



Wadowice-on-the Potomac: Celebrating Pope St. John Paul II

The Friends of John-Paul II Foundation, Washington, DC, hosted a splendid gathering at the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, DC, on Sunday, November 18, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Pope St. John-Paul II's inauguration to the papacy.

The annual event, known as Wadowice-on-the-Potomac, is named for the birthplace of Pope St. John-Paul II, who was born Karol Józef Wojtyła. It is a major fundraiser for the Friends of the John Paul II Foundation with profits going to support the Foundation's ongoing work. This year's special guest of honor was His Excellency Piotr Wilczek, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland.

The Master of Ceremonies was Raymond Glembocki. He began by introducing soprano Laura Kafka-Price who led all gathered in singing the Polish and American National Anthems. The current president of the Foundation Sharon Brzostowski asked for a moment of silence in honor of the most recent president Richard Wiermanski who passed away in September. She thanked all those present for their support and then asked the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre, to offer the invocation before the luncheon was served. Guests were seated at tables covered in gold and red linen tablecloths and



Attractive table settings at our Wadowice

decorated with colorful Polish memorabilia centerpieces. The delicious meal ended with John Paul II's favorite Polish dessert called Kremówka Papieska (Papal Cream Cake). Those present agreed that the meal and the setting were "breathtaking."

The afternoon's honoree Ambassador Piotr Wilczek spoke eloquently about the influence Pope St. John-Paul II has had on his homeland and how the impact of his papacy helped bring about dramatic changes in Poland and throughout the world. The Ambassador was presented with a crystal plaque bearing his image along with that of His Holiness John Paul II by the Friends of JPII Foundation president Sharon Brzostowski.

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Ray Glembocki, MC, and Archbishop Pierre

Richard M. Wiermanski loved family, his Polish roots and the church. He also loved traveling and celebrating his birthday.

Richard and Bernadette were high school sweethearts and perfectly matched in every way. They shared friends and interests, and were best friends. But dad always gave in to make mom happy. When they did something or got involved in an organization, they did it as a couple. After mom passed away in 2014, dad moved into Greensprings. He didn't want to live in their home alone. He decorated his apartment his way and developed new interests. When it became time to give up his car (in his mind he never stopped driving and carried his driver's license), friends and his driver, Tony, helped get him where he wanted to go. He wasn't going to sit home. And he wanted to go to board meetings, conventions and events related to Polish culture and his love of Saint John Paul II, his Polish Pope. If he didn't answer the phone when we called, we eventually found out that he was at a meeting. His involvement gave him purpose and wonderful friendships. He was Past President of the American Council for Polish Culture and a Past Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator of the Knights of Columbus. Even as his health was declining, serving as President for the Friends of John Paul II Foundation was his passion and joy.

During the last few years, he also got very involved in tracing his roots and better understanding his ancestors. His ancestry.com account has 539 family members linked. He did the DNA testing that confirmed his roots in Eastern Europe and Russia and he discovered a grandniece, the granddaughter of his sister Betty. As Joanna also lives in Virginia, they were making plans to meet.

Over the past few years, his good times between hospital visits became shorter and shorter. But he kept bouncing back always wanting to schedule one more cruise or trip to visit family and friends. He loved going to Chicago to visit Rick (No. 2) and go to his Holy Trinity High School reunions. His favorite cruise was when most of the family got together in July 2016 – every night we all gathered together for dinner to share stories and enjoy his preferred Polish vodka. During the day he enjoyed



teaching grandchildren to play his favorite card game and watching them rock climb, surf the Flow Rider and play putt putt. In February 2017 he joined my family on an Eastern Caribbean cruise. For Thanksgiving 2017 we planned a Panama Canal cruise. However, while visiting Ann (No. 3) in Sarasota for a few days before, he became ill and cruised into the hospital. He returned to Virginia and the hospital there in December and again in April. But he was determined to get to Chicago for his birthday party in July. His doctor was skeptical, but he proved that he was strong enough to travel and fly on his own.

Dad loved his birthday. We often joked that he celebrated 30 days before and 30 days afterwards. For his 90th he planned on celebrating even longer. In July he hosted a party, not only to celebrate his 90th, but also to celebrate 12 other family members who were born in years ending in an "8" – newborn to a centenarian. About 85 family members and friends "Celebrated the Eights" in Chicago. He was extremely happy to be surrounded by family for the entire weekend. It was the first time that all five children, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren were together. And, he came prepared to discuss planning our next cruise. On the way home, his flight was delayed a couple of hours and he developed a back problem.

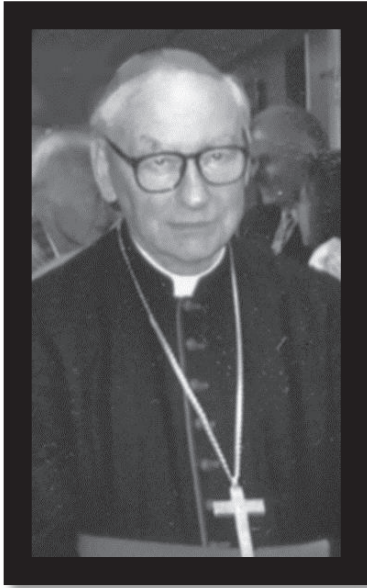
Physical therapy brought improvements, but on Sept. 4 he fell and took his last ride to the hospital. As complications emerged and pain

increased, he decided it was time to go home. He had celebrated his birthday in Chicago and knew he had taken his final cruise. The doctors agreed to just make him comfortable. I sat with him for his final three days and he gave instructions about mailing birthday cards that he had already addressed. He told David (No. 5) he must beat

his cancer. He said his goodbyes. Kathy (No. 4) was driving up from North Carolina with dad's birthday cheese cake when we got the news that he passed away peacefully in his sleep on Sept. 17, just 11 days shy of his 90th birthday.

Mary Wiermanski Kauper (No. 1 Child)

Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly (1926-2018)



On August 28, 2018, Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly died in Rome at the age of 92, in his 62nd year as a priest and in the 50th year as a bishop. His Archbishopric was associated with Rome where he had been ordained in 1956. He worked in Rome at Polish publishing houses

connected with the Jubilee of the millennium of the baptism of Poland. He also worked among others as head of the Slavic Press Section Office during the Vatican Council.

He was head of the Central Immigration Pastoral Center in Rome. In 1968 he became auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Gniezno in Poland. Retiring from there he served at the St. Stanislaus Polish church in Rome, as Rector until 2003. For many years he was the Chairman of the Administrative Council of the John Paul II Foundation, and Promulgated the teachings and legacy of John Paul II to all John Paul II Chapters. On October 13, 1994, Archbishop Szczepan Wesoly, Chairman of the Administrative Council of the Foundation, opened and blessed the John Paul II House in Lublin.

For his pastoral work, he was awarded many times including the Order of the White Eagle, Doctor Honoris Causa of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and the University of Silesia, the Great Cross of the Renaissance, the Golden Laurel of Polonia and Lux Ex Silesia. The funeral ceremony was held on September 10 this

year in Katowice at the Cathedral of Christ the King, under the leadership of Archbishop Wojciech Polak, Primate of Poland Archbishop Wiktor Skworc; Archbishop of the Diocese of Katowice gave the homily. At the Homily a letter from the Holy See which emphasized the merits of Abp. Wesoly for the universal and local church. It also reminded that the late archbishop was a close associate of the Holy Father John Paul II. At the end of the Eucharist, a letter of condolence from the President of the republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda was read, he wrote "Thanks to Archbishop Wesoly fellow citizens abroad could feel a true community. As living in exile, gave an example of love for the Fatherland".

According to his will Archbishop Wesoly was buried in the crypt of bishops in the church of Saint Apostles Peter and Paul in Katowice. Many believers, priests, bishops and people of the consecrated live participated in the funeral. Members of the John Paul II Foundation came from Italy, Germany, France, Great Britain and Poland to say goodbye to the Person who had done so much for the John Paul II Foundation. May he rest in Peace!

Fr. Jan Strzalka

Redacted from the Memorial article
in the John Paul II Foundation Newsletter



Funeral service of Archbishop Wesoly

Brother Leonard Konopka, MIC Chaplain: Diocese of Washington, DC



St John Paul II sought to be reconciled with assassin

After St. John Paul II recovered from his near fatal wounds, one of the first visits he made after leaving the hospital, was to seek out and be reconciled with his assassin, a Muslim by the name of Mehmet Ali Agca, who shot St John Paul at point blank range on May 13, 1981.

They spoke for 20 minutes, however the content of their conversation was never revealed. St. John Paul II told the reporters when asked about the meeting "I spoke to him as I would speak to a brother whom I have forgiven and who enjoys my confidence." This was one of the best examples of how John Paul II held to the practice of forgiving others who sin against us.

This tragedy happened as John Paul II was being driven through St Peter's Square in Rome, where a crowd of thousands were waiting to greet him and attend his weekly general audience. Suddenly there was a burst of gunfire that was seen and heard by those who were in the path of the vehicle. Mehmet Ali Agca fired four shots at the pontiff, who was struck in the abdomen, as well as on his right arm and left index finger. Severely wounded, John Paul II fell into the arms of his aide, Rev Stanislaw Dziwisz, then rushed to the Gemeli hospital in Rome for treatment. The Holy Father endured over five hours of surgery in which parts of his intestine were removed.

After fighting for his life in the hospital, he later revealed in his book "Memory and Identity: " Yes, I remember that journey to the hospital. *I remained conscious for some time after. I had a feeling that I would survive. I was in pain, I had reason to be afraid but I had this strange feeling of confidence.*"

Immediately after the shooting, the crowd held Mehmet Ali Agca until the police arrived. To

this day Ali Agca's reason for attempting to kill the Holy Father has frequently changed and still remains somewhat of a mystery. It has never been confirmed if Mehmet Ali Agca ever asked forgiveness for trying to kill the pontiff. Regardless of his motive, Mehmet Agca pleaded guilty to the assassination attempt on John Paul II and was sentenced to life in prison in July 1981.



Pope John Paul II meeting with his assassin in prison

Meanwhile, we find ourselves living in an age where feelings have become extremely significant in peoples lives. This results in our feeling resentful and unforgiving for any number of reasons. Most often our feelings stand in the way of our being objective and we take them all in a very personal and subjective point of view. When we do this we determine that our feelings of frustration, anger and/or hurt, are always right and justifiable. Furthermore, many fall into the delusion that their feelings are sacrosanct and superior to any other human understanding of all circumstances that caused an incident that cause a wound or hurt. As a result we most often fall into a very subjective manner of misinterpreting events in our lives.

It is also important to be aware that 'feelings are not facts.' But the 'fact is I do have feelings.' We don't want to ignore our human feelings when offended. However, we can make a choice not to remain unforgiving for very long as this can do great damage to our souls. Others may have no idea of how offensive they are unless we can help them understand how we interpret their remarks or judgments. They will continue their behaviors until somehow they are apprised of the hurts they cause. The same attitude is true of our sins against God. When we realize what anguish our sins caused Jesus to undergo on the cross, it can motivate us not to want Jesus to endure the pain of our sins against Him or others.

Clinging to resentment and bitterness can lead to serious depression, lack of energy and also creates a distance between God and us. Pope John Paul II knew this, and that is one of the reasons why the Holy Father took the initiative to seek out reconciliation with Mehmet Ali Agca.

Scripture tells us to extend our forgiveness to others because we want Jesus to forgive us our sins against Him. If we constantly



Pope John Paul II greeting guards while entering the prison

recall others' sins against us, we are unknowingly telling Jesus not to forgive us our sins against Him. We are likewise asking Him to constantly recall our sins against Him and others. There is no benefit to this attitude or mindset. Living with un-

forgiveness on our hearts can actually drain us of energy for living a healthy and peaceful life. It can even deprive us of union with God on earth and have us endure the pains and anguish of purgatory.

God does not desire or want anyone to cling to past hurts. He won't give us the grace to do or to think in ways that He does not approve. On the contrary, He always provides more than enough grace to help us overcome any sin against us no matter how profound or hurtful.

St. John Paul II did not delay becoming reconciled with his aggressor. He did not wait for Mehmet Ali Agca to come to him in the hospital. On the contrary he made the initiative to seek reconciliation. We would do well to follow and imitate his response

What can help us forgive others, is the ability get over our anger and resentment as soon as possible. Furthermore, we are actually doing ourselves a great favor by forgiving others for their sins against us. What can confuse us during the ordeal of overcoming our need to forgive is to quickly as possible remember that we cannot "pardon" the sins of others who may steal something of value from us, such as our wallet or other valuable possessions as that can only be pardoned by the state, society and ultimately only God can pardon. However, we can always try to be forgiving in order to remain at peace within ourselves and with those who have injured us in any manner.

With Christmas fast approaching, one tremendous gift we can give to Our Lord, is surrendering our sins of un-forgiveness to Him. An excellent New Years resolution would be to let God provide the healing we need and the grace to surrender to Him all the experiences He permits. Our prayer might achieve great results when we ask God: "What are you trying to teach me through the offense of others?"

"To be continued"

Relic comes to reside at St. Vincent Ferrer

LINDA REEVES
of the Florida Catholic staff

St. Vincent Ferrer Parish welcomed a special guest visiting the parish this month on a very special occasion.

Pauline Father Christopher Wieliczko, the executive director of the Vatican-based Foundation of St. John Paul II, visited the parish bringing with him a first-class relic. "The relic is the blood of St. John Paul II," said Very Rev. Canon Father Thomas Skindeleski, pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer, when asked about the holy relic that will remain at St. Vincent Ferrer for safekeeping with several others that are part of a parish collection.

The relic was placed in the St. John Paul II Room at St. Vincent, and will be displayed in a special relic room when the parish and school additions now underway are completed. The relics are under glass and in a special container.

Father Wieliczko took part in the Oct. 7 Mass at 11:30 a.m. with main celebrant newly ordained Father Matthew Hawkins of the Diocese of Orlando, who made the trip to Delray Beach for the special occasion. Very Rev. Canon Skindeleski also concelebrated, and Deacon Greg Osgood and Deacon Frank Lovine of the parish also participated.



Alicia Donelan kisses the relic of St. John Paul II during ceremonies Oct. 7 at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Delray Beach. Dr. Lawrence Ziemianski is shown behind her

During his homily, Father Hawkins spoke about St. John Paul II and how the beloved man influenced him as he discerned and then answered the call of priestly vocation. Father Hawkins served at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish while he was studying at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach. Was it a coincidence or at the hands of God that the young man lived in the St. John Paul II wing of seminary facilities? "I kept seeing his motto, 'Don't be afraid,'" he shared. "Don't be afraid to live the life of holiness in this world. We are all called to holiness. Our saints show us how to live our life."

Father Wieliczko spoke about the spirituality of St. John Paul II at the conclusion of Mass. "We have seen many miracles through the intercession of prayer to St. John Paul II," he said. "There are many miracle stories.

"St. John Paul II, pray for the Church, which you love. St. John Paul, pray for all the good people of St. Vincent Ferrer and all the people of the United States."



A first-class relic of St. John Paul II is displayed during Mass at St. Vincent Ferrer in Delray Beach. (PHOTOS BY LINDA REEVES | FC)

Father Canon Philip S. Majka Chaplain: Diocese of Arlington



Dear Friends,

In the tradition of the Christmas Eve Wigilia, the youngest member of the family is sent to the window to look for the first star. However, if he should see someone there, maybe a poor person, this is the unknown guest for whom a place has been set.

("A guest in the house, God in the house"). The stranger is invited to share in the Wigilia meal. The father gives his blessing over the oplatek and the wafer is shared with everyone wishing each other God's blessings for the coming year. Maybe the father would quote something from our great poet Adam Mickiewicz who once said.....

"Truly, I say that each one of us has in his soul the seed of the future and the challenge to implement this seed. In so far as we enlarge and improve our own soul, by so much we will expand brotherly love in our world. Sow therefore, love within the human race and the spirit of self- sacrifice, and be sure that from this seed it will grow into a world of perfect harmony."

Rev. Philip

...continued from Page 1

As a special tribute, on October 16, 2018, two United States flags were flown over the US capitol in remembrance of the day that Karol Józef Wojtyła was elected Pope in 1978. The flags were presented to His Excellency Piotr Wilczek, and His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre. After the presentation of the flags, Vice President Marianna Eckel gave highlights of the past and future activities of the Washington Chapter of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation.

The after lunch entertainment included some favorite songs of Pope St. John Paul II performed in Polish by the well-known soprano Laura Kafka-Price, accompanied by pianist Eileen Cornett. Both artists are on the faculty of the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Those present joined in singing the Pope's beloved *Góralu czy ci nie żal* and *Barka*. The final blessing was given by Rev. Canon Philip Majka. Before the guests departed, Cecilia Glembocki, former president of the Chapter, invited them to pick up colorful gift bags with traditional Polish Christmas ornament, an "Altar to the World" book, as well as a newly developed children's coloring book about Pope St. John Paul II. A beautiful red or white scarf was included as a remembrance of John Paul II's love and warmth that he demonstrated to the entire world.

Scenes from Wadowice



Our honoree Ambassador Piotr Wilczek receiving a gift from President Sharon Brzostowski



Cecelia Glembocki presenting the gifts to representative Kalia Sokos of the office of Rep. Barbara Comstock (VA-10)



Friends of John Paul II Foundation - Christmas Tree 2018

Early in December of this year our committee had the honor to decorate Polish Christmas Tree at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington DC.

The tree is decorated with the traditional handmade polish ornament donated by friends and members of JPPII foundation and admired by many visitors.

Please stop by and visit our Christmas tree at the Shrine which will be up until the middle of January 2019.

The tree is located in the Main Hall next to the John Paul II Luminous Mysteries Chapel where visitor can venerate a first-class relic of John Paul II and participate the liturgical life of the shrine.

May you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2019.

Zyczymy Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia oraz Szczesliwego Nowego Roku.

Mrs. Marianna Eckel

FJPIIF – Vice President



This star ornament was made by Cecilia Glembocki and Marianna Eckel. One hundred of these were made as a reminder of Pope John Paul II's Polish heritage. They were an example of a craft that comes from his Polish traditions. A scarf in red or white was also presented to each guest as a reminder of the warmth that radiated from Pope John Paul II. Directions as how to make the stars were included in each box.

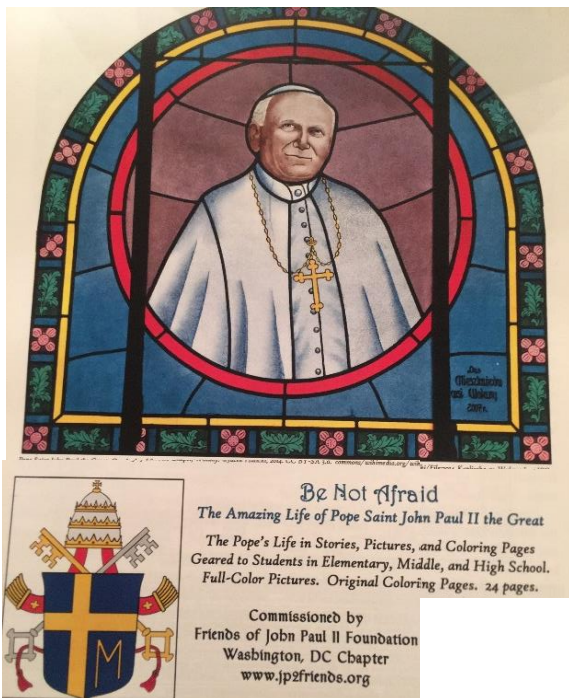
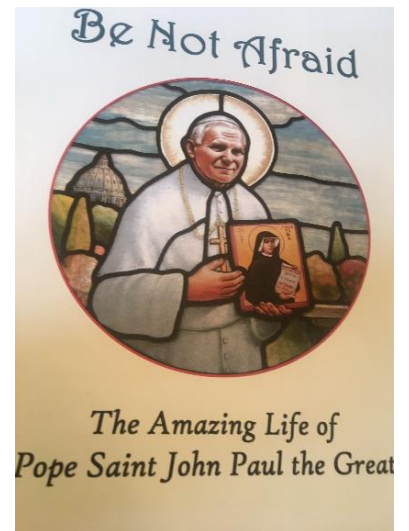
These hand-made ornaments are on the Polish Christmas tree at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. Notice the image of John Paul at the top of the ornament celebrating his 40th year.

Legacy Committee

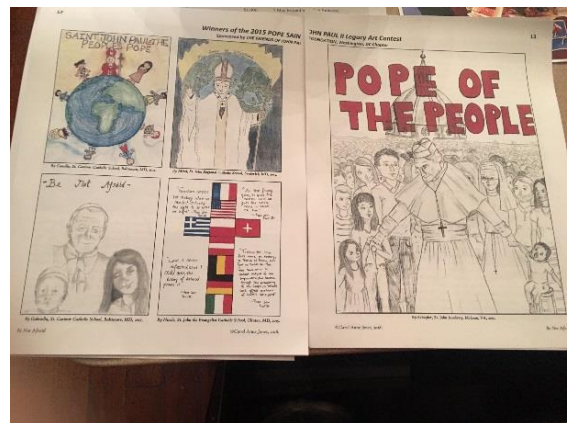
Update for the Children's Coloring Book

Cecelia Glembocki, Chairman

As we prepared for the Arlington Diocesan Catechists Conference for Religious Educators on November 17 at the Sheraton Hotel in Reston, Virginia, Marianna Eckel and Cecelia Glembocki had the opportunity to review the children's coloring book about Pope John Paul II. Eckel and Glembocki reviewed the book, its costs, distribution, and plans for the 2020 event in Rome. As a result of the preview of this 28-page coloring book, they both were in awe over the great deal of accurate facts presented and quality of material.



6,000 of these 28-page coloring books were ordered and are intended for elementary, junior high, and high school students. The plan is to have these books translated into the Polish language at a later date. These were distributed by the hundreds to religious educators.



The quality is excellent, and the content is outstanding. The winners of the coloring contest that was held in 2015 are in this coloring book and it is hoped that the schools and children will be pleased to see their illustrated projects in this lovely informative book. Special thanks to Connie Donnelly for recommending Carol Jones, who has prepared this informative coloring book for children.

If you should have any questions or comments, please do reach out. Both Marianna Eckel and Cecelia Glembocki are totally committed to developing this project for future generations.

In Memoriam Donations

In Memory of Lorraine Owen, John Kendig II, Dr. Armin Rahbin

Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki

In Memory of Dr. Lucas Kulczycki, Chester Lobrow

Stephen and Constance Donnelly, Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki

In Memory of Richard M. Wiermanski

William and Gloria Klepczynski

Stephen and Constance Donnelly

Commodore John Barry Assembly, K of C

Jane L. Johnston

Phil Kauper and Elaine Wikstrom

Michael Freeman and Marikay Shaw

Dorothy B. Leahey

Sharon L. Brzostowski

Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki

MEMORIAL AND SPECIAL OCCASION DONATIONS

Memorial donations in memory of your loved ones or donations honoring special occasions (anniversaries, birthdays, etc), can be made to support the goals of the John Paul II Foundation. In appreciation for your donation, the Foundation in Rome will have a special Mass and Prayers offered for that intention at the Tomb of Pope Saint John Paul II in St. Peter’s Basilica. The Washington, DC Chapter will mail a card notifying the family or honoree of the donation and intention. The Friends of John Paul II Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

\$ _____ () Memorial or () Special Occasion of _____

for _____

Please inform family or honoree (Name and Address): _____

Your name: _____ Your E-mail _____

Your address: _____

Mail form and check made payable to “Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc.”
to Constance R. Donnelly, 300 Kent Street, Falls Church, VA, 22046.

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Visit us at www.jp2friends.org

***The John Paul II Foundation
was established in Vatican
City in 1981.***

**Wishing you a Holy
and Happy Christmas
and a New Year filled
with God's Blessings**

*The Board of Directors of the
Friends of John Paul II Foundation*



Our Polish Christmas Tree
at the Shrine



NEWSLETTER

Friends of John Paul II Foundation, Inc.

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