

GATHERING OF POLONIA AT THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA IN DOYLESTOWN, PA INCLUDES CONFERRAL OF PRIDE OF POLONIA AWARD ON REVEREND KRZYSZTOF WIELICZKO, OSPPE

The National Polish Apostolate Committee and the Most Reverend Archbishop Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and Episcopal Liaison for the pastoral care of Polonia, invite the faithful to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa on Sunday, August 27, 2023, to celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady of Czestochowa. It has been a centuries-old tradition in Poland for hundreds of thousands of Catholics from across Poland to make a pilgrimage to Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, Poland for Our Lady's Feast Day. Most pilgrims travel on foot from different parts of the country, while others travel by bus, train, and car to the miraculous icon of the Black Madonna to request needed graces. Similarly, Polonia in the United States travel to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

In the 45th anniversary year of the election of Karol Cardinal Wojtyła, Archbishop of Krakow, to the See of St. Peter in Rome, it is fitting that the theme for this year is: "Highlight and Promote the Legacy of St. John Paul II." On this occasion, the Polish Apostolate commemorates and highlights the substantial contributions of Saint John Paul II to world history and the universal Church. Saint John Paul II's inspiring words on the dignity of every human person, his teaching of the Gospel, and his contagious enthusiasm gained a3en'on across the globe. His contribution to Poland and the Polish diaspora is enormous. Some have compared Karol Wojtyła's election to the papacy to other crucial events in Polish history such as the Baptism of Poland in 966 or its regaining of independence in 1918.

The Polish Apostolate invites everyone to observe the Polish custom of celebrating the Solemnity of Our Lady of Czestochowa by gathering at the American Czestochowa located at 654 Ferry Road in Doylestown, PA on Sunday, August 27, 2023. An artistic tribute program honoring Saint John Paul II will begin at 11:00 am in the Visitors' Center followed by a concelebrated Mass at 12:30 pm with The Most Reverend Archbishop Thomas Wenski as primary celebrant and homilist. All are warmly invited!

At the conclusion of Mass, the National Polish Apostolate Committee in the United States will confer its distinguished Pride of Polonia Award on Rev. Father Krzysztof Wieliczko, OSPPE. The Pride of Polonia Award is presented annually to recognize individuals who have made an exemplary contribution to the life of the Polish diaspora and community in the United States. Fr. Wieliczko, a member of the Pauline Order, was selected as this year's award recipient in recognition of his outstanding efforts to

promote and make known the spiritual and cultural legacy of St. John Paul II across the world. Fr. Wieliczko studied at the Pontifical University in Krakow and was ordained in 1987. After ordination, he was directed to pastoral work among Polonia in the United States and served as pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish in New York and St. Luke's parish in Vernon, CT. Fr. Wieliczko was instrumental in ensuring the dedication of an altar to Our Lady of Czestochowa at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. In 2003, he earned a doctoral degree from the Catholic University of Lublin. From 2002-2008, Fr. Wieliczko served as the Provincial of the Pauline Fathers in the United States and the Prior of the Monastery at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown after which he served as pastor of St. Joseph Church in Rockville, CT. The last twelve years of his ministry, he has worked as the administrator of the John Paul II Foundation in Rome. The Polish Apostolate recognizes and applauds Fr. Wieliczko's global leadership in propagating the rich history and legacy of St. Pope John Paul II throughout Europe, the United States, and around the world.

The pilgrimage of Polonia to Our Lady of Czestochowa Shrine on her feast is organized every year by the Polish Apostolate Committee. The Polish Apostolate is affiliated with the Bishops Committee on Migration of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and is dedicated to serving Catholics of Polish origin. Reverend Dariusz Gościński, pastor of Holy Cross Church in New Britain, Connecticut, serves as chairman of the Polish Apostolate.