It all began with a baptism.

More than a thousand years ago, Poland received Christianity of the Roman Rite through neighboring Czechoslovakia. The historical fact of the baptism of her first ruler, the Duke Mieszko, decided Poland's thousand-year future as a nation. Situated in the center of Europe as an outpost of culture and civilization, Poland (and Poles throughout the world) observed in 1966 the thousandth anniversary of her existence and development as a Catholic nation. Thus, Christianity shapes the destinies of nations and gives them historical direction.

Down through the centuries, the Cross of Christ, symbol of Christianity, survived on Polish soil from the moment it was first raised for veneration in 966. Royal dynasties followed one another to extinction, philosophic trends and political structures rose and fell, alliances were forged and disrupted by animosities, social and economic structures underwent various changes. Only the reality of Poland's Christianity remained secure. To quote Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, "Poland's fidelity to God, the Supreme Pontiff, the Blessed Virgin, and the Cross, preserved the Church and her shepherds." Poland's fidelity expressed itself in filial attachment to Rome, the Holy See, and to the person of the Holy Father.

So it was through the centuries. So it was at the time of the founding of the Parish of St. Francis of Paola at the turn of the twentieth century. Forty miles northwest of Pittsburgh, near the train line going to Buffalo, New York, on the Allegheny River, lies the small town of Ford City in Pennsylvania. The Poles began to migrate to this city some years before 1900. Most of the Poles who settled in Ford City came from the southern part of partitioned Poland known as Galicia, then a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The religious life of the Poles in Ford City in the beginning was concentrated near the German church of St. Mary, because at that time neither the Poles nor any other Slavic group had their own parish church. Early in 1900, the well-known organizer of Polish parishes in western Pennsylvania, Father Wal-tter Miskiewicz, pastor of Saint Adalbert Church in Pittsburgh, began to organize the Poles in Ford City. The people expressed their desire for a parish by sending a petition to the Rt. Rev. Richard Phelan, Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The bishop gave his approval, and on January 31, 1900, four lots were purchased from the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company of the State of Pennsylvania in Ford City in Armstrong County by Bishop Richard Phelan of the Diocese of Pittsburgh for the congregation of St. Francis of Paola. The prop-
Property for the church was located at the southeast corner of Eighth Street and Fifth Avenue. The lots purchased in 1900 were numbered 1003, 1005, 1007, and 1009 in the Ford City plan and laid out by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in the 1800's. All the lots had a twenty-five foot frontage on Fifth Avenue with a combined area of approximately one-half acre. The four lots cost $840.00 which was paid on March 3, 1900, to A. Pitcarin, vice-president of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass and witnessed by William J. Carson as notarized by C. W. Brown.

Encouraged by this favorable turn of events, the members of the congregation began an intensive house-to-house collection to raise funds so that work might start at once on a building which would serve as a permanent church. Each member was asked to give $25.00 towards the project. Within several months $2,500.00 was collected and work on a new church was begun by the Heilman Construction Company. This was done upon the advice of Father Miskiewicz. The church was wooden and later was used as a parochial school. The people not only supplied the finances, but they also worked with their hands to save construction costs. After a hard day's work, they gathered at the site to prepare the soil for the church foundation.

In June, 1900, Father Walter Miskiewicz of Pittsburgh laid the cornerstone for the new wooden church. In November of that same year, the church was dedicated by a delegate of Bishop Phelan. The congregation at the time of its inception consisted of thirty families and 200 unmarried persons. The parish began as a mixed congregation, because it consisted not only of Poles but of Slovaks and Ukrainians as well. Father Francis Miskiewicz, the brother of the organizer of the parish, was assigned as the first resident pastor in April, 1900. The church was named after the patron saint of the first pastor, Saint Francis of Paola. On April 25,1900, the first Mass was celebrated. The first child to be baptized at St. Francis of Paola Church was Maryanna Matawa, daughter of Jacob Matawa and Theresa Pastorek Matawa. The godparents were Francis Sporny and Caroline Tomasiewicz. Maryanna was born on May 8, 1900, and baptized on May 20, 1900. The sacrament was administered by Father Francis Miskiewicz. The first marriage performed in the church was that of Paul Kwiatkowski and Maryanna Krolicki. The marriage took place on May 19,1900 with Andrew Dynko and Julianna Hercza as witnesses. Father Francis Miskiewicz performed the ceremony. The first death was that of a three-month old infant, Francis Sporny, who died of pneumonia on November 9, 1900, and was buried November 10, 1900, in St. Mary Cemetery, Kittanning, Pennsylvania. The first church committee, named in April, 1900, consisted of Michael Wajs, secretary, John Rolnicki, Michael Krupianik, John Szul, Stephen Mermer, and Gregory Odrzechowski.

With the rapid growth of the congregation, the need for social activity arose. In 1903, it was decided to enlarge the church structure and finish off the basement for this purpose. To raise the necessary funds for this undertaking, a Brother from an unknown monastery, Alexander Dubois, solicited contributions from members of the parish and from Poles in other localities. On one occasion, he left the parish to make a visit to New Jersey and while there he died. When Father Miskiewicz went to the bank, he was unable to withdraw the money because all of it was deposited in the name of Dubois, who had died. The second signee was a Slovak from Terre Haute, Indiana. No one understood the situation, but the church lost over $1,700.00 in the First National Bank of Ford City. In 1904, two additional lots were purchased, numbers 999 and 1001, likewise laid out by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in the 1800's. The two lots cost $800.00. This was paid on April 13, 1904, to Vice-president A. Pitcarin, witnessed by William J. Carson as notarized by C. W. Brown.
In the summer of the same year, plans were drawn up for the erection of a two-story pastoral residence. William Schiigens was entrusted with the task of building the rectory for $3,263.00. This building was started and completed during the pastorate of Father Ignatius Ostraszewski.

In September, 1904, the sum of $6,000.00 was borrowed from the Armstrong County Trust in Kittanning to meet the expense of raising the church. William Detwiller was awarded the contract of raising the church and installing a finished basement under the edifice. The church was elevated some four feet and supported firmly on a concrete foundation and then brick veneered.

On December 20, 1904, Bishop Richard Phelan died. His successor was Bishop J. F. Regis Canevin. In 1905, the church and the rectory sustained damage from the big flood of that year. In September, 1913, a fire broke out in one of the sacristies and inflicted more damage. The damage was covered by fire insurance to the extent of $3,350.00. Father Thaddeus Siatecki was pastor at the time of the disaster. He immediately proceeded to restore the damage caused by the fire. The entire sanctuary was rebuilt. The tin roof was replaced by the Rubber Roofing Company of Pittsburgh.

Father Julian Luniewski, who served the parish from September 2, 1914, until his death March 4, 1925, paid off the parish debt of $2,500.00, installed a new pipe organ for $3,000.00 (dedicated on Sunday, February 12, 1922) and added three rooms to the rectory. Father Julian Luniewski is buried in Holy Trinity Cemetery, Ford City.

On November 26, 1920, the Most Rev. J. F. Regis Canevin resigned as Bishop of Pittsburgh and was succeeded by the Most Reverend Hugh C. Boyle, who was consecrated on June 29, 1921. Father Leo Chrzanowski, who succeeded Father Julian Luniewski, served the congregation as pastor the longest in its seventy-five year history. He was pastor for nineteen years. During his pastorate, improvements, physical as well as spiritual, were made in the parish. Father Leo Chrzanowski also served as pastor of Saint Lawrence Church in Cadogan, Pennsylvania, which was a mission of St. Francis of Paola Parish. On May 27, 1926, the Most Reverend Bishop Hugh C. Boyle came to the parish to confer the sacrament of confirmation for the first time in the church's history; 135 children and adults were confirmed. The second confirmation was held on April 11, 1932, when 228 young men and women were confirmed; the third, on May 14, 1940, when 206 individuals received confirmation.

Father Leo Chrzanowski died on May 14, 1944, and was buried in Holy Trinity Cemetery, Ford City. The next pastor, Father Vincent Kukleski, served the parish from June 1, 1944, until April 26, 1945. He started two new organizations in the parish: The Sodality of Our Lady (which was in existence a relatively short time) and the Holy Name Society (which attracted many members but eventually suffered a decline). During World War II, 160 young men and women of the parish served with the armed forces. Three died in the service: Dominic Golab, Paul Zydonik, and Anthony Balabazer.

The eighteenth pastor was Father Stanislaus Anuskiewicz, who served from April 26, 1945, until his death July 28, 1948. He was followed by Father Francis Lizik, who pastored for fourteen years, from August 19, 1948, until June 26, 1962. During his time, the parish was almost completely renovated, both spiritually and physically. On April 29, 1949, confirmation was administered to eighty young men and women by the Coadjutor-Bishop of Pittsburgh (and present Cardinal-Archbishop of Detroit) John F. Dearden. In 1950 the church was completely remodeled for the golden jubilee. The interior was refurnished and renovated, while the exterior was strengthened with mortar and cement. The renovation cost $20,000.00. On Sunday, September 20, 1950, the parish celebrated its golden jubilee with a Pontifical Mass offered by Bishop John F. Dearden, Coadjutor of the Diocese of
Pittsburgh. The anniversary occurred during the third Holy Year of the parish's existence and during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII. A banquet concluded the celebration at the Ford City Armory. The pioneer members of the church then included Antonina Szul, Sophie Kissick, Josephine Trop, Mary Elger, and Mr. and Mrs. Philip Stapinski.

During the preceding fifty-year period a total of 1,585 baptisms, 406 funerals, and 416 marriages were conducted in the church.

On December 22, 1950, Bishop, Hugh C. Boyle of Pittsburgh died, and the Most Reverend John F. Dearden succeeded to the see on December 22, 1950. On March 10, 1951, the Diocese of Greensburg was established by division from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, comprising the counties of Armstrong (in which St. Francis of Paola Parish is located), Fayette, Indiana, and Westmoreland in the State of Pennsylvania, with a total population of 682,776. The first Ordinary was Bishop Hugh L. Lamb; he was appointed to Greensburg on May 28, 1951, but was not installed until January 16, 1952.

In 1954, the parish bought a ten-acre tract along Route 128 in South Buffalo Township to be used for a cemetery. The tract of land cost $6,000.00. In 1959, the frontage along Route 128 was changed because of the relocation of the highway, and the frontage was modified as described in Deed Book 450, page 127. The Department of Highways of the State of Pennsylvania paid the church $16,500.00 for the property. The drawing was prepared in accordance with recent diocesan requirements. The cemetery map was compiled from deed records and maps. On April 28, 1954, Bishop Hugh Lamb visited the parish church to confer the sacrament of confirmation on eighty persons. On April 8, 1957, Bishop Lamb confirmed sixty-eight individuals. Bishop Lamb died on December 8, 1959. On February 23, 1960, Monsignor William G. Connare of the Diocese of Pittsburgh was appointed the second Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg. His consecration was held in Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, on May 4, 1960. On October 9, 1958, Pope Pius XII died. On October 28, 1958, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was elected Pope and took the name of Pope John XXIII.

On April 21, 1961, Bishop William G. Connare came to St. Francis of Paola Church to confer the sacrament of confirmation on 100 young men and women. Father Francis Lizik was transferred from this parish to St. John the Evangelist in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, on June 26, 1962.

Father Bronislaus Mieruniski came from St. John the Evangelist in Latrobe to be the pastor of St. Francis of Paola. He was pastor from June 26, 1962, until his death August 3, 1971. He was a kindly old priest, involved in many activities in the parish. "Father John" (as he was known) had never played sports in his life, but he coached basketball and baseball teams. Enthusiastic about children, he was instrumental in spurring interest in youth activities. In recognition for his pastoral services, Father Mieruniski was named a domestic prelate on February 6, 1971, the only pastor of St. Francis of Paola Parish to become a monsignor.

Fourteen months before Father Mieruniski died, Bishop William G. Connare appointed a priest to assist him, Father Francis Lesniowski, who remained until the pastor's death. Father Mieruniski served the parish through the eventful days of the Second Vatican Council, which was called by Pope John XXIII on October 11, 1962, and concluded by Pope Paul VI on December 8, 1965. On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died, and on July 21, 1963, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini became Pope Paul VI. He continued the Council and brought it to an end three years later. Father Mieruniski implemented the Council's decrees in the parish to the best of his ability, especially the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The altar was reversed to face the people, lectors were incorporated into the
liturgy, and the laity took a more active part in the singing of the liturgy.

Father Francis Lesniowski was a great help to Monsignor Mieruniski in his old age. He assumed responsibility for conducting the affairs of the parish. A charismatic group began to function under his direction. He was also involved in ecumenical affairs in the community. He brought the members of the parish community closer together. During his pastorate, three seminarians served at the parish: two were deacons and one seminarian — Rev. Mr. John Butler, Rev. Mr. Rudolph Koser, and Dennis Dellamalva. They helped in the census, the visitation of the sick, the administration of the sacraments, and the work with the youth under Father Francis Lesniowski's direction. On May 29, 1974, Father Michael R. Dylag was assigned as the twenty-second pastor in the parish's history, in the seventy-fourth year of its existence. Shortly after his arrival, Father Dylag carried out the intentions of the people to renovate the church according to the directives of the Second Vatican Council and in preparation for the parish's diamond jubilee.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATIONS

St. Francis of Paola Church is a parish church. Yet architecturally and decoratively, it contains certain distinctive features that make it artistically one of the more interesting churches in the Diocese of Greensburg.

The church's exterior is simple in architecture. There is a touch of the Gothic revival of the late 1800's in its arched windows and doors, its rose window above the main entrance, its masonry buttresses, and its sixty-six foot high bell tower. Simplicity characterizes the inside. The arches separating the nave from the sanctuary and the gabled ceiling also reflect the simpler form of the Gothic revival. The altar of sacrifice is the center of interest and the pivot of attention in the congregation. The eyes of the worshipers travel naturally and unimpeded to the liturgical action celebrating the death and resurrection of the Lord. The altar now is much simpler and clearly visible as the place of sacrifice and a table for the sacramental meal.

The architecture of the church and the design of the sanctuary reveal the primary importance of the altar, which is a symbol of Christ in redemptive action. Thus, the architecture and the furnishings are part of the sacramental sign. They are a spatial extension of the ritual action, the central sacramental sign which communicates its meaning to the people.

The crucifix behind the altar is primarily Mexican in concept with Spanish attributes. It measures about seven and a half feet in height. Realistic in color, it comes from Salamanca, Mexico. It is estimated to be from the seventeenth century.

Colonial art pieces are strictly forbidden to be taken out of Mexico at the present time. Exports of this kind were halted by the Mexican government about five years ago. This is a rare piece.

To the right of the sanctuary, hangs a painting of Our Lady of Częstochowa. The history of the picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa is shrouded in legend and tradition. Legend claims St. Luke the Evangelist as the painter of this picture. He is said to have painted it on a cypress tabletop from the Nazareth house. The image portrays the Holy Mother pensive in suffering, with deep sorrow reflected in her eyes and shadowed brow. In the year 326 St. Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, is reported to have located the picture in Jerusalem. With a collection of other relics, she is said to have brought it to Constantinople, where it remained for several centuries venerated by the emperor's family. As part of the dowry in a marriage between the royal families of Constan-
tinople and Kiev, the picture reached southern Poland. Ladislaus, Prince of Opole and regent for Louis the Great in Poland, found the picture in the castle of Belz during a war with the Ruthenian lords. Seeking a better place for the icon of the Blessed Mother, he brought it to Częstochowa, a small town in central Poland. To protect the picture, Ladislaus, in 1382, invited to Poland from Hungary members of the Order of St. Paul the First Hermit, known as the Pauline Fathers. Science traces the origin of the picture to the fifth or sixth century A.D. The picture is one of the oldest images of the Blessed Virgin. The dark coloring on the faces and hands is characteristic of pictures painted during this period.

Six hundred years ago the Pauline Fathers were entrusted with guarding the picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa. Under their direction, the Shrine at Częstochowa became one of the largest in the world. Over two million pilgrims visit it annually. The scars on the face of the Blessed Virgin are from 1430, when bandits, wanting to steal the picture, struck it with a sword.

Joseph Jankowski, a Cleveland artist, painted the copy of the Częstochowa Madonna in St. Francis Church. His religious paintings span a period of thirty-five years and grace many churches and synagogues. His works have won nineteen national awards and can be found in many museums and in university, public, and private American collections. His works are also in collections in England, Denmark, Italy, and Mexico. Professor Jankowski currently teaches advanced painting at the Cleveland Institute of Art; he formerly taught at the University of Alabama, the University of Tennessee and Notre Dame College. His works include ceramic murals, paintings, enamels, and drawings. He created the painting of Our Lady of Orchard Lake, painted Our Lady of Vladimir for the Diocese of Cleveland, and Our Lady of Guadalupe for a convent in Steubenville.

The painting which hangs in the sanctuary of St. Francis Church is an exact copy of the picture in the famous monastery of the Pauline Fathers in Częstochowa, Poland. It was given by Elizabeth Pechan in memory of her mother, Clara Tenerowicz. This painting of the Madonna was chosen for our sanctuary because she is the Queen of Poland, from where comes the heritage of the parish. The altar of reservation, or the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, is to the left of the sanctuary. The tabernacle and the Blessed Sacrament shrine are designed for private prayer outside of liturgical worship, that is, at times other than the Mass. The Mass, now celebrated at the altar of sacrifice, is the focus of attention.

The action of the Mass is central and calls for the full, conscious, and active participation of all present under the leadership of the priest celebrant. Pope Pius X initiated devotional changes at the beginning of the century, when he introduced and urged frequent communion. Even after that, however, the Mass for some remained only a means and an opportunity for receiving communion, as may be recalled from the custom of receiving communion outside the Mass. Pope Pius X also began his pastoral and doctrinal rehabilitation of the Mass, when he coined the slogan, "Pray the Mass" (rather than, pray at Mass). Attention was thus shifted to the Mass action; and this increased the Catholic use of missals.

The climax of this movement came with the Second Vatican Council, which stated (again after Pope Pius X) that the liturgy (and preeminently the Eucharistic sacrifice) is the "primary and indispensible source of the true Christian spirit." In explanation of this statement, the Fathers of the Council made two closely related doctrinal pronouncements. First, Jesus Christ achieved His task of "redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God... principally by the paschal mystery
of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby dying, He
deestroyed our death, and rising, He restored our life." Second, it is in the liturgy, and precisely
in the Eucharistic sacrifice, that we celebrate and perpetually renew this paschal mystery of the
Lord's death and resurrection. "For the liturgy, through which the work of our redemption is
accomplished, most of all in the living sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby
the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real
nature of the Church."

In an insight as old as St. Paul (who spoke of the "the mystery of Christ") and the crucifixion itself,
the Fathers of Vatican II affirmed the fullness of Eucharistic meaning, centered on the sacramental
renewal of the Lord's death and resurrection. Communion itself is the fruit of this sacrifice (and
should be received as its fruit), while the Lord's presence in the tabernacle is also its product. On
the window sill of the window near the tabernacle, under the stained glass window of St. Francis
of Paola, is a reliquary containing a relic of St. Francis of Paola. It was donated by Regina Molsky
in memory of her parents, Francis and Anastasia Sporny.

The pulpit is prominent in the sanctuary. Beautiful in form, it symbolizes the throne of God's word.
The pulpit was donated by Stanislaus Szalankiewicz twenty-five years ago in memory of his parents,
Francis and Katherine Szalankiewicz. Removed from the sanctuary about ten years ago, the pulpit
was returned to its former location at the time of the renovation.

To the right of the church, near the sanctuary, at the side entrance, hangs a drawing of St. Francis
of Paola done by Ralph Woehrman of Cleveland, Ohio. The drawing is a combination of acrylic
paint, pencil, and india ink. The artist alternated with the three media as he fashioned the draw-
ing. His sketch is based on research and study of the existing portraits of the saint by some of the
world's great painters — Goya, Murillo, Tiepolo, Velasquez, and others. The completed portrait
is a composite of the available images of St. Francis of Paola. The drawing has been donated in
memory of Anthony and Katherine Trop by their daughter, Eleanor Trop.

The people of St. Francis of Paola Parish are justifiably proud of their church building. With its
distinctive architecture and its artistic decorations, it is truly one of the ecclesiastical jewels in the
diocesan crown of Greensburg.

PERSONNEL OF PARISH - THE PRIESTS

During the first fifteen years of St. Francis of Paola Parish's existence, thirteen priests successively
served the church. During the last sixty years, only nine pastors ministered in the parish despite
the four times longer span of time. The twenty-two priests who were pastors of St. Francis of Paola
Parish during the seventy-five years from 1900 to 1975 include:

Francis Miskiewicz April 1900 - Sept. 29,1901
(Then two months without a priest)
Andrew Dzatkowiec November 17,1901 — March 2,1902
(Four months without a priest)
Joseph Galewski June 29,1902 - October 5,1902
(One month without a priest)
Stanislaus Jastrzembski November 2,1902 - April 12,1903
John Machnikowski April 25, 1903 - November 21,1903
Since its organization, the parish has had twenty-three priests (including the organizer, Father Walter Miskiewicz). The only assistant was Father Francis Lesniowski, who later served as pastor. The parish also had one Monsignor, Bronislaus Mieruniski.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council of St. Francis of Paola Parish held its first meeting on October 20, 1970, in the rectory. Father Bronislaus Mieruniski, pastor, and Father Francis Lesniowski, assistant pastor, were present. The council members were elected by the parishioners of St. Francis of Paola Church. Men and women served as council members. Eighteen were in attendance and elected these officers: John Placha, president; Cecilia Nimerosky, vice-president; and Laura Elger, secretary. The council organized four standing committees: finance and maintenance, social, liturgical, and education.

The first meeting discussed the practice of Saturday evening Masses, which was approved. The first Saturday evening Mass was then held on November 28, 1970, at 7 P.M. Regular council meetings are held every three months.

A High School Youth committee was later formed, and these officers were elected: John Hudak, Jr., president; Leonard Wojton, Jr., vice-president; and Eileen Cieply, secretary.

The officers of the 1975 Parish Council are: Valentine Wojton, president; Walter Tenerowicz, vice-president; and Elizabeth Pechan, secretary.
VOCATIONS

In its seventy-five years of existence, St. Francis of Paola Parish has had two parishioners ordained to the priesthood. The first was Father John Smolen, ordained June 28, 1928. He was born September 19, 1904, of Adalbert Smolen and Julia Obrene. The second was Father Ladislaus Isidore Szymanski, son of Mary Orchowska Szymanski and the late Konstanty Szymanski. A member of the Franciscan Order, he was ordained on May 13, 1945, and celebrated his first solemn High Mass, Sunday, May 20, 1945, in St. Francis of Paola Church.

The only female vocation to the religious life is Sister Mary John Cook of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. She is the daughter of John Cook and Sophie Ritrosky.

CULTURE, TRADITION, CUSTOMS

An intelligent person is one with knowledge of his personal relationship to the past and to the future, to the nation of which he is now a part, and to the nation or nations from which his forefathers descended. Without such knowledge, he is unable to understand fully himself, his character, his environment, and his place in the world at large. The current bicentennial American interest in the past of its inhabitants, in the lands of their origin and their peoples, in the forebears of their friends and relatives-in-law is an encouraging sign of intellectual and cultural maturity. For nearly two hundred years, non-Anglo-Saxon "foreigners" were often frowned upon, sometimes despised and condemned. As a result, many immigrants and their descendants were led to despise and condemn their entire European or "foreign" cultural heritage, when in reality they should have despised and condemned only that in their "foreign" heritage which was worthy of condemnation and rejection. This tragic American bias against retaining anything "foreign" has harmed America, for it has deprived it of much beauty and value. Civilization, culture, and tradition do not come into being out of nothing; they are the outgrowth of a dynamic process of evolution.

1. CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Every immigrant coming to America brought with him his native culture, customs, and traditions. By retaining them in his daily life, he gave the land of his adoption an opportunity to adopt and incorporate into its own developing culture the best of his possessions. No one culture should dictate to another; no one culture should forbid another to contribute something of its own; no one culture should block the efforts made by others to enrich this great American land.

Non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants make no demands upon Anglo-Saxon largesse. Instead, they want to give something to America. They want to share what to them is true, good, and beautiful with all Americans. The present reawakening of ethnic interest among various groups has much to offer to America, which has often thoughtlessly and lamentably broken ties with old traditions. Children in many cases never hear the sound of the language in which their parents were lulled to sleep. Even adults have no appreciation for or insight into the lives and characters of their forebears of two or three generations ago.

Let the following excerpts from several sources further illuminate the views expressed above.

"The Church of Christ, the faithful depository of the teaching of Divine Wisdom, cannot and does not think of deprecating or disdaining the particular characteristics which each people, with jealous and intelligible pride, cherishes and retains as a precious heritage. Her aim is a
supernatural union in all embracing love, deeply felt and practiced, and not the unity which is exclusively external and superficial and by that very fact weak. The Church hails with joy and follows with her maternal blessing every method of guidance and care which aims at a wise and orderly evolution of particular forces and tendencies having their origin in the individual character of each race, provided that they are not opposed to the duties incumbent on men from their unity of origin and common destiny.” Pius XII, Summi Pontificatus.

"The Catholic Church, according to a comparison of Benson, is like a great cathedral, which shelters under one extensive roof a great variety of small churches and chapels. It is one and universal wherever men acknowledge membership in it, profess the same truths of faith, submit to the same hierarchy, and receive essentially the same sacraments. But the Church, though it has ends which transcend time and nationality, is also a living organism which lives and wages battle on earth, immersed in the vortex of history, built by individuals and nations. The Church does not limit itself to preaching eternal truths; it created and creates its own culture. And that is why there is in the Church not only one common foundation and one flight to the heavens, but, consistent with the original comparisons made to the Gothic cathedral, also many varied chapels, differing in as many varied forms as the spirit in keeping with faith, sacraments and hierarchy can create.

"For example, there are in the Church many schools of thought, many systems of spirituality and many styles not only of architecture but also of prayer. It is no wonder, then, that the Catholic faith embraces and integrates these various national chapels. The nation has been for many ages that group which has most intensely influenced and molded the life of its people, impressing its stamp on their thought, culture and custom. It would be strange, indeed, if the nation did not also leave its mark on religion in all its variegated aspects of relationship to God and neighbor. It is an incontrovertible fact that Catholicism integrates in itself a variety of many nations, thoughts, prayers and customs.

"I would further claim that the Catholic concept of culture has nothing in common with the all-leveling trickle. It is based on the ideal harmony of hundreds of cultures and their local differences. The Church is not the "corpus politicum" of Hobbes, composed of identical atoms, but an organic whole blending in one faith and under one spiritual authority an unlimited variety of nuances, the sum body and interrelation of which creates the oneness and greatness of the whole. That is why, parenthetically speaking, wherever the Catholic Church exercises true rule over souls, it is then more than any other a true Church of that country in the truest and fullest meaning of the words." I. M. Bochenski, O. P., Szkice Etyczne "In our own American community we have sought to submerge all of the old hatreds, all the old fears, of the old world. We are Anglo-Saxon and Latin, we are Irish and Teuton and Jewish and Scandinavian and Slav — we are Americans. We belong to many races and colors and creeds — we are American."

Franklin D. Roosevelt Address delivered in Boston, Mass., Oct. 30, 1940

"America is a land of but one people, gathered from many countries. Some came for love of money and some for love of freedom. Whatever the lure that brought us, each has his gift, Irish lad and Scot, Englishman and Dutch, Italian, Greek, French and Spaniard, Slav, Teuton, Norse, Negro — all have come with their gifts and have laid them on the Altar of America.

"All brought their music-dirge and dance and wassail song, proud march and religious chant. All brought music and their instruments for the making of music, those many children of the
harp and lute. All brought their poetry, winged tales of man’s many passions, folk songs and psalm, ballads of heroes and tunes of the sea, lilting scraps caught from the sky and field, or mighty dreams and dramas that tell of primal struggles of the profoundest meaning. All brought poetry. All brought art, fancies of the mind, woven in wood or wool, silk, stone or metal — rugs and baskets, gates of fine design and modeled gardens, houses and walls, pillars and roofs, windows, statues and painting — all brought their art and hand craft. "Then too, each brought some homely things, some touch of the familiar home field or forest, kitchen or dress — a favorite tree or fruit, an accustomed flower, a style in cookery or in costume — each brought some homelike, familiar thing." Franklin H. Lane, America’s Making.

"It is a high privilege to bear witness to the debt which this country owes to men of Polish blood. Gratefully we acknowledge the services of those intrepid champions of human freedom — Pulaski and Kosciuszko — whose very names are watchwords of liberty and whose deeds are part of the imperishable record of American independence...

They and the millions of other men and women of Polish blood, who have united their destinies with those of America — whether in the days of Colonial settlement; in the war to attain independence; in the hard struggle out of which emerged our national unity; in the great journeyings across the Western Plains to the slopes of the Pacific; on farms or in town and city — through all of our history they have made their full contribution to the up-building of our institutions and to the fulfillment of our national life."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Arlington National Cemetery, October 11,1937 "In contrast with other immigrant groups, the American Pole has been able to retain to an unusual degree the Polish culture pattern within the American environment. This is due to the persistence with which the Polish immigrant clings to his nationalistic memories, the strength of the Roman Catholic Church, the unselfish willingness with which the American Pole supports his own institutions in America, the continued interest of the Polish Government, and the activities of the Kosciuszko Foundation. When this tendency is not carried to extremes, and when it aims to integrate the best elements of Polish culture into the culture pattern of American's culture, then it helps to create the best type of American Pole." Joseph S. Roucek, Racial and National Minorities.

DISTINCTIVE CUSTOMS

We can come to know a country through its people and their customs. These reflect their everyday life, their hopes and prayers. They express basic human sentiments: love, thanksgiving, joy, fear, fidelity, concern, forgiveness, prayer and devotion. They are the key to national character and to the understanding and appreciation of those things which mold man, which influence him, and which urge him to struggle for life, freedom, and happiness.

Americans of Polish descent number over six million and constitute one-sixth of the Catholic population of this country. They feel that the best of what they have received from their ancestors can be given to America and woven into its culture to enrich and beautify it. They look at the cultures of other immigrants and appreciate the best in them. May this portrayal of the customs of Americans of Polish ancestry make it easier for others to appreciate the culture which they have inherited.

The Catholic religious customs of Poland have been celebrated at St. Francis of Paola Church for
over seven decades. Polish feasts and fasts reflect the hardships and gaiety, the plowing and praying and playing, the festivals and dances, and the religious service and unceasing devotion of the Polish countryside and modern metropolis. Polish traditional ways express the life of a people who believe that their home is a true "church in miniature."

Poles have been Catholics for one thousand years. They have not shown infidelity to their religion. They have not, as a nation, deviated into error or schism. They have not rebelled against the authority of Rome. Their life has been permeated by the influence of religion. Much of their daily routine is associated in some way with deep religious beliefs. Their festivals are connected with the church calendar. Their holidays are related to and named in honor of saints. Practically every day bears the name of some saint. Numerous proverbs incorporate saints' names, predict the weather, give advice on farming, or remark about phenomena in nature.

Poland is a land of poetry and legend. No European country celebrates so many religious holidays, almost all of which are related in some way to the cycle of work on the land, because ninety-five percent of Poland is Catholic and one half of its population is rural. The home and the church are the Pole's chief interests. For the church, which is the social center of the village, he will dress as for a party. The piety of the Pole is practical, not theoretical. For him, God is a loving Father who helps him in his work, blesses his crops, cures his ills, provides his bread, gives him his children, and receives his loved ones in death. God is not an abstract concept about whom the Pole speaks but a Person whom he loves, worships, and adores. Christ, Mary, and the saints are intimately familiar figures who come to his aid with counsel, guidance, sympathy and consolation. The Pole is often poor in worldly wealth but rich in spirit. He is proud and fiery. He is a hard worker who loves to play. Though restrained, he is capable of being free, realistic, hardheaded, sensible. He believes in self-discipline. He is independent and much concerned about honor, and he has the genius for fusing every event of his intensely lived life into a deeply felt religious and national tradition.

The history of Poland is not a history of external changes in rule and boundaries, but of internal integrity and solidarity in custom and tradition. Because of its location in central Europe, Poland found itself at once the bridge and highway between East and West. Because it had no natural boundaries, it was constantly open to attack. Through 1000 years of its history, it has stubbornly resisted conquest. Almost all of its wars took on the character of religious crusades, for they were fought in defense not only of a national entity but also of religious heritage. The Turk, Tartar, Swede, Nazi, Communist — all tried to sever Poland from its Catholic foundation. Always the Pole resisted, as he continues to do today. The Pole jealously guards his religion, his language, and his customs. He regards anyone who tries to take any of these away from him as a mortal enemy trying to destroy him. The soil of Poland is sprinkled with the blood of martyrs for whom religion and nationality—Catholicism and Polishness—were synonymous. The Pole has one interpretation of life — a religious one. In his country, you do not merely see religion, you feel it as well.

The Pole loves that which appeals to the aesthetic sense of the soul. He loves singing and dancing, processions and pilgrimages, flowers and color, pageantry and ceremony. This is why the richness of Catholic worship suits his ebullient and effusive temperament so admirably.

In an essay entitled "The Church in Poland," Fr. I. M. Bochenski, the eminent Polish Dominican, has pointed out that the church of his native land is one of the great pillars of contemporary Catholic culture. Though Poland has produced comparatively few great thinkers, limited missionary activity,
no great expeditions, it has accomplished more than all these together, because it has realized the
end for which the Church was established. By creating a unified people, living with faith and charity,
it has occupied itself with the very reason of its existence and not with its means, for essentially
the work of the Church is not earthly fame, not a highly developed theology, not the conquest
of foreign lands, but the salvation of souls. The Catholic characteristic of Poland is nothing like the
splendor and mysticism of Spain, nor anything like the abstract profundity of France. Words cannot
describe it, for it is fashioned of the intangible qualities of piety and devotion which are rooted in
the heart and which meet the eye at every devotional service, at every prayer, every procession, in
every Polish home. Through one thousand years, the Church of Poland was able to create its own
admirable and distinctive body of custom, art, and Catholic life which on all levels seek to effect a
deeper realization of the teachings of the Gospel.

The Poles, as Catholics, have many customs in common with other Catholic countries. But only
those which are distinctive of Poland and which are not found in other Catholic lands will be noted
here. These customs still exist in Poland. They have been brought to America and adapted to local
conditions and needs, but they can be more fully understood and appreciated in the light of the
source in which they had their origin.

The mosaic of American culture is now in the process of being wrought. The descendants of Span-
iards, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Irishmen, Germans, Poles, Italians, Greeks, Czechs, Swedes, and
Hollanders are all contributing colorful fragments of their customs to fashion the picture of beauty
which will result. Without all these traditions, the tree of American culture will never produce the
fruit for which it has tremendous potential.

THE POLISH STYL OF CATHOLICISM

The Polish style of Catholicism has been expressed most graphically and dramatically in a series of
customs and practices that follow each other during the year, as it passes through its four seasons.
This is how Polish Catholics have lived and worshiped for over fifty generations.

THE CUSTOMS OF WINTER (ZIMA - WINTER) The beginning of the year of customs and traditions
for the Polish people coincides with the beginning of the ecclesiastical year or Advent. Because all
traditions in this country for the past 1000 years have stemmed from the deep religious spirit of
the people, it is logical to begin their calendar of customs at this point.

ADWENT - ADVENT. Boże wieczny, Boże żywy Odkupiciela prawdziwy, Wysłuchaj nasz glos płaczliwy.
Przyjdź co rychlej miłosierny! A Boże, człowiek mizerny Ciebie czeka, Tobie wierny. God eternal,
God Almighty, Our Redeemer most true, Hear our wailing voices. Quickly come, O full of Mercy, O
God; sinful man Awaits Thee, pledging fidelity.

So begins a popular Polish Advent Hymn and so begins the calendar of Polish religious customs —
with an Act of Faith in God, an Act of Hope in His Redemption, an Act of Humility in the petition of
a prayer and in the admission of guilt, and an Act of Charity in the pledge of fidelity. For the Pole,
as for every Catholic, Advent is a time of penance, of prayer and fasting. The natural gaiety of the
Polish soul changes into a spirit of serious reflection. An ancient song declares: "Święta Katarzyna
kluze zgubiła, Święty Jędrzej znalazł, Zamknął skrzypki zaraz." "St. Catharine (November 25th) lost
the keys, St. Andrew (November 30th) found them, and promptly hid the violin." In some parts of
Poland the farm-hands play sad and lonely melodies on special windpipes carved of willow, called
"ligawki" — flutes. It was on such flutes, so says a legend, that the Bethlehem shepherds played on the Eve of Christmas to greet the new-born Infant.

**RORATY - ROGATION DAYS.** Advent in Poland is solemnized from oldest times by the "Roraty" or "Matins," in honor of the Mother of Christ. The theme of the hymns sung on this occasion is preparation for the Last Judgment. During their singing, which takes place very early in the morning — a symbol of constant preparedness for the final judgment — a seven-armed candelabrum was lighted by representatives of the regal family, the Church, government, land-owners, the military, townsfolk, and peasants, with each repeating as he placed the candle into place: "Gotów jestem na sąd Boży" — "I am prepared for God’s Judgment."

**Prządki** — Evenings of spinning. The women of the Polish villages occupy the evenings of Advent with spinning. Gathering in the largest home of the district, each of the women brings her own distaff, spool, reel, and food. As they tell stories and sing religious hymns, they spin and weave the cloth they will use for their linens, bedding, and clothes. One of the most favorite subjects of the legends narrated during these evenings is Our Lady and the Saints.

**Andrzejki** — Eve of St. Andrew (November 29th) On the Eve of St. Catharine (November 24th) the young men entertain themselves with games as to who shall be their future wives. The turn of the young girls comes on the Eve of St. Andrew, for this Saint is considered the patron of marriage. In some parts of the country the girls fast during the day and pray that the Saint soon provide them with a husband. Many traditional games called "Andrzejki" are indulged in to determine which of the youths shall first be blessed by the exchange of vows: the pouring of melted wax on cold water and guessing the figures; throwing of a shoe over one’s head — if the tip falls so as to face the door, it is a sign of marriage; the tossing of tidbits to a dog — the girl whose tidbit the dog takes first shall be the first to marry; the floating of walnut shells — those whose walnut shells touch shall soon marry.

**Sw. Barbary** — Feast of St. Barbara (December 4th) A virgin descended from the tribe of Jesse who was martyred in Asia Minor, St. Barbara is a popular Saint in Poland. She is a patroness of the mountaineers, who have a deep devotion to her and regard her as a special protectress of those engaged in dangerous occupations, especially the miners. In other parts of the country on her feast the peasants drop seeds of wheat and branches of the cherry-tree into the water which are to float down the river and burst forth with blossoms on Christmas Day. Hence these are called: "Gałązki Sw. Barbary" — St. Barbara’s branches."

**Św. Mikołaj — St. Nicholas** (December 6th) Polish children don't have to wait until Christmas for their gifts. In Poland the equal of Santa Claus comes on the eve of his feast — the eve of St. Nicholas. And he is expected there in much the same way as he is here in America — by the good with joy, by the bad with fear. Dressed in a long gown, with a tall headpiece imitative of the episcopal mitre on his head, and a long pole fashioned into a crosier in his hand, some man of the village visits from home to home, there listening to the children recite their catechism, reminding them of their misdemeanors, threatening them with his staff, complimenting and praising the good, and distributing apples, cookies, cakes, and holy pictures to all.

**Niepokalane Poczęcie — Immaculate Conception** (December 8th) Deep love for Mary is a part of every Pole's religious training. This feast of Mary, therefore, occupies a prominent place in his devotion to the Mother of God. Traditionally the new Sodalists are accepted into Our Lady's Sodality
on this day. After the reception the novices sing the "Godzinki" or "Little Hours" in honor of Mary. Structured to resemble the Little Hours of the Roman Breviary, the "Godzinki" express in music and song the Pole's affection and admiration for the Queen of his Fatherland.

Święta Lucja — Feast of St. Lucy (December 13th) Before the Gregorian reform of the calendar, the Feast of St. Lucy came on December 23rd. This date marked the lengthening of the day after the first day of Winter, so that there arose the ancient Polish saying: Święta Lucja dnia przyrzuca. ..." — "St. Lucy makes the day grow longer. . . ."

BOŻE NARODZENIE - CHRISTMAS "Gwiazdka" (Feast of the Star) or "Boże Narodzenie" (The Birth of God) is a Feast very rich in religious customs among the Poles. It is a family feast, and most of the customs have their source in the life of the home.

Wilia — The vigil and Christmas Eve supper. With the women working in the kitchen over the holiday delicacies and the children busy with decorations, Christmas Eve is climaxed by the elaborate eve supper or "Wilia," for which an odd number of meatless courses (5, 7, 11) is prescribed. One place at the table is left vacant for a guest or beggar, for the Pole says: "Gość w dom, Bóg w dom" — "A guest in the home is God in the home." Under the white table cloth at the center of the table is placed a handful of hay over which is placed the "opłatek" or wafer. When the first star appears in the heavens, the traditional "Wilia" begins. Prior to the wilia supper the Pole observes a scrupulous abstinence from almost all food. The Wilia menu may consist of: Barszcz — beet soup; Uszka — filled patties with earlike shapes; Kutia — pottage made from wheat or barley with poppy seeds and honey; Śledź — herring; Ryba — stuffed carp or pike; Groch i Kapusta — cabbage and beans seasoned with mushrooms; Pierogi—dumplings filled with cabbage, mushrooms, dates or cottage cheese; Babka — coffee cake filled with almonds and poppy seeds; and Kompot — pudding made of dried plums, pears, peaches and cherries.

Oplatek — Wafer. After grace is said and before sitting down to eat, all those present at the Wilia share the "opłatek" or wafer, symbol of love, brotherhood, forgiveness, innocence, and Christ. The father breaks the wafer with his wife, exchanging wishes for health and happiness. Then the "oplatek" is broken with others, beginning with the oldest. Typical wishes may be "May God give you happiness, health, and fortune, and after death a heavenly crown." When the wafer is accepted, a willingness to forgive and forget is expressed; when it is offered to another, a willingness to share is denoted. A special pink-colored wafer is taken to the barnyard and fed to the cattle, thus recalling the part which the beast played in the first Nativity. It is customary to send a wafer by mail to absent relatives and friends as a sign of spiritual union.

Choinka — The Christmas Tree. As in other Western countries, the Christmas tree is a source of much festivity, especially for the children. Decorations for the tree consisting of apples, nuts, forms of animals, colored paper spheres, stars, spiders, cutouts and flowers, are made by the girls in the home. Under the tree are found the gifts. Atop the tree is always a star and angel.

Gwiazdor — Santa Claus. On Christmas Eve one of the villagers dons a long cap and an inverted fur coat, attaches a beard to his chin, and with basket and whip, visits the children in the village homes. After quizzing them on religious subjects, and asking them their prayers, he rewards them with cookies, nuts, and apples provided by their parents.

Kolendy — Christmas Carols. The Polish Christmas Carols, or "Kolendy," are a musical expression of the profound religious convictions and sentiments which the Polish Nation has drawn from the
First Christmas. They occupy a unique place in the musical literature of Catholic Europe, for unlike the carols of other countries, the Kolenda is not only a prayer, but also a story, a short musical drama portraying some event from Christ’s Nativity. Unrivalled in number and variety, the Kolenda tenderly, sometimes with affectionate familiarity, retells the old yet ever new story in the plain, touching words of the Peasant. The Kolendy may be divided into three categories — religious, legendary, and imaginative. The melodies are truly Polish — jolly, meditative, tender, even humorous — characteristic of the Polish peasant. The religious carols, among the most profound in sentiment of all Polish hymns, owe their origin to monks and religious. The legendary are based on the books of the Apocrypha and relate minutest details of the wondrous story of Christmas.

The imaginative owe their origin to simple peasant folk who in narrating the story of the Nativity used familiar surroundings taken from their own homes. In their songs Bethlehem becomes a Polish village and Jesus is born in Poland.

**Pasterka — Midnight Mass.** The Wilia takes on a religious significance when viewed in the light that it is a preparation for the Pasterka or Midnight Mass. Regardless of weather conditions, every Pole who is not too old or infirm hurries to his parish church to attend this Mass. In the mind of all participants, the peace and reconciliation which had resulted from the breaking of the wafer is blessed by the priest through the Midnight Mass. Before entering the church, the people break the wafer with their friends and acquaintances who await them by the church door. Popular belief has it that whoever desires a bountiful harvest must precede all others to the "Pasterka." During the Mass Kolendy are sung.

**Dzień Bożego Narodzenia — Christmas Day.** Christmas Day is spent at home; it is a family holiday. The singing of Kolendy plays a prominent role on that day. It is not until the next day that relatives and friends are visited. For the holly which does not grow in Poland, the peasant substitutes cherry twigs.

**Szopka — Marionette Theatre.** This is always a favorite with children who will pull the strings to make the dolls move while they recite specially prepared poems and sing traditional kolendy. The youngsters will work all year perfecting themselves in wood-craft, preparing new and better dolls for the Szopka. The custom began in the 17th century and since that time Kraków and its environs has become most famous for its Szopka.

**Jaselka — Nativity Plays With St. Stephen's Day** begins the period of Jaselka which lasts until January 6th. Jaselka is an amateur dramatic presentation which enacts the events connected with the birth of Christ. Besides the traditional characters, the "Jew," with his "peculiar Polish" and pranks, dominates the scene. The Jaselska took place in the Church from the 13th Century on, but were removed in the 18th because slowly they lost their original super-religious spirit, and were henceforth presented in the schools, recreation centers, and even out-of-doors. The Jaselska are also called "Herody" or "Maryjki." A whole library of Jaselska could be assembled, for some of the greatest Polish poets and prose writers lent their talents to their creation.

**GODY - "DWUNASTNICA" -**

The Feasts — "The twelve days" The period from Christmas to Epiphany is called "Gody" or "The period of Feasts." Another descriptive name given to it is the "Dwunastnica" or "The Twelve Days." Some of the year's most significant feasts fall into this two weeks interval.
Sw. Szczepana — St. Stephen (December 26th) There is an apparent sharp contrast between the Feast of the Nativity and the Feast of St. Stephen. Yet to the Church they have much in common, for in the first feast is commemorated the birth of Christ; in the second, the birth of the Church of Christ. In Poland the stoning of St. Stephen is imitated in the throwing of grain at members of the family, at friends, and at animals. December 26th was also the day on which all work agreements between master and hand were concluded.

Sw. Jana, Apostola i Ewangelisty — St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (December 27th) The scriptures repeat in varied ways that all things have been created for God. For His greater glory should all creatures be employed, and through them will come His benediction and guardianship. Before the parochial Mass offered on the feast of St. John, the pastor of every parish blesses a large quantity of wine, to be served to all present after the Mass, during which Christmas carols are joyfully sung. Even the children receive their small shares. This ritual com-memorates two occasions — the wedding feast at Cana, where Christ changed water into wine; and the incident in St. John’s life where he was given poisoned wine to drink by his enemies. To the faithful the wine is a sacramental which is intended to prevent or cure throat illnesses.

Sw. Sylwestra — St. Sylvester — New Year’s Eve (December 31st) The graces and benefits of the past year; the future destiny of man; the swift passage of time — these are the thoughts which occupy the mind of the Pole on the Feast of St. Sylvester. Not known in Poland until recently as New Year’s Eve, December 31st is spent in serious reflection of the past, as the faithful recall with sorrow the deaths of their dear ones and their hearts give thanks to God for all His blessings. In the small villages it is the custom for all to gather at the parish church for special devotions of thanksgiving. After this some of the folks may wish to gather together to greet the New Year. At such gatherings the hostess treats her friends with “pączki” (jelly doughnuts) and hot punch. At the stroke of midnight all touch glasses and wish each other "Dosiego Roku" — "A Happy New Year."

Nowy Rok — New Year’s Day (January 1st) New Year’s Day was always a day of great joy in Poland. Traditionally it was a day when the royalty and wealthy noblemen would shower generously their subjects and vassals with gifts and mementos. Children extended greetings expressed in original verses to their parents and superiors, and college students did the same to their landlords who in turn rewarded them with gifts. One expression of well-wishing was: "Bóg cię stykaj" — "God protect you." In another ancient custom peasants were wont to shower oats upon each other as a symbol of golden harvest. In the homes there was bread on the table for unexpected guests or for the poor. On January 1st also began the “caroling of the clergy” — "Koledowanie duchowieństwa." Accompanied by the organist and altar boy, the pastor would visit each home in his parish. Here the occupants would prepare a table covered with a white table cloth, on it a crucifix, two candles, holy water and an aspergil. As the priest entered, he would wish all a Happy New Year, bless the home, distribute holy pictures, quiz the children, console the sorrowful, encourage and pray for the infirm, and wish all God’s blessings.

Trzech Król — Epiphany (January 6th) The Eve of the Feast of the Epiphany is called "Szczodry Wieczór" — "Generous Eve." The spirit was one commemorative of the generosity of the Magi toward Christ. It was spent in visiting, playing games, and singing carols. In some districts the exchange of token gifts was traditional, while in others the women distributed sweet rolls, called "szczodrówki," to the caroling youngsters. Early on the day of the Feast, the head of the household removes the
star from above the entrance of the home, which had been displayed on Christmas Day, and carries it into the field. Then the whole family heads for church where they purchase a small box containing fir-resin, juniper, gold-leaf, and chalk, to be blessed during the High Mass. Once at home, the symbols K + M + B and the date are written over the doors as a sign impetrating divine protection and blessing. With this day ends the holiday spirit of Christmas festivity.

Święto Matki Boskiej Gromnicznej — Feast of Our Lady of the Candles (February 2nd) On this day the faithful bring to Church candles, often made by themselves from their own beeswax, decorated with artificial flowers and bright ribbons, to be blessed by the priest. After the ceremony all walk in procession around the Church carrying the lighted candles called "Gromnice." At home the "Gromnica" is lighted and set on a window sill during a thunder storm, as a source of protection against the elements, and is placed in the hands of the dying on their death bed, as a source of protection against the assaults of the devil.

THE CUSTOMS OF SPRING

Wiosna - Spring. After the death and somber spirit of winter comes the vitality of the new life of spring. With this resurrection of nature is closely associated in the minds of the faithful the resurrection of Our Lord. The religious customs of the season, therefore, find their basis in these two events of great importance.

Przedpoście - Pre Lenten Sason. This is a transitional period between Christmas and Lent. Joy is the dominant note struck by the customs. While anticipating the severity of Lent, the people give vent to all the possible gladness that lies in their hearts through parties, visiting, and generally intense social life.

Zapusty i Ostatki — Shrovetide and the Last Days. The last days before Lent are called "Ostatki" or "Zapusty" (Shrovetide). The spirit of revelry, merrymaking, and joviality is expressed through carnivals, masquerades, and gay parades.

Kulig — Pre-Lenten Carnival. One of the oldest pre-lenten customs dating back to the 14th century is the "Kulig" or masquerade carnival, which in spirit resembles the medieval knightly tourney. In addition to long and detailed planning, the "Kulig" requires many costumes of Jews, Gypsies, Beggars, other personages, and animals. Riding on horse-drawn sleighs, ringing bells, telling jokes, singing songs, the men and women ride from home to home and demonstrate their joy, trying thereby to exhaust themselves and satisfy fully their desires for merriment before the time of penance. Many evenings are spent in this amusement and from Fat Thursday to Shrove Tuesday the "Kulig" reaches the heights of revelry. The whole pre-lenten celebration is concluded by the "Podkurek" or "Midnight Snack" consisting of milk, eggs, and herrings — a form of preparation for the Lenten diet.

Pączki — Jelly or Fried Doughnuts. One vestige of the traditional feasting associated with the "Zapusty" which still remains and which has attained widespread popularity in the United States is found in the "pączki" or jelly doughnuts, symbols of the bounty of God and His goodness to man.

POST-LENT

The spirit of prayer, penance, fast, and abstinence predominates during the whole Season of Lent and regular attendance at frequent religious devotions is the rule.
Środa Popielcowa (Popielec) — Ash Wednesday Because the spirit of gaiety ran high the previous day and evening, in the larger cities it sometimes carried over to the first day of Lent. But in most parts of the country the penitential nature of the season quickly takes over. The ashes placed on the foreheads of the faithful by the priest after Mass serve as a reminder of death and man's future destiny. In some regions the older women would play tricks on their friends on this day.

Gorzkie Żale — The Bitter Laments - Finding their origin in the medieval mystery play, the Gorzkie Żale were first conducted as a religious service in Poland in 1707. There is nothing like them in any other Christian land. Usually sung on Sunday afternoons and Friday evenings of Lent, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the Bitter Laments consist of three parts, each containing a Hymn which considers the Passion and Death of Our Lord, a Lamentation which expresses sorrow for sins, and a sympathetic conversation of the soul with Mary.

Święty Kazimierz—Feast of St. Casimir (March 4th) The second son of King Casimir IV was born in 1458. Named Casimir after his father, he distinguished himself in his youth by a deep piety and blessed charity to the poor. As a young man he refused the crown of Hungary. On his deathbed St. Casimir asked that a copy of his well-known hymn to Our Lady which begins: "Dnia każdego, Boga mego, Matkę, wysławiaj" — "Daily, daily, sing to Mary," should be buried with him.

Gregorianki — "The Gregs" (March 12th) The spring scholastic semester begins on the Feast of St. Gregory, a patron Saint of schools in Poland. After classes the students don costumes of teachers, priests, or bishops and wander through the streets singing their school songs. Before compulsory education was introduced, many of the songs had as their theme encouragement of attendance at school. One such song ended with the words:

Greg, greg, gregoly
Dajcie dzieci do szkoły.

Greg, greg, gregories
Send your children for studies.

Zwiastowanie N. M. P. — The Annunciation March 25th. The Angelus in Poland is a 600 year old custom which is adhered to by everyone. The Church bells ring to announce the Angelus three times each day, and all interrupt whatever they may be doing to recite the salutation and prayers. Other names for the Annunciation are M. B. Otwornej (Our Lady of Spring because she opens Spring), M. B. Zagrzewnej (Our Lady of Encouragement), and M. B. Ożywiającej (Our Lady of Life).

WIELKI TYDZIEŃ - HOLY WEEK.
Both the material and spiritual preparations for Easter are intensified during the days of Holy Week. Cleaning of the home and baking occupy the women; cleaning of the stables and farmyard receive the attention of the men; all attend religious services and make their Easter duty.

Niedziela Palmowa — Palm Sunday. Sometimes called Niedziela Kwietna (Flower Sunday) or Wierzbna (Willow Sunday), Palm Sunday is marked by the traditional procession in which willow branches are carried instead of palms. In the old times a wooden donkey called the Palmowy Osiołek (Palm Donkey) was led in the procession. Upon their return home, parents give the blessed willow blossoms to the children and say: "Doczekaliśmy się pierwszej święconki, daj nam Boże doczekać i drugiej." (We have lived to see the first "Blessing"; may God let us see the second.)

Because the palm (or willow) has been blessed, it is believed to have curative value and is hung behind holy pictures during the year. In the country, peasants form crosses from the blessed wil-
lows and bury them in the fields to protect them from hail, and place them over buildings to guard them against lightning.

**Cienna Jutrznia** — Tenebrae On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week in most Churches, including those in small villages, services are held in the early evening consisting of the chanting of "Cienna Jutrznia" or Tenebrae, which is part of the Divine Office for the following day. Following the services the children, in anticipation of Easter, play games, tricks, and practical jokes. One common manifestation of this spirit is the lowering of the effigy of Judas from the Church belfry, attacking and beating it, and finally throwing it into a nearby creek or stream to drown.

**Wielki Czwartek** — Holy Thursday In the days of the monarchy it was a custom for the King and a Bishop to wash the feet of twelve beggars especially chosen for this occasion, symbolizing the spirit of penance, charity, and humility by those in authority.

In the Church of Our Lady of Częstochowa promptly at 4 A.M. the miraculous picture of Our Lady is ceremoniously cleaned, dusted, and given a change of dress. Religious objects are touched to the picture to impart to them a measure of the picture's supernatural powers. This is usually a private ceremony conducted in a small chapel at the monastery. In the parish churches, one of the side altars is elaborately decorated with linens and flowers and prepared for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This altar con¬figures the prison cell in which Christ was kept after His trial.

**Wielki Piątek** — Good Friday This is a day of strictest fasting, many of the people abstaining completely from all food except bread. In the Churches the faithful pray before the "grave," a replica of the tomb in which Christ was buried. It is a custom of long-standing to try to visit as many of the "graves" in the Churches in the vicinity as possible. A mystery play enacting the scene of the burial was formerly presented in the vestibule of the Church, with two soldiers, the three Mary's, and Sts. John and Peter being represented. On this day the peasants bury small crosses in their fields beseeching of God a good harvest.

**Wielka Sobota** — Holy Saturday The housewives set a large table, laying on it the cold "święcone" consisting of eggs, chicken, suckling pigs, cakes, hams, cheeses, and sausage; and a small lamb fashioned from butter or sugar, representing Christ is given the place of honor in the center of the table. In villages, the priest usually makes his rounds bless¬ing the fare and sprinkling it with holy water. Where the priest is unable to do so, people bring their świę¬cone to the Church to be blessed. The święcone is untouched until Easter Sunday. The blessing of fire and water is also an important ceremony. The old fire in the home was put out and a new one kindled from a lighted taper brought from Church. People bless their homes, fields, and animals with the newly blessed water as a prevention against disease and evil.

**WIELKANOC - EASTER SUNDAY**

Called by the Poles the "Great Night/" Easter Sunday ushers in a period of great joy.

**Rezurekcja** — The Easter Mass On Saturday evening or early Sunday morning before the Mass, a special service is conducted in which the "grave" of Christ is blessed and the figure of Christ is covered with a linen cloth. Then begins a long procession with the Blessed Sacrament, in which are carried the paschal candle, the cross of adoration vested in a red stole, and a statue of the resurrected Christ. The traditional Easter hymn "Wesoły nam dziś dzień nastął" (A happy day has dawned for us today) is sung, the Church bells peal forth, and all carry lighted candles giving the impression of
great illumination commemorating the return of the "Light of the World."

Święcone — Hallow-Fare After the Easter Mass the entire family returns home to partake of the "hallow-fare." The father cuts one blessed egg, as a symbol of unity, into as many pieces as there are members of the family and shares it with them, extending best wishes. The day is always spent at home.

Pisanki — Easter eggs As a sign of incipient and new life, the egg occupies an important place in the Easter festivities of the Poles. For many weeks before the holyday, the girls decorate the eggs which are ornamented in three ways: malowanki are done in colors; pisanki are batiked in geometric figures and animal designs; skrobanki are done in solid colors with figures on them.

Dyngus Śmigus, Święty Lej, Oblewanki — Easter Monday Great sociability characterizes the week following Easter. Since there is no work, the custom of Easter Monday permits the boys and girls to sprinkle each other with water or perfume. Sometimes the boys drench the girls, often give them a complete dousing. The boys sing dyngus songs, requesting food or gifts and threatening with a drenching should the requests be denied.

The śmigus festival is said to commemorate the 10th century when the Poles accepted Christianity, and were baptized en masse.

Sw. Jerzego — St. George's Day (April 21st) April 21st, St. George's Day, though not strictly a part of the Easter cycle, is part of the welcome to spring. St. George is thought of as a shepherd, moving unseen in the fields, the guardian of spring vegetation and of the flocks and the herds. He is said to open the earth to release the grasses, grain, and flowers which have been dormant during the winter. On St. George's day most villagers undertake excursions into the fields, singing and praying during the processions. Twigs of willow, blessed on Palm Sunday, are placed into the ground, and Easter egg shells are buried to aid fertility.

Sw. Wojciech — St. Adalbert (April 23rd) Born of Bohemian descent in the 10th century, St. Adalbert was the Archbishop of Prague, who worked for the conversion of Poland and who was martyred at Danzig in 997. He reputedly wrote the first Polish religious hymn "Bogurodzica" (The Mother of God) in honor of Mary.

Dni Krzyżowe — Rogation Days Sw. Marka - St. Mark (April 25th) On the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday preceding the feast of the Ascension, as well as on the feast of St. Mark, take place the processions of petition, carrying the faithful from Church to Church, or wayside shrines. Prayers are offered for good weather and good harvest. On these days the ceremony called "Dziady" is also conducted. At the cemetery the priest blesses the graves and prays for the dead. After this the parishioners feed the beggars who have gathered there.

THE CUSTOMS OF SUMMER

LATO-SUMMER There is a poverty of specific seasonal customs during summer because few significant feasts fall into this interim, and because it is a time of intense work for the inhabitants of a country which is predominantly agricultural. It seems as if all energy were being stored for the gay and exuberant customs and traditions which are directly associated with fall and harvest time.
Mary holds a special position of honor and is the recipient of singular devotion from the Pole. Therefore May for him is a month of preeminent importance. Famous Marian Paintings and Shrines — Matka Boska Częstochowska — Our Lady of Częstochowa According to ancient tradition the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa was painted by St. Luke in the home of St. John the Evangelist. It was kept there until its discovery by St. Helena in 326. Already during its stay at Constantinople it received special veneration. Later the Byzantine emperor, Nicephor I, presented the picture to Charlemagne for his defeat of the Saracens, who in turn gave it to the Prince of Ruthenia. From there it was transferred during the Tartar invasions to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa and placed in the custody of the Pauline Fathers. In 1655 Our Lady of Częstochowa "miraculously" defended the small Jasna Góra monastery and Poland against the overpowering invaders. From that day the Queen of Heaven became Poland's Queen and Częstochowa became a world-renowned miraculous Shrine of pilgrimage. The feast of Our Lady of Częstochowa falls on August 26th. Other extremely popular days of pilgrimage are May 3rd, August 15th, September 8th, and December 8th.

Matka Boska Ostrobramska — Our Lady of the Sharp Gate. This famous painting on wood derives its name from one of the four entrance gates leading into the city of Wilno. At the Ostro Brama (The Sharp Gate) hung this painting until 1671 when the Carmelites took custody of it because of the damage which public exposure was causing. The work of an unknown artist of the 15th century, the painting is frequently adorned with highly expensive dresses of gold and precious jewels. As to all other famous paintings of Our Lady in Poland there are many miracles ascribed to Matka Boska Ostrobramska.

Matka Boska Bogarodzica — Our Lady, the Mother of God. In the Latin rite Cathedral at Lwow, over the Main Altar there is a picture of Our Lady, the Mother of God. It was painted in 1598 by Józef Wolfowicz. On April 1, 1656, King John Casimir dedicated Poland to Mary and pledged to her eternal fidelity, adopting her as the special patroness of Poland.

Matka Boska Śnieżna — Our Lady of the Snows The Cathedral on the Wawel in Kraków has a chapel which houses a faithful reproduction of the painting of Our Lady of the Snows found in Rome. It was in front of this picture, now famous for many miracles, that Kings prayed before their coronation.

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska — Our Lady of the Angels Twenty-five miles southwest of Kraków is the Monastery of the Bernardine Fathers. Here on the main altar of the Chapel is a statue of Our Lady of the Angels. Wrought in silver, the beautiful sculpture was done in Rome. It has been famous for miracles since the 18th century. August 15th is a day of special indulgence here and great numbers of peasants, who are as a group especially fond of this image of Mary, come in pilgrimage.

Piekary (in Silesia) Famous since the 14th century, there is in the Village of Piekary in Silesia a painting by an unknown artist of Our Lady holding the child Jesus. Here in 1683 John Sobieski spent much time in prayer before setting out for the battle of Vienna against the Turks, which ended in a victory for him and all of Christendom.

Matka Boska Kodelska — Our Lady of Koden The princely Michal Sapreha brought this painting to Poland in the 17th century from the private chapel of the Pope in Rome. It is the work of a local painter of the 6th century. In 1635 a special Church was built for the picture and in 1723, on the Feast of the Assumption, a formal coronation of it took place.
Nabożeństwo Majowe — May Devotions In almost every Church daily evening devotions consisting of the Rosary, Litany of Loretto, singing of hymns to Mary, spiritual readings or a sermon, and Benediction are held. When there is no Church, a private home becomes the site of the services which the peasants themselves conduct.

Procesje Majowe — May Processions The opening and closing of May would be incomplete for the Poles without the special Marian processions in which is carried a statue of Mary upon an ornately and charmingly decorated platform. During these outdoor processions the faithful sing the beautiful Marian hymns.

SS. Filipa i Jakuba—SS. Philip and James (May 1st) These are the patrons of marriageable girls, who aid in the welcome of summer. On this day youth indulges in tricks reminiscent of April Fool's Day.

Sw. Stanisława — St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr (May 8th) Born in Szczepanów in 1030, St. Stanislaus became the Archbishop of Kraków in 1071. For his admonitions of the evil conduct of King Boleslaus II, the monarch murdered him while he offered Mass at the Skalka in 1079. From these very early days Stanislaus was highly venerated by both royalty and people. It was an accepted custom for each king to visit the Skalka chapel, where the Saint met with death, on the day before his coronation to beg forgiveness for the heinous act of Boleslaus II. The coronation itself took place in the Wawel Castle, where St. Stanislaus is buried. The banners of the enemies captured in war were traditionally placed at the Saint's grave. One outstanding example of this was Jan Sobieski's placing of the banner of the Turkish Grand Vizier after the defeat of the Turks at Vienna.

Sw. Andrzej Bobola — St. Andrew Bobola (May 16th). A member of the Jesuits, St. Andrew Bobola was born in 1591. During his life of sacrifice he distinguished himself by his piety, intelligence, and apostolic spirit. For many years he labored among the Orthodox White Ruthenians. He was murdered by the Cossacks on May 16, 1657.

ZIELONE ŚWIATKI - GREEN HOLIDAYS.
The "Green Holidays" or Zielone Świątki officially mark the beginning of Summer. They are the symbol of victory for the new and green life. All the customs of this period, therefore, are marked by joy and gladness. The Pole's sensitive soul sees profound beauty in all flowers as reflecting the creative splendor of God and he has deep respect for all foliage. The festal season of the Descent of the Holy Spirit finds him gaily bedecking homes and churches, shrines and chapels, with greens, flowers, branches.

Sobótki — Fire Games In some regions of the country evening outings are held at which fires are lighted and the youth plays games, sings, and dances. The fire commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of flaming tongues.

Majówki — Outings This is the season of picnics and outings. In days of old the wealthy lords joined their vassals in the fun and frolic, providing for them entertainment in the form of religious plays, fireworks, and games.

Trzeciego Maja — Constitution Day (May 3rd) Included by special Papal indulgents in the Pole's Litany to Our Lady is the invocation: Queen of Poland, pray for us. (Królowo Korony Polskiej, Módl się za nami). The occasion of the addition was King Jan Kazimierz's pledge of fidelity to Our Lady in 1656 in the Cathedral at Lwów, after the miracle at Częstochowa which saved Poland from the occupation of the Swedes. In a solemn ceremony the great monarch offered his country to the Heavenly Queen.
The third of May also marks the anniversary of the adoption of the progressive Polish Constitution of 1794.

BOŻE CIAŁO - CORPUS CHRISTI (Thursday following Trinity Sunday) The Feast of Corpus Christi affords an opportunity for the Poles to exhibit to the Blessed Sacrament — the Body of Christ — all their adoration, love, and tender devotion to the God-Man. The height of this expression takes the form of the Corpus Christi procession.

Small Chapel-like altars constructed of green boughs are erected at intervals in various parts of the village, usually in four different directions, and are ornately but tastefully decorated. From the Church the priest, carrying the monstrance, leads the faithful to these altars where selections from each of the Four Evangelists are chanted and Benediction is imparted. The Church bells ring out joyously; the people sing hymns honoring the Real Presence; young girls dressed in white drop flowers before the oncoming procession; women carry their favorite holy pictures; the elders of the parish bear the banners of their societies. The spirit of the procession is to lead Christ through the country begging His blessing upon the fields and the crops they will bear, offering to Him all this for His greater glory and honor.

Wianki — Wreaths During the Octave of Corpus Christi small wreaths of fragrant flowers are blessed in the Church. The fragrance is a symbol of the virtue of the faithful which is to rise to heaven with their prayers that God accept the humble sacrifice. The wreaths are later hung over the holy pictures at home to protect it from disaster. On the octave day a less elaborate procession takes place. Many flowers are again in evidence and even the monstrance is decorated with them.

Lajkonik — The Horse Festival In the region of Kraków a local custom finds one of the men dressed like a Tartar in elaborate armor, prancing through the village on a gaudily decked hobby horse, in commemoration of the day when the messenger brought news to Kraków of the defeat of the Tartar. It was precisely during a Corpus Christi procession that the news came in the 13th century.

Noc Świętojańska — The Eve of St. John (June 23rd). This is the great feast of the youth. Around the sobótki or lighted fires the boys and girls dance and sing traditional songs. The boys jump over the fire; the girls weave wreaths of wild flowers, fasten a lighted candle in the center, and throw them into a stream. Many are the explanations attached to the varied results. The festival ends with games and fireworks.

ŻNIWA - THE HARVEST

Because Poland is predominantly an agricultural country, harvest time is the most important season for the farmers. All the songs sung during this season throughout the land have the same essence: joy over the end of work, friendliness, respect, praise, and cordiality between the master and his workers.

Dozynki — Harvest Festival (September) The Dozynki (Harvest Festivals) climax the harvest season. Observed throughout the country in every village and hamlet, these festivals are a summary expression of gratitude to God for His bounty and of joy to the fellowmen for the happy conclusion to which another year of field work was brought. The reapers fashion wreaths of grain, flowers, nuts, and colored ribbons. These are then carried in the harvest processions and displayed at the harvest festivals at which there is much singing, dancing, and playing of games.
Matka Boska Zielna — Our Lady of Flowers (August 15th) On August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, there is celebrated in Poland one of the oldest Marian feasts of the country: Our Lady of Flowers. Picked the day before by the young ladies, the most beautiful and splendorous flowers are fashioned into huge colorful bouquets to be blessed at Mass by the priest. In some districts they also bless apples, wheat, rye, and other grains. The Spirit which prompted this custom was the Pole's innate love for and appreciation of the beauty of flowers and his desire to give back to God the best of what He had given to him.

THE CUSTOMS OF FALL

JESIEN - FALL "August is ended. Nature now resembles a man, who had much work to do during his life, exhausted his energy, lost the color of his cheeks, furrowed his brow with wrinkles, grew bald and toothless, and now yearns for the eternal rest of the grave. "The sun baked the earth, dried its flowers, faded its bright colors. The stalks now bow to the earth, and the seeds spill forth and fall to the ground. Pollen in thick layers adumbrates the trees, bushes, and herbs along the by-ways; neither can you see the coral bud of a field rose, nor the dark-blue plum of the sloe tree, nor the pitch black of the blackberry." So begins a description of the autumn season written by A. Dugasinski. For the Poles autumn is a period of recession, of rest. No longer do the peasants spend long hours in the fields over their plows and reapers, in the pastures with their horses and cattle, in the barnyards with their chickens, ducks, and geese. The customs of the season move back to the home as does now all the life of the people. The free time on the hands of the folks permits them to spend long evenings visiting with their neighbors and friends. The women, working in cooperative fashion, gather at their homes to weave, to spin, to shell peas, to can and preserve their foodstuffs for the winter. All these social gatherings would be incomplete without the traditional songs, stories, prayers, lives of the saints, catechism recitations, and spiritual readings. The simple soul of the peasant cannot conceive doing any thing without some mention or advertance to God, Who is his only cause of existence.

Matki Boskiej Różańcowej — Feast of the Holy Rosary (October 7th) October is the month dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Daily Rosary Devotions consisting of the common recitation of the rosary, Marian hymns, spiritual reading on a Marian subject and Benediction are held each evening in the city and village churches. The family rosary is a tradition of long standing among the faithful of Poland.

Wszystkich Świętych — All Saints Day (November 1st) Shortly after Vespers of All Saints Day begin the special customs associated with this and the next day. Because of a long standing tradition going back to the pagan days, the poor of the village are fed and beggars are given alms with a request for prayers for the dead. The spirit is one of mobilizing as much prayer as possible for the poor souls in purgatory. In the evening the Zaduszki or Wypominki (Mementoes of the Dead) are read, in which each family enumerates the names of all deceased relatives and ancestors, often going back several generations.

Dzień Zaduszny — All Souls Day (November 2nd) On this somber day of much prayer, all the graves of the family and relatives are visited, the tomb stones are cleaned and repaired, the plot is cleaned, and the grave is decorated with flowers. On the graves are lighted candles, symbols of the "eternal light" which is to shine forth for them in eternity. Church bells toll frequently during the day.
Sw. Jadwiga — St. Hedwig (October 16th) The model of womanhood, St. Hedwig was the mother of six children. Born in Bavaria in 1174, she married Prince Henry in 1186. She built churches, endowed convents, and was very generous to the poor. After the death of her husband she entered a convent. Pope Clement IV canonized her in 1268.

Sw. Marcin — Feast of St. Martin (November 11th) On this day little horseshoe-shaped cakes are eaten as reminders of St. Martin's horse. If snow falls on this day, children are wont to say that St. Martin is coming on his white horse.

Pieśni Polskie — Polish Hymns The Polish language and heart challenge all other tongues in the number of religious hymns which have been handed down for hundreds of years. With a hymn for almost every occasion, in every mood and tempo, for every level of intelligence, the Pole delights in singing his praises to God. Especially beautiful and numerous are the Christmas Carols, the Lenten Hymns, and songs in honor of Mary.

Powitanie — Polish Greeting The traditional greeting of the Pole, used when entering a house or meeting a friend, is "Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus." — "Praised be Jesus Christ." The answer to this is "Na wieki wieków. Amen." — "For ever and ever. Amen."

Sobota — Saturday The last day of the week is Mary's among the Poles. It is considered a day of special good fortune and blessing. Abstinence from meat on this day as a gesture of love for Mary is common practice among the peasants, who sing the Godzinki (Little Hours) in her honor. In the home a vigil light burns before her picture or statue. According to a beautiful Polish legend (which has been rendered in a painting by Stachewicz) Our Lady washed the clothes of Jesus on this day, and since the Infant had but one change of clothing, it was important that the sun shine, at least for a moment, to dry the clothes. Hence the belief that Saturdays are always beautiful days.

Uroczystości Świętych Polskich — Feasts of Polish Saints The land of the descendants of Piast has been blessed with many men and women who have distinguished themselves by their heroic virtues and lives of exceptional piety and goodness. A great number have not been canonized, however, because little organized effort in this direction could be made since the three partitions which took place in the 18th century. Some of these feast days have already been taken up in the Seasons in which they fall. More important of those that were not treated are presented here.

Sw. Władysław — St. Ladislaus (June 27th) This Hungarian King, a close relative of many Polish monarchs, was always held in great veneration in Poland. Born in 1031, he distinguished himself as a peacemaker through his mild character and profound piety. His love for Mary found expression in the many churches he built in her honor. He died in July of 1095.

Sw. Jacek Odrowąż — St. Hyacinth (August 17th) Born in 1183, St. Hyacinth was a very learned man who became a Dominican after meeting St. Dominic in Rome. He was an apostle to the Ruthenians and was outstanding for his preaching, deep charity, and working of miracles. He died in 1257 and was canonized by Pope Clement VII in 1594.

Sw. Jan Kanty — St. John Cantius (October 20th) St. John Kanty was born near Kraków in 1379. Endowed with keen intelligence, he taught theology and philosophy at the Jagiellonian University. A model priest, he died in 1473 and was canonized in 1775.

Sw. Stanisław Kostka — St. Stanislaus Kostka (November 13th) The patron of all youth, St. Stanislaus Kostka lived a life of extraordinary purity and devotion. His love for Mary was exceptional. He
became a Jesuit at 18, but died several months later, in 1568. He was canonized in 1762 by Pope Benedict XIII. Św. Jozafat Kunczewicz — St. Josaphat (November 14th) Born in Włodzimierz in 1580, St. Josaphat was a Greek-Catholic and a member of the Order of St. Basil. As Bishop and Archbishop of Wilno he worked unstintingly to effect a union between East and West. He was martyred by the schismatics in 1623 and his body was cast into the river. Pius IX canonized him in 1867.

Błogosławiony Wincenty Kadłubek — Blessed Vincent (March 8th) The father of Polish chroniclers, Blessed Vincent was born in 1161 of a noble family. In 1207 he became Ordinary of the Kraków Diocese. During his life he wrote in Latin a History of Poland. He died March 8, 1223.

Błogosławiony Stanisław Kazmierczyk — Blessed Stanislaus (May 3) He was born May 3,1433, in Kraków. After receiving his degree in Philosophy he joined the Order of the Canons and distinguished himself for his homiletic abilities and deep humility. He died June 7,1489, and soon after became famous for the many miracles which were wrought through his intercession. Błogosławiony Bogumił, Arcybiskup Gniezna — Blessed Bogumił (June 10th) Blessed Bogumił was born in 1116 in Koźmin. He entered the Order of St. Bernard and for a long time was Archbishop of Gniezno. He died June 10,1182. Błogosławiony Jakob Strzemień lub Strepa — Blessed James (June 15th) Born in the diocese of Kraków in 1340, Blessed James chose the Franciscan Order as his vocation in life. His labors took him to Ruthenia, where he worked for the conversion of the Ruthenians. After occupying several positions of importance, he became archbishop of Halicz. He died in 1411. His remains were found uncorrupted in 1619 and Pope Pius VI listed him among the Blessed in 1760.

Błogosławiona Jołanta (Helena) — Blessed Jołanda (June 16th). The sister of St. Kunegunda and daughter of the Hungarian King Bela IV, Blessed Helen lived a holy life amid the comfort and splendor of the palace. After the death of her princely husband, she entered a convent where she died in 1298.

Błogosławiona Marie Teresa Ledochowska — Blessed Mary Teresa Ledochowska (July 6) Foundress of the Sodality of St. Peter Claver for African Missions. She was born of a Polish noble family on April 29, 1863. She dedicated herself entirely to the abolition of slavery and to the evangelization of Africa. This evangelization was greatly enhanced by the printing presses she established. She died in Rome on July 6, 1922 and Pope Paul VI beatified her on October 19, 1975.

Błogosławiony Jan z Dukli — Blessed John (July 8th). Blessed John was born in 1414. After completing his studies he became a hermit in the Carpathian Mountains, preparing himself in this way for the priesthood. As a Franciscan he distinguished himself for his eloquent preaching. He died September 29, 1484, and was beatified in 1739 by Clement XII.

Błogosławiony Szymon z Lipnicy — Blessed Simon (July 18th). Widely renowned as a great preacher who delivered his sermons in the presence of King Kazimierz IV, he was born in 1420 in Lipnica. He was a member of the Order of St. Bernard. He died in 1482. Błogosławiony Czesław Odrowąż — Blessed Chester (July 19th) A spiritual son of St. Dominic whom he loved deeply and whose order he introduced into Poland with his brother St. Hyacinth, Blessed Chester spared no energy in his homiletic and penitential work. He was born in 1185 and died in 1242.

Błogosławiona Kunegunda — Blessed Kunegunda (July 24th). The daughter of the Hungarian King Bela IV, Blessed Kunegunda became Queen of Poland when she married Boleslaus V. Noted for her charity and virtue, she did not become ruler after her husband's death, but entered a convent
where she died in 1292 at the age of sixty-eight.

Błogosławiony Maximilian Maria Kolbe — Blessed Maximilian Mary Kolbe (August 14) He was born in Żduńska Wola on January 8, 1894. Blessed Maximilian entered the conventional Franciscan Order in 1910. In February 1941 he was imprisoned in Pawiak in Warsaw, then transported to the concentration camp in Oświęcim (Auschwitz). On August 14, 1941 Father Kolbe died a martyr in the Nazi concentration camp. Pope Paul VI listed him among the Blessed on October 17, 1971.

Błogosławiona Bronisława — Blessed Bernice (September 3rd) Born in Silesia in 1202, Blessed Bernice was a relative of St. Hyacinth and Blessed Chester. As a Sister of St. Norbert, she was noted for her sympathy, excellent advice, and generous alms. She died in 1259 and was beatified by Gregory XVI in 1839. Błogosławiony Władysław z Gielniowa — Blessed Ladislaus (September 25th) The patron of the capital of Poland, Warsaw, Blessed Ladislaus was a member of the Order of St. Bernard, whose superior he became in 1487. A great writer of Sermons, he also composed many religious hymns. He was born in 1440 and died in 1505. Benedict XIV announced his beatification in 1753. Błogosławiony Sadok i Towarzysze — Blessed Sadok and His Companions (October 29th) Together with 49 of his companions, Blessed Sadok, prior of the Dominicans at Sandomierz, met martyrdom at the hands of the Tartars in 1259. Death came as they all sang the Salve Regina. Since that time this hymn is sung at the bedside of dying Dominicans. Błogosławiona Salomea — Blessed Salome (November 28th) Born in Poland in 1202, Blessed Salome spent her childhood and youth in Hungary. After the death of her husband she returned to Poland and entered the Convent of the Claretians, whose Mother General she later became. She died in 1268 and was beatified in 1673 by Pope Clement X.

CONCLUSION

To some Ford City residents of non-Polish ancestry, the seventy-five year history of St. Francis of Paola Parish may appear to be an exotic chronicle. To others, the account may seem a swan song for a fading parochial Camelot, which once had its shining moment but now is a mere wisp of glory whose tale is being told before it is forgotten. But St. Francis of Paola Church still thrives and is sure to endure for time to come. Some parishioners now living will be around to celebrate the centennial of the parish in the year 2000. This account has been written not to recapture the nostalgic yesterdays of an ethnic Polish American parish, but to record its usable past for the present and the future. That usable past comes in the form of a report about an interesting human experiment in community building by people, priests, and bishops.

The significance of this experiment is not to be measured by quantitative standards but by the basic task of heritage preservation, by its successful exposition of religious ethnicity, and by its contribution to the historical and religious consciousness of Ford City and the Greensburg Diocese. The history of St. Francis of Paola Parish is the story of faith and courage, of kindly, sturdy, and dignified people with idealism and integrity, and with pride in their Catholicism, their Polishness, and their Americanism. The founders of St. Francis of Paola Parish demonstrated in their quiet but effective way that a parish fostering the Polish style of Catholicism could be sustained in the free cosmopolitan climate of Ford City. They transmuted their faith and integrity into the church, which stands for all posterity to see and for their parochial descendants to worship and find solace in.