



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznań Alliance quarterly newsletter – Summer 2016

1,050 Years of Official Christianity Celebrated in Poland

Exactly one thousand and fifty years ago this past April, Mieszko/Mieczyslaw made the hugely—significant decision to accept baptism and marriage with the Bohemian Czech princess Dabrowka. This was accomplished through the intermediary auspices of his bride’s people and avoiding any direct submission to the German emperors. He chose the Western form of



Christianity along with all its civilizing influences, including an alphabet which would be based upon Latin. Mieszko thus took the Latinized form of his name “Miecislaus” at his baptism on April fifteenth, 966 A.D. and importantly

placed his people under the direct protection of the Pope at Rome. The year 966 has thus been celebrated as the baptism of the Polish nation and the official beginnings of recorded history for Polska (Poland) as a legitimately—recognized sovereign and independent country.

While the Poles admirably avoided violence during this conversion, it should be noted that one explanation of why Polish people celebrate Easter Monday with men/boys chasing women/girls with branches or buckets of water in the probably pagan ritual called Smigus—Dyngus is that Mieszko ordered any women who refused to be baptized to be beaten with sticks. Hopefully some readers will recall the ten-year observance of the Millennium of Poland’s Christianity in 1956-1966. It was culminated

locally with the lighting of an Eternal Flame by the Diocese of Toledo’s Bishop George Rehring in front of the International Institute on April 15, 1966 (the 1,000 anniversary of Mieszko’s baptism). One month later thousands of visitors attended that year’s International Festival at the Sports Arena in celebration of the Millennium of Polish Christianity. On April 15th of this year, Toledo’s Polish Sister City of Poznan hosted a joint session of both chambers of the Polish Parliament (the first such meeting of the National Assembly ever held outside the capital) at the conclusion of three days of fanfare marking the anniversary. Nationwide celebrations will continue until November 2016. Polonia semper fidelis! (Poland Always Faithful!)

Submitted by David Gwidon Chelminski, Ph.D. and condensed by the staff of The Alliance News.

Toledo Polonia: A History of Toledo's Poles

Lecture and PowerPoint presented by Jacqueline Koralewski Konwinski, MA, TPA secretary

Polish Americans were Toledo's major ethnic group during the early 20th Century. Discover their Polish origins, immigration routes, settlements and patterns of work and worship. Learn about the customs of Lagrinka and Kuhschwanz, sources of Polish pride and spirit. Traditional Polish desserts will be served.

Thursday, July 14, 2016 from 2:00-4:00 pm

Lifelong Learning at Lourdes University,
6832 Convent Boulevard in Sylvania, \$18 for members of Life Long Learning, \$30 for nonmembers. Call 419-824-3707

A book review by Jackie Konwinski:

The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion

Stanislaw Ludic Jurdabralinski leaves oppressive Russian rule in Lwow, Poland and immigrates to his brother's home in Chicago in 1909. Fannie Flagg tells this on the first page of *The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion*. Flagg, best known for *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*, writes an amusing tale connecting the Jurdabralinski family from Pulaski, Wisconsin with Mrs. Sookie Poole of Texas and Alabama.

Sookie has just finished marrying off the last two of her daughters; she intends to relax, travel and outsmart the blue jays who eat the seed intended for the small birds. Her mother Lenore Simmons Krackenberry makes that impossible. Eighty-eight-year-old Lenore is beloved by all in Point Clear, but Sookie must rescue her from obsessive cable TV shopping, disgruntled letter writing and upholding the Simmons Confederate legacy.

Looking over her mother's voluminous mail in June of 2005, Sookie discovers that she was adopted. Not only is she not a Simmons, she is an illegitimate Polish Catholic person, born Jurdabralinski. Why she doesn't know any Polish people! She takes to her bed for a month to struggle with self-discovery and everything Polish.

During the intervening years, Stan has married Linka Marie, become a citizen, bought a house, raised four daughters and a son and opened a filling stations, the cleanest in the Midwest. Aware of opportunity, the Jurdabralinskis learn to fly. During World War II, the girls operate Wink's Phillips 66 and join the WASPs.

As the two families come together, Flagg writes about the hard work, culture and patriotism of Polish Americans in a humorous and positive book.

Polish calendar of events

You have an event that you want the Polonia to know about? Post your events here:
<http://www.polishtoledo.com/calendar/index.htm>

Polish Culture Center Fundraiser

Efforts are underway to raise money for a Polish Cultural Center in northwest Ohio. "This is a three to five year plan," said Tom Waniewski, who is working with various local Polish organizations to raise the money. "My goal is to raise as much as I can, but in order to do our heritage proud, I believe realistically it will take several million dollars."

The first fundraiser toward that end will be September 23, 2016 at the Premier on Heatherdowns starting at 6 p.m. Please mark your calendars. The night will feature a great dinner and entertainment. More information will follow.

Toledo's Polish communities represented hard-working families with strong religious and business ties. On Lagrange Street alone, two Catholic churches (St. Adalbert and St. Hedwig) mixed with small businesses to create wonderful neighborhoods to raise a family. The goal of the Polish Cultural Center will be to commemorate our families, neighborhoods, businesses, and spirituality for generations to come.

"We've secured a four foot crucifix from St. Hedwig School, and every time I run into someone from the old neighborhoods, they're offering me some of the artifacts from their family businesses," Waniewski said. The center will enshrine many of the memorabilia that identified Polish culture in northwest Ohio. A location has not been selected. Organizers would like to find a place with enough land to host a Polish festival annually. For more information on the Polish Cultural Center, contact Waniewski at 419-754-3633. And you can visit the web site at PolishCulturalCenter.com

Dużo sukcesów tym którzy poświęcają swój czas żeby utworzyć centrum Polskiej kultury. My wszyscy was popieramy i wam pomożemy.

100 Years of Franciscan Presence

1916 - 2016

On December 8, 2015, the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio entered their 100th year of mission and ministry. A year-long celebration began on that date, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the official anniversary of the Sisters coming to the Toledo area.

Responding to a request in 1916 from Bishop Joseph Schrembs, 23 Franciscan Sisters from Rochester, Minnesota, came to Toledo to teach Polish immigrants in city Catholic schools. Under the direction of Sister Mary Adelaide Sandusky, soon to be known as Mother Adelaide, the Sisters were first stationed at St. Hedwig School. In 1917, they purchased 89 acres of land in Sylvania and formally established the Motherhouse of what is now known as the Sisters of St. Francis, Congregation of Our Lady of Lourdes, of Sylvania, Ohio.

In 1918 the Sisters responded to another request from the Bishop, this time in healthcare. Five Sylvania Franciscans went to Gypsum, Ohio, near Sandusky on the shores of Lake Erie to care for victims of the flu pandemic that was sweeping the country. In 1921, the Sisters were asked to manage a hospital in Ashland, Kentucky, beginning their official entry into their healthcare ministry.



Since 1917, the Sisters have taught in 125 schools in 13 states and ministered in 20 hospitals in seven states. Specifically, 129 out of 521 Sylvania Franciscans entered the convent from the Diocese of Toledo and our Sisters have taught in 40 schools in the diocese for a total of 1,188 years.

Throughout the years, the Sylvania Franciscans have adapted their ministries in response to God's call and the values of St. Francis and St. Clare to serve the ever-changing needs of the human family. Committed to reverence and respect, the Sisters of St. Francis are active in issues of peace and justice and care for the environment.

Today, the Sylvania Franciscans have 150 Sisters and minister in 16 Dioceses in eight states, as well as the island of Haiti. In addition, there are 70 Associates who have made a commitment to share in the proclamation of Franciscan values. The Sisters of St. Francis respond to God's call to live the Gospel in joyful servanthood among all people through lives and ministries that reverence human dignity, embrace the poor and marginalized, and respect the gift of all creation.

Placing their individual gifts and talents in service to the needs of God's people, the Sylvania Franciscans today are engaged in such diverse ministries as education, healthcare, social services, religious education, media, law, art, parish and retreat ministries, and spiritual direction.



Sponsored ministries include:

- Lourdes University, our ministry in higher education
- Sylvania Franciscan Ministries, our health and human services ministry, which is made up of:
- Bethany House, a long-term shelter for victims of domestic violence
- Sophia Center, providing counseling services for children, adolescents and adults
- Rosary Care Center, a skilled nursing facility
- Our Lady of Grace, an assisted living facility
- Convent Park apartments for senior citizens

All Good Things, the Sylvania Franciscan Art and Gift Shop, where the Sisters share their gifts and talents, is located on the Motherhouse grounds near Queen of Peace Chapel.



123-year-old landmark church in Toledo's "Polish Village" closed and "de-consecrated"

When the anti-Catholic, anti-Polish policies of Otto von Bismarck, Prime Minister of the German "Kingdom of Prussia" (soon to become Chancellor of a united German Empire), drove Roman Catholic Polish families to flee to the refuge of the United States of America, some in the **Pałuki** region in the northeast quarter of the Province of **Poznań** had already had the city of Toledo in the northwest of the Midwestern state of Ohio "recommended to them" as a destination. Around a hundred pioneer families made the difficult journey, and were welcomed by the Jesuit Fathers (some of whom knew Polish) serving the ethnically-German parishes of St. Mary's and SS. Peter and Paul's in the north and southwestern districts of the city, then known as "Mohr's Town" and "Lenk's Hill," respectively, after prominent businessmen. The Polish pioneers settled previously-undeveloped still-wooded or boggy areas on the fringe of these two settlements which would come to be called "Lagrinka" or "Duketown" (**Kaczkowo** in Polish) and "**Kuhschwantz**" (German for "Cow's Tail"—**Krowi Ogon** in Polish).

Within a few years, the Moravian-born Jesuit missionary Reverend Francis Xavier Schulak advised the local Polish parishioners to form a St. Vincent de Paul benevolent society and organize their own parish. The "Mother Parish" of Toledo Polonia was established in 1874 and named after the thirteenth-century Duchess of Silesia, **Święta Jadwiga** [Saint Hedwig]. Unfortunately, although the parishioners had hoped to locate their church midway between their two settlements, the first church was a combined church-school built at the northeast corner of Dexter and Locust (eventually re-named Warsaw) in Toledo's North End, so that those in the southwest were halfway across town from the church. Thus the first pastor, Reverend Vincent **Lewandowski**, had to travel several miles to visit them.

Within sixteen years after the original church was dedicated on October 22nd, 1876, so many families had moved into the neighborhood that on July 12th, 1891 the cornerstone for a new building was laid about one block away at the northeast corner of Lagrange and Dexter, dedicating the church in honor of Saint Hedwig Queen of Poland and the one hundredth anniversary of the Polish Constitution of May III 1791. Despite the troubled times of the ongoing economic depression of the early 1890s, a magnificent Gothic church was built of Sandusky blue limestone (with a large rectory, school and convent added on the adjoining property within the next few decades). The first Mass and baptisms were celebrated in this newly-completed church building (which could accommodate some sixteen hundred persons) on April 23rd, 1893.

Tragically, after nearly one hundred ten years of service to generations of Catholics in what has semi-officially become known as Toledo's "'International' Polish Village," the Diocese of Toledo under Bishop Leonard Blair merged St. Hedwig's parish with its offshoot, St. Adalbert's (located at the northwest corner of Lagrange and Oakland), and closed the church to oratory status (reserved for funerals or weddings)—the final regular Mass was held on the Feast of the Black Madonna of Poland, Our Lady of **Częstochowa**, on August 26th, 2012--and closed the parochial school, and now on Sunday January 24th, 2016 Bishop Daniel Thomas announced that the 123-year-old building would be formally "de-consecrated" and pastors within the Diocese were given the opportunity to bid on its contents at an auction held on May 6th, 2016.

Please refer to the website provided through the Toledo Polish Genealogical Society for further details:

tpgs02.org/index.php/st.hedwig.parish/condensed by David Cheiminski

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