

FAITH • FAMILY  
COMMUNITY



POLISH  
HERITAGE  
CENTER  
PANNA MARIA, TEXAS

## Visitor Experience #55

*Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller blessing the Polish Heritage Center at Panna María, September 27, 2021*

*Photography courtesy of: Miguel Ramos*



*Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, along with Auxiliary Bishop Michael Boulette, joining Bishop John W. Yanta in celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, October 2, 2021*

*Photography courtesy of: Sr. Agnes Bochenek*

# Thank You, Thank You, Dziękuję, Dziękuję

*By Angelica Docog, Executive Director*

A big thank you to the donors who support the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria. Your generosity and continued support are making the completion of the project a success, and we are grateful for every donation. Our donors are a very amazing group! Thank you, Thank you!

We have celebrated two major events as we move forward to the Grand Opening of the Center. What an accomplishment to be at this point after many, many years of work and much donor support!



Archbishop Gustavo blessing the Center, with Bishops Yanta, Boulette, and Janak, and invited clergy on hand.

*Photography courtesy: Today's Catholic*

On September 27, 2021, a beautiful Mass was celebrated with the main celebrant being Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller and concelebrants Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta, Auxiliary Bishop Mike Boulette, Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak and all invited clergy. After Mass, all proceeded to the Polish Heritage Center for its blessing by Archbishop Gustavo making it officially ready for opening. After the blessing, invited guests proceeded to the Panna Maria Community Hall for a luncheon and program.



The Seraphic Sisters presenting Bishop Yanta with a bouquet of flowers.

*Photograph courtesy of: Sr. Agnes Bochenek*

We then celebrated, with joy, the 90th birthday of Bishop John W. Yanta at the St. Paul's Community Center in San Antonio. This event was fun and exciting with music and many paying tribute and giving thanks to Bishop John W. Yanta for his life-long service and contributions. There were many extended birthday wishes including the singing of Happy Birthday, Sto Lat and many other beautiful Polish songs presented by the Seraphic sisters. We were again blessed with the presence of Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller and Auxiliary Bishop Mike Boulette. It was indeed, a wonderful and fun evening.

In July, we began a fundraising campaign to complete our \$14M capital campaign which includes startup operating funds. The fundraising campaign included Bishop's birthday celebration and the continued opportunity to move up in society recognition with donations received through December 31, 2021. After December 31, the capital campaign phase will end. Those who donated to the capital campaign will be noted as the Founders and society recognition will end at that point. As we enter the sustainability phase, a new and beautiful donor recognition will be displayed.

In July, we needed \$950,000 to complete our goal. Thanks to your support, we have received over half of the \$950,000. That is amazing!!!! Please help us reach the finish line and ensure that your recognition as a Founder is noted in the center societies.

## Available society recognition:

***Saint John Paul II Society \****

\$1,000,000 and above

***Father Leopold Moczygemba Society \****

\$750,000 to \$999,999

***Families of Original Settlers Society \****

\$500,000 to \$749,999

***Saint Faustina Kowalska Society \****

\$250,000 to \$499,999

***King Jan III Sobieski Society \****

\$100,000 to \$249,999

\* *Indicates Heritage Circle*

***Saint Hedwig Society***

\$75,000 to \$99,999

***Marie Skłodowska Curie Society***

\$50,000 to \$74,999

***Nicolaus Copernicus Society***

\$25,000 to \$49,999

***Tadeusz Kościuszko Society***

\$10,000 to \$24,999

***Frédéric Chopin Society***

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Thank you!!!

# Grand Opening Events!

Please join us for the Grand Opening of the Polish Heritage Center on Saturday, October 23rd, 2021, & Sunday, October 24th, 2021, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. With performances by Jagoda Dance Ensemble and the Wigilia Wind Ensemble. Jolanta Dryden's Polish Events & Happenings Boutique will feature a Polish Folk display of items to sell including some folk clothing items, and other Polish items.

At 11:00 a.m. there will be a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with Karnes City Community Chamber of Commerce.



*Polish Events &*

*Happenings Boutique*



Wigilia



Ensemble

# *Inspiration in the Library!*



*Photograph courtesy of:* Lauren Robinson

The Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria will offer a library containing a myriad of books as well as a space for research and instruction. The space will offer to everyone a trove of locally focused materials such as books and artifacts covering a wide array of Polish history, culture, religion, economics, and even cookbooks. Ranging from the founding of Poland, the center's books trace Polish immigration

and the impact of Polish culture on American communities such as Panna Maria. There will be a wide scope of research topics including politics, wars, religion, and culture. The library will also boast a technology station composed of computers for visitors to conduct additional research. The library will also serve as a site where patrons can have access to archival materials. As the site of the center's educational and instructional center, guests will have access to a plethora of sources and materials not just limited to books, but also can interact with different artifacts such as photographs from the local Polish community in Panna Maria. Even though materials will not be allowed to leave the library, we plan on having a copier and scanning station where guests can make their own physical copies or scan into a PDF to email in order to have copies for themselves. As a site not just designated for Panna Maria, the library will serve all those interested in learning more about the Polish impact on Texas history and the settlements that were founded. Even those not from Texas will have the chance to learn about Polish history and its influence found in the rest of the United States, as we have books focusing on Polish immigration and its impact in places such as Chicago, Illinois.

The library is still a work in progress, but we have obtained several interesting books in both English, Polish, and Spanish. Some of the books that have been graciously donated focus on Polish religion, history, culture, World War II, and famous Polish peoples throughout history. Some specific examples of books obtained that demonstrate the wide scope of the center include Joanna Wojdon's *White and Red Umbrella: The Polish American Congress in the Cold War Era, 1944-1988*, Adam Zamoyski's *The Polish Way: A Thousand-Year History of the Poles and their Culture*, Kenneth K. Koskodan's *No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II*, and Reverend Edward J. Dworaczyk's *The Centennial History of Panna Maria, Texas 1854-1954*. These are just examples of the types of resources we have documenting and teaching the different ways in which Polish history has helped influence not just Poland and Panna Maria, but the world. While we only have a fraction of the books on site, we are excited at the sources we have already acquired and eager to see the rest!



Photograph courtesy of: Lauren Robinson

The main aim of the library is to offer all types of information regarding Polish heritage to its patrons, regardless of reading for research or pleasure. Another great aspect of the library are records pertaining to the names of Polish immigrants, allowing visitors to track their genealogy. A goal of the center is to be able to aid members of the Polish community in genealogical research. Working with researchers and friends of the center, we will have a database filled with family names and history dating back to the 1850s. Records include but are not limited to ship manifests documenting immigration from Poland to the states, birth certificates, wedding licenses, and even land records. With the help of our patrons, we hope to continue to add onto this amazing project. With such a wide range of topics, our mission is to become an ongoing site of research and instruction, providing information and education of the rich history of Panna Maria and

the Polish communities through 2D and 3D objects, primary, and secondary literature. We are going to strive to provide valuable information and knowledge to be inclusive of everyone that is eager to learn more about Polish history.

Here at the Polish Heritage Center, we are working very hard planning and finalizing details for our grand opening to the public. Some of the processes we are currently working on is our collections committee and policies that will allow us to



*Photograph courtesy of:* Lauren Robinson

begin accepting donations from the public. We are grateful to have already accepted a wonderful array of materials including books and artifacts, the majority of which were graciously donated by Bishop Yanta. Because we are busy planning the grand opening, and finishing our policies, we will begin to accept donations from the public beginning in the new year of 2022. This will also include the resuming of the scanning project of your precious photographs

that so many people contributed to over the past years. We are eager and excited to see what people will have to offer! With that in mind, our main policy is to ensure donations fit the criteria of the PHC's mission in promoting Polish history and culture. Once donations have been determined to fit these criteria, it will then go before the collections committee for approval and entered into the library or archives here at the PHC. We thank you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm!

Lauren Robinson  
Library/Archives Director  
Polish Heritage Center  
Panna Maria, Texas  
laurenr@polishheritagecentertx.org

# Brother Emil John Pawelek, S.M.

## 1909 – 2001

*By Janet Dawson Ebrom*



**Emil John Pawelek** was born in rural Wadsworth, Matagorda County, Texas, on October 19, 1909. He was the son of **Charles Pawelek** and **Florence Pollok**. Both families originated from Upper Silesia, present-day Poland. His mother's family, the Polloks, arrived on the *Weser* in Galveston, Texas, on December 3, 1854. They were Emil's great-grandparents, **Caspar Pollok** and **Margaretha Pierdola**, from Grodzisko, Upper Silesia. His father's family, the Paweleks, arrived on the *Saxonia* in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 23, 1868. They were Emil's paternal grandparents, **Maciej Pawelek** and **Josepha Kossak**.

When Emil was a child, his family moved to Falls City, Texas, and became members of Holy Trinity parish. When he was 14 years old, Emil received the sacrament of Confirmation by **Bishop Arthur J. Drossaerts** on October 30, 1923, and his sponsor was **H.A. Gabrysch**. Confirmation names selected by the children were not included in the Holy Trinity Catholic Church list (unpaged; digital image 135). Emil attended school in Poth and Falls City before becoming a student for four years in the preparatory department of St. Louis College which is now St. Mary's University in San Antonio. In the fall of 1932, he left Texas for Kirkwood, Missouri, to enter the postulate at Maryhurst followed by the novitiate in 1933. He explained his vocational choice, "I was out in the world for quite a few years, and I found out that the world was too distracting."

**Brother Emil** professed his first vows on January 22, 1934, and five years later, on July 15, 1939, he made his final profession of vows as a Marianist Brother. He inherited his parents' love for tilling the soil and preferred working

outdoors; his superiors honored his wishes and assigned him to places where he could tend to trees, farm the land, and sometimes serve as a maintenance man. According to the Marianist Archives, during the early years of his assignment at St. Mary's University, "Brother Emil raised cattle and hens in what later became the baseball diamond."



**Brother Emil with Parents and Siblings – 1953 – Falls City, Texas**

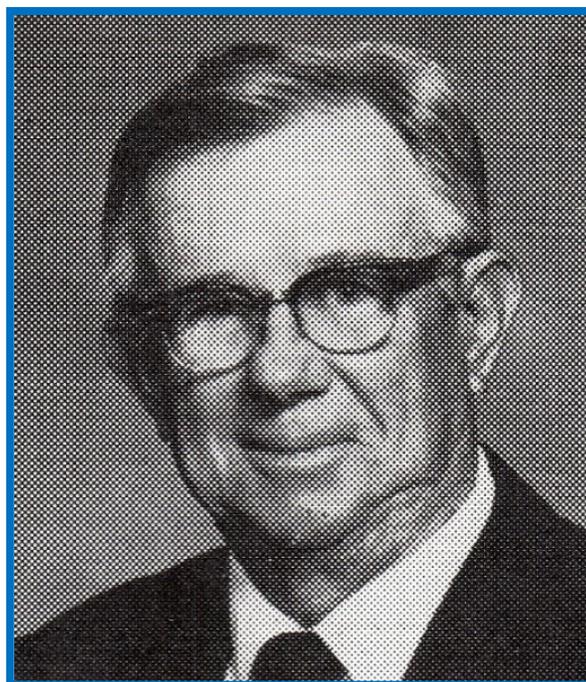
Back row: Benjamin T. Pawelek, Charlie Pawelek, Simon John Pawelek

Front row: Brother Emil Pawelek, Charlie Pawelek, Sr., Florence Pollok,  
Rosalee Pawelek

*Photograph courtesy of:* Gilbert Pawelek, Boerne, Texas

From 1941 through 1989, Brother Emil's working assignments fluctuated among Maryhurst in Kirkwood, Missouri; St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas; Chaminade College Preparatory School in St. Louis, Missouri; and Nolan High School in Fort Worth, Texas. He was a gardener and arborist with a specialty in pecan trees: "Many of the pecan trees planted on the campus of St. Mary's University owe their origin to Brother's tender loving care" (*San Antonio Express-News*, February 20, 2001, page 6B).

After **Brother Emil** suffered a stroke in 1989, he retired to the St. Joseph's Community in the Marianist Residence in San Antonio "... where he continued his characteristic quiet presence among his fellow brothers. Even in his retirement he kept his beloved gardening tools nearby as a witness to his many years of service" (Marianist Archives, February 17, 2001).



Photograph from: *Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Falls City, Texas, Diamond Jubilee Celebration 1902 – 1977*, page 20

On February 17, 2001, **Brother Emil Pawelek**, SM, died in San Antonio, Texas, at the age of 91. His Rosary was held in the Chapel of the Marianist Residence on Monday evening, February 19<sup>th</sup>, and his Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated at 4 PM on Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. **Bishop John W. Yanta** was the principal celebrant and gave the homily recognizing Brother Emil's lifetime of dedicated service. Bishop Yanta's mother, **Mary Magdalene Pollok Yanta**, was a first cousin of **Brother Emil**. **Bishop Yanta** recalled that **Brother Emil** always had a broad smile on his face and was well-liked by his fellow workers. After serving as a Marianist Brother for 68 years, **Brother Emil Pawelek**, SM, was laid to rest in the Marianist Cemetery on the campus of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

## Sources:

Chaminade College Preparatory School yearbook, 1960.

Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Falls City, Texas. LDS Microfilm #0025081.

Marianist Archives Obituary, February 17, 2001.

*San Antonio Express-News* [San Antonio, Texas], February 20, 2001.

Silesian Profiles Committee. *Silesian Profiles II: Polish Immigration to Texas 1850s – 1870s*. Panna Maria, Texas: Father Leopold Moczygemba Foundation and Panna Maria Historical Society, 2004.

The legacy of **Brother Emil John Pawelek** has already been honored by having him memorialized in the Polish Heritage Center by **Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta**. 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 Executive Director **Angelica Docog** at 720-339-6430.

# Calendar of Events

Many of our communities are still examining moving forward with their celebrations;  
many of the listed events ARE PLANNED BUT NOT FINALIZED!

October: Polish Heritage Month

October 9: 71st Anniversary Celebration of  
Immaculate Conception Parish,  
McCook, Texas

**October 10: Turkey Dinner & Homecoming,  
Panna Maria, Texas**

October 10: Homecoming Bazaar,  
St. Stanislaus, Anderson, Texas

October 17: Annual Parish Festival,  
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Cestohowa, Texas

**October 23-24: Grand Opening of the  
Polish Heritage Center in Panna Maria,  
Texas**

November 10: Polish Independence Day

Celebration by the Polish Consulate  
General at the University of St. Thomas,  
Houston, Texas, 6pm

**November 13: PACT ANNUAL MEETING,  
St. Joseph Church, New Waverly, Texas**

December 2: Lecture on St John Paul II at  
University of St Thomas, Houston, Texas,  
7pm (in-person & online)

December 3-5: Texas Festival of Texas Fiddling,  
Blanco, Texas

January , 2022: Polskie Kolędy, St. Stanislaus,  
Chappell Hill, Texas

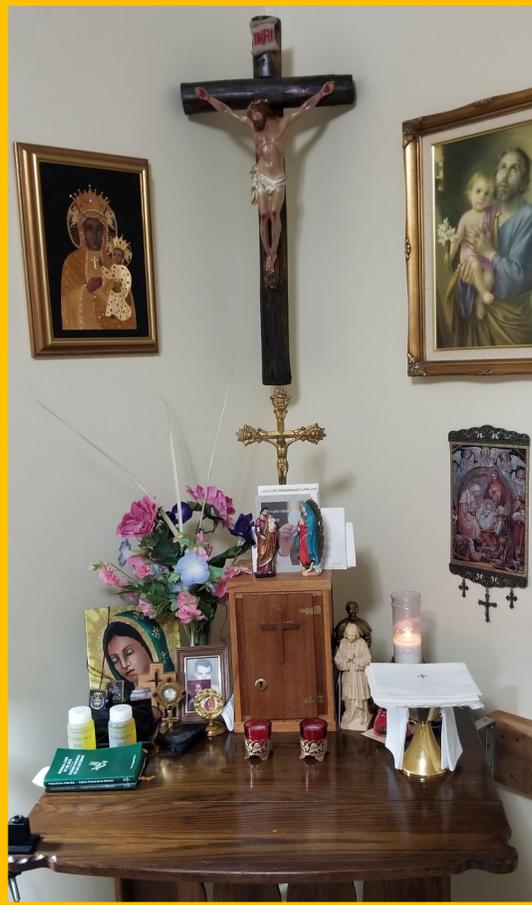
# *Sincere thanks to our supporters from August 22 to September 21, 2021!*

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Boulder, Colorado  
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Bishop John W. Yanta, San Antonio, Texas  
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# BISHOP'S CHAPEL

In my retirement, I often find myself dedicating more time to prayer. This picture is of my chapel in my home. It is a very special place for me, and I spend quite a bit of time here in prayer. Prayer is the greatest power on Earth. Here I offer Mass almost every day, and I pray for the intentions of all those who are not only connected to the Polish Heritage Center, but also for those who have helped make this project a reality. I remember and pray for all of you and your intentions daily.



will see several versions of Mary on the altar. Devotion to Mary is a strong Polish tradition.

Mary's unfaltering faith in her Son is the pattern and model for all of us. She simply believed and followed. She did not "have" to understand the situation to know that God was at work. She humbly accepted the mystery that was presented to her. It is through her *fiat*, her *yes*, that Mary is considered the model Christian. She never doubted God's word to her. And

I draw on solace and strength before the Blessed Sacrament, the relics, and the images before me that remind and reaffirm me of God's providence, guidance, and love. Throughout my life, I have always fostered a deep love and reverence for our Blessed Mother. This is why you

as our heavenly Mother was given to us, no one other than God loves us more.

My chapel occupies a very special place and role in my life. It keeps me centered and grounded in my faith. Here I will continue to pray for all of you, thanks be to God!

God Bless You and Yours, Bishop John W. Yanta,