

**Discussing Polish Culture and Catholic Faith in America:
Future POLISH-AMERICAN LEADERS Attend to a Very
Important Conference - by: Bogumil Misiuk**



The second annual Conference of the Polish American Leadership Association (PALA) was held at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania from August 17-20, 2011. The mission of the Polish American Leadership Association (PALA) is to form college-aged intellectuals who will promote Catholic faith, culture, and traditions of Polonia in the United States with the cooperation of Polish-American communities. The organization's goal is to unite, strengthen, and prepare the future leaders of Polonia in the United States by initiating conferences and other events that advance and cultivate Polish cultural heritage and Catholic values.

Last year's conference was mostly a discussion between current leaders of Polonia and Polish American youths about the importance of maintaining Polish identity and the challenges that encumber this aspiration. This year's conference continued this theme while also further developing practical implications of these Polish ideals.

Almost twenty young adults from the ages of 15 to 29 from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Connecticut actively participated in this year's conference, which was coordinated by the Msgr. Anthony Czarnecki and Msgr. Peter Zendzian of the National Polish Apostolate Committee. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops also sent Sister Joanna Okereke as their official liaison. Ms. Theresa Romanowski of the Polish American Congress, Eastern Pennsylvania District, as well as Mr. Chester Lobrow, the 1999 New York Grand Marshal of the General Casimir Pulaski Day Parade also partook in the Conference.

Two honorary guest speakers were invited to address the young adults. The first was His Excellency Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly from Rome, who was a very close friend of Blessed Pope John Paul II and Primate of the Millennium Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski as well as the long-time papal delegate to Polonia and Polish emigrants. He spoke to the group about what it means to be a Polish Catholic. Among other things, he emphasized the centrality of the family as the fundamental bastion of the "4 pillars of Polishness"—tolerance, moderation, love of freedom, and Catholic morality. Abp. Szczepan Wesoly stressed that the teachings of the Polish Pope Bl. John Paul II and the values that he embodied must be the backbone of Polish identity. In addition, he underscored the crucial role of Polish parishes as oases for immigrants and the essentiality that parishioners do everything possible to not allow the liquidation of these parishes by American bishops. Moreover, Abp. Wesoly celebrated Holy Mass each morning at the Chapel of Our Lady of Czestochowa; and in the evening, he led the group of young adults in the singing of Polish patriotic songs around a camp fire.

The second honorary speaker was Professor Anthony Bajdek of Northeastern University and Polish American Congress. He passionately addressed the problematic issue of never-fading anti-Polonisms ranging from vicious jokes about Poles to the falsification of Polish history, particularly that of World War II. He supplemented historical descriptions with personal testimony of the obstacles that he had to overcome and inspired his audience with his successful activism on behalf of Poland in various petitions to state governments. Moreover, he presented the young adults with several proposals that they could implement, thus locally promoting the Polish cause.

The majority of the discussions during the Conference, in fact, were led by the young generation, all of whom regardless of whether they were born in Poland or were descendents of Polish immigrants, spoke Polish fluently. As a result of their insistence, all talks—ranging from those that were formal to friendly conversations—were held in Polish. Often it was stressed that sustaining fluency in one's native tongue—especially a language that is as rich and vibrant in its nuances as is Polish—is vital in upholding one's national cultural heritage.

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Donation to the
Polish American Cultural Center
in Loving Memory of Mom & Babci
Laura Julia Gutowicz
April 5, 1919 - October 24, 2006
We Dearly Miss You
Offered by Daughter Lorraine and Charles
& Grandchildren Bradley & Lauren

Three major student presentations were delivered at the Conference. Bogumil Misiuk from New Jersey highlighted that the three premier values for Poles have always been "God, Honor, and Homeland"—values which are so essential and yet commonly obscured in American society, though so many Americans hunger for them. In his speech, he recalled that the great Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz with utmost respect reflected these values in his writings and achieved unparalleled popularity in America at the turn of the 20th century. By invoking the example Sienkiewicz, he emphasized that it is possible for Poles to prevail over general disinterest and antagonism and instead capture the hearts and minds of millions of Americans for the Polish cause. However, such success could only be achieved through a united concerted effort by all of Polonia to engage Americans and introduce them to their Polish culture. Afterwards, Marek Szymula from Philadelphia spoke about different types of leaders and qualities that are necessary to make a leader effective. Then Natalia Kolakowska from Connecticut led an online group exercise designed to reveal each member's leadership strengths as well as qualities that still need to be developed.

The Conference did not end with mere discussions. Inspired by them, the group decided to formally organize itself. A cabinet of officers was elected: Marek Szymula as chairperson, Natalia Kolakowska and Joanna Sudyka from Massachusetts as vice-chairpersons, Dorota Bielawski from New Jersey as secretary, and Bogumil Misiuk as public relations liaison. The organization's bylaws were written, the construction of the website of PALA was authorized, and participation in the General Pulaski Day Parade was proposed. Most importantly, all PALA members pledged to bring their newly-acquired Conference experiences to their local parishes and to organize local PALA groups so that the young generation of Polish Americans can already unite and prepare themselves as future leaders of Polonia.

If anyone would like to acquire further information about the Polish American Leadership Association (PALA) or get involved in the organization, please call (508) 943-0467.

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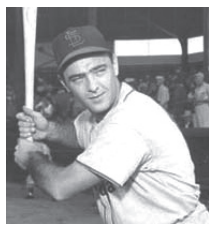
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Museum's Historic Reflections Project Part 6

November 25, 1985 - Ray Jablonski (Died)

Ray Jablonski was a third baseman in Major League Baseball who played for the St. Louis Cardinals, Cincinnati Reds and the New York Giants. Ray Jablonski was elected to the National League All Star Team in 1954.



November 26, 1855 - Adam Mickiewicz (Died)

Adam Mickiewicz was known for his poem Pan Tadeusz and is considered one of Poland's greatest romantic poets. All of his greatest works were written in the Polish language. He is buried in Wawel Castle.

November 27, 1958 - Artur Rodzinski (Died)

Artur Rodzinski was a Polish conductor of opera and symphonic music. Rodzinski studied music in Lwów, and then law in Vienna, where he simultaneously enrolled at the Academy of Music. He was associated with Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic.



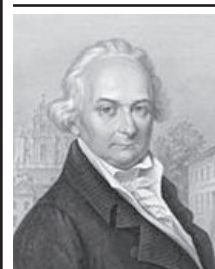
November 28, 1948 - Agnieszka Holland (Born)

Agnieszka Holland is one of Poland's most prominent filmmakers. Agnieszka Holland is best known for her movie, Europa Europa, which brought her the Golden Globe Award and her second nomination for an Academy Award.



November 29, 1830 - Polish Uprising (Event)

The famous Polish Uprising of 1830 was a revolt against Russian rule in Poland which caused one of the largest waves of immigration in Polish history to France, the United States and several other countries around the world.



November 30, 1768 - Jędrzej Sniadecki (Born)

Jędrzej Sniadecki was a Polish writer, physician, chemist and biologist. Sniadecki's most important book was entitled The Beginnings of Chemistry, the first Polish-language chemistry textbook. It is believed that Jędrzej Sniadecki was the original discoverer of the element ruthenium in 1807.