

## The Komancza Challenge !

The past century will be remembered as one of the most cruel and inhuman in all of mankind's history. Two devastating World Wars, Two nightmarish Utopias of National Socialism and Communism have spread horror and planned genocide across the globe, aspiring to a new society without God. Many suffered and perished from one or the other. Poland betrayed, sold and abandoned by its Allies fell victim to both, paying a price unmatched anywhere. Once the war ended other nations enjoyed freedom, prosperity and economic development. Poland had to continue to fight, every single day, for the next 50 years to come, to preserve basic human dignity, human rights and their Catholic Faith.

But God did not abandon his people. In those trying times, he gave us true giants of Faith, that reshaped our world and our lives. Saint Faustina Kowalska, Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe or Servant of God John Paul the Great, instantly come to mind. But those of us who were fortunate enough to have lived far away from the aftermath of World War II, safe to enjoy their freedom and free to shape our own destiny and that of their country, may never have heard of an unsung hero, that reshaped their own world in ways difficult to grasp. We can only wonder what this world would be like if John Paul the Great would not have become Pope and Polish "Solidarity" would not have ended the cold war by expiring Communism. It was not our military might that ended that horrible chapter in human history, but the invincible Faith and Spirit of the Polish people.

That Faith and Spirit was saved and preserved by one single man, Servant of God, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński the Primate of Poland, or the Primate of the Millennium, the uncrowned King of Poland as they called him, without whom, all would have been lost. John Paul the Great in tribute to the Cardinal has said: "[...] This Polish Pope would not be on the See of Peter, if it were not for Your Faith, not stopping short of prison and suffering, Your heroic Hope, Your complete Trust without reservations in the Mother of the Church [...]. Indeed, it is rare, that so many owe so much to one Man. It is him, who led the Polish Nation across the "Red Sea" saving the Church and the Country.

Enemies of Poland were and are well aware, that Poland cannot be destroyed, unless they destroy the Catholic Faith. This was the goal in the Communist days and remained so, ever since.

In a pivotal moment in history, when the Stalinist regime, imposed on Poland by signatures of President Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta, set out to destroy the Church in Poland, by passing a Law, that would have given Communists control of Church nominations, the Primate of Poland confronted them with a stern "Non Possumus!" – We Cannot! "We will not sacrifice what is divine on the altars of Caesar!" he said. By choosing prison he preserved the independence of the Church and paved the way for Poland to be the only Communist country, where religion, with some difficulty, could nevertheless be practiced universally, something that later on, proved crucial to the fall of Communism and the emergence of John Paul the Great.

Visiting us is Sister Bogumiła Zamora (CSFN) from the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth from Komancza - Poland. Her six weeks long mission will take her to Polonia of **New York & New Jersey, Phoenix, Los Angeles Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, Chicago and Toronto – Canada.** She is with us, to give witness and to bring closer to our hearts and minds the person and teaching of a great Polish Hero, the Servant of God Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński and his Great Spiritual Heritage. Sister Bogumiła is the author of several books, including books on the "Primate of the Millennium. Her visit is in preparation of his imminent beatification which is expected by many to be announced next year, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Death. Sister Bogumiła greatly regrets that her English is insufficient to be able to share her Komancza experience with English only speaking members of the parish. She assures you though, to keep you in her and her fellow Sister's prayers.

### A few words about Komancza:

In 1955, the communist authorities brought to the Cloister of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Komancza, without notification, the ill Primate. Exhausted by perilous conditions of the previous three places of imprisonment (he was sick with tuberculosis) he was, as the Communists were convinced, to end his days there. By the Grace of God and the loving care of the Sisters from Komancza, the Primate recuperated. There he designed, what was to become the program of great moral renewal in preparation of Poland's celebration of its Millennium of Christening. The corner stones of that program were the text of the Jasna Góra Vows of the Polish Nation, The Great Novena of the Millennium, the Jasna Góra Roll Call and the peregrination of the copy of the painting of the Queen of Jasna Góra, whose image crossed villages and towns across the

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## Warsaw by Trotting - part 2

By: *Justyna Ball*

<http://justyna-polishdelight.blogspot.com>

In one of her editorials, Agata Passent, the daughter of the famous late song writer, Agnieszka Osiecka and publicist, Daniel Passent, remembered how while in high school in Boston (at the time her father taught at Harvard), a classmate aware of her Polish origins asked if they used forks and knives where she comes from. That made her rethink her views on other (superior?) cultures.

I'd say, not only do they use sticks, but they don't bother with glasses and drink straight from the bottle... And that's probably why they are such a tourist attraction. They, the civilized ones, all strive to meet this nation, this exotic relic of the past. As I looked around the coffeehouse, with such regret, I saw no one stirring their coffee with their index fingers nor was anyone finger picking his greens at lunch or rolling his noodles around with his thumb.

But seriously, Poles are not unique in their etiquette. They are just like everybody else... they eat their sharlotka with silverware and coffee grounds stay in the espresso machine rather than on the bottom of their glass, and teas come in quite a variety (compared to what was available in communist days, now prehistoric times - oolong and madras.)

These days, hot drinks are always served in a porcelain cup accompanied by a biscuit. The service is exceptional! Prices vary.

Normalization is the key word, and everything seems to work fine. Since my last visit, the national mood was somehow lifted, and as much as some still want to complain about something, they seem to be running out of strong arguments.

My mom, who used to collect unnecessary stuff (empty jars, plastic containers, aluminum foil) all for the upcoming "czarna godzina" (black hour) in case she may need it, she realized that the unspecified in time event, may actually never come or if it will, she may be too old to care.

On one of my first trips home, my uncle pointed out after I emptied a box of Kelloggs' Frosted Flakes cereal, "Throw it away or your mom will save it." Finally, she understood that those things are replaceable and there is plenty more where they came from - no need to collect for "zle czasy" (bad times.)

Traffic scares them. It just so happened that we got stuck for a couple of hours in downtown Warsaw, but it did snow terribly that day. It was rush hour, our car's windshield washer sprinkler wasn't working, and from what I could comprehend, the transmission was loose.

As more people drive new cars and as more families own more than one, traffic must be an annoyance, but that is something to be expected. More Poles travel abroad and observe how others drive, but on the other hand, more and more foreigners bring their driving skills and manners in with them, so the change on the roads is noticeable. Local maniacs must have their screws tightened up as well.

Days before our departure for Poland, my cousin disappeared from the internet and later excused herself by saying that she was so preoccupied with reading this book, "Zmierzch" ("Twilight") that she was not able to put it down.

You know that story about vampires that our homegrown teenagers read and watch? It's that contagious!

Besides watching "Hannah Montana," Poles are up to date on US politics too. It would be difficult not to notice a statement such as The Economist's "Poland strong economy: horsepower to horsepower." ([http://www.economist.com/world/Europe/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=15394158](http://www.economist.com/world/Europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15394158)) Jan 28th 2010. And side by side

**"The power of history - New thinking and old wounds around the Auschwitz death camp."**

Of course, the editors can't run an article that is positive about Poland from beginning to end - they had to ruin it by including old stereotypes even though its subtitle claimed: "Time to rethink old notions about Poland." Attached was a photo of a horse drawn carriage... C'mon, seriously?

But as they pointed out, Poland is now the 6<sup>th</sup> economy in Europe and Germany's new foreign minister picked Warsaw for his first foreign visit ... gut very gut!

The Deutsche Bahn (German rail road) is planning to enter the Polish rail system and compete with the Polish PKP for customers, which I think is a great idea, for the convenience and comfort of Polish passengers. However, at the same time, the Polish organization of United Ex-Political Prisoners want compensation since the Deutsche Bahn profited from transports of thousands of prisoners during WWII.

The organization does not seek large

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## Calendar of Events

**Feb. 19 – Mar 19, Witold Vito Wójcik oil on canvas exhibition**, Opening reception February 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Vienna Woods, 351 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036, Information: 323-954-9595.

**Feb. 21, Sun 1:30 p.m. Polish American Congress monthly meeting** Our Lady of the Bright Mount Parish, 3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles - Rectory's Pokój Warszawski room. Entry - door by the Grotto, Info: 323-240-8525 or 626-577-9797.

**Feb 26 - 28, Polish Ski Trip, Mammoth Mountain**, Departure from 3400 W. Adams Blvd. on Feb. 26, 4:45 p.m., return Feb. 28. Information at: 310-331-6492 (day), 310-670-3152 (evening).

**Feb 27, Sat, 7:00 p.m. - Concert celebrating 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fryderyk Chopin's birthday** - Zipper Hall, Colburn School Conservatory of Music. 200 S. Grand Ave. - Los Angeles. Organized by the Paderewski Music Society and the Culture Club of Helena Modrzejewska. Tickets and info: at 818-456-7742. **PLEASE SEE PAGE 4**

**Feb 28, Sun., POLONIADA, Competition for an essay or album about selected Pole and his contribution to the culture of the country you live in.** Info: [fmp7@poczta.onet.pl](mailto:fmp7@poczta.onet.pl)

**Mar 27, Sat., 11:30 a.m. Easter Celebration & 10<sup>th</sup> Club Anniversary** Clubhouse Five, The Polish Club of Laguna Woods, Information: Irena 949-206-9122.

**Mar 31, Wed., "Life of Polonia in the camera" photographs of Polonia competition organized by Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, First Prize 3,000 zł., Deadline for submission of photographs – March 31, 2010.** Information: 310-442-8500 ext.109.

**Apr 22 – May2, - The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Polish Film Festival in Los Angeles.**

*Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: [zbyskoopet@aol.com](mailto:zbyskoopet@aol.com) ★*

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