War I, his father, **John Andrew Yanta**, served in the US Cavalry. The books in the case are US Army-issued prayer books in *Polish!* His father inscribed his name in one copy, and it is said that **Bishop's** mother had routinely read one of them.



In 1987, then **Fr. John Yanta**, was involved with the coordination of the visit of **St. Pope John Paul II** to San Antonio. This being no small task, **Fr. Yanta** was up to the challenge at hand. On the left, **Bishop Yanta**

looks over some of the many souvenirs that remind us of that auspicious, yet brief visit by the Holy Father in that hot summer sun!

Below, Bishop Yanta views mementos of his most recent achievement, other than the completion of the building of the Polish Heritage Center! In July of 2019, at a special gathering of Polonia in Houston, Texas, at the parish of *Our Lady of Czestochowa*, the president of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, made a visit. While there, one of the purposes of President Duda's missions was to acknowledge and award outstanding members of Polonia. Thus, **Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta** was awarded the *Commanders Cross of the Order of Merit* in recognition of his many years of service within, and for, Polonia. **Bishop Yanta** was presented by President Duda the highest award that can be bestowed upon a person who is not a citizen of the Republic of Poland. A true and just recognition.





On Tuesday, March 9, 2021, **Bishop Yanta** made his first trip to the Polish Heritage Center in over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together in a group picture are a number of individuals connected with the ongoing project. From left to right are: Executive Director **Angelica Docog**, **John Wojtasczyk**, **Angela Notzon**, **John Ebrom**, **Aloys Notzon**, **Bishop John W. Yanta**, **Lupe Ontiveros**, **Fr. Wiesław Iwaniec**, **Betty Kowalik**, **Lauren Robinson**, **Gabe Navarro**, and **George Kowalik**.

Photographs in the above article courtesy of John Wojtasczyk

March 17, 1956, **Archbishop Robert E. Lucey** celebrates the Sacrament of Holy Orders, here ordaining **John Walter Yanta** to the Holy Priesthood at San Fernando Cathedral. **Bishop John Yanta** has now been serving the Church and the people of God for over 65 years!



Sto Lat!

Photograph from Bishop John Yanta

SISTER M. MARCELLA SRUBAR

1924 – 2014



Photograph from *Victoria Advocate*

Sister M. Marcella Srubar, 89, of Victoria, died July 5, 2014. She was born August 19, 1924, in Plum, TX to the late Charles and Mary Vecera Srubar. She was a Catholic and a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

She received her elementary education at St. Jerome School in Plum, Texas and graduated from Nazareth Academy in Victoria. She entered Nazareth Convent on May 23, 1937 and received the habit of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament on July 27, 1942 and made her first profession of vows on July 28, 1943.

Sister Marcella was awarded a BA with a major in English and a minor in Spanish, and a Masters in Education with a major in Elementary Education and a minor in English and History from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio.

Sister Marcella served as an educator in the following schools: Holy Cross School in Bay City, St. Wenceslaus School in Cistern, Nazareth Academy in Victoria, Falls City Public School, Mary Immaculate School in Dallas, St. Leo School in San Antonio, St. Ludmila Academy in Shiner, and St. Joseph School in Yoakum; she also taught piano lessons after school hours. She served the Congregation as local superior at Incarnate Word Convent for nine years. She loved to listen to music and take photos; she enjoyed cooking, growing potted plants, crocheting and crafts, especially making the yo-yo angels.

When she retired from her educational ministries, she was assigned to Incarnate Word Convent where she ministered in the Gift Shop and helped with household duties. She then entered the Apostolate of Prayer and Suffering.

She was preceded in death by: Parents; her brothers/sisters-in-law: Frank and Mary Srubar, August Srubar, Two infant brothers; her sisters/brothers-in-law, Mary and William Prihoda, Martha and Neal Harper, Frank Prihoda.

Survivors: her sister, Edith Prihoda; her brother/sisters-in-law: Emil and Angeline Srubar, Paul and Mary Srubar, Mary Ann Srubar; many nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces and nephews.

On Tuesday, July 8, Visitation and Scriptural Rosary will be at 3:00 p.m. and a Wake Service with Evening Praise and Sharing of Memories will be held at 7:00 p.m. at Incarnate Word Convent. Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the convent on Wednesday, July 9, preceded by a family rosary. Burial will follow at Catholic Cemetery No. 3. Pallbearers will be Charles Srubar, PJ Srubar, Andrew Srubar, Frankie Srubar, Raymond Prihoda, John Prihoda, Ken Kneupper, and Ken Harper.

Source: *Victoria Advocate* [Victoria, Texas], July 7, 2014

Roger Moczygamba, Falls City, Texas, has honored the legacy of **Sister M. Marcella Srubar** by having her memorialized in the Polish Heritage Center. **Sister Marcella** was a beloved teacher in Falls City from 1953–1973. Each departed religious vocation from our immigrant families can also 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**.

Calendar of Events

*Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Virtual Events for Spring:
Please see Facebook and Website for details. We will share
Summer and Fall events as we schedule:*

- May 19, 3-4:30pm: (virtual via Zoom) Please join us for a PHC presentation on “Early Polish Texas Builders and their Contributions to the Texas Landscape” in honor of “Historic Preservation Month.” The live program will include a discussion of recent historic Polish Texas preservation projects and resources. Everyone is encouraged to share photos, documents and stories with a Q & A about documenting and preserving historic Polish Texas buildings and early farmsteads.

April 21st, 3-4:30pm: “Ask an Archivist-Librarian”

Please join us for our upcoming virtual “Question & Answer” workshop-presentation with PHC Library/Archives Director, Lauren Robinson via Zoom!

Everyone is invited to ask questions and share their photos, documents and stories during the workshop (and all month via our PHC Facebook event post).

To join via Zoom the day of the meeting enter the link in your browser, open and wait for the prompt:

<https://zoom.us/j/98873903427?pwd=RDNuazZPdZr4bkILYTYyNHJURnhPdZ09>



More Upcoming Events!

This list of Member Events is courtesy of the Polish American Council of Texas. Please see their 2021-22 Directory of Everything Polish in Texas and their website, PACTX.org for updates and more.

- April 15—PNA Scholarship application deadline
- April 18—Fr Leopold Moczygemba Foundation Scholarship deadline
- April 18—Polish Progressive Lodge 2335 (PNA) Scholarship application deadline
- April 25—Picnic, Polish School, Houston
- April 25—Feast Day & Dedication of Pope JP II statue, Annunciation of the BVM, St Hedwig
- May 2—Parish Festival, St Stanislaus, Bandera
- May 3—Houston Polish Festival
- May 3—Polish Constitution Day
- May 9—Mother’s Day!

Thanking Our Donors!

From March 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021

Ronnie & Laura Bitterly, San Antonio, Texas
Marvin R & Janet M Boroski, San Antonio, Texas
Barbara Kiolbassa Britton, San Antonio, Texas
Barbara W Budkowski & Katrina L Farah, Royal Oak, Michigan
Jerry & Terry Dworaczyk, Kenedy, Texas
Ruben & Veronica Escobedo, San Antonio, Texas
Olivia Felux, Floresville, Texas
Antoinette Gustafson, San Antonio, Texas
Pat & Barbara Moczygamba Hoffmann, San Antonio, Texas
Darryl & Bernadette S Jiral, Saint Hedwig, Texas
John & Mary Yanta Memorial Trust, San Antonio, Texas
The John G. & Marie Stella Kenedy Memorial Foundation, Corpus Christi, Texas
Robert & Linda Kiolbassa, San Antonio, Texas
Edwin Kowalik, Westhoff, Texas
Leonard & Mary L Krzywosinski, San Antonio, Texas
Rev. Gregory Labus, Edinburg, Texas
Rick Lyssy, San Antonio, Texas
Sheldon & Judy Matull, San Antonio, Texas
Carlos & Guadalupe Malacara Ontiveros, San Antonio, Texas
Adrian Palitza, San Antonio, Texas
John & Patricia Picacio, San Antonio, Texas
Lloyd & Bernadette Pruski, Stockdale, Texas
James & Aileen Reinders, San Antonio, Texas
Bennie & Patricia Snoga, Shavano Park, Texas
David & Babette Spinhirne, Channing, Texas
Janice Stolle, San Antonio, Texas
Edward C & Shirley D Stolowski, Saint Hedwig, Texas
Kathy Tatarian, Boerne, Texas
Elaine Vinklerek, Houston, Texas
John S & Christie Schroeder Wojtasczyk, Karnes City, Texas
Bishop John W Yanta, San Antonio, Texas

Bishop's Page: the month of May, Our Blessed Mother Mary and Our Mothers

I have strong and frequent boyhood memories of our May Processions, the singing of *On this day oh beautiful Mother, we give thee our love*. The Polish sang Marian hymns, especially *Serdeczna Matko (Beloved Mother)*. I learned the Spanish Marian song to Mary, *O Maria, Madre Mia*. The Catechism of the Church teaches: *When you took on flesh, Lord Jesus, you made a marriage of mankind with God. Help us to be faithful to your word and endure our exile bravely, until we are called to the heavenly marriage feast, to which the Virgin Mary, exemplar of your Church, has preceded us.*

This May, in addition to remembering our Blessed Mother I will remember and pray for all mothers this Mother's Day. God bless you all and all mothers.

†Bishop John W. Yanta

John W. Yanta



*Bishop John W. Yanta before the image our Our Lady of Czestochowa in the Polish Heritage Center
photo by John Wojtasczyk*