

# JOHN PAUL II PONTIFICATE'S CENTER FOR DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

No. 1/2016

## RECENT EVENTS

DECEMBER  
13, 2015

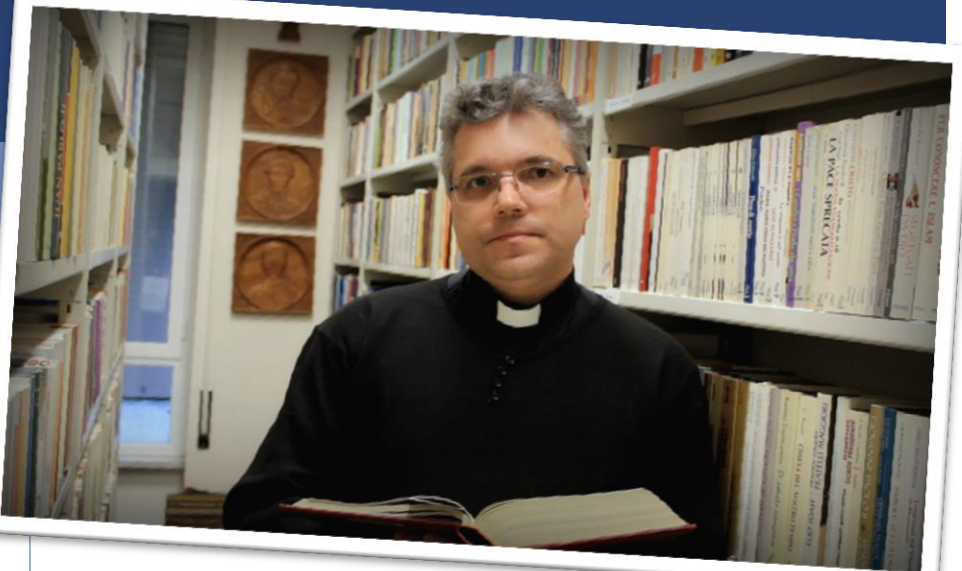
A meeting commemorating the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council.

JANUARY  
24, 2016

A presentation of the book "Agca Was Not Alone". An event organized in Rome with the cooperation of the Department of the Institute of National Remembrance in Katowice (see p. 5).

JANUARY  
28, 2016

An annual meeting of the Administrative Council of the John Paul II Foundation.

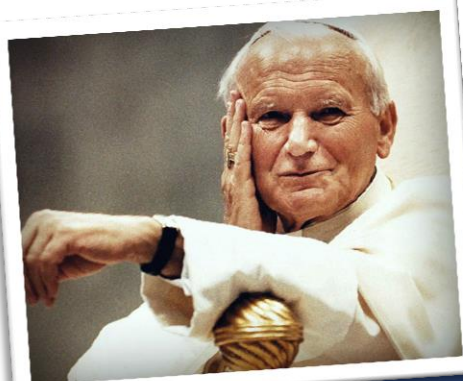


Dear Friends!

Members of John Paul II Foundation, Researchers of His teaching and All of you who appreciate the legacy of our Holy Father.

From the first issue of the e-newsletter you will find out about the salient initiatives of The Center for Documentation and Research of the Pontificate taken in 2015. In addition, you will find here testimonies of those who have visited our collections. We are also informing about events in the Center and

about our plans for the current year. We hope our e-newsletter will become a good and interesting communication tool. This way we would like to provide You information about our work on documentation, research and promotion of the legacy of the Polish Pope.



*The Center for Documentation of the Pontificate collects regularly documents, books, audiovisual, musical, philatelic and numismatic materials, and also other memorabilia connected with the current pontificate, with the papal travels... It is like a chapter of history we are writing together. One can expect that it will be for the next generations not only a point of reference but also a historical challenge.*



## Center from the inside

At the beginning of the new calendar year it is worth to look back and summarize the activity in the previous year, 2015. Among the staff of the Centre for Documentation and Study of the Pontificate of John Paul II there are a priest Andrzej Dobrzyński and two sisters of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, s. Remigia Sawicka and s. Julia Knurek. We are trying to fulfill the mission appointed by John Paul II almost thirty-five years ago, by creating in the Vatican a Foundation of his name and referring to the existence, within the Foundation, an institution with the aim of documenting and studying – as he called it himself – "the heritage of the good" that arose during his ministry as the Successor of Saint Peter. Throughout this period the Centre has been operating under the tutelage of the Foundation's

authorities. However, it would not be possible without the financial support of the Friends of the John Paul II Foundation, active among associations of Polish diaspora scattered around the world, as well as among other nationalities. The headquarters of the Centre is located in the Polish House on the peripheries of Rome. Thanks to the pronouncements of Pope Francis the term "periphery" has gained a positive meaning, denoting a privileged place of evangelization. Thanks to this we better understand that the distance from the center of the Eternal City is not our main problem, because our Centre has the qualities, including a unique atmosphere conducive to concentration and study, that can attract researchers and visiting guests. However, most important is what lies at the center of our institution, and is like the heart of

the Centre, i.e. the person and teachings of the Holy Father and the history of his pontificate. Every day we open the door of the library, museum and archive not in order to just make sure everything is in its place, but to make these collections accessible to researchers and visitors. It happens like this because we are convinced that John Paul II still has a lot to say to the Church and humanity. This conviction is shared with us by many people, which is encouraging and gives us strength to overcome difficulties. In the library in the past year we recorded a total of 225 visits, what makes us very happy. On this occasion we would like to mention two researchers: John Corrigan from the USA and Father Fernando Sousa from Brazil, who in the past year often visited the library of the Centre. The former

explored the philosophical basis of the concept of culture in terms of Karol Wojtyła, the latter examined from a historical perspective the genesis and development of the process of "purification of memory", these gestures of reconciliation through which John Paul II prepared the Church to enter the third millennium

with a clear conscience in relation to faults and omissions of the past. Within the framework of the Erasmus program, last year we hosted in the Centre Patrycja Mikulska from the Pope John Paul II Institute from the Catholic University of Lublin.







From the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków came to us two doctoral candidates, Magdalena Kotulska and Oleksandr Uigeli, who helped in cataloging albums. We hope that the practice, based on the Erasmus, they held at the Centre, helped them to acquire new experiences.

Also Dr. Stanisława Postawa has been helping us for many years in cataloging publications. Thanks to her work almost ten thousand records were entered into the interlibrary database Virtua. It is worth mentioning that the "home" base ProCite has almost thirty-five thousand items. Both databases are available online on our website.

Now our work is largely focused on developing an electronic catalog of museum collections. The database Musnet, in which each object has standardized description and photography, has already more than twelve thousand records. The use of digital technology is primarily aimed at the protection and help in quickly search the exhibits. It also gives access to a rich documentation that may be the subject of study and further exploration of the history of the pontificate, people's attitudes to the person of the Pope and reception of his teaching. Also a digitization of audiovisual materials is proceeded. The number of recordings secured in digital form increased last year by

432 items. It is worth mentioning that last year over 1,200 guests watched collections of our Centre and among them were: Poles, Italians, Spaniards, Americans. Guided tours in the Centre are a form of getting closer to visitors the person of John Paul II and a way of looking at his pontificate.

The study of the teachings of John Paul II also forms a part of our daily work. Last year we published several scholarly articles in Italian, Spanish and Polish journals. We took part in conferences and academic sessions in Rome, Warsaw, Rapperswil and Krzemieniec. In this activity we are supported by Dr. Marta Burghardt, always willing to cooperate and to represent the Centre.

Wishing to enlarge the circle of people with whom we have contact, we try to be active on the Internet. We enrich the content of our website and use social media. By posts and video and audio materials, placed on social networking websites (Facebook, Instagram, SoundCloud, YouTube, Twitter), we reach people of different nationalities and ages. In the last year, as in previous years, with the help of this modern way of communication, we reminded facts from the life of John Paul II, elucidated selected topics of the papal teaching, presented souvenirs stored at the Centre or

informed about our new initiatives. We realize that this form of contact and provision of information has gained great significance today, therefore we will strive to further develop this area of activity. We are grateful to our Friends from the Internet for their interest in our work.

Finishing summary of 2015, it should be emphasized that the circle of colleagues, friends and people interested and enjoying the activities of the Centre continues to grow. Thanks to the joint efforts of many institutions and individuals, all this "good legacy" that was born from the life of St. John Paul II, is getting better documented, considered and passed on to succeeding generations. This is the purpose of the Centre and this aim our institution will serve this year and, God willing, in the future.



## About Our Collections



Marzena Dzilińska, Kętrzyn

Together with my friends, during two evenings, I had an opportunity to visit museum collections of the Center for Documentation. Souvenirs collected here as well as a way the Sister told us about them, made a great impression on me. All of this brought even close to us a great figure of our compatriot, John Paul II.

During the evening sightseeing many feelings were revived, so it was difficult to hold back tears of emotion. Here, personal belongings closely associated with the Holy Father were collected, things showing his spiritual greatness, but first of all showing his human face, his passions and love for the others. I recommend all persons staying in Rome visit this place.

I appreciate the contribution of the people who look after and store all of this stuff with such a meticulously care.

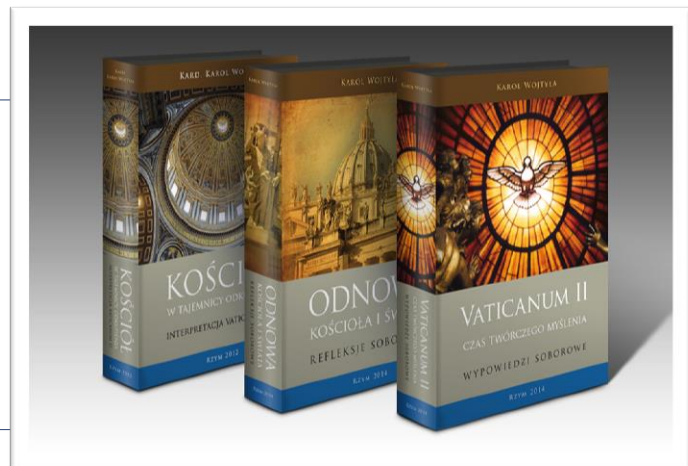
## The Council, the Millennium, and the 1050<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Baptism

Karol Wojtyła saw the celebrations of the millennium of the baptism of Poland in the perspective of the Second Vatican Council. I have discovered this leafing through three volumes of the council and post-council statements of the future pope. All of this was edited by Rev. Andrzej Dobrzyński and beautifully published [thanks to the efforts of John Paul II Foundation and the Center of Documentation and Research of the Pontificate]. In his article “Millennium and the Council”, published on 2 May 1965 in “Tygodnik Powszechny”, archbishop Wojtyła wrote: “It is very salient and important for us that the main subject of this Council was the truth about the Church. Doctrinal elaboration of the truth on the eve of the millennium of our baptism provides new elements to relive the latter. But in 966 the Church entered in the history of our nation. [...] Therefore a mediation on the council’s Constitution on the Church really helps to understand theologically the historical event that took place thousand years ago. [...] Chapters of the Constitution can be read one after the other with applying them to our millennium as a measure and test”. These Karol Wojtyła’s guidelines from a half-century are still valid also today, when we

Three volumes of Karol Wojtyła’s conciliar texts, published by the John Paul II Foundation and the Center of Documentation of the Pontificate.

celebrate the jubilee of the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the baptism of Poland. Everything seems arranged in logical sequence: conciliar renewal, celebrations of the millennium and current anniversary. In a pastoral letter, read out in churches on 22 November 2015, the Polish bishops note that the enormous spiritual effort, which was the millennium of the baptism, has resulted in, among others, the pontificate of John Paul II and the great “Solidarity” movement. In addition, they recall that Mieszko I received baptism before great divisions into Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism. So, the jubilee has an ecumenical dimension: Poles of different Christian denominations can find their common roots just in the year 966. The bishops stress that the 1050<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the baptism of Poland coincides with the Year of Mercy. This way we are invited to consider the baptism, among others, as a sign and realization of God’s mercy.

Dariusz Kowalczyk SI,  
A fragment of the article in:  
“Idziemy”, (2/2016).





## A Presentation in Rome



Sr. Małgorzata Banach, the Society of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, Munich

Many times I have heard about the existence of the Polish House, here in Rome, but I did not know anything about the museum located here. I was most impressed by the “gifts of the heart” collected here that were offered to John Paul II during his pontificate. It is amazing that people to whom the things had great and often sentimental value, offered them to the Holy Father. I wondered: why to him? Because he would appreciate their incomparable value? Because he would accept a donor with often difficult experiences? Because he would tell the one about God? Because he would save the one from oblivion...?

This place is in part an answer for each of these questions. “Gifts of the heart” – meticulously stored, exhibited, told – enrich all visitors and are a quite invitation to the prayer. Thank you...

Almost 35 years after the assassination attempt on the life of John Paul II, a book “Ażca Was Not Alone. Around the Participation of the Communist Special Services in the Assassination Attempt on John Paul II” (“Ażca nie był sam. Wokół udziału komunistycznych służb specjalnych w zamachu na Jana Pawła II”), published by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) and Instytut Gość Media, was presented in Rome. The book is a summary of investigation carried out by the IPN department from Katowice. The presentation [organized in cooperation with the Center of Documentation and Research of the Pontificate of John Paul II] sparked a lot of interest among Poles living in Eternal City who numerously came to the auditorium at the St. Stanislaus Church. Rev. Sławomir Oder, a postulator of the beatification process of the Polish Pope, was among the guests. The meeting was not only an opportunity



to present the main findings of the investigation into the attempt on the life of John Paul II on 13 May 1981 and to demonstrate conclusions resulting from the geopolitical context in which the attempt occurred, but also to reflect deeper on the meaning of this event for the general history and history of the Church. The authors of the book hope that soon it will be published in Italian and trigger an international debate on the circumstances of the assassination attempt made 35 years ago.

Andrzej Grajewski, “Gość Niedzielny”, (5/2016).

## Mercy of Acts

Saints who carrying out God’s call became witnesses of mercy help us in the experience of the current Jubilee of Mercy. A good illustration of this is a painting stored in the Center of Documentation entitled “Skopjanka – Mother Theresa”. The picture by a Macedonian artist, Ivanco Talevski, was offered to John Paul II in 2003. A rectangular composition, placed in a gilded frame, shows a kneeling figure of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Frozen in prayer, with hands at her face, she is staring at the scene in the background. Here, the Good Samaritan is tenderly leaning over naked man lying on the ground, and gently embracing, is raising the aching body. The dark tone of the painting illuminates a bright cape covering Mother Theresa which



protects her from the cold, because the meditation is prolonging... The stiff canvas, modeled with copious folds and kinks, with its shape seems to refer to the Tabernacle – a place where the Lord spoke to Moses, transforming his heart. The extraordinary meetings made the Patriarch’s face radiating of God’s nearness. It is not easy to love deeply, giving oneself as a gift. How can one learn this? The message of this work was accurately expressed by the words of John Paul II on 30 April 2000: “This love can only be learned by penetrating the mystery of God’s love. Looking at him, being one with his



fatherly heart, we are able to look with new eyes at our brothers and sisters, with an attitude of unselfishness and solidarity, of generosity and forgiveness. All this is mercy!”

The photos by: p. 1- Rev. Dr. A. Dobrzyński; p. 2 – Rev. F. Sousa, M. Kotulska, J. Corrigan, employees of The Center of Documentation of the Pontificate; p. 3 – Dr. M. Burghardt, Sr. R. Sawicka, the Polish House of John Paul II in Rome.



“In His resurrection Christ has revealed the God of merciful love, precisely because He accepted the cross as the way to the resurrection”

John Paul II, “Dives in Misericordia”, 8

The Jubilee Year, we are experiencing, reminds us that we are called to be merciful just like the Father. Therefore, experiencing the merciful love of God, we need the power of the Holy Spirit, to be “interiorly transformed in the spirit of that love towards our neighbor” (DM, 14).

Entrustment to Divine Mercy makes us people of hope, peace and joy that the Risen Jesus brings to us. May Mary, Queen of Heaven, who proclaims “God’s mercy from age to age” (Luke 1:50), intercede for us the grace of Christ and power of the Spirit, making us witnesses of Divine Mercy in our daily lives.

Cordially, in remembrance and prayer,  
The staff of John Paul II Pontificate Center for Documentation and Research

» Easter 2016 «

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