

Torun Students Visit Philadelphia



In October, 2008, a group of twenty-seven Philadelphians, including teachers and students from various high schools, had the opportunity to visit Torun, Poland, Philadelphia's Sister City, when the city celebrated its 775th anniversary. A reciprocal visit of Torun officials, teachers and students took place during the week of October 17 through October 26, 2009.

The group of students from the Thaddeus Kosciuszko High School in Torun were hosted by students from Swenson High School, Northeast High School, Lincoln High School and Nazareth Academy High School during their 10- day visit to America.

The 52 students, along with the tour guides, teachers and officials, had an extremely busy schedule. They visited historic Philadelphia, Kosciuszko House, enjoyed lunch at the Polish American Cultural Center Museum, visited City Hall, and met with Mayor Michael Nutter and members of City Council. They also had the opportunity to visit New York City and Washington, DC.

The officials participating with the group were Mayor Michael Zaleski, Mayor of Torun; Chairman of Torun's City Council, Waldemar Przybyszewski and Head of Education in Torun, Anna Klobuskowska.

Compliments to the Philadelphia Sister Cities representatives and host families for helping to make their Sister City Torun's group visit a memorable event.



Honorable Robert Borski, Torun's City Council Chairman, Waldemar Przybyszewski, Senator Robert Casey Jr., Senator Arlen Specter, Mayor of Torun, Michael Zaleski, Torun's Education Director, Anna Klobuskowska, and International Visitors Council of Philadelphia President & CEO, Nancy Gilboy visiting the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

To all our Members and Friends Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

Adam Mickiewicz Polish Language School

Copernicus Society of America

Council of United Polish Societies
Chester, Pennsylvania

Jagiellonian Law Society

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Polish American Congress
Eastern Pennsylvania District

Polish American Cultural Center Museum
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Polish American Heritage Association
of Delaware County**

Polish American Radio Program

Polish Beneficial Association

Polish Eagles Sports Club

Polish Falcons of America

Polish Museum of America
Chicago, Illinois

Polish National Alliance of U.S. of N.A.

Polish National Alliance District #6

Polish National Alliance Lodge #650

Polish Police Association of Philadelphia

Polish Roman Catholic Union of America

Polish Roman Catholic Union of America District 3

Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union

Polish Women's Alliance of America

Polish Women's Alliance of America
St. Rita's Society #417

St. Adalbert Polish Language School

Second Street Polish Society

The Society of Our Mother of Consolation
Wilmerding, PA

TK Club of Conshohocken



Polish Christmas Open House at Museum

On **Saturday, December 12th**, the Polish American Cultural Center Museum at 308 Walnut Street in historic Philadelphia will sponsor its annual **Christmas Open House. Everyone is invited. Admission is FREE.**

The schedule for the Christmas Open House is as follows:

- 11 A.M. to 11:45 A.M.** Snacks and refreshments will be served in the 4th floor meeting rooms of the Polish American Cultural Center.
- 12 Noon to 12:30 P.M.** Children's Magic Show in the Exhibit Hall on the first floor.
- 12:30 P.M. to 1 P.M.** Sw. Mikolaj will visit the Museum and have a treat for every child.
- 1 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.** The children will sing Koledy.

Admission is FREE to everyone and Sw. Mikolaj will be available to take pictures with the children, so bring your camera.

Refreshments will be served from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.

For more information about the Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 12th, call the Museum - Monday through Friday between 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. - Call 215-922-1700.

During the Polish Christmas Open House the Museum Gift Shop will be open from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Well-Known Polish Christmas Customs



Wesolych Swiat! Bozego Narodzenia! That is the way to say "Merry Christmas" in Polish. Among Poles, living all over the world, the most beloved and beautiful of all traditional festivities is that of Christmas Eve as they gather for the Christmas Eve Dinner, known as Wigilia.

The Wigilia table is covered with a white cloth on which a thin layer of hay is placed to remind all gathered of the humble manger setting where the Christ Child was born. Before sitting down at the table, everyone breaks the traditional wafer, or Oplatek and exchanges good wishes for health, wealth and happiness in the New Year. The Oplatek is a thin, unleavened wafer similar to the altar bread in church. It is stamped with the figures of the Christ Child, and family. The Oplatek wafer is known as the bread of love and unity and is often sent by mail to family members and friends in Poland or those living at a distance who are unable to be present for the Christmas Eve Dinner.

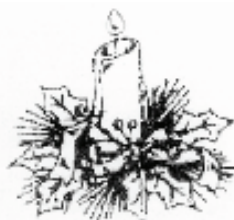
A lighted candle in the window, or on the table, symbolizes the hope that the Christ Child will be with you in spirit. The Polish people also set an extra place at the table for an unexpected guest. This belief stems from the ancient Polish adage, "A guest in the home is God in the home."

The Wigilia is a meatless meal. Items that are included in a traditional Wigilia menu are mushroom soup, boiled potatoes, pickled herring, fried fish, pierogi, beans and sauerkraut, a dried fruit compote, babka, potato pancakes, assorted pastries, nuts and candies.

After dinner the members of the family sing Polish Christmas Carols called Koledy, while the children wait impatiently around the Christmas tree or choinka for the gifts to be exchanged.

Aside from the beautiful Wigilia, the Polish people enjoy Polish Christmas Carols, "Koledy". They are sung in Polish churches at the Christmas Eve Mass, known as Pasterka, or Shepherd's Watch, and throughout the Christmas season, to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas Day itself is spent enjoying visits to family members and friends where you will always hear the words "We Wish You a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year", in Polish, "**Wesolych Swiat, Bozego Narodzenia i Szczesliwego Nowego Roku!**"



Wesolych Swiat

from

**Fr. Jan Palkowski, Pastor
and Parishioners of**

**Sacred Heart Church, Clifton Heights, PA
St. Hedwig, Chester, PA**