

FAITH • FAMILY
COMMUNITY



POLISH
HERITAGE
CENTER
PANNA MARIA, TEXAS

Visitor Experience #50

USTAWA
RZĄDOWA.

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PRAWO UCHWALONE.

Dnia 3 Maja, Roku 1791.



w WARSZAWIE,

u P. Dufour Konsyl: Nadw: J. K. Mci
i Dyrektora Druk: Korp: Kad:

**Polish
Constitution
Day
May 3rd!**

Title page of 1791 printed edition of the
Government Act (Constitution of Poland)

Printed in Warsaw by: Piotr Dufour (1730 – 1797)

Inspiration Taking Form

May 3rd marks a pivotal date in Polish history and for Poles around the world. It is for reasons such as this that the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria was established. To teach, preserve, and inform the next generation about the legacy of our Polish heritage. May 3rd marks Constitution Day in Poland. In 1791, Poland became the second country in the world to establish a formal constitution patterned after the first constitution, the Constitution of the United States.



On August 24, 2011, in a filing submitted to the State of Texas, an application was approved that established and created the *Panna Maria Heritage Center Foundation*, now known as the *Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation*. The foundational work that gave rise to the application that was approved by the Secretary of State is found in what is referred to by **Bishop John W. Yanta** as the *Blue Book*. This

book compiled by **Bishop Yanta** became the seed upon which designer, **Steve Harding**, used to develop the vision of **Bishop Yanta**. Over the years, this vision continued to clarify itself and mature. The most recent example is the tri-seal medallion that is in the middle of the lobby floor. Within this seal (above left) are the national seals of Poland and the United States and the state seal of Texas. These vivid seals are reminders of our connections to modern-day Poland, the United States, and our home state of Texas.



Looking to the left wall is a series of monitors (above) that display images of our Polish history. Snippets of these images call us back to the Baptism of Poland, historical figures, conflicts and victories, the immigration to America, faces of the local community, and events today.

To the right is a panel with *A Family Prayer*. Faith and family are inseparable within the Polish mindset. It is the faith that families lived by and expressed that allowed them to survive an unforgiving New World and to establish their permanent presence. The example of our immigrant families is a testament to how they witnessed and were unafraid of their Christian faith. **Bishop Yanta** recalls a remark that his cousin, **Loretta Dzuik Niestroy†**, once said regarding our immigrant ancestors, “The only two things you need to know about our people are that they were Catholic and that they were Polish.”



Beyond the *A Family Prayer* panel is a continuation of monitors (below) revealing additional images of our history both past and present.





Above and center, over the entrance to the Exhibit area from the lobby, is a large, colorful mural depicting some of the images that you will encounter in the Exhibit area. It is a rich tapestry that is a beautiful summation of the highlights of the past 1000 years of Polish history that links us to today. Below this image, wrapping clockwise around the walls of the lobby, are the names of the documented villages of origin of our immigrant ancestors and the list of towns here in Texas where they settled and established their new homes. Many of these family histories may be researched in the PHCPM Library room.

On the right hand wall is a large monitor that will provide our visitors a brief history of the Polish migration along with many wonderful images as an introduction to the fuller scope of what you will encounter within the Center.

Witamy!
Welcome to
our Center!



Ustawa Rządowa
“Government Act”
Święto Konstytucji 3 Maja
Constitution Day

**Celebrating the Polish Constitution of May 3,
1791**

Although the constitutions of the United States (1788) and Poland (1791) emerged almost simultaneously, the content and timing of their formation were determined by the domestic and international political developments within and around their respective countries. The geographical location of the emerging United States, isolated from the great powers of the day, benefitted the American cause, while Poland’s position amongst aggressive autocratic European empires doomed its democratic project.

Poland’s democratic tradition of limiting the powers of the king, the executive, predates European discovery of America, as well as similar developments in continental Europe. The roots of this balance of power reach far back into Polish history.

In 1374 the Charter of Koszyce provided for consent of local Sejmiks (local or county bodies of government) before new taxes could be imposed.

Between 1430 and 1433, NEMINEM CAPTIVABIMUS, the equivalent of Habeas Corpus, the requirement that an arrested person be brought before a judge or court before being detained or imprisoned, was instituted.

In 1505 it was established that no new laws could be introduced without the consent of both the Chamber of Envoys and the Senate.

In 1573 the principle of religious tolerance was established when the Inquisition was raging in western Europe.

Poland’s May 3, 1791, Constitution extended full citizenship rights to townspeople and full protection of the law for peasants. The belief was that the constitution would strengthen and rejuvenate the struggling and threatened nation.

Not widely known outside of Poland is the fact that Poland’s Constitution was the second-oldest written constitution in the world, following the Constitution of the United States. Although short-lived (the Constitution was in effect for only

19 months), the Polish Constitution would have a lasting effect, becoming the light of hope that flamed in the hearts of Poles during, and after, Poland's three partitions and its eventual reemergence as a sovereign nation in 1918.

In the eighteenth century, the concept of a constitution was a threatening prospect to those who clung to the old-world order and power structure. The Constitution of May 3rd was an essential step in the evolution of European politics as it became a beacon of hope for those seeking liberty, addressing many wrongs of its day, and yet it was unable to survive due to the actions of Poland's autocratic neighbors.

In many ways, the Constitution of May 3rd resembles the Constitution of the United States. With a series of modern protections and views in place, the new Polish Constitution would acknowledge and confirm religious liberties, protect its citizens, detail a separation of the three branches of government, and provide for the defense of the country, among other provisions.

The Dominant Religion

Poland had been a Catholic nation since 966, and the Constitution stated that the country would remain so. The document also confirmed respect for and free exercise of all religions. This inclusion was not new. Poland had the largest Jewish population in all of Europe.

The Landed Nobility

This article did not deny or take away the traditional privileges of the nobility, but it did codify that all nobles were equal and had the right to personal security and their property.

The Cities and their Citizens

Based on an earlier act from 1790 called the Free Royal Cities Act, citizens of the royal cities were granted personal security, the right to own property, hold public office, and be represented in the Sejm.

The Peasants

Critically, this article ensured the protection of the peasantry, enfranchising the largest block of the country's population.

The Government, or Designation of Public Authorities

Within the Constitution was the following statement: "All power in civil society should be derived from the will of the people." That sounds familiar, doesn't it?

The Sejm, or Legislative Authority

This was the equivalent of the Congress of the United States. The Sejm's lower chamber, called the Chamber of Deputies, resembled our House of Representatives, and the upper chamber was called the Chamber of Senators. The creation of all laws was to originate within the Sejm.

The King, the Executive Authority

Polish kings had been elected by the nobility since 1573. Poland now became a constitutional monarchy, and the king was to preside over the Senate. The king and his council, known as the Guardians of the Laws, held executive power.

The Judicial Authority

The duty of the judiciary was to enforce the laws that had been promulgated by the Sejm like the United States' Supreme Court does. Neither the Sejm nor the king had power in this regard.

The National Armed Force

The Constitution addressed the need of a standing armed force to defend the homeland.

Poland's autocratic neighbors, the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire, and Prussia, viewed the development of this Constitution as an intolerable radical threat. This threat of democracy contributed in part to the 2nd and 3rd partitions of Poland in 1793 and 1795, respectively, by these same neighbors, and brought the constitution and the nation of Poland to an end.

May 3rd is a national holiday in Poland and is celebrated in Polonia centers all over the world. The Polish Heritage Center enthusiastically joins with all of our Polonia and Polish brethren in this celebration.

Periodic Reminder!

Within the last month, I have received through the US mail, a number of returned newsletters that were not forwardable. If you have moved, and your mail is being forwarded to you, please let us know so that there is no interruption to your receiving the newsletter. You can either use the remit envelope found in most newsletter, email me at wojtasczyk@sbcglobal.net, or call 210-387-7472. Thank you, John Wojtasczyk

Calendar of Events

The public is invited to the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria's upcoming live virtual event in honor of Historic Preservation Month!

"Early Polish Texas Builders and their Contributions to the Texas Landscape"

Workshop and "Q & A" session,
presented by Maureen 'Mo' Brown,
PHC Marketing Director
via Zoom, **Wednesday, May 19th,**
3-4:30PM.



The online 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 during the program (and also to Mo Brown, via email: momo4design@yahoo.com).

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

<https://zoom.us/j/94892411418?pwd=ZzNDek9aMmhJRStia1R3UEFvOGtsdz09>

May 3: Polish Constitution Day

May 9: Mother's Day

May 19: Polish Heritage Center, virtual event, 'Early Polish Texas Builders & Contributions to the Texas Landscape

May 23: Children's Day, Mothers/ Fathers Day Picnic, Our Lady of Częstochowa, Houston, Texas

**June 16: PHC Virtual Event—
Traditional Polish Dancing in
Texas , 7:00pm—8:30pm**

June 20: Father's Day

June 25-26: Polski Dzień—Polish Pickle Run, Bremond, Texas

August: Annual Homecoming Bazaar, St. Stanislaus, Chappell Hill, Texas

August: Annual Homecoming Bazaar, St. Mary, Plantersville, Texas

August: Homecoming Bazaar, St. Stanislaus, Anderson, Texas

August 1: Annual Picnic, St. Ann, Kosciusko, Texas

September: St. Joseph Annual Bazaar, New Waverly, Texas

Heartfelt Gratitude for Those Who Have Supported the Polish Heritage Center from April 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021

Marvin & Janet M Boroski, San Antonio, Texas
Mildred Dupnik, San Antonio, Texas
Jerome & Shirley A Dziuk, San Antonio, Texas
Stephen & Nancy A FitzSimon, Saint Hedwig, Texas
J. Sean Habina, San Antonio, Texas
Pat & Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann, San Antonio, Texas
Ronald Jendrusch, Falls City, Texas
Edwin & Agnes Moy, Falls City, Texas
John & Mary Pollok Yanta Memorial Trust, San Antonio, Texas
Carlos & Guadalupe Malacara Ontiveros, San Antonio, Texas
Gerald & Jackie Sczepanik, San Antonio, Texas
Michael & Cindy Sheppard, Cuero, Texas
Graham Sowa, Tampa, Florida
Patricia Szalwinski, Pleasanton, Texas
Donald & Catherine Varella, San Antonio, Texas
John & Christie Schroeder Wojtasczyk, Karnes City, Texas
Bishop John W. Yanta, San Antonio, Texas

CORRECTION:

IN ISSUE #48, THE DONATION LISTED AS FROM ALBERT & DONATA BANDUCH OF CINCINNATI, OHIO WAS ACTUALLY FROM MARILYN BANDUCH CONGER OF PINEHURST, TEXAS IN THEIR MEMORY.

Since our ground breaking in April 2016, five years ago, we have been moved, touched, and so incredibly thankful for all of your continuous generosity! The size of the heart in each of the gifts that have been made to the Polish Heritage Center is a testimony to the faith and legacy that has been handed to us by our immigrant ancestors. We are almost over the finish line, but have not crossed it yet! Until then, we continue to appreciate each and every gift that you make. Let us all cross the finish line, see our Center open, and celebrate the inheritance of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents!

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER



Gabriel “Gabe” Navarro earned a BS in accounting from UNAM, Mexico City and an MBA from Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas. His experience in accounting and administration began with his own accounting firm which he ran for close to 20 years in Mexico City until he and his family relocated to San Antonio, Texas. He worked at Our Lady of the Lake University for seven years as the International Student Recruiter and Study Abroad Coordinator where he interacted with students from many different countries, enjoying the opportunity to organize multicultural events for the entire university community. After OLLU, Gabe moved on to museum operations as the Operations Manager for 10 years at UTSA – Institute of Texan Cultures, where he managed operations and finances.

Gabe is always interested in challenging himself and learning new things and technologies; during his time at OLLU and UTSA, he implemented and upgraded processes and systems for operational purposes.

He enjoys spending time with family and entertains himself with projects such as home gardening and minor repairs, watching sports and traveling.

WELCOME ABOARD AND STO LAT!

Polish Heritage Center Update From Angelica Docog, Executive Director

The Polish Heritage Center is weathering its pandemic-related challenges, but the resulting delay in last year's hoped-for opening presents our supporters with a final opportunity to join the ranks of founding donors and to honor your ancestors.

We thank you all for your support which has made the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria possible. With its *anticipated opening in the Fall of 2021*, the years-long capital campaign will be coming to an end, and fundraising will transition from building to sustainability. At that time, the roster of those wonderful people who contributed to the Center's creation and construction will be finalized and their role as founding donors will be permanently recognized.



The PHC Board has set a goal of Dec. 31, 2021 to raise the \$1.2 million that will complete the capital campaign. So this gives new and existing donors one final opportunity to join the Heritage Circle or to enter or move up within the societies. Once the capital campaign ends, the Heritage Circle and societies will close in recognition of our founding donors. The only exception is the Peter Kiolbassa Society which has already closed due to space constraints.

With the opening of the Center, we will transition into new and exciting recognitions for donors whose ongoing support sustains our mission and educational programs. Details will be announced in upcoming newsletters. Right now though, we have a goal to meet! Remember that family members can pool donations to maximize their impact and to move up in the society structure. Thank you for all you have done for the Polish Heritage Center, for honoring your ancestors and for being a part of history.

For information concerning recognitions in the Heritage Circle or in the societies, please don't hesitate to contact Betty Kowalik at: kowalikbetty@gmail.com or by calling 830-583-6236.

Saint Joseph,

Pope Francis on the 150th Anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church repeats the declaration!



Pope Francis invoked the year of Saint Joseph from December 8, 2020, through December 8, 2021. Bishop Yanta thought it helpful to share portions of the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter on the life of that man to whom was entrusted the protection and care of Jesus. What Saint Joseph offers today is to reform all fathers into the role models that God originally intended.

*Excerpts from the Apostolic Letter **Patris Corde***

Matthew and Luke, the two Evangelists who speak most of Joseph, tell us very little, yet enough for us to appreciate what sort of father he was and the mission entrusted to him by God's providence. Joseph had the courage to become the legal father of Jesus to whom he gave the name revealed by the angel. Joseph has been declared "Patron of the Catholic Church," "Patron of Workers," "Guardian of the Redeemer," and is invoked as the "patron of a happy death." The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus.

Congratulations to all who chose the name of *Joseph* as either their Baptismal or Confirmation name.

This day I pray that Saint Joseph will again impress upon the hearts of all, especially all fathers, the love he first shared with Jesus.

†Bishop John W. Yanta