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Dear Members and John Paul II Foundation Friends

Last few months brought a number of significant changes that mainly related to Foundation's personnel. Msgr. Stefan Wylezek of many years standing Foundation's Administrator was nominated as a new Rector of Polish Mission in London (England and Walles) starting March 1, 2010. Msgr.



Msgr. Stefan Wylezek
and Jolanta Szpilarewicz

Stefan Wylezek began his work for John Paul II Foundation in 1986. The broad apostolic scope within activities of the Institute of Christian Culture, one of the Papal Foundations, very well suited his interest and qualifications. Most of all, this work meant for him realization of the goals that were set for the Foundation by John Paul II; carrying into special groups important trends of Papal's teachings and pontificate.

Together, with then the Director of the Institute Fr. Marian Radwan, he organized a few important scientific symposiums' that gathered well known scientists from Central and East Europe. He was also, at that time, an editor and he edited many books from Christian's cultural domain. From 1987 to 2003, he was the editor-in-chief of "Kronika Rzymska" (Rome's Chronicles) and, then published on a quarterly basis the John Paul II Foundation's "Biuletyn" (Bulletin). Msgr. S. Wylezek initiated, based on the cooperation with the Catholic University of Lublin, Polish program named as Summer University of Polish Culture. These summer courses, for close to 20 years of their activities, allowed to familiarize Polish history, literature, art, music, social and political issues as well as John Paul II teaching to approximately 1,500 participants from many countries. From 1996, as the Administrator of the John Paul II Foundation, he took responsibilities of the Foundation's secretariat and was responsible for working with benefactors and Foundation's friends. With dedication organized for them, every two or three years, international meetings in Rome and Vatican to celebrate more important dates of John Paul II pontificates' and Foundation's anniversaries. Especially, he valued cooperation with all presidents of the John Paul II Foundation branches and Foundation Friends and with might and main he met with them either in Rome or at their places. Indefatigable, he repeated Pope's John Paul II wish to give a special attention and care to young people from the former Soviet bloc, whom Foundation embraced with long standing scholarship program that is functioning on Catholic University of Lublin with Foundation's

Home support. For those talented but not wealthy young people, Msgr. Wylezek gained funds also from church's organizations in Italy and Belgium. After almost 25 years of his work for John Paul II Foundation in Eternal City, Msgr. Stefan Wylezek will be remembered as a solicitous Father, excellent organizer and, most of all, faithful advocate of the John Paul II teaching.

Msgr. Stefan Wylezek nomination timely coincided with Ms. Jolanta Szpilarewicz nomination. Ms. Jolanta Szpilarewicz was elected as a Head of the Institute of Immaculate Mother of the Church. Ms. Jolanta was working for J.P.II Foundation for more than 20 years. At first, Ms. Jolanta was working for Polish Institute of Christian Culture in Rome which, at the time of the regime that was present in Poland, served as a place of cultural growth uniting scientists from Central and East Europe. Later, Ms. Jolanta was working in J.P.II Foundation secretariat. Working for the J.P.II Foundation,

Ms. Szpilarewicz vividly and with dedication participated in J.P.II Foundation's and Foundation's Friends growth, in a process of acquiring new benefactors as well as in all initiatives that Foundation undertook. By her devotion, commitment, competence and heartiness, she was fully participating in Foundation's goals that were set by John Paul II. For her whole work, attitude and commitment to the Foundation we would like



Msgr. Stefan Wylezek
and Julia Irska

to give special thanks to Ms. Szpilarewicz. "The wind's wings will bring me back to Rome" with those words, Ms. Julia Irska said good-bye to J.P.II Foundation team. Ms. Julia Irska from the Institute of the Immaculate Mother of the Church established by Fr. Blachnicki, after 5 years of her work for Foundation, was reassigned by her superiors to one of the Institution's branches in Poland. Ms. Irska's sacrificial attitude, honest and reliable work was engraved in Foundation's history and especially in hearts of all individuals who were involved with Foundation work. For excellent and hard work, Ms. Irska received Foundation's medal from Stanislav Cardinal Rylko's hands.

It is not easy to express how Msgr. Stafan Wylezek's as well as Ms. Jolanta Szpilarewicz's and Julia Irska's hard work and commitment contributed to J.P.II Foundation's growth and development. Therefore, for all their effort, attitude and dedication we would like to thanks them with a pray at the revered God's Servant, John Paul II tomb, asking for strength and God's blessings.

The new Foundation team that took responsibilities from their revered predecessors consist of: Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko, J.P.II Foundation's Administrator and Anna Kielech, secretariat employee. Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko finished philosophy and theological studies and graduated from Pontifical Academy of Theology, Krakow in 1987 and was ordained at the same year. In 1987, Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko was directed to work in United States, where he held various positions, e.g. as a Pastor at St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church in New York, Provincial of Pauline Fathers and Brothers in United States, Prior of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, mentor and faculty member at Holy Apostle Seminary and as a Pastor at St. Joseph Church in Connecticut. In 2003, Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko received docto-

rate degree from the Institute for Spirituality Theology KUL. Anna Kielech studied theology and graduated from John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Ms. Anna Kielech received a master degree. During Ms. Kielech study, she was also learning Italian at linguistic programs in Rome. At first, after graduation, Ms. Kielech worked as a teacher of religion at primary school in Chelm. Later, Ms. Kielech worked as a senior referent in the Promotion and Information Office at Catholic University of Lublin. Recently, Ms. Kielech was working as an assistant to a board at instruction and advertisement school in Lublin. Beside studies and her work, Ms. Kielech was always associated with voluntary service, e.g. Ms. Kielech was the Chief of Polish helpers during the Youth Days in Rome.

W. Zachariasiewicz

Memories of the John Paul II Foundation and the John Paul II Foundation Home

More than 30 years have passed by since the news spread that for the first time in the two thousand-year history of the Church a son of the Polish nation became Christ's spiritual leader on Earth. The Pope from "the country far away" almost from the first second of his pontificate attained the highest authority of his time. Traveling throughout the world, he successfully proclaimed words of hope, reconciliation and love.

The entire Polish nation, in the joyful 'Te Deum', has given thanks to our God for the ability to be eyewitnesses to this historic moment. In Polish communities individuals wondered what would be the best way to honor this historic moment. Many spontaneous initiatives and ideas came to fruition. The Polish community in Rome had also been considering how best this enthusiasm should be changed into action - an action that would be comparable to this historic moment and that would be appreciated by the Pope himself.

Our new administrator of the Foundation, Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko, who himself wrote a beautiful historical page depicting the growth of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa on the east coast of United States, turned to me with a request, as one of the living witnesses of these times, to serve as a reminder of how Poles from around the world responded to this historic call. I am fulfilling this request with great pleasure as my emotional and organizational connections with the Foundation for so many years still - almost from its beginning - remain unchanged, close and dear to my heart. To be able to serve the cause for which our adored Christ's lieutenant was its Patron remains the highest award and experience of my life. Perhaps Divine Providence guided my steps in the summer of 1979. During my return from the "Radia Wolna Europa" (Radio Free Europe) board meeting in Munich, I found myself in Rome where I was supposed to learn about the Vatican's radio programs for Poland. On my way it so happened that I met a man who for many years dreamed about Polish pilgrimages to Rome in order to stand in a decent, honorable place alongside "Our Pope". That very person was an extremely spiritual and socially-active Fr. Kazimierz Przydatek, a Jesuit well-known in Rome as "Padre Casimiro". At that time, he was the director of an institution on St. Peter Square supported by both the Vatican and Polish Episcopate. This institution took care of Polish pilgrims as well as pilgrims from other countries. By happy chance, Fr. Przydatek stumbled upon me in Rome and that is how my "Rome adventure" began and subsequently continued on for many years. Fr. Przydatek complained that many Poles from the west during

their meetings in Rome promised to help him in the realization of his "dream", but after their return to their own respective homes he never heard back from them. Fr. Przydatek suggested that I should go with him to one of the many camping places near Rome, so I could see for myself the conditions of the visiting Polish pilgrims. As it is well-known, upon election of a Pope from Poland, Rome almost instantaneously became Poland's second capital. People came by trains, buses, bicycles and even some even embarked on walking pilgrimages all the way to Rome. The possibility to get blessings from a "Polish" Pope was worth any sacrifice.

It was late when we arrived to one of the camping places. People slept in tents that offered little to no protection from any possible rain. My heart bled upon seeing the conditions under which all the people awaited the Pope's audience the next day. Fr. Przydatek was a great psychologist; he knew how to touch my soft spots and convince me to accept his idea. The next day I went to the Vatican. The closest collaborators from the Pope's Secretariat, Prelates, Fr. Stanislaw Dziwisz (now Metropolitan Cardinal of Cracow), Fr. Jozef Kowalczyk (now Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw) and Fr. Tadeusz Rakoczy (now Bishop of Bielsko-Biala) assured me that the matter of purchasing (it was too late for permanent construction) a suitable place was a critical matter and any help from Polonia would be extremely appreciated. During my meetings in Rome, I did not promise anything aside from the assurance that upon my return to the United States I would alarm the "Polonia's top" and other influential people about what I witnessed in Rome. On my way back I did not waste any time - I drafted a plan into action. The most important step was to find a suitable presidential candidate for our National Committee: an individual who would have respect for the community as well as the authority. By nature, among the many millions of American Poles there are countless leaders who have their justifiable ambitions that should be respected. My silent vote was placed on the president of the influential House of Foreign Affairs Committee, Con-



Władysław Zachariasiewicz

gressman Klemens Zablocki, fortunately a close acquaintance of mine. Upon my return from Rome, while going to a meeting with him, I quietly prayed that my mission would succeed. The important reason behind my selection was that Congressman Zablocki was religious and a great enthusiast of "Our Pope". During our two-hour friendly conversation, I tried to convince him that his acceptance of the leadership position of the National Committee would guarantee the success of this action. As a person with widespread general respect, he would be well-accepted by "Polonia's top" in addition to being welcomed by the Polish community in the Vatican. Although by the time I left the meeting I felt that my arguments were reasonable and sound, Zablocki nevertheless asked me for a one-week period of time for consideration. In the meantime, I had a long phone conversation with the President of the Polish American Congress, Alojzy Mazewski, who agreed with me that Zablocki was the best candidate and he furthermore assured me of his willingness to cooperate. Having gained this assurance, I was less stressed going into my second meeting with Zablocki. I felt as if I had won the lottery! This time our meeting was much shorter; Zablocki told me that after some long consideration, he finally agreed to accept the President's role, but under one condition: "You, Mr. Wladyslaw, will need to work and I will gladly give my name". That was the point. As an additional expression of his total support of our action, he elected his Chief of Staff, Alfred Kulczycki, as the Treasurer of the Committee. At the same time we were successful in gaining Mary Flanagan, an assistant to Congressman Lucien Niedzi, to take on the most demanding work as the Secretary of the Committee. All the Committee members worked pro bono. Anna Szczepanska was an additional person who helped Kulczycki. The entire team would often work late in the evenings, with great determination and a willingness to make the necessary sacrifices – altogether working in wonderful harmony throughout the entire campaign. At that time, I went on an early federal retirement in order to devote all my attention and time towards our campaign. Cardinal Jozef Krol from Philadelphia agreed to become the Honorary Committee Chairman. Primate of the Millennium, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski, blessed our entire action. The following is a quotation from his letter: "Through being in Rome a few months ago I was able to see just how important the issue of founding the Polish Home was for the Holy Father. The Polish Episcopate joined this magnificent idea with the wholeheartedness that is required by such a historic moment. Let's do it for our Holy Fat-

her – the Polish Pope who does so much for all of us. It will be a monument for him from his closest children whom he loves so much"

Coordinating the campaign in the United States, per Fr. Przydatek's request, I took a few trips to Rome to provide an update on our action to the Pope's Secretariat as well as to Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly, head of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Additionally, I spent time with Fr. Przydatek who came personally to participate in the campaign's major meetings in New York, Buffalo, Detroit, and Chicago as well as in Toronto and Hamilton in Canada. Everywhere we gave speeches various radio programs readily provided their airtime. The local priests willingly helped us as well. After two years, this intensive and versatile campaign was crowned with success. In total, we passed onto Rome more than 2.3 million dollars. It was comprised of big donations as well as the countless smaller donations of just a few dollars. All of the gifts were given with love for our Holy Father and therefore we acknowledged all of them with the same gratitude. Later on we handed the Foundation in Rome some several thousand addresses of the benefactors from around the world. Many of the supporters have become loyal friends and very



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often they became generous benefactors to the Foundation. It is worth noting that out of all of the Polish organizations within United States, the Polish National Association collected the most funds – amounting to more than a hundred-thousand dollars. From the individual supporters, most of the funds were donated by the famous Polish philanthropist Edward Piszek. Among other countries, Canada collected more than 85-thousand CAD; Australia – 70-thousand AUD. The final cost of the beautiful home (along with all of the necessary investments in furnishing, etc) totaled approximately 2.6 million dollars. The Polish Home is surrounded with beautiful gardens and it can easily accommodate up to 80 people.

Continuation in the next bulletin

Foto: Mariusz Kubik

Hail, O Cross, our only hope, give us patience and courage and obtain peace for the world!

John Paul II, Vatican, March 25, 2005

The photograph portraying very weak Pope John Paul II clasping his cheek against the cross and reclining his head on it, during Pope's last Stations of the Cross in 2005, 8 days before his death; the photograph done by Arturo Mari circulated around the world. It is unknown whether the Pope was holding the cross or if the cross was supporting John Paul II. This photograph sunk deeply into our hearts. Desire to see the cross, its adoration become a dream not only for us, but for many people around the world. This is a unique (very specific) cross. Christ's body was done sacredly and with love, depicting details that are rarely met on crucifixes'. Jesus' head is deflected up; the face with closed eyes is facing (turned) into the sky. The hammered nails imitate a crown of thorns. Legs hangs palsied as in paralyzed indivi-

dual. The cross was carved by a very talented self-taught sculptor for his wife who after an accident was paralyzed. By looking on the cross she was able to better connect in her pain with crucified Jesus. A few years later, pilgrims offered the cross to Pope John Paul II who handed down the cross to Fr. Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki. On that special day - Good Friday, during the fourteen's Stations of the Cross, that cross was given to John Paul II hands.

(History of this cross is known from stories, books and articles. For example, there was an article in "Gosc Niedzielny" that was published on April 5th, 2009. For more information please visit www.parafiakraczkowa.pl)

In 2009 our dream came true, here on the Swedish land. From

October 2nd to 22nd, this precious cross peregrine throughout Sweden, visiting Polish Catholic Missions in Goteborg, Malmo – Lund and Stockholm as well as Swiss Catholic parishes, Spanish Catholic Missions, even a prison that has Polish prisoners. That was the first foreign journey of the cross beyond Polish and Italian borders. Many people were touched and tears of affection felt down from many eyes. Ability to be closed to the cross, to touch, kiss and to adore the cross was a great experience for all of us. In remembrance of this visit, worshippers received the picture of Pope John Paul II with the Cross (Arturo Mari photography) with a Pope's pray for the Good Friday on reverse. The cross visit in 2009 was related to the 20th anniversary of the Pope John Paul II visit in Sweden. This association contributed to superior experience to all who remembered that visit from years ago. The plan to bring the Pope's John Paul II cross from Good Friday was initiated by the Friends of J.P.II Foundation in Stockholm. Bishop Andres Arborelius gave the main responsibility for this plan to the director of Friends of J.P.II Foundation in Stockholm, Boguslawa Zaniewicz-Dybeck. Additionally, in realization of this plan was involved Jadwiga Kurkus, the director of the Friends of J.P.II Foundation in Lund and Tomasz Stepinski, the director of the Friends of J.P.II Foundation in Goteborg. Capuchin, Father Zbigniew Nowakowski from Polish Catholic Mission in Goteborg, brought the cross from Poland. That was the starting point of the cross' first foreign pilgrim, in Sweden. Rector, Father Adam Piascki, OFMC was responsible for the cross in the St. Peter of the Cross Church in Angered where the main celebrations were taking place. The magnitude of the celebrations was augmented with St. Francis (the founder of Capuchin's) feast that occurred at the same time. Secondly, the cross visiting Malmo and Lund from October

8th to October 12th. In Malmo, the cross was adored in Maria in Rosen Garden (Maria I Rosengard) Church that is maintained by Oblates' lay Monks from the Polish Catholic Mission in Southern Sweden while in Lund, the cross visited St. Thomas of Aquino Church. Special information about the origin of the cross was prepared in Swedish language. Masses were celebrated in Polish and Swedish language, while in Lund the Masses were celebrated also in Spanish language. After Masses, the cross was available for individual and organized adorations. Father Wieslaw Badan, OMI held the main responsibility for the cross in southern Sweden. Please visit www.maria-rosengard.com to get more details of the cross adoration prepared by Oblate's Fathers. More intensive visit of the peregrine cross was taking place in Stockholm and nearby areas from October 14th to October 22nd. Day and night the cross was adored by Polish worshippers from Polish Catholic Mission, Sweden worshippers, and Spanish worshippers from St. Erick Cathedral, catholic parishes from Marsta and Haninge. Among worshippers there was Bishop, nuns, lay sisters as well as Polish prisoners from the Mariefred prison. Each celebration and meeting with the cross had unique program of adorations for all of us. The time was designed to allow not only for joint adoration but also for individual prayers and quiet worship. On Friday, October 16th, the 31st anniversary of the Pontificate, a Mass was celebrated at St. John Church offered for prompt beatification and canonization of

God's Servant, Pope John Paul II. On Saturday, at St. Francis Church in Marsta, the cross was a "witness" of the marriage and after the evening Mass it was adored by all gathered parishioners and guests. On Sunday, at St. John Church there were three Masses celebrated, one of which was offered in intention of Pope John Paul II for a prompt beatification (inclusion among all Saints.) The Mass was celebrated by Provincial, Fr. Zbigniew Lepko SDB along with Rector, Fr. Marian Chojnacki SDB and all gathered Salesian monks. After each Mass, parishioners and visitors could pay the tribute to the cross and spent time on individual adoration. St. John Church is one of the biggest churches in Stockholm that has approximately 800 to 1200 worshippers during each Mass. On the day of the peregrine cross visit, the church was crowded (full). From the St. John Church, the cross was transported to St. Erick Cathedral where during solemn procession it was carried by Mission's Rector, Fr. Jofred Rendon.



Cross at the Church of Saint John - Stockholm

After procession, a Mass was celebrated by Bishop Andres Arborelius along with priests from the Mission. Immediately after this Mass, another Mass was celebrated in Polish language by Pral. Fr. Marian Jancarz who was praying for Pope John Paul II beatification and canonization. After the Mass, the cross was carried to a crypt to make it available for a peaceful private adoration by worshippers and then by nuns in their private Chapel. Bishop celebrated two Masses in his private Chapel. Curia's employees and invited nuns were participating in one of the Masses. On the last day, the cross was taken into four various places among which was the prison in Mariefred, that has Polish prisoners. Father Ryszard Flakiewicz SDB who is the spiritual leader for the prisoners took the cross to the Mariefred prison. It was estimated that approximately 6 to 7 thousand worshippers participated in the peregrine cross adoration.

The cross was taken back from Stockholm to Poland by Boguslawa Zaniewicz-Dybeck, who was taking care of the cross during flight. We need to acknowledge the great concern and help that was given by Sweden airport personnel, LOT employees in Warsaw and all flight passengers who were helping to carry the cross on the plane. They realized the importance of the occasion and their help at the time Ms. Zaniewicz-Dybeck gave them the remembrance photograph. We can say that the adoration continued until the final delivery to Fr. Mieczyslaw Bizior from St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church in Kraczkowa near Rzeszow.

Our express our sincere thanks on Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki's hands who is the current guardian of the cross for his permission to take the cross for a pilgrim to Sweden; Bishop Anders Arborelius for his permission and support in realization of this project in catholic missions and churches; Fr. Mieczyslaw Bizior, from St. Nicholas Bishop Church in Kraczkowa for all his help and support. We also would like to thanks: all the priests from Stockholm, Marsta and Haninge; Rectors from Polish Catholic Missions in Goteborg, Malmo-Lund and Stockholm as well as all the good-will people who contributed to appropriate welcome of the peregrine cross. We need to express our special thanks to Polish Congress in Sweden who financially supported our project.

May God bless you all.

Boguslawa Zaniewicz-Dybeck, Stockholm
Jadwiga Kurkus, Lund