Bulletin No. 69 June 2025

JOHN PAUL II
VATICAN FOUNDATION

Fot. Grzegorz Gałązka

Two Meetings of the Foundation's Governing Board in Rome

The many initiatives undertaken by our Foundation require sound and effective governance. Oversight of the John Paul II Vatican Foundation is entrusted to the Administrative Council. According to the new statutes signed on November 15, 2023, by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, the Council is composed of 7 to 9 members, serves a five-year term, and meets at least twice a year.

The current Council, appointed in 2022, includes the following members: Msgr. Paweł Ptasznik (Chairman), Bishop Sławomir Oder (Vice Chairman), Marek Markiewicz (Secretary, Poland), Bogdan Chmielewski (USA), Wojciech Halarewicz (Germany), Henryk Rogowski (France), Fr. Tomasz Szopa (Poland), Fr. Michał Wilkosz (Germany).

Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz is an ex officio member of the Council, not subject to term limits. The higher authority (l'autorità superiore) over the Foundation is vested in the current Metropolitan Archbishop of Kraków, presently Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski.

This year's Council meetings (held on February 4–5 and May 21–22) began each time with a morning Mass at the tomb of St. John Paul II in the Vatican, followed by working sessions at the Church of St. Stanislaus BM in Rome.

At each meeting, the directors of the Foundation's five operational branches presented their reports:

– Fr. Jan Strzałka, SCJ (Student House in Lublin)
– Fr. Mateusz Wójcik (Pilgrim House in Rome)
– Fr. Andrzej Dobrzyński (Documentation and Research Center on the Pontificate of John Paul II in Rome)
– Fr. Dariusz Giers (Administrative Secretariat)
– Fr. Tomasz Podlewski (recently established Office for Media and Events)

Each session of the Council involves key decision-making regarding current and future projects. Highlights from the February meeting included:

– Maintaining the number of Foundation scholarship recipients, increasing scholarship amounts, and initiating renovations at the Student House in Lublin
– A plan to relocate the Documentation Center to central Rome within the coming years
– Drafting renovation plans for the Pilgrim House in Rome
– Continuing and expanding two initiatives: the St. John Paul II Award and the John Paul II Days at Rome's Pontifical Universities, both scheduled for this autumn
– Establishing a press office and expanding the Foundation's media outreach

Outcomes from the May meeting included:

– A Papal Contest for high school students (June) and university students (July), along with a multi-day mountain camp for students in Poland (September), co-organized with the Tertio Millennio Institute and Teologia Polityczna

– Strengthened cooperation with the Angelicum University in Rome—alma mater of both St. John Paul II and the current Pope, Leo XIV—including the awarding of several scholarships for the John Paul II Studies program.

During the May session, members of the Council and the directors also participated in the first general audience of the newly elected Pope Leo XIV. Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski and Bishop Sławomir Oder held private meetings with the Holy Father.

It is worth noting that Pope Leo XIV began his pontificate on the 105th anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II (May 18). During his inaugural Mass, he wore the chasuble and carried the pastoral staff once used by John Paul II—an image featured on the cover of this Bulletin.

Rome Commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the Passing of St. John Paul II to the Father's House

April 2, 2025, marked the 20th anniversary of the death of our Patron, St. John Paul II. To honor his memory, a three-day series of commemorative events took place in Rome, with active participation from our Foundation. On the evening of April 1, a concert titled Credo by Krzysztof Penderecki was held at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. In addition to commemorating the 20th anniversary of John Paul II's passing, the event also marked the fifth anniversary of the composer's death. The concert was co-organized by the Church of St. Stanislaus BM, whose rector is the Chairman of our Foundation. Attendees included representatives of the Polish episcopate, the Italian Polish community, and members of our Foundation. On April 2, at 3:00 p.m., a Mass was celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica, presided over by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, with the participation of, among others, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. Later that evening, at 9:00 p.m., a multilingual prayer vigil was held in St. Peter's Square, conducted in Polish, Italian, and English. The final day of the commemoration, April 3, began with a morning Mass at the tomb of the Pope and concluded with a religious and cultural evening organized by our Foundation in the John Paul II Hall at the Church of St. Stanislaus BM. The event also featured a photography exhibition by papal photographer Grzegorz Gałązka titled The Passing of a Great Pope: 20 Years Ago. We are pleased to share that, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of his death and the 105th anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II, the Catholic Editorial Office of Polish Television (TVP) has produced two new documentary films about the Pope. Both feature priests from our Foundation—Fr. Paweł Ptasznik (Chairman) and Fr. Tomasz Podlewski (Spokesman)—and are titled In the Footsteps of the Father and The Pope's Mother. The films are available free of charge on the Catholic Editorial Office's YouTube channel: youtube.com/@religiatvp

Death of Pope Francis

On April 21, Pope Francis passed into the hands of the Lord. Representatives of our Foundation took part in the funeral rites held at the Domus Sanctae Marthae and in St. Peter's Basilica, as well as in the funeral Mass celebrated on April 26 in St. Peter's Square. The John Paul II Vatican Foundation gives thanks to God for the gift of the pontificate of the late Pope Francis, and in particular for the three memorable meetings he granted us: in April 2015 (on the first anniversary of the canonization of John Paul II), in October 2016 (the 35th anniversary of the Foundation), and in September 2022 (the Foundation's 40th anniversary, postponed by a year due to the pandemic). We share below an excerpt from Pope Francis's personal address to our Foundation in 2015: "I especially thank you for your help in the education of young people (...). You enable both priests and laypeople to deepen their formation so that they are better prepared to help communities face the cultural and spiritual challenges of today's world (...). It is so important that you live in solidarity, above all, within your local groups of the Foundation's Friends (...). I bless you in your work, and I ask you to pray for me." (Vatican, April 25, 2015)

Another Group of Our Scholarship Recipients Completes Five Years of Study in Lublin

Thanks to the generosity of our Benefactors, another group of our scholarship recipients has successfully completed their studies at the Catholic University of Lublin, following five years of residence and formation in our Student House in Lublin. Several years of spiritual formation and academic achievement have been made possible through the support of our scholarship program by people of goodwill. We are proud of our graduates and deeply grateful to everyone who, even through the smallest donation, contributed to the fulfilment of our mission. We also extend our sincere thanks to the Sacred Heart Fathers, Fr. Jan Strzałka and Fr. Robert Ptak, who have faithfully overseen our Student House in Lublin for many years. If you wish to continue making a real impact on the education of future generations in the spirit of Saint John Paul II, we kindly ask for your continued support of our scholarship program. Let us help more students realise their dreams. Applications for the next round of scholarships open in July.

Our Pilgrim House in the Jubilee Year

The Jubilee Year draws many pilgrims to Rome. During this special time, the Polish House of John Paul II on Via Cassia 1200 is hosting numerous groups and individual pilgrims. In the past quarter alone (March–May), our Pilgrim House welcomed, among others: the Christ the King Fathers during their priestly retreat; primary school groups from Mieścisko and Popowo Kościelne; a secondary school from Elbląg; pilgrims from Gniezno, Swarzewo, and Puck; parish groups from Wolsztyn, Stare Miasto, Knurów, and Słupca; representatives of the Polish healthcare sector; youth ministers from Kraków; the "120" community led by Fr. Wojciech Węgrzyniak from Kraków; the Major Seminary from Przemyśl with Bishop Krzysztof Chudzio; the "Light-Life" Movement from Choroszcz; members of the Polish diaspora from Zgorzelec; as well as pilgrims from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, and Italy. Creating an atmosphere of hospitality and welcome is made possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of Fr. Mateusz Wójcik, the director, supported by the Sercan Sisters and a committed team of staff.

New President of the New York Chapter of our Foundation

During the annual Christmas wafer-sharing meeting of the Friends of the John Paul II Vatican Foundation in New York, held on December 8, 2024, a leadership transition took place: Janusz Grabiński was appointed the new president, succeeding Mieczysław Pająk, who had served in the role since 1997. The event, held at Princess Manor in Greenpoint, brought together members and supporters of the New York Chapter of Friends of the Foundation, as well as representatives of Polish-American institutions and clergy. The gathering had a festive character, featuring carol singing, the traditional sharing of the Christmas wafer, and performances by children and youth. Bishop Witold Mroziewski, present at the meeting, led the prayer and blessed the wafers, while chaplain Fr. Józef Szpilski offered a reflection on their meaning. During the official portion of the evening, the enduring mission of the Foundation was emphasized. The new president, Janusz Grabiński—who has been involved in the Foundation's work for many years—is also a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Visiting the Chapters of our Foundation in Florida, Stockholm and London

Since the very beginning of our Foundation, the Friends' Chapter have played a special role. In addition to visits from their representatives to Rome (which we will cover in the next issue of the bulletin), we also visit them in their communities. From March 25–31, our administrator, Monsignor Dariusz Giers, traveled to Florida, where he held numerous meetings concerning the

current and future activity of the Foundation in that region. He met with the Archbishop of Miami, Thomas Gerard Wenski, who gave his blessing for the Foundation's work in his archdiocese. Fr. Giers also met with Anna Navas, long-time coordinator of the Friends' Chapter of the John Paul II Vatican Foundation in Florida, and with Jerzy Bogdziewicz, President of the Polish American Congress in Florida. One especially joyful meeting took place in Port St. Lucie, where Fr. Giers was warmly welcomed at Holy Family Parish. After celebrating Mass, he met with members of the community, who expressed their willingness to become involved in the mission of the Foundation. His stay in Florida was made possible by the kind support of attorney Ryszard Krzyżanowski, one of the Foundation's greatest benefactors, honorary president of the Friends' Chapter in Philadelphia, and long-time member of the Administrative Council. At the age of 93, Mr. Krzyżanowski remains in good health, follows the Foundation's activities in the USA and Rome with great interest, and fully supports the rebuilding of its presence in Florida. He hosted Fr. Giers at his home in West Palm Beach. Later, on May 17–18, 2025, at the invitation of the Swedish Friends of the John Paul II Foundation, Monsignor Giers visited Stockholm. After celebrating Mass at the local Divine Mercy Chapel, he met with members of the Society at the Diocesan Pastoral Center named after St. John Paul II.

A special Mass commemorating the 105th anniversary of John Paul II's birth was held on Sunday, May 18, at the beautiful Church of St. John in the city center. The celebration began with a procession of the local Friends' Chapter's banner. The Mass, presided over by Fr. Giers, was concelebrated by Salesian priests from the Polish Catholic Mission: Fr. Paweł Drążyk, Fr. Marek Brożyna, and Fr. Włodzimierz Kruczkowski. After the Eucharist, Fr. Giers, together with President Dorota Walko and other members of the Society (including former president Bogusława Zaniewicz-Dybeck), visited the Apostolic Nunciature, where they prayed and laid flowers at the statue of St. John Paul II, commemorating his visit to Sweden. From there, the group continued to a nearby care home run by the Bridgettine Sisters, where John Paul II had stayed during his time in Stockholm. The final international visit by a representative of our Foundation took place on Sun-

day, June 1, in London, where the Friends' Chapter of the John Paul II Foundation in the United Kingdom celebrated its 30th anniversary. Representing the Foundation was Fr. Tomasz Podlewski, Director of the Office for Media and Events, who traveled from Rome. The celebrations began at the Polish Church of St. Andrew Bobola in London and were led by Fr. Stefan Wylężek, who served the Foundation for nearly 25 years (1986–2010), including as its administrator from 1996 to 2010. Before Mass, Fr. Wylężek blessed a Memorial Plaque dedicated to the victims of Katyn. He then presided over the Eucharist, during which Fr. Podlewski read a letter from our chairman, Monsignor Paweł Ptasznik, and delivered the homily. The congregation included numerous members and supporters of the Friends' Chapter, parishioners, and clergy, including Fr. Zygmunt Zapaśnik and Fr. Marek Reczek (current and former pastors). The second part of the celebration took place at POSK (Polish Social and Cultural Centre), where guests enjoyed a concert of Polish music, poetry readings, and a shared meal. President Ewa Szymańska spoke on behalf of the London Friends' Chapter. The John Paul II Vatican Foundation extends heartfelt thanks to the entire community of the UK Friends' Chapter, Fr. Stefan Wylężek, the clergy of St. Andrew Bobola Parish, the event organizers at POSK, Radio Bobola, and all supporters.

Honors for Our Foundation Priests

On Sunday, 23 March 2025, a formal gala was held in Andria, Italy, marking the conclusion of the fifth edition of the Premio per la Pace—an award given to those working to build a better world through their commitment to peace, justice, solidarity, and dialogue between nations. We are pleased to share that among this year's laureates was Monsignor Dr Paweł Ptasznik, Chairman of the John Paul II Vatican Foundation. The award committee recognised him "as an official acknowledgment and public expression of gratitude for his service in the Secretariat of State at the Vatican as a close collaborator of Saint John Paul II, and for his ongoing commitment to spreading the message of peace and the teachings of the Holy Pope in his role as Chairman of the John Paul II Vatican Foundation." Soon after, on 31 March–1 April, the Catholic University of Lublin hosted an international academic conference titled "Gift and Hope: On the 20th Anniversary of the Passing of Saint John Paul II." During the event, four priests associated with our Founda-

tion were honoured. Monsignor Paweł Ptasznik received the Signum Universitatis Medal, while the Centenary Jubilee Medal of the Catholic University of Lublin was awarded to: – Rev. Professor Andrzej Dobrzyński, Director of our Documentation and Research Centre in Rome; – and Sacred Heart Fathers Jan Strzałka and Robert Ptak, who oversee our Student House in Lublin.

Unveiling of a statue of St. John Paul II in Aulnay sous Bois

On Sunday, April 6, delegations of the parish Chapter of the Vatican John Paul II Foundation and the Polish School, laid flowers in front of the monument to the Polish Pope on the 20th anniversary of his death. The monument, created at the initiative of the Foundation's parish Chapter, was ceremonially unveiled and consecrated last Sunday, December 8, in the square bearing the name of St. John Paul II for the past 10 years, in front of the Church of Saint Sulpice in Aulnay-sous-Bois. The statue was consecrated by the Provincial of Christendom in France, Spain and Portugal, Fr. Zbigniew Wcisła TChr, and Fr. Bruno Leclerc - pastor of the local French parish. The ceremony was accompanied by the parish choir Soli Deo, which performed the national anthems of Poland and France and the songs "Deus Tama" and "Jesus Christ, you are my live." At the end, everyone sang the song titled. "Barka." The ceremony of unveiling the monument was also attended, among others, by Mr. Bruno Beschizza - mayor of the city, Mr. Consul Piotr Adamiuk, Mrs. Małgorzata Dudek - president of the Paris Chapter of Friends of the Vatican John Paul II Foundation, and Mr. Henryk Rogowski - member of the Administrative Council of our Foundation with his wife, Christiane Rogowski, and also representatives of the Polish School and local Polish associations, flagpoles and numerous parishioners. Among the French Polish community, the memory of our Patron is still alive, and initiatives like this keep it alive also in local non-Polish communities.

The 45th Anniversary of the Foundation - Collection for the Memorial Plaque

Next year, the John Paul II Vatican Foundation will celebrate its 45th anniversary in Rome. Following the custom of previous years, we turn to all our Friends, Benefactors and Supporters with the information that we will place a Benefactors' Plaque in the John Paul II Polish House in Rome on this occasion. As a testimony for future generations, we will honor by name all individuals and institutions and parishes that significantly support the mission of our Foundation. We will dedicate a Platinum Plaque with a donation equivalent to €10,000, a Gold Plaque with €5,000, and a Silver Plaque with €2,500. In addition, the names of Donors who make other donations will be inscribed in the Golden Memorial Book, which we gratefully preserves at the Polish House. Please contact Rev. Msgr. Dariusz Giers, administrator of the Foundation on how to make the donation and the details to be included on the Plaques.

Platinum Plaque

10 000 €

donations equivalent

It is never the case that a person, in doing good to another, is only himself a benefactor. He is at the same time gifted, endowed with what the other accepts with love."

John Paul II

The John Paul II Vatican Foundation expresses gratitude and perpetuates for history the names of those who have made special contributions to its development

First and Last Name

Gold Plaque

5 000 €

donations equivalent

"A man is great not by what he possesses, but by who he is; not by what he has, but by what he shares with others."

John Paul II

The John Paul II Vatican Foundation expresses gratitude and perpetuates for history the names of those who have made special contributions to its development

First and Last Name

Silver Plaque

2 500 €

donations equivalent

„The rich is not he who possesses, but he who gives."

John Paul II

The John Paul II Vatican Foundation expresses gratitude and perpetuates for history the names of those who have made special contributions to its development

First and Last Name

For more information on the Memorial Plaque

Rev. Msgr. Dariusz Giers, office@fjp2.com, tel. +39 06 6861 844.

The Vatican's John Paul II Foundation expresses gratitude and perpetuates for history the names of those who have made special contributions to its development

AUSTRIA

Rodzina Wiśniowski	500 €

FRANCE

Koło Przyjaciół Fundacji Jana Pawła II w Aulnay sous Bois

Gąsior Adam i Teresa	2.500 €
Szwedo Michał i Anna	2.500 €
Mądziel Jacek	400 €
Chamot Janina	200 €
Gurgul Genowefa i Grzegorz	200 €
Adamek Barbara i Zbigniew	100 €
Chamot Izabela i Adam	100 €
Chudy Kazimierz i Kazimiera	100 €
Dec Barbara	100 €
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Rodzina Łuczak	50 €
Nowak Anna i Roman	50 €
Obrochta Danuta i Jan	50 €
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Gąsior Krzysztof	30 €
Gąsior Michał i Karolina	30 €
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Niezabitowska Beata	30 €
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Rodzina Savary J.T.	30 €
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Strzelczyk Ewa i Wiesław	30 €
Stow. AEMCP Duszpasterska Rada Parafialna	550 €
Polska Parafia Sw. Rodziny w Aulnay sous Bois	450 €
Bractwo Żywego Różańca Róża św. Jana Pawła II	100 €
Bractwo Żywego Różańca - Róża św. Rity	100 €
Chór Soli Deo	100 €
Stowarzyszenie rodzicow Szkoły Polskiej APEOP2	100 €
Bractwo Żywego Różańca - Róża św. Faustyny	50 €
Bractwo Żywego Różańca - Róża św. Rodziny	50 €
Liturgiczna Służba Ołtarza	50 €
Straż Honorowa Grobu Pańskiego	50 €
Suma donacji od Koła	1.500 €

Koło Fundacji Jana Pawła II w Paryżu

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INDONESIA

Friends of the John Paul II Foundation

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CANADA

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Suma donacji od Koła	500 €

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Ks. Andrzej Jakubowicz (Sarnaki)	2.000 zł
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SLOVAKIA

Branislav Kľuska	60 €

SWEDEN

Andreas i Hanna Meixner	150 €

Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Fundacji Jana Pawła w Lund

Suma donacji od Koła	944,64 €

Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Fundacji Jana Pawła II w Sztokholmie

Dorota, Andrew, Karol, Adelia, Gabriel Walko	5.000 SEK + 250 €
Bogusława i Mats Dybeck	2.000 SEK
Iwona i Wiktor Kalinowscy	2.000 SEK
Anna, Teodozja i Nils Norman	1500 SEK
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Barbara Kowalska i Jessica Lewandowska	1.160 SEK
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Justyna Czyżewska	180 SEK
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Adam Wesołowski	150 SEK
Danuta Kobiałka-Söderlund	150 SEK
Monika Ringblom	150 SEK
Irena Torines	130 SEK
Aniela Piszczkiewicz	100 SEK
Suma donacji od Koła	400 €

USA

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Ks. Eric S. Orzech	500 USD
St. Stanislaus Benevolent Society	500 USD
Marek Walicki	300 USD

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Grabinski Janusz	50 USD
Grodzka Zofia 2024	50 USD
Gawelko Bozena	50 USD
Gawelko Dariusz	50 USD
Hartly Iwona	50 USD
Izak Dorota	50 USD

Jablonska Krystyna	50 USD
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Kufel Wieslawa	50 USD
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Kurpiewski Boguslaw	50 USD
Kuzma Bozena	50 USD
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Teresa Barbara Lenik Sokolowska	75 USD
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Stefania i Jozef Sowa	200 USD

We pray for the intentions of all Benefactors at the tomb of St. John Paul II in the Vatican, especially during Mass every Thursday and also daily at the John Paul II Polish House in Rome.

The bulletin was prepared by Rev. Msgr. Dariusz Giers, Rev. Tomasz Podlewski, Anna Rychlik. **Computer typesetting:** Mateusz Kruszewski
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