



Alliance News

Toledo-Poznan Alliance quarterly newsletter — Summer 2007

Dozynki—2007

The Dozynki Planning Committee for 2007 has some exciting news to tell you about this year's Dozynki. This year Dozynki will be on Sunday, September 30th at the Franciscan Center on the campus of Lourdes College. The Dozynki dinner will be preceded by a full Mass at the Lourdes College Chapel at 12:00 Noon, officiated by Fr. Paul Kwiatkowski. After the Mass, a procession will take place from the Chapel to the Franciscan Center for the dinner. The procession will be lead by Fr. Paul and an accordion player. It should be very festive.

This Mass will fulfill everyone's obligation of a Sunday Mass. So plan on attending this Mass at Noon, at Lourdes College on Sunday, September 30th.

Celebrating a Centennial & Praying for a Canonization....

The year 2007 marks the centennial or 100th anniversary of the founding of Toledo's parish of Sw. Wojciech or St. Adalbert, named for the tenth century Czech Bishop of Prague who was martyred as a missionary among the pagan aboriginal Prusowie or Prussians. Coincidentally, while St. Adalbert's parish was founded in 1907 as a northern off-shoot of Toledo's oldest Polish parish of Sw. Jadwiga or St. Hedwig (founded in 1875), the two parishes are once again officially "twinned" under one pastor—currently Father Marek Ciesla, assisted by Associate Pastor Father Piotr Nowacki. Both priests are members of the Society of Christ, trained in the seminary at Toledo's own Polish Sister City of Poznan.

Formal celebration of the Centennial of St. Adalbert's foundation began with Masses celebrated on the weekend of April 21-23 (April 23rd is the feast day of St.

Adalbert), and will include an upcoming special Mass of Thanksgiving at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday October 28th.

Meanwhile, on the evening of Monday April 2nd, parishioners and guests gathered at St. Adalbert's for a Mass with a special program and candlelight procession prepared by the Youth Group to honor the second anniversary of the passing of the late Holy Father. Prayers were said at the recently-added larger-than-life outdoor statue of Polish-born Karol Wojtyla, who became beloved by millions around the world as Pope John Paul II, for his speedy canonization (official recognition as a saint)!

David Chelminski, Contributing writer



Picture - compliments of Janet Gawle

Tour to Poland

The tour to Poland is planned for this July, 2007, and the dates are July 17—30. On our itinerary is a plan to visit the orphanage, Dom Dziecka in Poznan. We will report to you on this visit in the next newsletter.

A Polish Midsummer's Eve

I am always reminded and amazed at the rich diversity of Polish heritage, customs and celebrations when I continue to expand the content of polishtoledo.com. Recently, I decided to post a list of what I consider to be significant Polish holidays and celebrations on the Website. Combining Church - oriented and secular events, I came up with no less than thirty. That averages 2.5 celebrations a month.

Here, I'd like to concentrate on **Sobotka**. It is still observed wholeheartedly in some parts of Poland and in particular at Krakow, which is fast becoming one of the premier tourist destinations in Europe. In Mazowsze (near Warsaw) and Eastern Poland it's known as "Kupalnocka" or "Kupala".

What we know today as "Noc Swietojanska" (St. John's Eve) has ancient roots from pre-Christian Poland. Before conversion, pagans paid homage to the natural elements of fire, water, earth and air. These elements brought both bounty and famine.

The name "Sobotka" originated from Saturday (Polish "sobota"). This celebration coincides with the summer solstice when we experience the longest day and the shortest night. The sun being the source of light and warmth, it was paid much respect.

According to Polish legend handed down for untold generations by *babcias* everywhere, the eve of the summer solstice is filled with myth, mystery, fortune - telling and magic. Certain plants and herbs take on the magical properties to cure illness. Animals speak in human voices, the earth shimmers with transparency and the barren fern blooms for just one moment in the deep recesses of the forest at midnight with a flaming flower. Those lucky enough to observe the elusive occurrence were destined to find treasures.

Huge bonfires were set ablaze because fire protected against misfortune, and young men showed off their agility leaping the flames. Amorous frivolities this night were a manifestation of readiness for procreation. Wreaths (*wianki*) woven by girls with flowers and herbs symbolized virginity, which girls were ready to offer for the promise of marriage. At dusk a lit candle was added to the wreath and launched in nearby rivers. The fate of the wreath's course and destination would predict the maiden's love fortunes.

The great Polish poet Jan Kochanowski immortalized this custom in his *Piesni Swietojanskiej o Sobotce* (Songs of St. John's Eve), and William Shakespeare used it as his theme in his famous work - *A Midsummer's Night Dream*.

While the traditional candle-lit wreaths are floated on the Vistula along with fireworks and outdoor concerts in Krakow to commemorate the holiday, in Waterville, Ohio we trek to the Maumee River at dusk after remembrance of the ancient rites of our ancestors at Dom Kutylowski.

Significance of the Linden Tree

Lipa is the Polish name for the linden tree that blooms in midsummer, and *Lipiec* is the Polish name for the month of July. The linden tree has always held a place in the hearts of the Polish people. In folktales, the Blessed Mother hid among the linden's branches, and revealed herself to children. Many wayside shrines were placed under linden trees for this reason. Lightning was thought never to strike a linden tree, and thus it was a "lucky" tree.

Sometime during the Middle Ages, a Prussian was pardoned by the locally ruling Teutonic Knights and thanked God by placing Mary's likeness in a local linden tree. Rumors of miraculous healing and epiphany soon attracted local pilgrims to the Holy Linden (*Swieta Lipka*). So many came to this tree, that people built a shrine to the arbor in 1320. The Teutonic Knights razed the Catholic chapel and installed threatening gallows, complete with bodies, around these trees. However, the gallows eventually rotted and flocks of Germans and Poles still visited the Sanctuary of Our Lady. This Sanctuary is located near Mragowo in the Mazury region of Poland.

Dozynki Reservations

In addition to the mass mailing for Dozynki, a downloadable registration form will be posted in the Toledo-Poznan Alliance section of www.polishtoledo.com. Please direct your friends, acquaintances and others who would enjoy this joyful celebration of the Polish Harvest Festival to the accessible form and help make this the best attended Dozynki ever.

Denny Kutylowski, Contributing writer

Pat's Corner

Sculptor JoeAnn Cousino got ooohs and aaahs and applause when her sculpture of the local silent film star, Lillian Gish, was unveiled at the Gish Film Theatre at Bowling Green State University. Joe Ann said that it took her some 100 hours from making the connection with old photos and then getting her interpretation of Lillian Gish, because she appeared so different in various photos. Joe Ann heard that Miss Gish was called the "Porcelain Princess" so she had decided to use a porcelain wash on the sculpture. The idea of the sculpture was born when Ms. Cousino, who was a regular at Sunday matinees at the Gish Theatre, and Ralph Wolfe, curator of the theater since it opened in 1976, realized the theatre was lacking a bust of its namesake.

Some highlights from Toledo Poznan's Annual Meeting held March 18th at the Sanger Library.

- Frank Szollosi, City of Toledo Councilman, spoke of his recent trip to Poland.
He visited the northeastern part of the country as well as Poznan and said that he was the first Toledo official to visit and meet with the Vice Mayor of Poznan. He touched on various highlights of the trip such as taking part in the ceremony of Old Town honoring soldiers of Europe and America who were in World War II. Visits were made also to city government offices, the shopping mall, arts center and brewery. A gift of a banner was presented to Toledo Poznan Alliance, with the coat of arms of Poznan.
- Kathy Grabel spoke of the of the upcoming trip to Poland planned for the last two weeks in July 2007.

Pictures of the Orphanage in Poznan were shown as well as some photos taken of the presentation in Krakow of Adam Grant's work, while we had a light lunch.

Pat Konwinski



Frank Szollosi speaking at the annual meeting in March.



Irene Szydowski, Kathy Grabel, Ann Lavalenti, Rosalie Hinde at the annual meeting in March



Board members Lorraine Kwiatkowski, Marcy Sieczkowski at the Annual meeting in March



Annual meeting in progress

Pictures - compliments of John Zielinski