

Pol-Am Easter from 1

A delegation of twelve burly male parishioners and an equal number of ladies marched over to the rectory, baskets in hand. A somewhat surprised Father Nowak explained he had orders from the Archdiocese to discontinue the food-blessing custom. "If you won't bless our święconkas, then we'll go to the Polish National Church down the street. In fact, we may take all business there altogether!" one of the feisty parishioners said in bluff.

The priest was dumbfounded, just stared and finally left the room to make a phone call. When he returned, he said: "I can bless your baskets right here and now." As he sprinkled the baskets, he uttered a shortcut prayer "Lord, bless these food baskets in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (The term "Holy Spirit" had not yet become universal even amongst Vatican II enthusiasts.)

The following year, the food-blessing was re-introduced as the in-church practice it had always been. It took a few more years of pleading and pressure for the Lord's Tomb to be restored. Quite a few years had to pass, however, before many churchmen fully realized that different people approach religion in different ways. To be relevant, it must speak to the intellectual as well as the factory worker, to the teenager and the old grandmother, and to the fully Anglo-Saxonized American as well as the one who feels his ancestral heritage helps bring him closer to God. □

Justyna Ball from 2

went to church, part to the synagogue and part to the minaret." Back then, it was rather typical.

"For most of its history, Poland was inhabited by a very mixed population – a multitude of cultures and religions." (Charles Bronson was a son of Polish Tatars. How about that?)

How much will HRH remember from such a visit? You may be surprised... As ex-first lady Jolanta Kwasniewska recalls, while visiting him off duty in his estate Highgrove, he actually remembered that while in Krakow, a popular Polish musician, Grzegorz Turnau played piano. And he also recalled that it was a terrible concert. Did he remember it because the prince has such a great memory or was it because the piano, (as the ex- first lady pointed out) was totally out of tune?

Bogdanowicz's ancestors and such arrived in Poland in the XIV century, hired by the Polish Grand Duke as skilled warriors. They played quite an impressive role in Poland's history, a small group, but at least they know exactly what their background is...

Joel Stein, in his "Awesome Column" when he wrote "Where did I come from? I now know my roots are in Russia. Or Poland" (TIME, March 1st, 2010) wasn't so sure... And I don't mean to sound sarcastic - I actually feel sorry for the guy. Maybe you don't care about your own background, you may be estranged from your family, or have an ugly past, but c'mon, do it for your children, in case they don't turn out (ignorant) like you. Aren't you somehow obligated to carry on some bit of information to the next generation? One day your grandchildren may want to sit down and try to glue all the pieces together only to discover that there is nothing to work with. Stein is uninformed, but Stein's children don't have to be. In the age of MySpace, Facebook and smart-phones, you can stay in touch with your friends and family living on different continents even if they are long lost and newly found. At this moment of time not knowing a couple branches of your family tree seems so... backward.

Because of Stein's family's lack of interest in genealogy reaches a few

decades back, Joel came to the wrong conclusion, but maybe that's what the editors of TIME like.

He allowed an actress Lisa Kudrow and Ancestry.com to do the research for him. "They made me do it," seems like the scream of a nervous man who fears that they may find something totally unexpected. But there was nothing embarrassing in his family past that he should feel ashamed of. Still, after reading that his great-grandmother, while filling out the 1930 census, when asked about in which country she grew up, crossed out "Poland" and wrote in "Austria." He suggested that she wasn't quite bright (as Joel, pointed out those countries do not even lie close to each other) And that notion led him to the conclusion that "he comes from stupid people." I know, I know, but see, Joel, as he said so himself, comes from stupid people...

I bet that there must be someone in the entire Stein family, who may not necessarily be fascinated by genealogy, but possesses some basic knowledge, to explain Poland's history to Joel or simply Google "Poland's timeline" to see that not only did the borders move back and forth, but entire countries butchered Poland and had it disappear for over a century. I refer to the year 1795, when the final partition of Poland by Russia, Prussia, and yes, Austria took place. But I guess Stein did not get that far in his quest.

Seems that it isn't that his great grandma who wasn't too bright, but rather that it is actually Mr. Stein that can't be counted amongst the brightest of columnists America produced. Maybe at school he did fair in geography class (for American standards, at least), but history was not his strong subject. I'm not saying that all the Time's columnists are dumb, just this one.

British "The Economist" this week has not one but two positive articles about Poland's economy ("What went right" and "Fingered by Fate"). Summing up the last world crisis, and surprisingly a good outcome in Central Europe that the Western countries could take an example from. They seemed to be taking the crisis better. "Poland's economy, the largest in the region, was so untroubled by the catastrophe that its GDP grew in 2009 helping all its trade partners." What makes them motivated is probably still the drive to catch up with the rest of Europe. The road is tough and long, but they seem to be going in the right direction.

This may inspire some people to start researching for opportunities at times when the economy isn't doing great or simply because they may suddenly become interested in traveling around Europe or go back to see what's left of the village or shtetl from where their ancestors came. It may become "cool" to be Polish for a change... Other benefits? When your college tuition hits the newest high, a Polish passport may be the ticket to a much less expensive, but still quite good education in Poland or any other EU member nation.

Travels educate, and our great-grandparents certainly did not expect to have some of their great-grandchildren a century later acting like total idiots and calling THEM stupid.

And why not? It's a free country for all □

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Polonia at its Best from 3

invitation of Rev. Eugeniusz Bolda S.Chr. and Sisters Weronika Inicka and Franciszka Keler in Phoenix. Rev. Marek Ciesielski S.Chr. of the Los Angeles Parish of Our Lady of the Bright Mount, who despite his own absence at the parish at that time, relegated the host honors to Sister Kinga Hoffmann MChR, who together with Ms. Natalia Kamińska (who contributed in many ways) and Sister Anna Kalinowska MChR, offered her their loving and generous care, throughout her entire stay. Equally in Toronto - Scarborough parish of Our Lady Queen of Poland, Rev. Stanislaw Rakiej S.Chr. went out of his way to provide and secure her accommodation and welcome.

A banquet attended by several Polish organizations and a Polish consul in Toronto was organized by Mr. Janusz Stypka, as a fund raiser for the much needed restoration of the Cloister in Komancza (where Cardinal Wyszyński was imprisoned by the Communists) and the planned Multimedia Center meant to serve as a Museum, but above all, - a tool to teach some 30,000 young people visiting there each year, the legacy of one of the greatest Poles in our History, - to love our Country and the Church, to defend it from attempts to secularize it and void it of patriotism. The challenges these days are even more demanding and difficult, for the enemy is more sophisticated and less obvious. The program of moral renewal devised by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński and phrased in the Jasna Góra Vows, constitutes the essence of saving Poland, pivotal to its survival and thus Komancza, which proved a Spiritual Abode, where over 3000 pages of text were written and program of Monumental proportions and consequences came to being, that culminated on August 26, 1956 at Częstochowa, where some 1,5 million people repeated on top of their voices in the Communist occupied Poland, to the Mother of God, the Queen of Poland: „We vow.” „...to do all in our power, that Poland may be the real Kingdom of Yours and of Your Son, entirely subject to Your reign in our private, family, national and social life ...

Many people of good will and generous hearts were involved in this project. Too numerous to list them all, however since News of Polonia mostly reaches readers in California, a few more names ought to be mentioned. If it were not for Mr. Marty Cepielik, the publisher of this publication, whose referral to kind and generous people, that were willing to support and coordinate Sister's mission to Southern and Northern California, it would have been scrapped, due lack of friends and contacts in California.

Thus, Mr. Edmund Lewandowski of San Francisco, a generous, able and committed organizer who coordinated her visit there and Mr. Adam Gromek, who hosted her stay in Sacramento. Many thanks are owed to Rev. Mieczysław Maleszyk of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Sacramento, Rev. Andrzej Salapata SCh of Saint Albert Chmielowski Mission in San Jose and Rev. Tadeusz Winnicki of Nativity of Our Lord in San Francisco. Expression of gratitude goes to directors of Polish schools: Ms. Henryka Łazarz of Los Angeles, Ms. Elżbieta Rudzińska of Yorba Linda and Ms. Barbara Stamberg of San Jose, who made Sister's meetings with the youngest Polonia members possible. Last, but not least sincere thanks to the Provincial of the Society of Christ, Rev. Pawel Bandurski for his blessing and support.

Sister Bogumiła Zamora's visit „Spiritual Heritage of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński" constitutes a prime example that Polonia cares, can and does unify around meaningful projects and is willing to support it. The inherent difficulty to draw crowds to meetings with an unknown nun and for some, a topic, whose significance they did not fully

comprehend, was overpowered by the genuine charisma granted by Providence to a "tiny" nun with incredible wisdom, humility and Spirit, who blessed us with her presence, message and testimony. She is fully aware that English only members of Polonia were shortchanged in the process and left with the resolve to learn English better (which may take her a few months or so, with her talent - she speaks Polish, Italian, Ukrainian and Russian). Sister Bogumiła (Zofia) Zamora asked, to express to all she met with, her deep gratitude for their time and support. She promised to keep all, including those, she was not able to meet and communicate with, in her prayers. Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Komancza extend their invitation to visit them in Komancza and offer their patronage of Polonia in their prayers.

News of Polonia provided generous space to inform Polonia of the purpose and details of her visit. We may unjustly take it for granted, but where would we be, without a publication, that is truly a lifeline to Polonia's presence in the „Golden State." News of Polonia as well as „Komancza" constitutes an important Common Good, for which we all carry a responsibility.

To satisfy numerous requests and inquiries of those that have not had a chance to contribute or wish to continue doing so, further information and details will soon be available in English at: www.nazaretanki.dir.pl □

Taxes to page 16

to buy, build, or improve your main residence (up to a maximum of \$2 million) is generally not taxable. That's also true when the forgiveness involves debt you incurred to refinance a loan used for those purposes.

So what if you're sure you're not going to owe tax, since the forgiven debt is a result of a foreclosure or mortgage restructuring on your home? Do you need to report anything?

In most cases, the answer is yes. Why? One reason: Though certain cancelled debt can be excluded from income, the exclusion is not automatic. You have to attach Form 982 to your federal income tax return to claim the tax relief and to show the amount you can exclude.

In addition to mortgage debt relief, you may qualify for other exceptions that make the cancelled debt reported on Form 1099-C nontaxable, such as insolvency or a cancellation resulting from nonrecourse debt.

If you have additional questions about the ideas mentioned here and/or the many other strategies available to you, they may be directed to me at 800-CPA-KROL (272-5765), or you may write to:

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