



# Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

Bishop John Yanta's vision continues to guide the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria. So often during the past several weeks, I've reflected on his vision and was gratified to realize that he would be smiling down on our efforts. Bishop wanted to honor our hard-working immigrant ancestors who thrived because of their underlying principles of Faith, Family and Community. Five years ago, he wrote: "The Center will help us all grow in faith which we have inherited. How easy we have it in our lives compared to the many hardships that our ancestors endured. Please pray for the success of our Polish Heritage Center daily. +John W. Yanta."

We are thankful to Bishop Yanta and our donors for their support, allowing us to make his vision a reality. He wanted the Polish Heritage Center to be a welcoming environment for all visitors, telling the story to all generations, to be a place of pilgrimage, a resource for researchers, educators and the public. Alice Poore, our Executive Director, will detail PHC goals for this year in this newsletter, and will follow up in a couple of months with an article on accomplishments of the Center during the past year which shows how Bishop Yanta's wishes are being fulfilled.

As mentioned, the Center is involved in education, research, celebrations and interactive exhibits which involve and entertain visitors and students of every age. Board, docent and staff support of student tours contributes to the success of their field trips.

Visitor numbers are increasing, and our virtual programs are available on our website. Family reunions, meetings and celebrations are regularly scheduled in the Bishop John W. Yanta Room and have been wildly successful. But we can always do better, so please provide your feedback on how we can improve our Center.

The second annual White and Red Gala will be covered in the next newsletter, as will the weeklong visit by AllDete, our Polish entertainers, who enjoyed our unique South Texas Polish hospitality.

On a final note, we are so proud of board member and PACT president Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz who was a finalist for appointment as the United States Ambassador to Poland. He was supported by many organizations and would have made a great Ambassador since he works with the Polish Diaspora in the US and is involved in many cultural and economic development exchanges of students and business leaders in the US and Poland. *Dumny y ciebie, Dr. Jim.*



Jubilee Pilgrimage Group from St. Matthew's, San Antonio

# Building on Bishop's Vision

By: Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

When I look back on 2024, I can't help but feel Bishop Yanta's guiding hand in all that we have achieved in 12 months. We had a record-breaking year in attendance, special events, marketing, cultural events, exhibits and rentals.

The PHC Board of Directors, staff and I are extremely proud of our accomplishments and want to thank all our generous donors for their continuous support in helping to drive the Center in the right direction. With all that said, there are new levels of success we want to achieve, so we are setting additional goals to achieve the desired outcomes. Here are a few:

I have written many times about the PHC's Educational Outreach program and our new goals in this area are to recruit five additional school districts, add three new summer ACE programs to our agenda, and extend invitations to area Catholic schools, along with local Homeschool programs.

We are always seeking new special events for the PHC. After the beautiful celebration for the opening of the Jubilee Year on December 29th, we want to extend an invitation to all Catholic churches to let us help plan a pilgrimage to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Panna Maria, which is one of the designated pilgrimage sites for 2025. This excursion would include Mass, a tour of the Polish Heritage Center, and lunch. The Panna Maria Historical Society has teamed up with the Center and will provide tours of the church, museum and a shopping adventure.

Our marketing goals are expanding in several different areas. We will continue advertising with our local newspapers, which have now expanded to seven counties, and Rockport. The PHC will maintain our billboard ad in Floresville, the highway signs on 123 and the Certified Information Guide travel brochure in hotels in San Antonio and Corpus. We are now promoting more television opportunities. Our latest was a feature segment on the "Day Tripper" travel program, along with a beautiful commercial advertising the Jubilee Celebration created by Catholic Television of San Antonio.

CTSA will also run a commercial for the PHC in May and June. We have begun to seek out school sponsorship ads in which the Polish Heritage Center's name and information will be featured on the school's banners, programs, t-shirts and website. Our plans are to begin advertising in Catholic church bulletins. We are now featured in a monthly ad in the Hill Country Catholic Magazine, which reaches 36,000 families, and the PHC is again the featured photograph on the front of the Karnes County National Bank 2025 calendar.

In the area of cultural events, we will begin Polish cooking classes in May. Our plans are to hold a cooking class once a month, on Saturday. The classes will be open to all ages, but we especially want to pass on these delicious culinary traditions to our children. My hope is that local grandmothers will join us in helping with these fun cooking lessons. Please call the PHC if you are interested in sharing your culinary talents with us!

Plans also include expanding our exhibition goals to one that will touch all our hearts. Our next exhibit will feature the life and achievements of our beloved Bishop John W. Yanta, the visionary and motivator behind so many programs and accomplishments. The PHC has recruited Steve Harding and Clay McClure, renowned exhibit designers, and Will Fuller, design constructor, along with our own archivist Lauren Robinson to spearhead and assist with this exhibit. The exhibit is scheduled to open along with a celebration of Bishop's life in August.

Bishop Yanta aspired to fill the Polish Heritage Center with guests who would celebrate family milestones along with their Polish culture and traditions but also welcome all those visitors that expressed interest in the immigration of the early Polish ancestors. Our last goal is to provide rental opportunities to guests that plan to celebrate any special occasion and enjoy the beautiful exhibits within the gallery. The PHC has hosted birthday parties, rehearsal dinners, anniversaries, funeral luncheons, Christmas parties, business meetings, monthly organization meetings, and even a Quinceanera celebration. Let us plan your celebrations at the Polish Heritage Center, a beautiful national treasure.

We have set the bar higher this year! With the help of our donors, the Board, our docents and a wonderful staff, there is no doubt we will fulfill each of these goals.

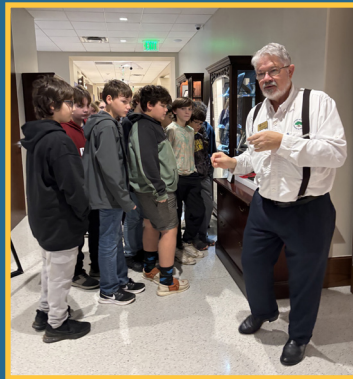


Jubilee Pilgrimage Group from St. Matthew's, San Antonio

# Kowalik Birthday and Janysek 40th Anniversary Celebrations



# Students from Stockdale, Runge, Poth and Karnes City at the PHC





**THE  
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER  
AT PANNA MARIA**

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PHC Hours: Wed. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
[www.polishheritagecentertx.org](http://www.polishheritagecentertx.org)  
(830) 310-8612

The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

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**News from the Heritage Communities**

With the annual Lumen Gentium awards, the Archdiocese of San Antonio honors Catholic laity who demonstrate their participation in Christ's mission to bring the Lord's light to all and who are the "beacons of hope" in their home parishes.

Congratulations to the 2025 Lumen Gentium awardees from our Heritage and surrounding communities.

Annunciation of the BVM, St. Hedwig

Denise Cellmer

Holy Trinity, Falls City

Gene and Linda Gawlik

Immaculate Conception of the BVM, Panna Maria

Margaret Moczygamba

Nativity of the BVM, Cestohowa

Wayne and Deborah Tiemann

St. Ann, Kosciusko

JoAnn and Kenneth Wiatrek

St. Anthony, Runge

Zachary Yanta

St. Boniface, Hobson

Henry Opiela

St. Elizabeth, Fashing

Roger and Lori Lyssy

St. Mary, Stockdale

Evelyn and Claude Drzymala

St. Stanislaus, Bandera

Ernie Dewinne