

FROM GRATITUDE
TO LEGACY

The POLISH-AMERICAN
WALL OF REMEMBRANCE
2026



A
Permanent
Tribute to
Polish
Emigrant
Families

Church of St. Maximilian
Maria Kolbe-Mistrzejowice
November 8, 2026

An Invitation

*Honor Your Ancestors
Committee Members
Vanessa O'Brien, DM
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*Foundation of the Polish
Knights of Malta in Kraków
In partnership with The
Copernicus Foundation
5216 W Lawrence Ave
Chicago, IL 60630*

May 2026

Dear Friends of Poland:

Somewhere in your family history, your ancestor made the difficult decision to leave home, cross an ocean, and begin again in an unfamiliar land — often with little more than faith, determination and hope for future generations. It was these ancestors that helped build America while preserving their Polish values, language and Christian faith that continues to shape families today.

Now, as two important dates arise – America's 250th year of independence and the 100th year of Polish Declarations of Admiration and Friendship for the United States, the Polish Knights of Kraków invite you to add your ancestor's name to the Wall of Remembrance at the Church of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe in Kraków. This Wall of Remembrance is dedicated to preserving the names of the Polish families whose journeys shaped America.

We are grateful to our US charity partner, The Copernicus Foundation, for their leadership and swift action to ensure your gifts are tax-deductible. Donations of \$1,000 will permanently inscribe your ancestor's name, alongside a genealogical record preserved in the Digital Book of Gratitude 2026. Space constraints within this sacred place limit our invitation to 1,000 names, please act fast to avoid disappointment.

This is so much more than simply remembrance; it is about belonging and building a bridge connecting Poland, America and generations far into the future. By contributing your ancestor's name, memory is transformed into mercy. All donations, less processing fees, go directly to the Polish Knights of Malta Foundation in Kraków, who own and manage the Center for Children with Disabilities. **Your donation gives a new family not only hope, but their dignity back.**

All foundations, organizations, clubs and associations, whose members collectively contribute 100 names or more, will automatically have their name inscribed as a Sponsor at no cost. Please find additional information in the following pages.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa O'Brien".

Honorary Ambassador
Foundation of the Polish Knights
Of the Order of Malta in Kraków

Our Story

Every Polish-American Family Carries a Story of Courage

For generations, Polish emigrants carried their faith, traditions, language, and love of their homeland across oceans to America.

Many arrived with little more than hope for a better future.

Through sacrifice, perseverance, hope and hard work, they built communities, Christian churches, schools and businesses. These families shaped American life across generations.

Even though they were far from their homeland, Polish immigrants preserved their Christian faith, family traditions and cultural identity, ensuring a deep connection to their roots for generations to come.

Their stories became part of both Polish history and the story of America itself.



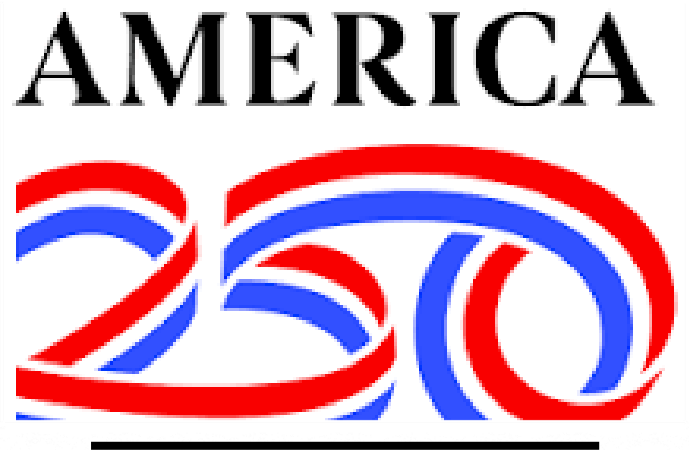
“Their journeys
changed the destiny of
generations.”



Two Historical Anniversaries

250 Years of American Independence

In 2026, America marks the 250th anniversary of its independence — a milestone honoring the generations of immigrants whose work, sacrifice, and ideals helped shape the nation.



100 Years since Polish Declarations of Admiration and Friendship

The year 2026 also marks the centenary of the Polish Declarations of Admiration and Friendship for the United States — a historic gesture of gratitude from the people of Poland to America in 1926. The result was 111 volumes signed by five million Polish citizens.

The Polish-American Wall of Remembrance transforms these anniversaries into a lasting legacy of gratitude, remembrance and mercy.

The Wall of Remembrance

A Permanent Place of Gratitude and Prayer



The Polish-American Wall of Remembrance will be created inside the Church of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe in Kraków-Mistrzejowice.

The memorial will include:

- Multi-column commemorative inscriptions
- A central patinated bronze plaque
- A digital archive preserving family histories

Names will appear alphabetically, reflecting the shared dignity of every family story.

A Living Purpose

The Wall of Remembrance is not only a memorial project. Every commemorated name also directly supports children with disabilities and their families through the charitable mission of the Polish Knights of Malta Foundation in Kraków.

Funds raised through this campaign help:

- Support rehabilitation and therapy
- Strengthen educational services
- Provide family assistance
- Secure long-term stability for the Maltese Center
- Preserve compassionate care for vulnerable families

POLISH-AMERICAN WALL OF REMEMBRANCE 2026

Gratitude remembers names.
Mercy transforms remembrance into good.

We dedicate this wall to the memory of Polish families and emigrants whose journeys to America changed the destiny of generations to come.

Carrying faith, hope, language and love for their homeland, they built new lives while preserving the values and traditions that shaped Polish-American communities for generations.

The names inscribed on this wall are gifts of remembrance from descendants, families and friends of Poland. These gifts support the works of the Polish Knights of Malta Foundation in Kraków for children with disabilities and their families.

To Poland - for our roots. To America - for opportunity.
To our children and families - for the future.

Kraków-Mistrzejowice, November 8, 2026

Every commemorated name becomes an act of
remembrance and mercy

Social Impact

The Polish Knights built the Malta Center for Assistance to Disabled Children and their Families (MCPNDiIR) in 2004.

Our goal was to create a facility that would address the treatment and rehabilitation of children with disabilities.



-
- 22 Years
 - 42,000 children
 - Ages 0-7
 - 900 children/year
 - 200 volunteers
-

We provide assistance to:

- Children whose development is delayed, disharmonious or abnormal.
- Children with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, genetic defects and autism, among others.
- Families who need psychological support and assistance in raising and stimulating their child's development.
- Children offering individual and group classes, workshops, and therapy .



**Your Gift Supports the Center for
Disabled Children in Kraków,
Poland.
To learn more about the Center,
visit**

<https://zakonmaltanski.pl/dzialalnosc/centrum-pomocy-i-osrodki-maltanskie/centrum-pomocy-krakow/>

How To Participate

HONOR AN ANCESTOR.
LEAVE A LIVING LEGACY.

STEP 1

SCAN BARCODE TO THE RIGHT

STEP 2

CLICK ON THE BLUE BUTTON THAT SAY
HONOR YOUR ANCESTORS AT THE TOP

STEP 3

SELECT AN ORGANIZATION TO RECEIVE
CREDIT FOR YOUR SUPPORT

STEP 4

SELECT TOP BUTTON TO CONFIRM
\$1,000 AT THE TOP AND HIT THE
CONTINUE BUTTON AT THE BOTTOM

STEP 5

SUBMIT ANCESTOR INFORMATION AND
CONTINUE

STEP 6

LEAVE MESSAGE (OPTIONAL) AND
CONTINUE OR SKIP

STEP 7

CHOOSE PAYMENT METHOD

1 NAME = USD 1,000
(OR PLN OR EUR EQUIVALENT)



WE WILL CONTACT YOU TO CONFIRM SPELLING
BEFORE ENGRAVING

Participation Benefits

“A name remembers a person.
A story preserves a legacy.”

- Permanent commemorative inscription on the Wall of Remembrance.
- Participation certificate.
- Invitation to the unveiling ceremony and charity concert.
- Inclusion in the Digital Book of Gratitude 2026.



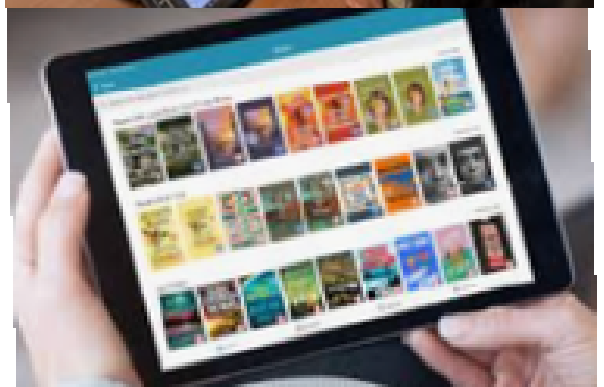
DIGITAL BOOK OF GRATITUDE

Beyond the physical wall, families may contribute to the Digital Book of Gratitude 2026.

The archive may include:

- Family histories
- Historical photographs
- Immigration records
- Personal stories
- Other documents and memories

This growing archive will preserve the heritage of Polish-American families for future generations around the world.



We will contact you for digital additions

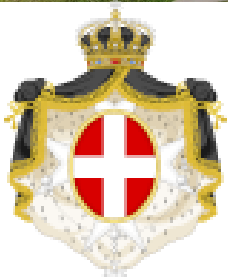
The Church

“once you belong, it’s forever”

The Church of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe is a major Roman Catholic sanctuary built between 1976-1983. The church serves as a significant spiritual and symbolic site.

Key Features and History

- **Papal Connection:** The church was consecrated by Saint Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) in 1983 during his second pilgrimage to Poland. As Archbishop of Kraków, he previously laid the cornerstone in 1969.
- **Capacity:** The church is designed for large congregations, with an upper church accommodating 5,000 people and a lower church holding 2,000.
- **Anti-Communist Role:** During the 1980s, particularly under martial law, the church became a major hub for the "Solidarity" movement.
- **Symbolism:** The church is named after St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish Franciscan friar, and only known person to offer his life to save another at Auschwitz.
- **Significance:** Polish British emigrant Andrew Ciechanowiecki, a nobleman, diplomat, art historian and collector, provided funding for this church decorating it in a modern, cubist style. He is buried in its crypt.
- **Artistic Works:** The main altar features a six-metre-high statue of Christ Crucified by Kazimierz Gustaw Zemła.



To learn more about the church visit:
<https://parafiamistrzejowice.pl/>

The Ceremony

DATE:

Sunday, November 8, 2026

PLACE:

Church of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, Kraków -Mistrzejowice

PURPOSE:

Unveiling the Wall of Remembrance will culminate in:

- Solemn Blessing & Unveiling Ceremony.
- Grand Maltese Charity Concert.



Ceremonial Timeline

16:30 Arrival of guests and registration.

17:15 Historical segment honoring Polish emigrants.

17:50 Blessing and unveiling of the Wall of Remembrance.

18:30 Grand Maltese Charity Concert.

20:00 Words of thanks and continuation of the project mission.



The event will unite prayer, remembrance, sacred music, family heritage and charitable service

Partners in Legacy

Polish-American Wall of Remembrance 2026: A Legacy of Heritage and Hope



Invest in Remembrance

Your **support is vital** to preserve our Polish heritage and inspire future generations.

Join us in honoring the past while creating impactful change for those in need.

HONOR AN ANCESTOR

HELP A CHILD

LEAVE A LIVING LEGACY



Poland just elected a historian as its new president. 🏛️

Karol Nawrocki is not a career politician. He is a historian — the former director of the Institute of National Remembrance, the institution that exists to ensure Poland never forgets what happened to it.

His mission as president is clear: protect Polish sovereignty, defend Polish identity, and make sure the world never forgets what Poland has survived.

Poland has been invaded, partitioned, occupied, and erased from maps — and it came back every single time. Now it has elected a man whose life's work is making sure that story is never forgotten.

That is not a coincidence. That is a choice.



We welcome conversations with American-Polish foundations, organizations, philanthropic families, associations, cultural institutions and corporate partners interested in supporting the project's charitable and commemorative mission.

Those organizations whose members contribute 100 names or more, will be inscribed as a Sponsor at no cost.

Any questions, please contact Vanessa O'Brien at vanessaapkmusa@gmail.com

With Gratitude,

Vanessa O'Brien, DM

ORGANIZED BY
Parish of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe
Polish Knights of Malta Foundation in Kraków
Copernican Foundation