

A Review, and Appreciation

A Blessing To One Another... Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People

By: *Andrew (Poznański) Ettinger*

This is an extraordinary exhibit, currently on view at the Skirball Cultural Center. It is, indeed, a blessing... and a memorable experience, especially for Poles, or anyone who believes in God (or needs to...). Virtually no one in today's civilized world could be unaware of Pope John Paul II's enormous contributions to the healing and repairs of hatred and misunderstanding between peoples and religions.

Although the exhibit's focus is primarily on the Pope's handling of the deep and painful rifts between Catholics and Jews over the past two centuries, there is an ecumenical message of hope and healing here for people of every faith and philosophy.

As a Pole who is still searching for his ancestral roots in Poland, I saw this exhibit on several levels. First, as the marvelous life story of Karol Wojtyła, the boy who lived a momentous and full life – surviving World War II – and went on to become one of humanity's greatest heroes. Second, as a beautifully designed visual experience that captures one's heart, mind and soul. Third, as a spiritual experience that continues to resonate in one's memory and imagination.

This is not just another collection of pictures, documents, and artifacts ... but a totally involving interactive and multimedia experience. One cannot leave the exhibit without a renewed sense or responsibility to our family, our neighbors and our world. The Pope's conciliatory message to all of humanity rings clearly. Be Good. Be True. Love Thy Neighbor.

I spent two hours at the exhibit and plan to return again, with my children and grandchildren. I am telling my friends too, that they must not miss this opportunity to realize how one Polish man was to bring much-needed change to the world.

The exhibit continues until January 4, 2009. For more detailed information, call (310) 440-4500.

The totality of this exhibit is difficult to describe in a brief report. The content is wonderfully uplifting and relevant for all. The expertise in constructing the exhibit is outstanding... a model of artistry, communication, and outreach. You will be pulled into it and the loving power of Pope John Paul II's eternal message. You will feel like a participant in his mission.

Basically, the exhibit is in four sections. Part One is entitled 1920 - 1938: Wadowice. Here we learn about Karol Wojtyła's early years as a child and his experience in a Catholic and Jewish neighborhood. We also meet his boyhood friend, Jerzy Kluger, a Jew who would become a lifelong friend. It is here in Wadowice that Karol began to understand and appreciate the differences and similarities among peoples of contrasting faiths and attitudes.

Part Two is 1939 - 1945: Occupied Poland. We now follow Karol's path to Krakow and the dark years of WWII under the Nazi regime. The future pope maintained his university studies underground while performing hard labor in a factory by day. We see the horrific reminders of the holocaust and Auschwitz, and the continuing battle to survive Nazi brutality.

Part Three is 1946 - 1977: The Ministry. This is the story of Karol's rise from priest to bishop to cardinal of the Catholic Church ... and his participation in the Second Vatican Council. As Bishop of Krakow he established close relationships with the Jewish community and began some of his most important writings.

The Polish Club of Laguna Woods

Concert features music of Paderewski

As a part of Polish American Heritage Month, on Sunday, October 12, 2008 at 2:20 p.m. in the Clubhouse Three Auditorium, Laguna Woods Village, 25002 Moulton Parkway, Laguna Woods, CA 92637, the Polish Club of Laguna Woods will present a concert of Polish music dedicated to "The Life and Music of Ignacy Jan Paderewski", (1860- 1941) Poland's pianist, composer, politician and champion of all who cherish freedom.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski was greatly acclaimed as a virtuoso musician when he emigrated to the USA. He settled in Paso Robles, California, where he owned a successful vineyard. He received an honorary doctorate from USC. When Paderewski died in 1941, during WWII, it was President Franklin D. Roosevelt that gave him a funeral with full military honors and offered him a resting place in Washington Arlington Cemetery until his remains could be returned to a "Free" Poland.

Pianist Dr. Lorenzo Sanchez, and Violinist Dr. Nancy Roth, will perform the concert of Paderewski's compositions.

Sanchez's interest in the life and compositions of Paderewski led him to regular appearances as a performer and lecturer at the annual Paderewski Festival in Paso Robles. Sanchez is a music professor and directs the adult choir at St. Jerome's Church, Los Angeles.

The program will include Paderewski compositions Mazurkas, Legend, 3 piece from Sonata Op. 13 pour violin et piano, Caprice- Valse Op. 10 # 5, Nacturne and Manuet in G Op.14 #1.

A Short Film will be shown, the Life and Homecoming of Ignacy Jan Paderewski with a ceremony of President George H. Bush bringing back to "Free" Poland the earthly remains of Poland's great pianist, composer, politician and champion of all who cherish freedom.

Master of ceremonies of the event will be Dr. Zbigniew Petryka.

Tickets: Mail \$10 check, made out to PC - LW, to 811-Q Ronda Mendoza, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. Door will open at 2:00 p.m. Your tickets will be waiting for you at the door.

For more information call Irena at (949) 206-9122. □

Part Four is 1978 - 2005: The Pontificate. The final section celebrates his papacy as the first Polish Pope, and an exciting, new world leader, traveling to more countries than any other leader, and attracting the largest audiences in history. Visitors are encouraged to write a prayer and place it in a replica of Jerusalem's Western Wall--a very moving experience. One also is able to place one's hand upon a bronze cast of the Pope's right hand. A moment to cherish. We also see, again, photographs of the elderly Pope with his boyhood pal, Jerzy Kluger... another testament to friendship and loyalty between two men.

On the 50th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Pope John Paul II stated: "As Christians and Jews, following the example of the faith of Abraham, we are called to a blessing to the world. This is the common task awaiting us. It is therefore necessary for us, Christians and Jews, to first be a blessing to one another."

Go, then, and be blessed...and a blessing. □

Poland's Tusk Calls for New Debate over Baltic Pipeline

The Baltic pipeline is a joint Russian-German project to supply Europe with energy

A website called *DW-World.de* (deutschewelle) – Your link to Germany printed an article on September 6 about Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk calling on Germany to rethink the Baltic Sea pipeline project with Russia in light of the ongoing crisis over Russia's military presence in Georgia, German media reported.

Referring to a plan by a Russian-German consortium to build a 1,200-kilometer (750-mile) pipeline to supply the Europe Union with natural gas from Russia energy giant Gazprom, Tusk said Europe should not increase its dependence on Russia with this project.

In an interview published Saturday, Sept. 6, in a German newspaper, Tusk said every responsible politician in Europe had to reconsider whether such a situation is still sensible after Russia occupied uncontested parts of Georgia after intervening to prevent Georgia's reassertion of its authority over breakaway region South Ossetia.

"We should have already set an example by developing alternative supply sources. Then the Russians couldn't exert any influence on us," Tusk said.

Appeal for common energy policy

A common approach by the EU on energy security was "absolutely necessary," he said, adding that there should not be any unilateral moves by individual member states.

"The Europeans should ask themselves how they can make themselves at least partially independent from the dictates of Russia gas and oil."

In light of the Georgia crisis, Tusk said the West's relationship with Ukraine should be strengthened: "We have to support Ukraine on its path toward NATO and the EU."

He further mentioned that EU partnership prospects for the Ukraine should be made more concrete at the EU-Ukraine summit this coming Tuesday.

While denying that this meant speeding up Ukraine's timetable, Tusk emphasized clarifying the country's position vis a vis the EU.

"The eastern partnership program decided at the EU summit before last should be implemented quickly, including the provision of financial resources," he said. □

Poland's Prime Minister ready to testify on CIA secret prisons

An article in the Eurasian Secret Services Daily Review states that Polish Radio reported that Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced that he was ready to testify on alleged CIA prisons in Poland. "If there is a need, if my testimony will be in any way important, then certainly yes," Donald Tusk told journalists when asked whether he planned to testify.

Last month, the State Prosecutor's Office in Warsaw started an investigation into whether the Polish government agreed to establish the alleged secret CIA prisons in Poland.

According to a private Polish radio station, Radio ZET, a report confirming the existence of the CIA prisons in Poland, written by Roman Giertych, then head of a committee looking into the activities of Poland's secret services, was shown to top ministers in the previous government led by the Law and Justice party, such as the then justice minister

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The beauty within seconds

For the past few weeks, just before a new school year started, both state-operated and privately owned national TV stations presented their new programme format, including hit programs, reality shows, etc. in order to make millions of Polish zlotys out of advertising. Television is all about timing, and so advertising time is of utmost importance to all TV channels.

The length of advertising time in Poland is differentiated between state-operated stations and privately owned stations. The state-operated stations' advertising time is shorter thanks to legal regulations that prohibit advertising goods as long as a certain program lasts, and a notion that state-operated TV should not be commercially oriented but should play an important role for society. That in practice means that a two-hour-long Hollywood movie cannot be cut into four parts that will be filled up with advertisements. This of course is not to be abided by private TV stations that can schedule their broadcasting time as they wish as long as they can adhere to laws related to such issues as alcohol, cigarettes, violence, and sexual content.

Naturally, advertisements are designed to catch potential customers' eyes. They are bound to encourage the audience to go buy a hairdryer or a cooker. Motion pictures are being transformed into pieces of art that are being used for commercial purposes. They are deliberately shocking, awful or funny. Some of them look like short movies, with actors, a captivating story behind them and a punch line, which may traditionally be described as "Go buy our product because it's simply the best you can find on the market."

Recently, a new wave of advertising policy has been created in Poland. Modern Polish commercials are usually satires. This trend has been widely developed thanks to the incredible success of "Mumio" Cabaret's masterpieces. Its work was included in a promotional campaign of a mobile phone network provider called Plus GSM a few years ago. In its short ads, for instance, a salesman was comically trying to convince a customer to try a new product. He used absurd and pure fun to agitate his interlocutor, e.g. he persuaded his customer into relaxing his facial muscles by saying "Van Gogh" or "Do Babuni" and at the same time stretching or massaging his mouth. Such activities were intended to help the customer get used to proper use of a new product. The campaign was a big success with lots of people actually having fun doing what a salesman tried to persuade them into. It was a total blast!

Nowadays, thanks to a rapid development of banks in Poland, with foreign capital included, there are plenty of financial establishments that want to get in contact with potential clients. The easiest way to do this is to create a commercial that would be broadcast in the prime time. Initially, several banks invited Polish celebrities to play a part in their advertisement. It proved to be a good choice. However, only when a new TV commercial of ING Bank aired a few weeks ago, there had been so much fuss around it.

Personally, I love the commercial. Why? It's quite simple. First, you ask Marek Konrad, one of the best Polish actors ever, to play a character in your

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