



# Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee Year of Hope through 2025, with graces and indulgences granted to pilgrims. Archbishop Gustavo of the Archdiocese of San Antonio has designated the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Panna Maria as one of the pilgrimage sites for this Jubilee Year.

On Dec. 29, 2024, worshipers gathered in Panna Maria for the opening day of the Jubilee Year with a Mass celebrated by Fr. Scott Janysek, a Panna Maria native and a descendant of the original Polish settlers. Panna Maria pastor, Father Wieslaw Iwaniec, was the concelebrant. PHC Secretary Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey served as lector.

Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz, President of the Polish American Council of Texas and PHC Board member, gave opening remarks and introduced the Majeranki, a delightful group of young musicians, singers and dancers from Rabka, Poland. Dr. Jim was responsible for the troupe's visit to the US and their performances in Chappell Hill, Houston and Panna Maria. The Majeranki led the opening procession and sang Polish Christmas carols for the Mass.

After the Mass, the Majeranki led the assembled pilgrims to the historic oak tree next to the church as a tribute to the founding of Panna Maria 170 years ago. They sang to the assembled pilgrims, and Fr. Wieslaw blessed more than 200 people who carried lighted candles which captured the feeling of the first Mass celebrated under the oak tree by candlelight on Christmas Eve, 1854. I was honored to make remarks about that first Mass and the fact that we were next to the tombs of Father Leopold Moczygemba, who encouraged the immigration in the mid-19th century, and Bishop John W. Yanta, the first Bishop descended from the original settlers, who honored those brave immigrant ancestors by founding the Polish Heritage Center. It was also the 30th anniversary of his ordination as Bishop.

The Majeranki then performed a concert, entertaining the assembled pilgrims in front of the Church, even going into the crowd for dance partners. Following their performance, they led the pilgrims to the Polish Heritage Center, where Executive Director Alice Poore and her staff welcomed the visitors, and where board member Randy Pawelek had arranged for the Panna Maria Men's Club to serve a wonderful meal.

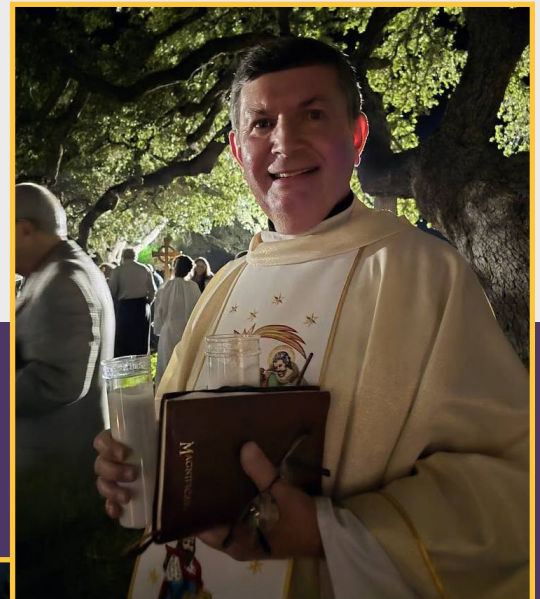
The Polish Heritage Center is honored to have served the Parish and the Archdiocese in this pilgrimage that opened this Jubilee Year of Hope.



# The Mass



# The Candlelight Vigil



# The Performance before the Church



# The Reception at the Polish Heritage Center



Photos courtesy of:  
Maureen Brown and Isaac Benitez



**THE  
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER  
AT PANNA MARIA**

13909 N FM 81  
PO Box 25  
Panna Maria, Texas 78144



PHC Hours: Wed. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
[www.polishheritagecentertx.org](http://www.polishheritagecentertx.org)  
(830) 310-8612

The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria  
Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

TAX ID: #46-0561240

*Join us for The Polish Heritage Center's*

# *White & Red Gala*

**Cocktails, Dinner, Entertainment, and Auction.  
Reserve your tables and individual tickets now!**

**Saturday, March 1, 2025**

**5:30pm - 9:00pm**

***Panna Maria Hall***

***13912 N. FM 81, Panna Maria, Tx***

**For more information contact the Executive Director Alice Poore at 830-310-8612  
[director@polishheritagecentertx.org](mailto:director@polishheritagecentertx.org)**