On Sunday, October 19th at Joint Base Fort Meyer Officers’ Club in Arlington, Virginia, members of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Washington, DC chapter gathered for their annual fund-raiser, Wadowice-on-the-Potomac. This timely event offered members the opportunity to honor our newly recognized Polish Saint, Pope John-Paul II, a man who during his lifetime altered the course of history and averted overwhelming evil.

Chapter president, Gloria Klepczynski, introduced the guests. Included among them were the Very Reverend John A. Langlois, O.P., and the Reverend Thomas Petri, O.P., who are President and Vice President-Academic Dean, respectively, of The Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies; Reverend Canon Philip S. Majka, Chaplain, Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Washington, DC Chapter; Reverend Raymond J. Studzinski, OSB, Ph.D., John Paul II Institute for Studies of Marriage and Family, Catholic University; and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Zachariasiewicz. Mr. Zachariasiewicz established the Washington, DC Chapter in 1985.

After the invocation by Father Majka, the guests were seated for the brunch. The formal program began after brunch when William Klepczynski and Raymond Glembocki introduced the guest of honor, Rev. Canon Philip S. Majka. He was born
President’s Message

As the year comes to a close, I would like to thank all the Officers and Directors for their continued efforts and enthusiasm to keep the Legacy and Life of our beloved Saint Pope John Paul II available to the children, youth, adults, clergy, and religious groups. It has been with their dedication that we have been able to expand our horizons and develop programs for the three area Catholic school districts. Please read the Educational Legacy Project Report in this newsletter for updated information. Also, our Web Site is a good source for information about our Chapter and we recommend that you check it out at: www.jp2friends.org.

Our Chapter has undertaken and developed many noteworthy projects and events during the past several years. Working in conjunction with other religious institutions and organizations, we have been able to accomplish many of our objectives with more exciting functions in the future. This year’s events included a special dinner and program on Sunday, May 18 to celebrate the canonization of our new Saint John Paul II and his Birthdate of May 18, 1920. Just recently, we held a very successful annual fund raiser, Wadowice-on-the-Potomac.

From time to time, it is beneficial for all of us to review and re-read the Corporate By-Laws of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc. In doing so, it reminds us of the responsibilities and duties that are entrusted to us to keep our Chapter moving forward to promote the Legacy and Life of Saint John Paul II. In Article 1: “Purpose of the organization, to be known as “Friends of John Paul II Foundation,” is to conduct religious, cultural, educational, humanitarian and fund raising activities in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area in liaison with the John Paul II Foundation in Rome. The organization shall devote special attention to studies and popularization of Pope John Paul II’s teachings. The Corporation’s purposes are limited to those set forth in Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and it will not engage in any activities that will not be in furtherance of such purposes”.

On October 22, the Feast Day of Saint John Paul II, a portion of the newly remodeled Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, DC was dedicated with a special Mass followed by the inauguration of the new permanent exhibition on the Life of Saint John Paul II. It is an outstanding and excellent exhibition and should be visited by everyone and especially children. Please plan to take your family and friends to visit the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, DC for a wonderful and educational experience. You will be amazed to see the two ‘first-class relics of Saint John Paul II’ and hear and read about the life of Karol Wojtyla. For address information and opening times, please visit their web site at: www.jp2shrine.org.

Our future is very busy as we continue our efforts to promote the Legacy and Life of Saint John Paul II. If we are to succeed and expand our organization, we need not only funds but we need more help and volunteers.

We thank you for being a part of our ‘family’ of friends and hope that the New Year 2015 will be a happy and healthy one for you. If you have any questions about the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, please don’t hesitate to contact us. But, most of all, please continue your membership and attend our next event. We would love to see you!

Very best wishes for a blessed and healthy Christmas and New Year,
Gloria Klepczynski, President
and raised in Connecticut and attended local schools continuing his education at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, CT; Queen of Apostles Seminary, Madison, WI and SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, MI. He was ordained on May 1, 1965 and served as associate pastor of five parishes and pastor of two other parishes. Father Majka has received numerous awards and honors for his many years of service as Chaplain and member of Polish-American organizations. In 1999, he was awarded the Cavaliers Cross of Merit from the Polish Government. Since 2006, Fr. Majka has served as the Catholic chaplain at Dulles International Airport and in 2010 became vice president of the National Conference of Catholic Airport Chaplains. He will celebrate the Golden Jubilee year of his Ordination to the Priesthood in May 2015.

The program continued with Gloria Klepczyński giving special recognition to founding members Mary and Robert Flanagan, who had announced their retirement from their active roles as Editor and Layout/Production Manager of our newsletter in June of this year. Since the beginning of this chapter, they have worked tirelessly to preserve the legacy of Saint Pope John Paul II as well as to promote the chapter’s charitable outreach in the Metropolitan Washington, DC area. Among the many positions the couple has held were President, Directors, Chairmanships, and Editor and Layout/Production Manager for the Newsletter.

Other past Wadowice honorees have included: H.E. William Cardinal Keeler, Rabbi Jack Bemporad, H.E. Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Congresswoman-elect Barbara Comstock and Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, Ambassador of the Holy See to the U.S.

The featured speaker, Paul A. Brazinski, was introduced by Cecilia Glembocki. Mr. Brazinski is a Ph. D. candidate in Church History at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. A specialist in the history of saints and relics, Mr. Brazinski described the various relics of Saint John Paul II, especially those located at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington. These include a square piece of the blood-stained cassock the then-Pope wore on the day of his attempted assassination and several secondary relics as well. At the conclusion, brightened with music performed by pianist, Alvin Smithson, a benediction was given by Father Majka.
Mary and Robert Flanagan Honored

Mary and Robert Flanagan were honored at 2014 “Wadowice-on-the-Potomac” for their service to the Friends of John Paul II Foundation and their role as founding members.

Since the very beginning of the Metropolitan Washington, DC Chapter in 1985, Mary and Robert have served in the positions of President, Directors, Chairmanships, and Editor and Layout/Production Manager for our Newsletter. They have worked tirelessly as a team to help wherever they were needed. Their experiences in their professional and other areas have helped them to strengthen our organization and to achieve wonderful results for the Chapter.

They announced their retirement from their newsletter positions at our June meeting. We were sad to see them relinquish their posts, even before we realized the amount of work involved in putting together a newsletter! Since their retirement, we have come to value their contributions even more. Throughout their tenure on the newsletter, Mary and Robert have handled the work with grace and with a smile, under what can sometimes be intense and pressure filled moments. They have written articles, done the layout, published and mailed the newsletter for nearly 30 years. As they step down as Editor and Layout/Production Manager, we congratulate and thank them for their dedication. There are not enough words to express our gratitude and appreciation for their many years of service. So, we say a traditional Polish ‘Bóg Zapłać!’

Relics of St. John Paul II

by Wanda O’Brien-Trefil, Ph.D.

Paul A. Brazinski was the featured speaker at the Wadowice Champagne Brunch on October 19, 2014, speaking on “Holy Bones, Holy Blood – Relics of Saint John Paul II.” Paul came to the forefront of Washington DC Polonia when he received the First Place Scholarship Grant from the Polish American Arts Association. Paul is pursuing his Ph.D. degree at Catholic University, majoring in Church History and Byzantine studies. He is a scholar who is also an athlete, and is proud of both activities. As an undergraduate at Bucknell University, Paul pursued Latin and ancient Greek, while playing football. At the University of Cambridge in England, Paul studied medieval and Byzantine archeology, and also captained the varsity lacrosse team. Paul has published in Papers from the Institute of Archeology, and has presented at the International Archeological Institute of America. Most recently, Paul authored a pamphlet for The Friends of John Paul II Foundation, titled “The Relics of Saint John Paul II: History, Function, and Miracles,” which was gifted to all the guests at the Wadowice brunch. The Friends of John Paul II Foundation plans to print and distributed the pamphlet to the middle and high schools in the greater Washington DC area.

In his presentation, Paul explained about three classes of relics as they pertain to Saint John Paul II. Among the pope’s first class relics are the vials of blood that were collected by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz of Kraków in 1981, when the holy father was shot, and then at his last hospital stay in 2005. The Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, DC has two first class relics—a vial of blood and a piece of blood-stained cloth from the assassination attempt. Drops of the blood have been disbursed throughout the world, and are reverenced in ornate reliquaries, such as the one in Baltimore at Holy Rosary Church. Second class relics, like the pope’s clothes, tennis shoes, and skis are kept in Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, DC. Everyone who attended the Wadowice brunch received a second class relic to take home—a small piece of cassock imbedded into a photo of Saint John Paul II. Tertiary relics are those objects that have contact with primary and secondary relics; these include reliquaries and pictures of St John Paul II which have been blessed by the Vatican.

Christians have historically acquired relics, and made pilgrimages to be in their presence, hoping that the saint will help them by performing a miracle. Paul’s presentation was informative and engaging. Mrs. Cecilia Glembocki thanked Paul and wished him success in completing his doctorate.
Message from John Paul II Foundation in Rome on the 36th Anniversary of the Election of John Paul II

by Fr. Krzysztof Wieliczko
Administrator of the John Paul II Foundation, Rome, Italy

For the John Paul II Foundation, October 16th is a special day. Not only is it the date when, in 1981, John Paul II himself established the Foundation, but most of all it is the date to commemorate the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła to lead the Holy See. Thus, on the 36th anniversary, the John Paul II Foundation along with the Museum of the Family Home of John Paul II in Wadowice organized a conference entitled: “Why John Paul II is a saint?”

The conference began at the Polish Church in Rome with a Mass celebrated by Stanisław Cardinal Ryłko, who in his homily said: “The day of October 16, 1978 was permanently engraved in the memory of all Poles: the date of the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, who took the name John Paul II, as the successor of St. Peter, the Pope from a “far-away country”…..How many years have passed since that unforgettable day? …..And, yet we are still coming back to that day…. Why? …. We want to continue to give thanks to God for the great gift which John Paul II was and is to the Church and the world…. Everyone, but especially we-Poles, are His spiritual debtors!.. And how should we pay off this debt?... We have to constantly re-take the responsibility for this great legacy of His teachings, which He left us …Every year we come back to this fundamental question: What from John Paul II – from His teachings - remains in my life: as a Pole, as a Christian... Is there a risk of dangerously forgetting the memory of John Paul II? We carefully enclose Him in our family albums, photographs, and we proudly show off pictures with Him... a few nice emotions and that’s it…. Thus, it is so important to go back to the basic question: Who John Paul II was for Poland, for the world, for the Church – and, finally, for each of us personally ... Who He is for me today? “

An adoration of the relics of St. John Paul II was held after Mass. Strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Mass, participants of the conference gathered in the St. John Paul II hall. After welcoming all guests, the Director of the Museum of the Family Home of John Paul II in Wadowice, Rev. Dariusz Raś, spoke. In His speech, Rev. Raś presented the idea and history of the Museum. In the next part of the conference, a documentary film was presented. This film was created as a part of the Museum’s project. The closest friends of Karol Wojtyła, His co-workers from the pontificate time, and witnesses of the life of John Paul II were presented in it. Everyone who was featured in the movie was answering the question “Why John Paul II is a saint?” These were very personal and moving testimonies of people from various generations, backgrounds and communities. These testimonies strengthen the belief of the great holiness of John Paul II. This kind of meeting provides an excellent opportunity to learn of the person and teachings of John Paul II, but most of all, it is an invitation to a holy life.

Letter from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland

I would like to express special thanks to members of John Paul II Foundation for the invitation to the Annual Fund Raiser “Wadowice-on-the-Potomac’. Unfortunately, due to earlier commitments, I am not able to attend the event.

Your Annual Fund Raiser is giving me wonderful opportunity to point out the very important role played by religion in the life of Polish immigrants. Poland is a largely Catholic nation with a Church that survived even under the anti-clerical reign of the communists. The person who helped Poles achieve this survival is Pope John Paul II, who is perhaps the most beloved pontiff of modern times. He is often credited as one of the non-political forces, which contributed to collapse communism in Central and Eastern Europe. He helped not only to bring about the downfall of the Soviet Bloc but also sought to unite all people which is his legacy for every one of us.

Let me also underline that your work and commitment is also a great reflection of the ideals of John Paul II for which I am very grateful. It is this moment that I can thank those who promote Polish history, art and culture. Please continue to care for our Polish national identity, cherish Polish values and, above all, the protection of our great heritage.

At the end, I want to send my kindest regards to all participants of this event for success and happiness in your professional and personal lives.

Piotr Konowrocki, Minister-Counselor
Head of Consular Section
Embassy of the Republic of Poland
John Paul II Educational Legacy Project Travels to Boston

By Cecilia Glembocki

Cecilia and Raymond Glembocki, Exhibit Chairpersons, traveled to Boston with the Polish Perspectives Exhibit of the American Council for Polish Culture to present at the annual National Council for Social Studies Conference (NCSS). A total of 4,367 educators attended the event, held at the Hynes Center during November 21-22, 2014. This was a record breaking year for attendance. Five people represented the Polish Perspectives exhibit: Debbie Majka, Honorary Counsel of the Polish Embassy from Philadelphia; Dr. Andrej Pronczuk from the Boston Affiliate; Jason Franzen from the Minnesota Polonia; and the Glembocki’s.

In addition to St. John Paul II and Jan Karski (who was a Polish diplomat, activist, professor and author), we featured Jamestown’s Polish Craftsmen and notable Poles, including Matt Urban. We distributed posters along with bookmarks, books, the DVD “Nine Days that Changed the World,” “Interesting Facts About St. John Paul II” leaflets, books from Aquila Polonica, “Life in a Jar” books, and other DVDs. Teachers loved the Jan Karski books and the CD along with the book marks and posters. The educators were very interested in the sainthood of our Polish Pope. We distributed twenty DVDs to Catholic schools. Book marks of St. John Paul II were very popular among the educators.

In sum, the materials taken by the educators included 2,000 book marks, 275 CDs, 250 posters and a dozen books. If you stop to ponder that each teacher has access to more than 125 students per semester, the impact that he/she has with our materials is significant. It was exhilarating to be part of the conference and share the significance of our St. John Paul II and the impact he had, and continues to have, upon the world.

Polonia Consultative Council Update

by Bożenna Buda, Representative from the Friends of John Paul II Foundation

The Polonian Consultative Council met in November, 2014, at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, DC. We were welcomed by Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf and Counsel Piotr Konowrocki and Vice-Counsel Ewa Pietrasieńska. Mr. Ambassador noted that the Polish- American community has been actively participating in the historical anniversaries being commemorated this year.

Special guests in attendance from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs included the Director of the Consular Department Marek Ciesielczuk, Deputy Director of the Bureau of the Ministry HR Krzysztof Teske, and Mr. Jacek Junosza-Kisielewski, Director of the Department for Cooperation with Polonia and Poles Abroad, who discussed the Program of Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora for the next several years.

We also were updated about an upcoming month-long event in the state of Tennessee: the “Memphis in May International Festival 2015 Salutes Poland” (www.memphisinmay.org) celebrating Poland’s culture, customs, cuisine, and commerce. This venture is an example of cooperation and joint initiatives among the Polish-American Society of Memphis TN (whose president is a member of this Council), the city of Memphis, and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland/Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
The center of St. John Paul II’s concern was the family, understood as an unbreakable union of a woman and a man. The Polish Pope unceasingly taught that marriage and family are the most precious good, jointly held in every nation and every society.

Today, as never before, the family is in peril. Therefore, we must take care to establish wise laws, which respect the nature of matrimony and the family, which don’t destroy it but support it. Unfortunately, we know it often happens differently.

Concern for the family is a sign of our patriotism. How threatened is the fate of a country and people, in which families are impermanent, broken, materially or spiritually poor, pathologically opposed to children, unable to create a safe climate as well as intelligent education for the young generation.

A strong family is the unfailing base of a strong country and ethnic group. It is clear, by the example of some of the countries of Western Europe where marriage and family are recognized for homosexual pairs. There, many marriages are falling apart. A considerable number of spouses are unfit for parental love, so the number of children falls dramatically. If the current trend continues, then in 50 years the Germans, Belgians or Dutch will comprise the minority in their own country. Citizens coming there from other countries create strong families and are more devoted to bequeathing life to their children. Therefore, concern for a permanent family and for wisely raising their children and grandchildren is one of the most important assignments and consequences of our Faith and patriotism. Above all we pray that the Holy Family of Nazareth protects the holiness and singularity of our families and marriages for the good of the Church, Country and Polonia.

During Holy Week of 1990, I received the gift of a rosary from John Paul II as he blessed me as I was about to celebrate the silver anniversary of my priesthood. I just finished praying a rosary on the set of beads as I write this. The same beads that were given to me by a living Pope twenty some years ago who is now an intercessor for us as Saint John Paul The Great! The Polish Holy Father fostered devotion to Mary in our life time. Many have received a set of beads from our popes.

How did devotion to Mary come about in the history of our church? It was fostered by the people of God….the Church. In short, the crusades traveling from Constantinople to the Holy Land in the East discovered that some peoples living in the East had the practice of using stones (beads) to count their successive prayers. When they returned home, they talked about this with those Christians who had the habit of praying successive Paters (Our Fathers) or Aves (Hail Marys). As the centuries passed, more and more prayers for Mary’s intercession came to be. The famous Lady of Godiva of Coventry (d. 1075), left in her will a statue of our Lady with a circle of stones which she had threaded on a cord for the counting of the prayers. In 1090, Saint Bruno founded a monastery where monks wore a rosary hanging from their belts. Saint Dominic (1170 - 1221), before he established the Dominican Order, helped settle the Albigensian problem with Marian Devotion. In 1571, St. Pius V asked the Christian World to pray the Rosary to stem the Turkish invasion at Lepanto. Pope Pius V added the salutation, “Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.” Over time, so many have asked us to pray the rosary including Fr. Peyton, Padre Pio, Our Lady of Fatima, our recent Popes and our Godmother.
We are continuing our outreach programs to the three diocesan school districts of Washington DC, Arlington VA, and Baltimore MD. It is our goal to eventually reach 207 schools and 38,446 students. We distribute DVDs of “The Nine Days that Changed the World” along with lesson plans for educators using the DVD in their classrooms. We also disseminate posters of St. John Paul II, posters from the Canonization, and “Interesting Facts About Saint John Paul II” leaflets to all schools. The Relics Leaflet Project now includes an audio CD and a power point presentation, holy cards with relic, books, medals, and bookmarks. Avenues of distribution include during meetings with principals in the three diocesan school systems and through parish adult education classes.

Plans are underway to distribute the DVD “Nine Days That Changed the World” at the National Council for Social Studies in Boston on November 21-22, 2014, along with holy cards and lesson plans. [See article “John Paul II Educational Legacy Project Travels to Boston” in this newsletter.]

We completed two comprehensive educational leaflet projects this past year: “Interesting Facts About Saint John Paul II” and “The Relics of Saint John Paul II”. Graphic designer Carla Tomaszewski actualized the leaflets. Paul A. Brazinski, a Ph.D. student of relics at The Catholic University of America, helped us develop a CD with a power point presentation suitable for high school students and adult education classes. We premiered this presentation at the Wadowice-on-the-Potomac event on October 19, 2014. It covered the origins of relics, their importance to Christianity, the classification of relics, explanation of reliquaries (relic holders), and finished with the relics of St. John Paul II.

Two bronze busts of Saint John Paul II, designed by Gordon Kray, will be placed at the St. John Paul II Seminary and the Columbus School of Law Library at Catholic University in the spring of 2015. The funds for this project were donated by the estate of Carl and Jean Sharek.

Advisory Council Members for the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Washington, DC Chapter are: Rev. Dr. Raymond Studzinski (Catholic University), Dr. Piotr Kosicki (University of Maryland, currently on sabbatical at Stanford University), Mr. Paul Brazinski (Ph.D. Student at Catholic University), and Monsignor Robert Panke (St. John Paul II Seminary). We solicit members from various local institutions to advise and counsel us on our legacy and educational projects.
In Appreciation: Thank you to our friends and families that continue to support our Washington, DC Chapter. Your prompt response to our membership campaigns and special requests are always appreciated. Most of all, the support and encouragement that you give us year-after-year has made our work to perpetuate the Legacy and Life of Saint John Paul II possible. Your financial support also helps to support our local Educational Legacy and Outreach Programs. Remember that the Friends of John Paul II, Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and all donations and gifts including mutual funds and bequests are tax deductible.

Memorial and Special Occasion Donations: In remembrance of family members or friends, you may send a donation to the Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc. The names and the donations are forwarded to the Foundation in Rome, Italy and special masses and recognition of the donation will be acknowledged by the Administrator, Father Krzysztof Wieliczko. This is a wonderful way to make a lasting gift. You may use the form below to send in your Memorial or Special Occasion donation.

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FRIENDS OF JOHN PAUL II FOUNDATION, INC.
MEMBERSHIP 2015

Yes, please count on me to support the John Paul II Foundation that was established by Saint John Paul II as a religious, educational, charitable and non-profit organization.

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$_________ Additional gift to support the goals of the Foundation. All gifts including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, last wills and testaments are always welcome. The Friends of John Paul II Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Enclosed is my check made payable to:
Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc.
Gloria Klepczyński
1204 Whetstone Drive
Arnold, MD 21012

Visit our Web Site: www.jp2friends.org

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Best Wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year