
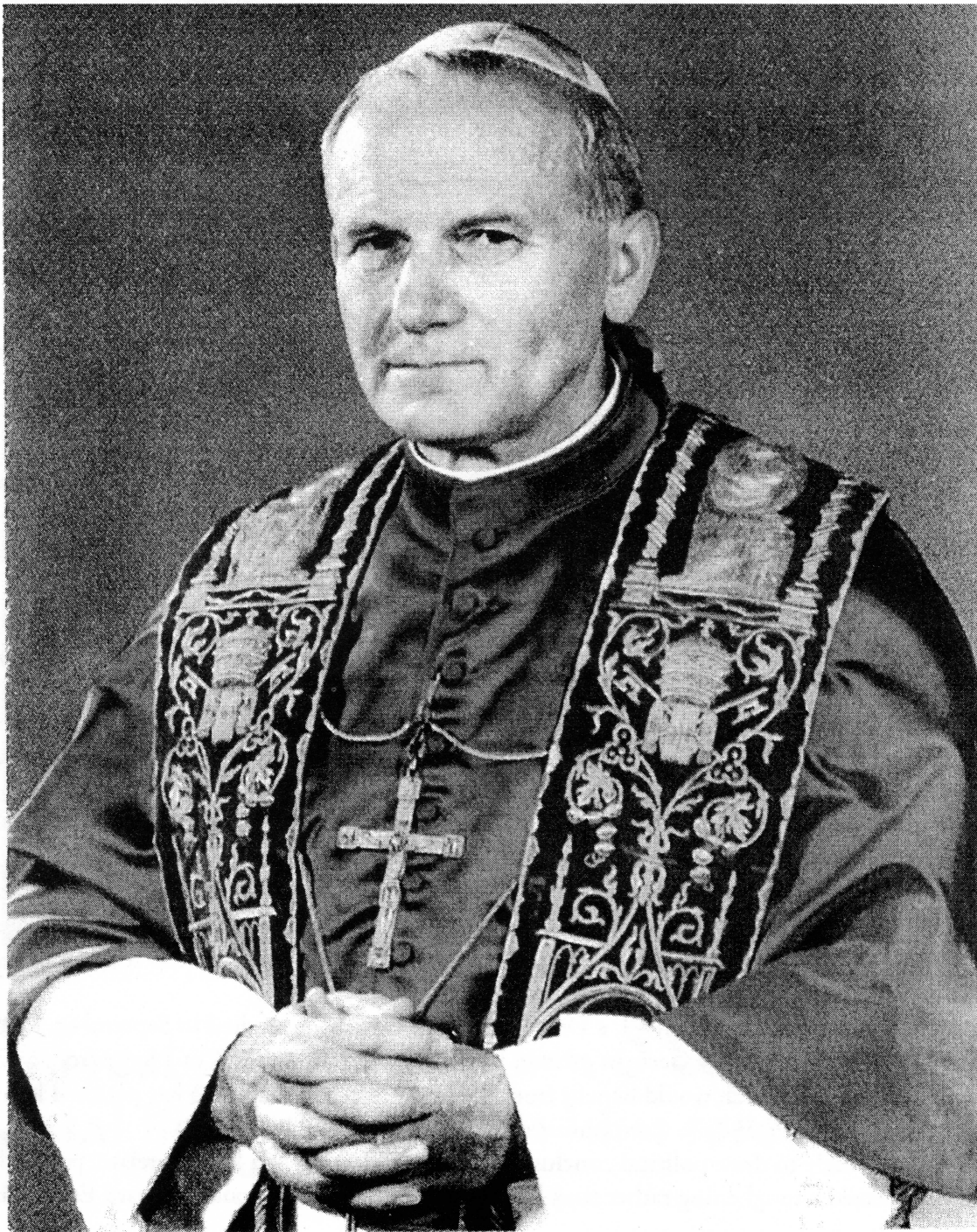


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THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND
PAPAL MEMORIAL SPECIAL EDITION-2005



Pope John Paul II ~1920-2005



RECOLLECTIONS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II~ FROM A CLEVELAND PERSPECTIVE—

On October 16, 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla from Poland was elected Pope. The following day, October 17, 1978, the headlines of the Cleveland Plain Dealer read:

Pole is chosen pope in historic change

Rome—Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Poland last night became the first non-Italian pope in 455 years.

He assumed the name of John Paul II in homage to his predecessor, John Paul I, who died Sept. 28 after a reign of only 34 days. The name combines the names of Pope John XXIII and Paul VI, the two immediate predecessors of John Paul I.

The election of a non-Italian from a Communist country of Eastern Europe came as a complete surprise and is expected to have a political impact of historic dimensions.

The new pope is 58, the youngest man to be elected in this century.

(His name is pronounced voy-ty-wa, with the letter “I” in his last name crossed forming a separate letter that only exists in Polish.)

His name had not been mentioned, even as a dark horse candidate, in the speculation among prelates and Vatican specialists before the secret conclave began last Friday.

White smoke curling from a flue on the roof of the Sistine Chapel at 6:17 p.m. (1:17 p.m. EDT) signaled to the world and to tens of thousands of believers in St. Peter’s Square that the new pope had been elected.

Minutes later the traditional Latin phrase “Nuntio vobis gaudium magnum: habemus papam” was called out from a balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica by Cardinal Pericle Felici, the ranking cardinal deacon. The phrase means “I announce to you with great joy: we have a pope.”

The crowd in the huge floodlit square below broke into joyous cheers.

There was new cheering and waving when the new pope, already wearing the white pontifical vestments with a gold embroidered purple cape and stole, appeared on the central balcony of the basilica to impart for the first time his blessing “urbi et orbi”—“to the city (of Rome) and to the world.”

Before reading the Latin benediction, the new pope, a tall solidly built man, addressed the crowd in almost accent-free Italian. New cheers went up when he said: “I don’t know whether I can make myself understood in your—in our—Italian language. If I make a mistake you will correct me.

“I was afraid to accept this appointment, but I did so in the spirit of obedience to our Lord and in total faith toward His mother, the Holy Virgin.”

The new pontiff is known as a conservative theologian. Specialists said his conservatism was evident in the fact that twice in his address he referred to the Virgin Mary. Liberal theologians have recently played down the cult of the mother of Jesus to spare Protestant feelings.

Socially—as distinct from theologically—the new pope is regarded as a progressive by Vatican officials.

Born in Krakow on May 18, 1920, he was the son of a working class family and worked as a laborer in a chemical factory while going through high school and college.

He has often urged the church to “remain close to the people” and is reported to have supported Polish workers in demands for better wages and living conditions.

Politically he is regarded by specialists as a pragmatist, who occasionally adopted more diplomatic positions toward Poland’s Communist government than the strong-willed primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski.

Wyszynski, beaming with joy, was standing next to his countryman as the new pontiff read his benediction and addressed the crowd.

The last non-Italian pope was Hadrian VI, a Dutchman from Utrecht, who died in September, 1523.

Western European and particularly German prelates have advocated the election of a pope from a Communist country, arguing that the church would benefit from the leadership of a man who has personal knowledge of what it means to be a believer under a Communist regime.

Although it was too early to draw political conclusions from the election of a Polish prelate, political specialists here said they expected a toughening rather than a softening of the Vatican’s policy toward Eastern Europe.

Many in the predominantly Italian crowd in Saint Peter's Square appeared stunned when Cardinal Felici announced that a non-Italian had been chosen. But when the new pontiff spoke in Italian, and especially when he called it "our" language, the reaction changed quickly to warm receptiveness.

A U.S. priest in the crowd, the Rev. John Dowd from Chicago, exclaimed: "A Polish pope! I can't believe it." Saying he lived in an area of Polish workers, Father Dowd added jokingly: "There will be no living with them now. If you're from Chicago, you'll know what I mean."

The archbishop of Montreal, Paul Gregoire, said he remembered the new pope from a visit he had made to Canada, as a cardinal, in 1976. The visiting prelate was popular, and the churches were packed, the archbishop said. He added that the new pontiff had "a broad mind" and an excellent knowledge of foreign languages—English, French and German in addition to Italian.

The new pope himself, it seems, was among those who were surprised by his election. When he arrived at the Rome airport 10 days ago to attend the conclave, and Italian press photographer, Franco de Leo, took several shots of him. "Why do you want to take all those pictures?" the then Cardinal Wojtyla asked him laughingly. "You don't think that I could become pope?"

The 111 cardinals who elected the new pope will remain secluded in the conclave until this morning.

It was not known how many voted the new pontiff had received on the decisive eighth ballot. He needed a majority of two thirds plus one—or 75 votes.

Polish churches overjoyed

'I was so emotionally excited that I almost collapsed....'

by Darrell Holland, Religion Editor

Each Polish neighborhood here became like a little St. Peter's Square yesterday when the people learned that Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla had become pope, priests reported.

The excitement was heightened because the new Pope John Paul II visited in Cleveland in September 1969, and is well remembered here.

He was a guest at SS. Peter and Paul Church, 4780 Turney Rd., Garfield Heights, and visited in many of the other nearly 20 Polish churches here. He celebrated mass in the old Arena.

As the news spread through Greater Cleveland that the Polish cardinal of Krakow had been elected pope, surprise and elation took hold of the Polish-American community and church bells pealed in celebration.

Priest after priest who serve Catholic churches attended primarily by persons of Polish descent said their phones had rung constantly as excited parishioners called.

A typical reaction came from Rev. Canon Leo Telesz. "I never thought I would live to see a Polish cardinal become pope," he said. "I cried. It was the greatest emotional event in my life as a priest."

Father Telesz, pastor of St. Casimir Catholic Church, E. 82nd St. and Sowinski Ave., added, "I was so emotionally excited that I almost collapsed. About 50 parishioners called me with the news. When I got composed I went out and rang the church bells to announce the election of the new pontiff to the neighborhood."

Many priests said their Polish-American parishioners were very proud that their countryman had been elected Holy Father.

Father Telesz described it as an act of God that a prince of the church from a Communist nation like Poland could be chosen pope.

"It will give the people behind the Iron Curtain hope and strengthen their faith," he said.

Several of those contacted by The Plain Dealer compared the new pope to his immediate predecessor, Pope John Paul I, because of their openness and friendliness.

One priest said that John Paul II reminded him of the beloved Pope John XXIII when he was introduced to the crowd in St. Peter's yesterday shortly following the election.

Bishop Gilbert I. Sheldon, auxiliary bishop of the Cleveland diocese, expressed a sentiment echoed by many when he said, "We share the excitement and interest of the world in the fact that for the first time in 450 years, we have a non-Italian pope."

Bishop Sheldon, speaking for the diocese in the absence of Bishop James A. Hickey, who is in Africa, also said that the fact that John Paul II comes from a Communist nation means he will have a greater understanding of the problems of the church in those nations.

Most of the dozen priests contacted agreed that the approximately 36 million citizens of Poland have displayed a tremendous loyalty to the church. Ninety percent of Poles are Catholics despite the fact that they live under a government unfriendly to the church.

The Rev. Clarence Korgie, pastor of the oldest Polish church here—St. Stanislaus—said, “I was stunned and excited when I heard the news that a man who is now pope had been in our home here, had embraced me, and encouraged me and the people.”

He said the election is of particular significance to the people of St. Stanislaus, at E. 65th St. and Forman Ave., because the parish is named for the patron saint of Poland, who founded the Polish church 1,000 years ago in the see served by Cardinal Wojtyla.

The Rev. Robert J. Sanson, who visited the new pope in Poland in 1975 and is on the Cleveland diocesan staff, predicted that John Paul II will be a traditionalist with a pastoral bent.

He said the church could not survive and be strong in Poland unless Cardinal Wojtyla and other Polish bishops had taken a conservative stance on church tradition.

Mrs. Battisti recalls John Paul II fondly

Gloria J. Battisti, wife of U.S. District Judge John J. Battisti, is among the Greater Clevelanders with fond memories of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, now Pope John Paul II.

Mrs. Battisti was visiting Rome in June 1967 for the elevation to cardinal of an old friend, Archbishop John Krol of Philadelphia, when Krol, a former Clevelander, introduced them.

“He struck me as the type of person who looks you in the eye and thinks about what you are saying,” Mrs. Battisti recalled.

“He was a gentle, kind man,” she said. The half-hour conversation touched on several items, with Mrs. Battisti and her mother, Helen Karpinski, talking about the United States while Cardinal Wojtyla talked of Poland, the homeland of Mrs. Battisti’s great-grandparents.

Although he was then a cardinal and aged 47, he still maintained rapport with young people, Mrs. Battisti recalled.

For the elated Poles here---Pope John Paul II is

One of our own

By John F. Hagan and Gary R. Clark

White smoke billowing from the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City yesterday thrilled Cleveland’s Polish community.

The smoke signaled selection of Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as the new pope.

“All the old-time Polish people were hugging and kissing today,” Gerald Tucholski, 40, part owner of the Karb’s Tavern, 3614 E. 65th St., said. “We are very proud. I had a nun that taught me 20 years ago who called and told me about it as soon as it was announced. She just wanted to make sure I knew.”

A patron at Karb’s, Ted Praszek, 63, said, “This is the first time they’ve had a Polish pope and I’m very proud.

“I couldn’t believe it and I was elated when I found out he was Polish,” he said. The new pope, John Paul II, celebrated a mass at Praszek’s parish, St. Stanislaus church, 3649 E. 65th St., when the former cardinal visited Cleveland in 1969.

“I’m simply elated,” Praszek added, “and I’m proud and I’m tired of Polish jokes. I think they will stop.”

“If the Irish can be proud of St. Patrick, then the Polish can be proud of Pope John Paul II,” another patron at Karb’s, John Kucharski, 37 said. “It (the papacy) has always been predominantly Italian. The change will do well across the country and across the world.”

Johny Swiech, 57, who was tending bar yesterday at Karlin Hall, 5302 Fleet Ave., said: “I was thrilled. It’s an

honor, a big honor. The Polish people are real thrilled. It makes me very happy that I am Polish.”

The president of the Alliance of Czech Catholics, Vaclav Hyvnar, 56, said he was born near Pope John Paul II's birthplace and said he saw the former cardinal during the 1969 visit here.

“When the cardinal was here at St. Stanislaus,” Hyvnar said, “I greeted him. He was the youngest looking cardinal I ever saw. To me, he looked like a very, very humble man.”

“I look at him like a distant cousin,” Hyvnar added. “We are very proud we have a Polish pope. All the Slavic people in Cleveland are happy today.”

Chuck Jancura, 30, another patron at Karb's, said he is half Polish and half Bohemian.

“Polish people catch a lot of flak,” he said, “and there are a lot of good Polish people. Throughout history there have been Polish scholars and inventors. A change like this is good for the church. It will show that the church is trying to appeal to the people.”

Richard J. Jablonski, national president of the Union of Poles in America which has its headquarters here, said the union will sponsor charter flights to Rome for John Paul II's coronation.

October 18, 1978 from the *Cleveland Press*, Frank Hruby's column:

Poland gives the world more than jokes

The election of Karol Wojtyla to the Roman Catholic papacy, whatever its religious and political ramifications, will probably accomplish what no other event in recent history has been able to do: put an end to the silly, often cruel, Polish jokes.

For the event will serve now to focus not only on John Paul II but on those parts of Polish endeavor which have been all too often forgotten, hidden or just plain ignored.

Though he has been with us ever since his famous career, Frederic Chopin has suddenly become even bigger on the good-music stations.

There are still many who remember the great Polish pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski, who made his farewell tour back in the 1930s, and who in the middle of a long and famous musical career took time off to become the president of his country, for a short time after World War I until a *bona fide* political administration could be formed.

Chopin, a century earlier, was always identified with Polish causes. Son of a Polish-French marriage, his heart always remained with Poland, though he spent the better part of his concert, composing and teaching career in Paris, the then musical capital of the world. He, too, ended his career for the cause. His last concert was for the benefit of Polish refugees who had been rendered homeless by another of the endless conquests the nation was subjected to.

Like so many Eastern European countries, Poland was constantly being overrun throughout its history, a fact which forged a stubborn resistance in its countrymen which benefitted, among other things, the American Revolution. Sweden, Austria, Russia, Prussia, all have taken their various turns at occupying parts or all of Poland from time to time.

Still it could loan us its soldiers like Casimir Pulaski, a hero of Brandywine and Germantown who gave his life leading a cavalry charge at the battle of Savannah; and Thaddeus Kosciusko, who won his honors at Saratoga, West Point and in Carolina, and then went back home to attempt the same for Poland.

Poland's artistic endeavors have led to several Nobel prizes for literature: Henryk Sienkiewicz for “*Quo Vadis*,” and Wladislaw Reymont, for “*The Peasants*.”

Modern astronomy is built on the foundation of the system developed by one Mikolaj Kopernik—better known as Copernicus—the key point of which is that the sun, not the earth, is the center of this particular universe. Like Poland's quest for freedom, this too was not a very popular concept, since it challenged an almost universally accepted sacred belief.

In modern times, one of the most widely known contemporary composers, Krzysztof Penderecki, was selected by the Lyric Opera of Chicago to write what it considered its contribution to the American Bicentennial.

Closer to home and by sheer coincidence, the Polish song and dance troupe “Slask” is making two appearances Saturday at Beck Center in Lakewood under Polish-American auspices. It will provide an ideal glimpse at

the ethnic traditions and customs that evolved from and with the lifestyle of this proud people.

The surprise and joy manifested by many Poles at the recent news was not because “one of our people made it,” as one of them said, but because the world was getting smart enough to appreciate what Poland had and has to offer.

I remember

by Eleanor Prech

I remember shaking the hand of a man not much taller than I, with pink cheeks, snow white hair and kind blue eyes.

It was Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, now Pope John Paul II, who had come to Cleveland in 1969 on a 14-city tour to thank Americans for the help they had given the Catholic Church in Poland.

I recall thinking of him as a cherub—he reminded me of the wooden angel cherub I had brought back a year before from Oberammergau, Germany.

I watched as he moved silently among the priests and Polish lay leaders who had gathered at Sts. Peter & Paul Church in Garfield Heights.

I even remember that he had to be brought forward so that a Press photographer could take a picture of him as he received the key to the city.

I remember attending evening services at the large, impressive St. Stanislaus Church at Forman Ave. and East 65th St. where so many Cleveland Poles met him that evening.

The new Pope visited our city as a guest of Bishop Clarence G. Isenmann of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. He was the first Polish cardinal ever to tour this country, but two other high-ranking Polish churchmen also visited here.

In 1966, Bishop Ladislaus Rubin, came to Cleveland from Rome in place of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, prelate of Warsaw, who was refused a visa to come from Poland. Bishop Rubin celebrated a mass at the Cleveland Arena in honor of the Polish Millennium.

In 1975, Bishop Julian Grobicki of Krakow stopped to visit with Cleveland Poles after attending the Eucharistic World Congress in Pittsburgh.

October 19, 1978 from the Cleveland Press—On the front page, there is a picture of Ms. Nettie Kowalski with a bold faced line: “Pen pal of pope.” The caption to the picture reads, “Ms Nettie Kowalski has been corresponding for the past nine years with Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, who is now Pope John Paul II. Their correspondence started after the cardinal visited Cleveland and St. Stanislaus Parish on the Southeast Side in 1969. Story on Page B 3. Following is the story.

John Paul II sent letters to Clevelander

by Eleanor Prech

Pope John Paul II has a pen pal in Cleveland.

Ms. Nettie Kowalski is the proud possessor of a dozen letters and messages signed by the then Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, whom she first met when he visited here in 1969.

She also is one of the few Clevelanders to have made personal visits to him in his residence in Krakow. The most recent was in 1973 when she presented him with a book marking the 100th anniversary of St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church, E. 65th and Forman Ave.

The book includes a picture of the cardinal taken at the church reception in his honor on Sept. 19, 1969.

“I first met him when he arrived here at the airport,” recalled Ms. Kowalski. “I had just recently been to Poland where I had attended a folk dancing course in Rzeszow, near Krakow. I was wearing a costume from the Krakowiak region. Since it was from his home area, he asked me about it.”

“Later at a reception for him, he reminded me to make sure to visit him on my next trip to Poland. After he left, I sent him newspaper clippings about his Cleveland visit and he returned a thank-you note.

That marked the beginning of their correspondence.

The following year, Ms. Kowalski visited his church in Krakow and she was invited to his residence.

Fluent in Polish, Ms. Kowalski has studied at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and at the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw, where her subject was folk dancing. Scholarships from the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York aided her in her studies.

As a member of the Committee for the Blind Children of Poland, she has also visited the organization's headquarters near Warsaw.

Ms. Kowalski is employed in the Lincoln Heights branch of the Third Federal Savings and Loan Assn.

Cardinal Wojtyla's Visit to Cleveland—1969

September 20, 1969, from the Cleveland Plain Dealer:

Cardinal Thanks Poles Here

Bringing a message of thanks from the church of Poland, Karol Cardinal Wojtyla of Cracow, Poland, stopped here yesterday on a tour of 14 American cities.

Cardinal Wojtyla said he was trying to visit cities with large Polish communities to thank them for their financial and spiritual aid to the Polish Roman Catholic Church since the end of World War II.

The cardinal celebrated mass at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, 3649 E. 65th Street, and later was honored at a reception in the church hall.

Dressed in the red-trimmed, black robes of his office, the cardinal chatted with clerics at a dinner at Cavoli Restaurant, 11517 Clifton Boulevard N. W.

The gray-haired, 49 year-old cardinal spoke English well telling of his warm reception in this country but an interpreter translated questions into Polish for him. He refused to comment on political issues in Poland.

Cardinal Wojtyla said he wished that he could thank each Polish American in the country that had aided their people.

"There are over 12 million here and I'll miss some, but I'm going to thank all of them I can," he said.

The cardinal's colorful history as a fast-rising priest began with his ordination in 1946. He spent the German occupation working in a factory.

During the reign of Joseph Stalin in the USSR and the resulting Stalinism in Poland, the cardinal, as a young priest, attracted crowds of students with his controversial sermons.

After his tour of the United States, Cardinal Wojtyla will attend the world synod of bishops in Rome before returning to Poland.

September 20, 1969, from the Cleveland Press:

Polish Cardinal Visits Here, Finds a 'Hospitable City'

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, the first Polish cardinal ever to come to America, was on his way to Pittsburgh today after a memorable visit with Cleveland Poles here yesterday.

From the moment he arrived at Cleveland Hopkins Airport yesterday noon, the cardinal had evidence of Cleveland as a "hospitable city" as he referred to it on his arrival.

At the airport he was presented floral pieces, he heard Polish verses recited by school children and he embraced Polish war veterans and thanked them for their service to Poland.

He was presented with the key to the city by Utilities Director Ben S. Stefanski and read with interest the proclamation by Mayor Stokes calling yesterday as "His Eminence, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla Day."

Bishop Clarence G. Issenmann of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland was present at a concelebrated Mass at 7:30 p.m. conducted by Cardinal Wojtyla at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, Forman Ave. and E. 65th St.

A procession of uniformed members of Polish organizations in front of the church preceded the Mass. A reception followed the Mass at St. Stanislaus Social Center. Richard Jablonski, head of the Ohio Division of the Polish American Congress, introduced Cardinal Wojtyla to the Polish community.

Cardinal Wojtyla, 49, is one of the Catholic Church's youngest cardinals. He was made Archbishop of

Krakow in 1958 and a cardinal in 1967.

Cleveland was among the 14 American cities which he visited to thank American Poles for their help extended the Church in Poland during the most critical years in its history.

Photo Gallery

Welcoming the Future Pope



September 19, 1969—Cardinal Wojtyla is greeted at Cleveland Hopkins Airport by, from left to right: Richard Jablonski, president of the Union of Poles; Frank Piotrowski, Treasurer of the City of Cleveland; Ben Stefanski II, Utilities Director of the City of Cleveland and Monsignor Edmund Mondzelewski, pastor of SS. Peter & Paul Parish. The cardinal was presented a proclamation from the city declaring the day to be "His Eminence, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla Day." He also received the key to the city from Ben Stefanski II.



Two of Cleveland's finest Polish-American dancers greet the cardinal in costumes of his native land.



More Clevelanders bid Cardinal Wojtyla welcome to our fair city. At the far left is Nettie Miecja Kowalska and at the far right is Father Francis J. Szczepanski.



THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA

isters of St. Joseph Marymount Convent • Garfield Heights, Ohio 4412

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, the present Pope John Paul II
visited the Shrine in 1969.

During his visit to Cleveland, the cardinal took the time to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa located in Garfield Heights, Ohio.



The Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland, Anthony Pilla, meets with the pope on one of his many visits to Rome.



Nettie Miecica Kowalska presents the Polish pontiff a copy of the one hundredth anniversary history book of St. John Cantius Parish of Cleveland, Ohio in 1998.



Two Polish-American Cleveland pilgrims, Josephine Winiarz (kneeling) and Molly Sommerfeld, journey to Rome to receive a blessing from Pope John Paul II, October 16, 1980.

**Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and may
perpetual light shine upon him forever and ever,
Amen.**

THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL
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OF GREATER CLEVELAND**



Everyone who is interested in Genealogy, and more specifically Polish Genealogy, is welcome to join our group. We meet the first Tuesday of the month from September thru June at St. Mary's PNC Church; 5375 Broadview Rd. (corner of Broadview & Wexford); Parma, Ohio. Parking is available in the parish lot, the entrance of which is on Marietta Ave. Meetings begin at 7:30 PM and usually end at 9:30-10:00 PM.

Membership dues are \$20.00 a year.

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