



February | Luty 2026 No 2 – Vol. CXLII

# E-NARÓD POLSKI Polish Nation

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## ANNUAL PRCUA OPŁATEK

On Sunday, January 11th, three hundred guests attended the annual PRCUA *Opłatek* celebration at the Allegra banquet hall in Schiller Park, Illinois. Hosted by PRCUA District 7 and organized by the Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble, the event allowed participants to once again experience the magic of Christmas. It featured a performance of traditional Polish Nativity play (*Jasełka*) by all the ensemble's groups, depicting carolers arriving at an old Polish country cottage (chata) somewhere in the Lowicz region.

The dancers from the Polonia representative group and Młoda Polonia played the roles of the carolers, hosts of the cottage, household members, King Herod, death, the devil, and an angel. The younger groups Mała Polonia and Średnia Polonia, played the roles of angels and shepherds, while the Krasnoludki played elves. Mary and Joseph were performed by Ola Podowska-Watson and her husband Michał, along with their youngest daughters as baby Jesus and a little angel.

The *Jasełka* presented picturesque scenes of old Polish folk traditions - with the Christmas Eve table at the cottage, and a repertoire of the most popular Christmas carols and pastorals, accompanied by musical director Bogusława Nedzka-Ściążko (accordion), assisted by Krystian Baran (accordion) and Connor

Chłopek (trumpet).

The carolers brought joy singing the carols. The hosts of the cottage symbolically welcomed them according to tradition with true Polish hospitality and biblical humor, legend, and a touch of history. The program closed with the arrival of Grandpa Frost (*Dziadek Mróz*), who came with a large sack of gifts for the children. The gifts were organized by Kasia Evans and the reliable parents of the younger dancers.

The script and direction of the nativity play were coordinated by Dorota Romek; costumes by Ewa Wszolek; choreography by Jaclyn Krysinski, Nicole Romek, and Nina Romek. The performance was made possible thanks to all the wonderful dancers, and their dedicated parents. Thank you for your participation, support, and all the help in the great success of the Nativity play, as well as for your dedication and sharing with us the passion for cultivating Polish culture, language, singing, dancing, and beautiful Polish traditions with the hope of their survival among the Polish community abroad.

Pastor of the St. Ferdinand parish in Chicago Fr. Peter Gnoinski said a prayer and blessed dancers and all attending the event.

PRCUA was represented by: President (Cont. on pg. 11)



...protecting *Life* through all its stages!

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[prcu.org](http://prcu.org)**FEBRUARY****2 OFIAROWANIE PAŃSKIE – MATKI BOSKIEJ GROM-  
NICZEJ (PL)****7 HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ POLISH SCHOOL VENE-  
TIAN BALL****12 FAT THURSDAY / TŁUSTY CZWARTEK****14 MUNSTER, IN – ST. RAPHAEL KALINOWSKI POL-  
ISH SCHOOL ZABAWA WALENTYNKOWA (VALEN-  
TINE'S DAY DANCE)** at 6 p.m., Carmelite Banquet Hall, 1628 Ridge  
Rd., Munster. Dinner, cash bar, raffle, DJ Lukas. Reservations must be  
made by February 7. Tickets: \$60 adults, \$30 children 12 and under. For  
information and reservation, call 708-969-3305 or 219-671-3903 or  
email: swkalinowski@gmail.com.**16 PRESIDENTS' DAY – PRCUA OFFICE WILL BE  
CLOSED.****17 FAT TUESDAY / OSTATKI****WYANDOTTE, MI – PAĆZKI DAY POLKA FEST**, noon-8 p.m.,  
PRCU, 1430 Oak St., Wyandottet. See pg. 18 for details.**18 ASH WEDNESDAY / ŚRODA POPIELCOWA****21 SHIRLEY ANN GALANTY MICHIGAN STATE BALL****MARCH****2 CASIMIR PULASKI DAY – PRCUA OFFICE WILL BE  
CLOSED****8 LEMONT, IL – 50TH ADULT CULTURE GROUP FASH-  
ION SHOW LUNCHEON PRESENTED BY THE  
ADULT CULTURE GROUP OF PRCUA.** Entry - 11 a.m.; lunch-  
eon - 12 pm. Crystal Grand Banquets, 12416 S. Archer Ave., Lemont.  
See pg. 14 for details.**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY / MIĘDZYNARODOWY  
DZIEŃ KOBIET****DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS / ZMIANA CZASU NA  
LETNI****TOLEDO, OH – THE ECHOES OF POLAND PIEROGI  
DINNER**, 4-8 p.m., PRCUA Hall, 5255 N. Detroit, Toledo. See pg. 18  
for details.**14 ZAJĄCZEK DANCE ENSEMBLE ANNUAL RECITAL****15 DETROIT, MI – BLESSING OF POLISH DANCE  
SCHOOLS****HALKA DANCERS SPRING RECITAL****17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY****19 ST. JOSEPH'S DAY****20 SPRING BEGINS / POCZĄTEK WIOSNY****21 MALBORK DANCE GROUP RECITAL****OPOLE DANCE RECITAL****TATRY DANCERS RECITAL****22 CHICAGO, IL – PRCUA DISTRICT 7 CORNED BEEF  
AND CABBAGE****27 TOLEDO, OH – THE ECHOES OF POLAND PIEROGI  
DOZEN SALE**, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., PRCUA Hall, 5255 N. Detroit,  
Toledo. See pg. 18 for details.**29 POLSKIE MAKI DANCE SCHOOL RECITAL****PALM SUNDAY / NIEDZIELA PALMOWA****ATTENTION MEMBERS!****Do you want to keep receiving the *Naród Polski*?**PRCUA is updating our records. To continue receiving print copies of the  
*Naród Polski*, all members will need to resubscribe. Be on the lookout for  
information in our next print and digital issues.



A Message From  
**AGNIESZKA BASTRZYK**  
PRESIDENT

### A New Year, A New Chapter

February still feels like the New Year to me. While the calendar tells us we are already in the second month, this is only the beginning of my journey as the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America's President - and already, so much has changed.

This moment is historic. In more than 150 years of our organization's proud history, I have the honor of serving as the first woman President. Since 1897, when women were granted equal membership and voting rights within our organization, the PRCUA has been at the forefront of the women's progressive movement. For the first time in our history, we look to an all-woman leadership team to guide us into a new and exciting period of our continued history.

With the resignation of our President, the Board followed the path outlined in our Constitution to ensure continuity and stability. When the Vice President chose not to accept the position, I was asked to step into this role. I accept this responsibility with humility, gratitude, and great excitement for what lies ahead. I am mindful that I follow generations of leaders who built, protected, and strengthened this organization, and I am committed to honoring that legacy while guiding us into the future.

I am grateful to share that the current PRCUA Executive Committee, with Vice President Micheline Jaminski and Secretary-Treasurer Julie Prado, is fully on board and working together with purpose and focus. With a dedicated staff, trusted partners, and the oversight of our Board of Directors, our path is clear - and it is being followed. As we do this important work, the results will be felt and seen over time, and we certainly hope to see meaningful progress by mid-year.

My connection to this organization spans nearly two decades. In that time, I have had the support of many influential people, worked within PRCUA three administrations, and - like so many - yearned to find my place. Along the way, I was encouraged, challenged, and supported, even when the path forward was not always easy. While some of that journey was uphill, it shaped who I am today and prepared me for the responsibility I now carry.

I have had the privilege of being an employee here for close to 20 years, and during that time, I have come to understand this organization from many perspectives.

I began as a licensed sales representative, experiencing firsthand how challenging that role can be. That was over 15 years ago, and I know the work our sales representatives do today is even more demanding. I have lived the realities of meeting members where they reside, listening to their concerns, and helping them make important decisions for themselves and their families.

My journey then led me into the annuities and underwriting areas, where I gained a behind-the-scenes view of the careful and detailed work required to support new members and agents. I saw the effort involved in addressing concerns, providing proper service, and at the same time ensuring the organization is protected through complete and accurate information. Much of this work happens quietly, but it is essential to our success.

As Director of Marketing, I had the extreme pleasure of sharing the good news of our organization across the country. I met members and non-members alike, spoke with individuals whose families had generations of history within our societies, and visited districts throughout the United States. Those conversations reinforced just how deeply rooted, and meaningful, this PRCUA is to so many.

For the past eight years, I have served as Secretary-Treasurer, ensuring our records were in good order and gaining yet another perspective on the stewardship required to keep our organization strong.

And now, I am honored to serve as President.

This new year has already inspired us to begin looking internally at ways to better organize our efforts and, ultimately, better serve our membership. One of the most visible and notable changes is that our office is now once again open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., allowing us to better support our members and sales representatives.

Our next efforts are focused on financial efficiencies, thoughtfully reevaluating how and where we invest our resources, and, when necessary, changing direction. This includes making prudent decisions to reduce or redirect expenses, so they better align with our mission and long-term goals. By carefully diverting resources where they can do the most good, we strengthen our ability to offer more competitive products, support sustainable growth, and ensure surplus strength that will benefit our organization well into the future. Alongside this work, we continue to identify opportunities in the marketplace and to provide additional tools for both our staff and our sales representatives.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway for the August 2026 Quadrennial Convention in Rosemont, Illinois. As part of this work, we are conducting a careful review of our Constitution to identify potential updates and thoughtful improvements that will help strengthen the organization for the future.

I encourage every member to consider becoming more involved in PRCUA by stepping forward to serve in one of the open leadership positions this August. For more information about open positions and the application process, please visit the Convention information page on pages 4-5. Your engagement reinforces our fraternal foundation and helps ensure that our organization continues to thrive for generations to come.

The life insurance and fraternal industries are changing, and so must we. Change does not mean losing who we are; it means ensuring that our mission, values, and services remain strong, relevant, and sustainable for generations to come. Together.

As we move through this still-new year together, I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside collaborating with you. There is much ahead of us. And I want to hear from you! Please reach out to me: [President@PRCUA.org](mailto:President@PRCUA.org).

I am proud of our legacy and excited for PRCUA's future! It is truly an honor to serve.

Agnieszka Bastrzyk, FLMI, FICF, ACS  
National President

# ★ 2026 CONVENTION ★

August 7-9, 2026 - Rosemont/Chicago, Illinois

## — 64<sup>TH</sup> PRCUA QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENTS —

### ENSURE YOUR SOCIETY'S VOICE IS HEARD: ELECT YOUR CONVENTION DELEGATES

As members of PRCUALife, every Society plays a vital role in shaping the future of our organization. In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws, elections for delegates and alternates to the upcoming Convention must take place between **April 15 and May 20, 2026**.

If your Society's meeting date is not listed in the PRCUA Calendar of Events, please contact your society representative for information. We also ask that all Societies email their meeting information to the Home Office by March 15, 2026, so we can ensure accurate scheduling and representation.

Delegate packets will be mailed to financial secretaries in mid-April and must be returned by mail or email no later than **May 30, 2026**. Timely submission ensures that your delegates are fully registered and ready to participate in shaping the direction of PRCUALife.

**MAKE YOUR SOCIETY'S VOICE COUNT! YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE OF OUR PRCUA FRATERNAL FAMILY.**

### SHAPE THE FUTURE OF PRCUALIFE: SUBMIT PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

All PRCUA members are encouraged to submit proposed changes to our Constitution and Bylaws and help ensure that our governance reflects the needs and values of our membership.

Your ideas can strengthen our fraternal foundation, preserve our traditions, and support the continued growth and impact of PRCUA. Every thoughtful suggestion is an opportunity to improve how we serve our members and communities.

Changes must be submitted in writing to the Constitution Committee for consideration. Please follow the format below when submitting changes.

**Proposals to the Constitution Committee should include the following information:**

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Email
- Society number
- Section number
- Article number
- Page(s)
- Title of Article
- Reason for proposed change
- Proposed wording

Send proposed changes by **June 1, 2026** to:

PRCUA Constitution Committee  
Secretary-Treasurer Julie Prado  
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60642-4101

or email to [constitution-proposals@prcu.org](mailto:constitution-proposals@prcu.org)

### WHY OUR LEADERS SERVE

"I am deeply humbled and proud to serve as the first woman president in PRCUA's 150+ year history, driven by a belief in the power of the fraternal model to unite modern financial strategies with our core mission, ensuring our life insurance and annuity portfolios provide the financial protection our families rely on while strengthening our community support for generations to come."  
*President Agnieszka Bastryk*

"Inspired by the PRCUA's significant 50-year impact on my life across cultural, artistic, and professional domains, I am driven to reciprocate by serving the organization. My goal has been to leverage my business experience to promote its mission, ensure its continuity, nurture its strengths, and mitigate its weaknesses."  
*Vice President Micheline Jaminski*

"As a past employee, manager, and now appointed officer, I take pride in knowing that my work makes a real difference - strengthening PRCUA's fiscal foundation, promoting our mission and insurance business, and helping build a secure, meaningful future for our members, their families, and generations to come."  
*Secretary-Treasurer Julie Prado*

### HELP PRCUALIFE IMPROVE: SUBMIT YOUR GRIEVANCES OR SUGGESTIONS

As members of PRCUA, you have a voice in the rules that guide our society. The PRCUA Budget and Grievance Committee invites any PRCUA member who has a suggestion or grievance to file it **by mail or email** with the Budget and Grievance Committee. It should be postmarked by **May 30, 2026**. The PRCUA Convention will only accept suggestions and grievances that have been officially filed with this committee.

A meeting of the Budget and Grievance Committee will be held after receipt of responses from the membership.

Send your suggestions and/or grievances to:

PRCUA Budget and Grievance Committee  
984 North Milwaukee Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60642-4101

or email to [budget-grievance-committee@prcu.org](mailto:budget-grievance-committee@prcu.org)

**STEP UP. SPEAK OUT.  
BE PART OF SHAPING PRCUA FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**

# ★ 2026 CONVENTION ★

August 7-9, 2026 • Rosemont/Chicago, Illinois

## STEP FORWARD ▪ SERVE WITH PURPOSE ▪ LEAD THE FUTURE OF PRCUA

The Polish Roman Catholic Union of America has always been strongest when members step forward to serve. Since our founding, member leadership has been the heart of who we are: protecting families, strengthening communities, and preserving our fraternal values.

We encourage and invite you to consider running for a PRCUA Board of Directors or officer position and help guide the future of an organization built on protection, service, and mutual support.

Leadership in a fraternal benefit society is more than governance. It is a commitment to our shared mission, our members' families, and the generations who will depend on PRCUA tomorrow. By serving, you bring your voice, experience, and values to decisions that strengthen our financial stability, honor our traditions, and expand our impact in the communities we serve.

If you believe in what PRCUA stands for, care deeply about our members, and are ready to give back in a meaningful way, this is your opportunity to lead with purpose. Your willingness to serve can make a lasting difference.

**CONSIDER RUNNING. CONSIDER SERVING.  
CONSIDER SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PRCUALIFE, TOGETHER.**

### THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The PRCUA Board of Directors is the decision-making body that safeguards our mission, represents the best interests of our members, and steers the long-term future of our society. We are seeking candidates who are ready to step in with integrity, vision, and commitment.

As a Board member, you will:

- Help guide long-term strategy and organizational direction
- Oversee responsible stewardship of member assets
- Ensure PRCUA remains strong, member-focused, and fraternal at its core

If you value service, community, and thoughtful leadership—and understand the balance between strategy and stewardship—we encourage you to consider this important role.

As an executive officer, you will:

- Oversee the implementation of strategic initiatives set by the Board of Directors
- Manage the operations, programs, and services that protect and support our members
- Provide leadership to the society's staff, ensuring excellence in administration and member services
- Maintain financial stewardship and operational accountability while preserving our fraternal values
- Serve as an ambassador for PRCUA, fostering relationships with members, communities, and partners

Effective executive officers balance operational management with long-term strategic thinking, ensuring the society continues to grow, remain financially

strong, and uphold its fraternal mission. If you value service, integrity, and visionary leadership and want to make a lasting impact on PRCUA, this is a unique opportunity to guide the society at the highest level.

As PRCUALife continues to grow and evolve, strong leadership will ensure we keep building momentum, expanding opportunities for members and strengthening our impact on the communities we proudly serve.

### WHO SHOULD CONSIDER RUNNING?

PRCUA is seeking dynamic candidates with:

- A history of community involvement aligned with PRCUA's mission and values
- Strategic thinking and sound judgment
- Willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to help execute long-term strategies
- A member and mission-focused mindset

Candidates must also meet the requirements set by the Constitution according to Article 03K Nomination of Officers and Directors.

**READY TO MAKE YOUR MARK?  
STEP UP. SPEAK OUT. HELP BUILD WHAT'S NEXT.**

### HOW TO APPLY?

There are nine directors-at-large positions that need to be filled and three national officer positions: president, vice president and secretary-treasurer.

If you feel you fit the qualifications and have a calling to serve the PRCUA and help it continue to grow and flourish, please complete the application for national office.

- Go to our website: [www.PRCUA.org](http://www.PRCUA.org)
- Click on the blue "2026 Convention" button
- Review the PRCUA Constitution and By-Laws for qualifications and eligibility
- Click on "Application Packet"
- Complete the application and all required documents

Email all completed and signed documents to [PRCUANationalOffice@prcua.org](mailto:PRCUANationalOffice@prcua.org) or mail to: Candidate Qualifications Committee  
c/o Julie Prado, Secretary-Treasurer  
984 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60642

All applications must be postmarked or emailed to the Candidate Qualifications Committee via the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer by **May 30, 2026**.

**EVERY PRCUA DELEGATE WILL HAVE A VOICE  
IN SHAPING THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF PRCUA  
AT THE 64TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION**

# Be Worry Free at 70!

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- ✓ Builds cash value
- ✓ Dividend participating\*
- ✓ Lifelong financial protection
- ✓ Tax-free benefits to beneficiaries
- ✓ Premiums paid through to age 70
- ✓ Guaranteed minimum death benefit\*\*



\* Dividends are not guaranteed  
 \*\* When premiums are paid and there are no outstanding loan balances

Monthly Standard Non-Tobacco Rates*		
Coverage amount - \$25,000		
	Male	Female
35	\$35.42	\$32.29
40	\$42.80	\$38.90
45	\$53.21	\$48.42
50	\$69.03	\$62.98
55	\$95.21	\$87.17
60	\$147.35	\$134.93
65	\$300.38	\$276.32

\* Subject to underwriting review



Other plans and coverage amounts are available  
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**MAXIMIZE YOUR TAX REFUND**

**BOOST YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME**

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ALL PLANS ARE ISSUE AGES 0-90

**10% ANNUAL FREE WITHDRAWAL**

	TIER 1 \$100,000 AND ABOVE	TIER 2 \$50,000 TO \$99,999	TIER 3 \$5,000 TO \$49,999	SURRENDER CHARGE
YEAR 1	5.50% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	5.25% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	5.00% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	10%
YEAR 2	5.50% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	5.25% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	5.00% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	9%
YEAR 3	4.50% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	4.25% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	4.00% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	8%
YEAR 4	4.50% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	4.25% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	4.00% <sub>GUAR.</sub>	7%
YEAR 5	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	6%
YEAR 6	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	5%
YEAR 7	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	NON-GUAR.	4%

### 2.4% MINIMUM GUARANTEED APY

ALL PRCUAlife ANNUITY CERTIFICATES ARE SECURED BY LEGALLY MANDATED RESERVES.

**CONTRIBUTIONS AND APY CREDITS:** in order to be eligible for receiving interest for the month, contributions must be received at the PRCUA home office by the 15th calendar day, interest is credited as of the last calendar day of each month.

Annuity rates are subject to change with market conditions. For current rates, offers and additional information, please visit [www.prcua.org](http://www.prcua.org). PRCUAlife products are not available in all states.

For more information contact:

**Marge Grzeszczuk, ALMI** Sales Coordinator  
**Joanna Blach, ALMI** Sales Associate

**(800) 772-8632 EXT. 2755**  
[sales@prcua.org](mailto:sales@prcua.org)

**PRCUA.ORG**

# MAXIMIZE YOUR TAX SAVINGS AND CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL IRA RETIREMENT ACCOUNT



## 2025 IRA combined annual contribution limits for both traditional and Roth IRAs:

**\$7,000** for individuals *under* the age of 50

**\$8,000** for individuals at age 50 and *over*

The Tax Filing Deadline is **APRIL 15, 2026**

\*Disclaimer: Some contributions to traditional and Roth IRAs are subject to income limits and other eligibility requirements. Please consult with your Financial Advisor.



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR MEMBER REFERRAL PROGRAM

**You know you love us, your friends will too**

Refer a non-PRCUA member and earn up to \$25 in gift cards for every life insurance referral that is approved and issued.



**Earn a \$25 Gift Card**  
for every Life Insurance certificate issued at \$25,000 and up

**Earn a \$10 Gift Card**  
for every Life Insurance certificate issued at \$10,000-\$24,999

### A valid referral meets the following requirements:

1. All necessary contact information has been accurately filled out on the form.
2. Referral must be for a new PRCUA member.
3. The prospective member's Life Insurance certificate must be approved and issued.

\*Limitations and restrictions apply. Program subject to change without notice. PRCUA employees, directors and sales agents are not eligible to participate in the member referral program.

**REFERRING MEMBER'S NAME: (ACTIVE PRCUA MEMBERS ONLY)** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROSPECTIVE MEMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed forms can be mailed to the **PRCUA Sales Department**  
984 N Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60642 or submitted online at [PRCUA.org/referral-program](https://PRCUA.org/referral-program)



## Insurance Checklist for the New Year Are You Prepared for 2026?

**Make a resolution to review your coverage and beneficiaries!**

The start of a new year is a great time to reevaluate your life insurance coverage. Changing circumstances may lead to different insurance needs. Did you have a baby? Get married? Purchase a new home or car? If so, you'll want to check whether you have the right coverage in policy protection. Recent events have highlighted how important planning for the unexpected really is. Take some time to contact your sales representative and review your certificates to see if they meet your current needs. Even if you haven't experienced a life changing event, you could be eligible for new financial products which may better serve your needs.

### Impact on Life Insurance and Annuities

Changes—such as a birth, divorce, remarriage or even a new mortgage or new job—are reasons that you might need to make changes to your life insurance, or at the very least, that you should review your coverage.

Read your policy carefully and answer these questions:

- What is your current amount of coverage? Is this sufficient to protect your loved ones if something were to happen to you?
- Do premiums or benefits vary from year to year?
- Is there cash value? If so, how does it grow?
- Can the certificate be converted into another form of insurance or annuity?
- Are the beneficiary designations on your life insurance or annuities current?

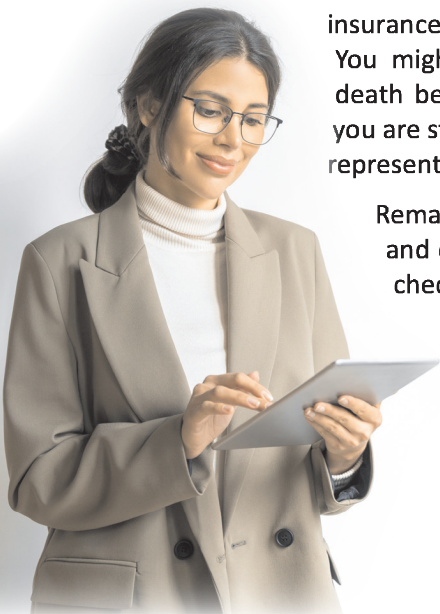
In the case of the birth of a child or a new marriage, you might want to consider increasing your death benefit.

Alternatively, events like paying off your mortgage, retirement or children finishing college might mean that you can update your life insurance coverage and premiums. Your life insurance company might be able to offer "conversion privileges" from your current term life

insurance policy to a new whole life insurance policy without a medical exam. You might also be able to expand your death benefits so they can be used while you are still living. Ask your **PRCUALife** sales representative about these options.

Remain current on product specials and offers – read the *Naród Polski* and check our website and social media pages.

**For more information,  
contact us today!**



## We are looking for a few good women and men too...

*to become*

## PRCUA licensed life insurance agents



### Become a **PRCUALife** Partner today

**PRCUALife** is a member-owned non-profit fraternal organization that is ranked among the leading fraternal benefit societies operating in the US. Established in 1873, PRCUALife has a long-standing reputation for quality life insurance and annuity products as well as customer care. Today we have 41,000+ members and counting.

### Why **PRCUALife** is an excellent choice:

- ✓ We offer a wide array of competitive life insurance and annuity products
- ✓ Licensed in 27 states
- ✓ Support staff to assist agent and client needs
- ✓ Ease of payment collections via credit card and Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT)

### Agent Benefits

- ✓ Easy to use quoting software
- ✓ Competitive commission rates
- ✓ DocuSign technology, which allows for flexibility to sign clients up via the phone or in person
- ✓ Unlimited earning potential
- ✓ Frequent commission pay schedule
- ✓ Branded and customized marketing materials
- ✓ Structured support system

## ARE YOU READY TO JOIN OUR TEAM?



## Contact our Sales Department

Marge Grzeszczuk, Sales Coordinator  
(773) 782-2644 | [marge-grzeszczuk@prcu.org](mailto:marge-grzeszczuk@prcu.org)

# IT'S MORE THAN LIFE INSURANCE

BY MARGE GRZESZCZUK, ALMI SALES COORDINATOR

Life has a way of surprising us and the real question is are you ready for the unexpected?

When's the last time you reviewed your insurance certificate? There are some questions you should be asking yourself.

- Have you figured out how much money you may need to cover expenses for yourself and your immediate family if you were no longer here to provide for them? Did you consider that for your 40's, 50's, and 60's? - If you think your existing life insurance coverage is not enough, then why not consider term insurance?
- What type of life insurance do you currently have? Whole Life, Term Insurance or Final Expense. Is it the right fit for your needs today, and will it continue to be tomorrow?
- Is what you are paying for life insurance now still affordable for your budget? A life insurance review might reveal ways to increase coverage without buying a new certificate.
- When is the last time you looked at your certificate and updated your contact and beneficiary information? It might be worth checking – who knows, maybe “Wujek Tomek, who passed away in 1995”, is still the beneficiary?
- And finally, what's your plan for that 2025 tax refund? Why not consider putting it toward an annuity or additional life insurance to strengthen your long-term financial security.

Don't underestimate the power of life insurance. Get ready for tomorrow, today!

For more information, contact your local PRCUA Sales Representative or the Sales Department directly to get started. Email me at [sales@prcu.org](mailto:sales@prcu.org) or call (800) 772-8632 ext. 2755 today.

## SAVE THE DATE



# AUGUST 7-9, 2026

## Hilton Rosemont/Chicago O'hare

5550 N River Rd, Rosemont, IL 60018

### PRCUA PRODUCT ORDER FORM

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**PRCUA Marketing Department, 984 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60642**



ITEM		QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
1.	2026 PRCUA CALENDAR (WHILE SUPPLIES LAST)	LIMIT 2	FREE	\$ 0.00
2.	PRCUA 150 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE BOOK		X \$20.00	= \$ _____
3.	SHARING OUR BEST - 130 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COOK BOOK		X \$17.00	= \$ _____
4.	COATS OF ARMS OF POLAND COLORING BOOK - VOL. I		X \$2.00	= \$ _____
5.	COATS OF ARMS OF POLAND COLORING BOOK - VOL. II		X \$2.00	= \$ _____
6.	OUR POLISH ANCESTORS COLORING BOOK		X \$2.00	= \$ _____
7.	PROMOTING POLISH CULTURE - A HISTORY OF PRCUA SCHOOLS & GROUPS	LIMIT 1	FREE	\$ 0.00
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# CHICAGO BULLS

## POLISH HERITAGE NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 7:00 PM



# TICKET + HAT

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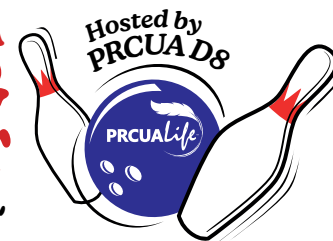
**\$56**

SECTION 325



# 87<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL PRCUA BOWLING TOURNAMENT

April 17-18, 2026 Lockport, IL



## SPORTS VENUE

**Strike N Spare II** (815) 838-2450  
811 Northern Dr., Lockport, IL 60441  
[strikeandspare2.net](https://strikeandspare2.net)

## LODGING

**Hampton Inn by Hilton** (708) 206-3048  
16176 LaGrange Rd., Orland Park, IL 60467

- PRCUA rate: \$169 plus taxes per night (2 queen beds)
- Use code PRC when booking
- Group rate reservation deadline is **March 13**
- Includes hot breakfast daily

Link to reservations: <https://group.hamptoninn.com/u2mao0>

## HOSPITALITY

Details will be announced at a later date

## TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

### Squad Times (one squad per day)

- Doubles/Singles - Friday, April 17 at 11:00am
- Team Event - Saturday, April 18 at 11:30am

(Opening ceremony will be at 11:00am)

Send in your completed entry form (along with the appropriate entry fees) by the deadline. Please be sure to fill in all information on your entry form, including average information. The deadline for submitting entries is **Friday, March 20**.

A secured room for overnight bowling ball storage will be available. There is a tournament office located at the bowling alley; details will be provided at the facility upon arrival.

The host society will offer jackpots and other raffles.

## AWARDS CEREMONY

**American Legion Post #18**  
15052 S. Archer Ave., Lockport, IL 60441  
Doors open at 5pm  
Light snacks provided; cash bar  
No charge for bowlers; guests pay \$15

## TOURNAMENT HOST

PRCUA District 8

## TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT

Brian Brumm, Bowling Coordinator  
Conrad Wiecek, PRCUA Fraternal Coordinator



Additional information available at [www.PRCUA.org/bowling](http://www.PRCUA.org/bowling)

## ANNUAL PRCUA OPLATEK *(cont. from pg. 1)*

Agnieszka Bastrzyk and her family, Vice President Micheline Jaminski and her husband Ryszard, Secretary-Treasurer Julie Prado and her daughter Lily, National Directors Ewa Cholewiński (D-7) and Elizabeth Dynowski (D-8), representatives of the Adult Cultural Group with Cinde-

rella and Prince 2026 Ruby Kono-packi and Piotr Tumiel, former Vice President Anna Sokołowski, editor of *Naród Polski* Lidia Kowalewicz, and assistant to the president Mary Jane Robles.

Attending the event were Vice Consuls from the Consulate of the

Republic of Poland in Chicago, and representatives from Polish-American organizations in Chicago.

Information about the ensemble's activities, trips, concerts, performances, and weekly meetings of individual groups can be easily found on all popular social media platforms, the addresses of which are given below.

We cordially invite you to join our ranks; registration for all age

groups takes place every Wednesday evening at St. John Brebeuf Parish in Niles, Illinois.

For more information about the ensemble, contact: Director Anna Krysiński, (847) 529-2555; [www.poloniamensemble.com](http://www.poloniamensemble.com); Facebook: Polonia Polish Folk Song & Dance Ensemble; TikTok & Instagram: Poloniamensemble-chicago

*Photos: Lidia Kowalewicz*



L-r: Vice President Micheline Jaminski, D-7 Director Ewa Cholewinski, Sekretary-Treasuer Julie Prado, President Agnieszka Bastrzyk, past D-7 Director Anna Krysiński, past Vice President Anna Sokolowski, D-8 Director Elizabeth Dynowski

# 53<sup>RD</sup> CINDERELLA – PRINCE CHARMING BALL

By Liz Dynowski

The Adult Culture Group marked a significant milestone with the celebration of the 53rd annual Cinderella–Prince Charming Ball, held on November 22, 2025, at the Belvedere Chateau in Palos Hills, Illinois. The long-standing event continues to honor young members of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) while promoting cultural heritage, academic excellence, and community involvement.

The ball featured candidates who are both high school students and active members of PRCUA. Each participant received a scholarship funded by the Adult Culture Group, underscoring the organization's ongoing commitment to youth development and education. A defining tradition of the event is the selection of Cinderella and Prince Charming, along with a runner-up couple, by



L-r: Runner-up Zofia Kuzmiuk, Prince Charming Piotr Tumiel, Cinderella Ruby Konopacki, Runner-up Kevin Wenc

lottery rather than competition. The newly crowned royal couple represents PRCUA throughout the year at official events within the Polish community in the Chicago area.

Throughout their term, the royal couple participates in a variety of cultural and charitable events, including the Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas Christmas Party, the annual You Can Be My Angel fundraiser benefiting a child with cancer in Poland, Polish school Jasefka performances, and holiday gatherings organized by PRCUA or the Adult Culture Group.

The evening was the culmination of weeks of preparation, during which candidates rehearsed extensively for the formal presentations that are central to the ball. These included the traditional Polonaise danced with their parents and an elegant waltz performed later in the program. The artistic direction and choreography were prepared by Ryszard Jamiński, whose work highlighted both technical precision and timeless elegance. On the night of the event, candidates appeared in formal attire, with young women wearing white gowns and young men in black tuxedos, creating a visually striking presentation that reflected the ball's long-standing traditions.

Guests were welcomed by Elizabeth Dynowski, PRCUA National Director of District 8, President of the Adult Culture Group, and a former Cinderella from 1990. In her opening remarks, Elizabeth emphasized the importance of community support in

sustaining the event, acknowledging the patronage of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, the vision of the ball's founder Regina Ocwieja, and the dedication of past and present Adult Culture Group members. She also recognized the commitment of the candidates and their families, wishing all attendees "one enchanted evening." The program was hosted by masters of ceremony Danielle Kroplewski and Ricky Skowrya, both former ball candidates. Reflections on the year were shared by the 2025 royal couple, Cinderella Emilia Kroplewski and Prince Charming Maciej Truty.

A central highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 28 candidates, introduced by the 2024 Royal Couple, Cinderella Daniela Gal and Prince Charming Dylan Skowrya. As each candidate was presented alongside their parents, guests learned about their academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, and community service. Many candidates are honor roll students and active participants in sports, dance, and school organizations, with several noting their involvement in PRCUA dance groups and Polish language schools.

Following dinner, the candidates performed a formal waltz choreographed by Ryszard Jamiński. The performance, marked by intricate patterns and synchronized movement, was met with enthusiastic applause. The dance reflected not only the candidates' dedication and preparation, but also the confidence, ma-

turity, and camaraderie developed throughout the weeks leading up to the Ball.

The most anticipated moment of the evening was the selection of the 2026 Cinderella and Prince Charming. Reverend Tadeusz Dzieszko offered a blessing of the crowns before the lottery drawing took place. The envelopes were selected by distinguished guests, including PRCUA National President James Robaczewski, who selected the Cinderella, PRCUA National Vice President Micheline Jamiński, who selected Prince Charming, and District 8 Directors Myron Cislo and Elizabeth Dynowski, who selected the runner-up couple.

The first runners-up for 2026 were announced as Zofia Kuzmiuk and Kevin Wenc. Ruby Konopacki was selected as Cinderella 2026, and Piotr Tumiel was selected as Prince Charming 2026. The newly crowned royal couple and runners-up concluded the formal program with a waltz, joined by all candidates, their parents, and guests, bringing the evening to a celebratory close.

The Adult Culture Group expressed gratitude to the many individuals whose efforts contributed to the success of the event, including its officers, committee members, and volunteers. The organization also announced its next major event, the Annual Fashion Show, scheduled for March 8, 2026, at Crystal Grand Banquets in Illinois. The fashion show will mark its 50th anniversary, and former candidates, Cinderellas, and Prince Charmings are invited to participate and support the fundraiser.

*Photos: Desiree Sacinski*



## Cinderella - Prince Charming Candidates



### Gianna Grace Cislo

of Oak Lawn, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Barbara and Robert Cislo. She is a senior at Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School in Chicago. Her father was a past candidate of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Gianna is a graduate of the Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Song and Dance for 9 years. She is currently a member of the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Gianna is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



### Grace Ava Friery of

Naperville, Illinois, is the 15-year-old daughter of Barb Bryja-Friery and Sean Friery. She is a sophomore at Metea Valley High School in Aurora. Her mother was a past candidate of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Grace attended Helena Modrzejewska Polish School in Naperville and received private Polish language lessons. Grace is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



### Liliana Helene Gal

of Palos Park, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Ivona and Edward Gal. She is a senior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Her mother was a past candidate of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Her sister Daniela was selected as a Cinderella 2024. Lily was selected as Cinderella runner-up 2025. Lily attended the Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School for 5 years. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 8 years. Lily is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



### Anna Harbut of Or-

land Park, Illinois, is the 16-year-old daughter of Teresa and Krzysztof Harbut. She is a junior at Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park. Anna is enrolled in her third high school year of the Jan Karski Polish Language

School. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing and is currently a performer with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA for three years. Anna is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Cassandra Kołtaś of

Burr Ridge, Illinois, is the 14-year-old daughter of Joanna and John Kołtaś. She is a freshman at Hinsdale South High School in Darien. Cassandra is enrolled in her first high school year at Zbigniew Herbert School of Polish Language and Culture. She performed with the Szkołka Pieśni i Tańca i Zespół Holni przy ZPPA for the past four years. Cassandra is a member of PRCUA Society #1597.



### Roxanne Kołtaś of

Burr Ridge, Illinois, is the 15-year-old daughter of Joanna and John Kołtaś. She is a sophomore at Hinsdale South High School in Darien. Roxanne is enrolled in her second high school year at Zbigniew Herbert School of Polish Language and Culture. Roxanne performs with the PRCUA Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble. Roxanne is a member of PRCUA Society #1597.



### Ruby Claire Konopacki

of Downers Grove, Illinois, is the 18-year-old daughter of Selena and Peter Konopacki. She is a senior at Downers Grove North High School. Her father was a past candidate of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball, selected twice as the Prince Charming runner-up in 1994 and 1995. Ruby was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 3 years. Ruby is a member of PRCUA Society #880.



### Pola Kozikowski of

Chicago, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Anna Magdalena Czapkowska and Cezary Kozikowski. She is a senior at Walter Payton College Preparatory High School in Chicago. Pola was a member of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble for 7 years, and has been dancing with the PRCUA Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble for the last five years. Pola is a member of

PRCUA Society #1624.



### Aleksandra Julia

**Kroplewski** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 15-year-old daughter of Danielle Lech Kroplewski and Robert Kroplewski. She is a sophomore at Lemont High School in Lemont. Both of her parents were past candidates of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Her mother was selected as a Cinderella runner-up 1998. Her sister Emilia was selected as Cinderella 2025. She is an assistant dance instructor for the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing. Aleksandra is enrolled in her second high school year at the Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 10 years and is in her second year as a member of the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Aleksandra is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Karolina Danielle

**Kroplewski** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Danielle Lech Kroplewski and Robert Kroplewski. She is a junior at Lemont High School. Both of her parents were past candidates of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Her mother was selected as a Cinderella runner-up 1998. Her sister Emilia was selected as Cinderella 2025. She is an assistant dance instructor for the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing. Karolina is a graduate of the Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 11 years and is currently in her third year as a dancer with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Karolina is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Zofia Alexandra

**Kuzmiuk** of Oak Lawn, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Izabela and Piotr Kuzmiuk. She is a junior at Harold L. Richards High School in Oak Lawn. Zofia is enrolled in her third high school year of the Jan Karski Polish Language School. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 10 years and with the

Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA for three years. Zofia is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Mia Isabella Little

of Wheaton, Illinois, is the 16-year-old daughter of Diane Muszalski Little and Brian Little. She is a junior at Wheaton North High School. Her mother was selected as Cinderella 1995. Mia attended Helena Modrzejewska Polish School in Naperville for 7 years. She was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 2 years. Mia is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



### Natalia Makuch of

Oak Lawn, Illinois is the 17-year-old daughter of Elzbieta and Tadeusz Makuch. She is a senior at Harold L. Richards High School in Oak Lawn. She is a graduate of Ignacy Posadzy Polish Language School. She danced with the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 5 years and with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA for one year. Natalia is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Allie Ann Panozzo

of Homer Glen, Illinois, is the 16-year-old daughter of Magdalena and Mark Panozzo. She is a junior at Lockport Township High School. Her mother was a past candidate of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. Allie was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 5 years. Allie is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



### Amilia Szwajnos of

Hickory Hills, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Izabela and Tadeusz Szwajnos. She is a senior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Amilia was selected as Cinderella runner-up 2024. Amilia was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 9 years and is currently a member of the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Amilia is a member of PRCUA Society #1634. (continued on pg. 14)

53<sup>RD</sup> CINDERELLA-PRINCE CHARMING BALL *(cont. from pg. 13)*

**Olimpia Stefanie Witek** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 15-year-old daughter of Agnieszka and Mariusz Witek. She is a sophomore at Lemont High School. Olimpia is in her third high school year at St. John Paul II Polish School. She was a member of the Polanie Dancers of St. John Paul II Polish School for 11 years and is currently in her third year as a member of the Lajkonik Polish Folk Song and Dance Ensemble. Olimpia is a member of PRCUA Society #1636.



**Dominica Zyskowska** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 17-year-old daughter of Iwona and Pawel Zyskowski. She is a junior at Lemont High School. Dominica is in her third high school year at St. John Paul II Polish School. She was a member of the Polanie Dancers of St. John Paul II Polish School for 3 years and is currently a member of the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Dominica is a member of PRCUA Society #1597.



**Lena Zyskowska** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 14-year-old daughter of Iwona and Pawel Zyskowski. She is a freshman at Lemont High School. Lena is in her first high school year at St. John Paul II Polish School. Lena is a member of PRCUA Society #1597.



**Christopher Abramowicz** of Palos Hills, Illinois, is the 17-year-old son of Irena and Eugene Abramowicz. He is a junior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Christopher is enrolled in his third high school year at Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. Christopher is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



**Joseph Adam Bartoszek** of Palos Hills, Illinois, is the 15-year-old son of Anna and the late Christopher Bartoszek. He is a sophomore at

Brother Rice High School in Chicago. His father was a past candidate of the Cinderella – Prince Charming Ball. Joseph is enrolled in his second high school year at Saint Blasé Polish Catholic School. He was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 10 years. He is in his second year performing with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Joseph is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



**Aleksander Tadeusz Bastrzyk** of Elmwood Park, Illinois, is the 14-year-old son of Agnieszka and Daniel Bastrzyk. He is a freshman at Saint Patrick High School in Chicago. Aleksander is enrolled in his first high school year at Polska Szkoła imienia Trójcy Świętej. He is in his tenth year performing as a member of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. Aleksander is a member of PRCUA Society #1219.



**Jan Stanisław Klepacki** of Lemont, Illinois, is the 15-year-old son of Justyna and Jacek Klepacki. He is a sophomore at Lemont High School. Jan is enrolled in his second high school year at Zbigniew Herbert School of Polish Language and Culture. He was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing and is currently a member of the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Jan is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



**Steven Jan Skowyr** of Hickory Hills, Illinois, is the 17-year-old son of Nathalie and Ricky Skowyr. He is a senior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Both of his parents are past Candidates of the Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball. His father was selected Prince Charming runner-up, and his mother was selected as Cinderella 1988. Steven is a graduate of the Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. He was also a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 8 years. Steven is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.



**Krystian Bartłomiej Szwajnos** of Hickory Hills, Illinois, is the 16-year-old son of Izabela and Tadeusz Szwajnos. He is a junior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Krystian performed with the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 9 years. He is in his third year performing with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Krystian is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



**Piotr Tumiel** of Burbank, Illinois, is the 16-year-old son of Beata and Krzysztof Tumiel. He is a junior at Reavis High School in Burbank. His sister Anna was selected as Cinderella 2018. Piotr is enrolled in his third high school year at Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. He was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 9 years. He is in his third year performing with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Piotr is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



**Kevin Mieczysław Wenc** of Palos Hills, Illinois, is the 17-year-old son of Agnieszka and Janusz Wenc. He is a junior at Amos Alonzo Stagg High School in Palos Hills. Kevin was selected as Prince Charming runner-up 2025. Kevin is enrolled in his third high school year at Maria Konopnicka Polish Language School. He was a member of the PRCUA Southwest Center of Polish Dancing for 9 years. He is in his third year performing with the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company of PRCUA. Kevin is a member of PRCUA Society #1634.



**Maksim Thomas Zakrzewski** of Orland Park, Illinois, is the 14-year-old son of Dr. Tommy and Heather Zakrzewski. He is a freshman at Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park. His father was selected as Prince Charming 1999. Maksim is a member of PRCUA Society #1622.

*Congratulations to all candidates!*

JOIN US for the  
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FASHION  
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LUNCHEON

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**March 8, 2026**  
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12416 S. Archer Ave, Lemont, IL  
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Donation \$60.00

For tickets contact  
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TO JUŻ ZŁOTE GODY - NASZEJ MODY

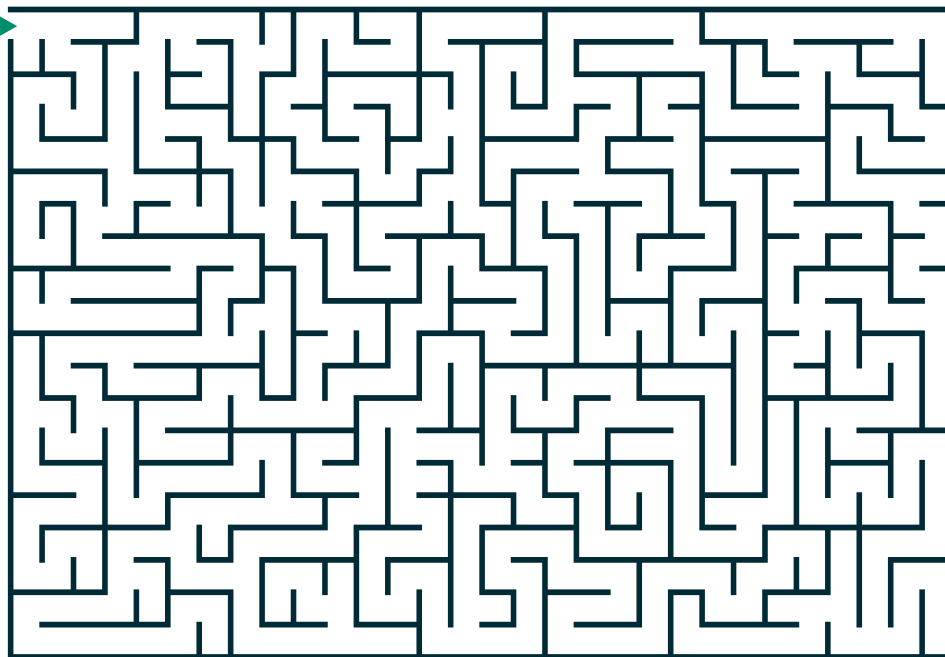




1. Find 8 differences.



2. Which way should President Washington follow to meet President Lincoln?



3. Find all the words in the puzzle.

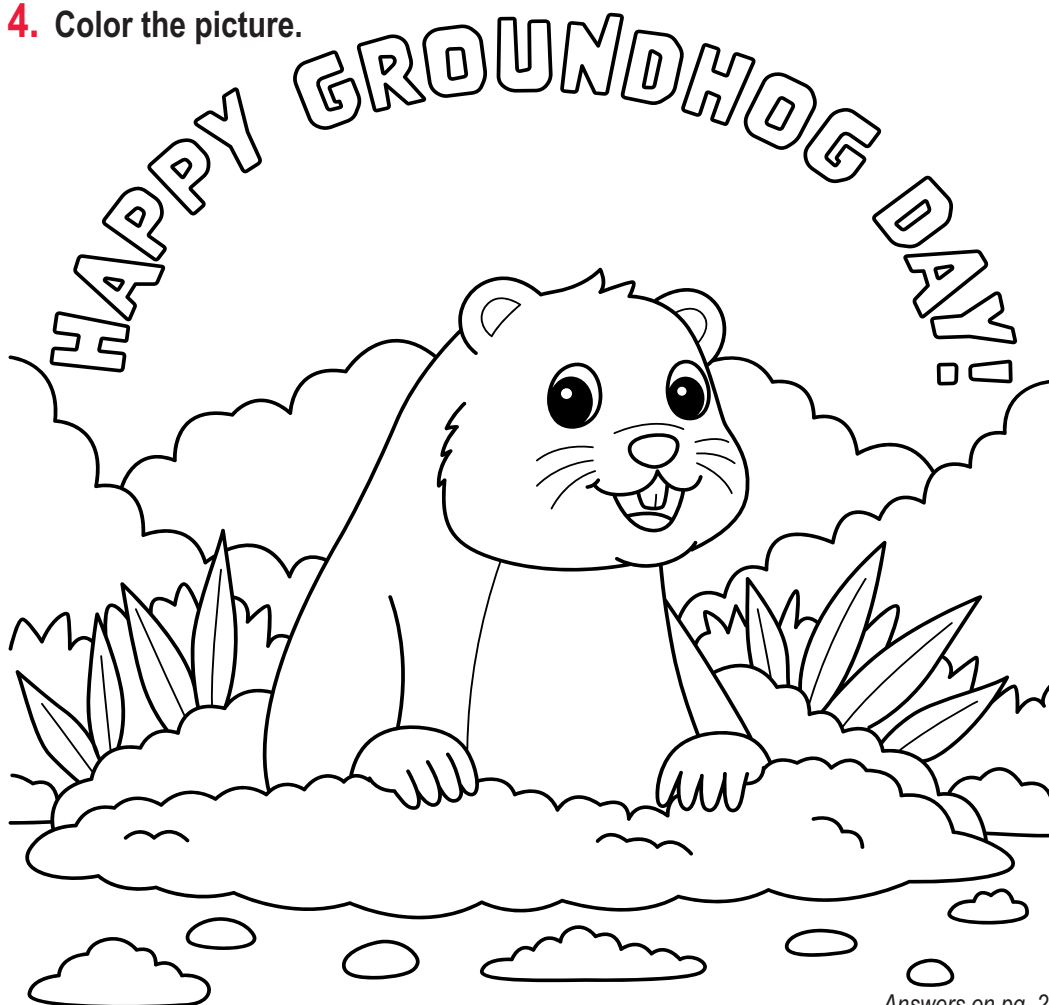


S W E E T S P C Z C U P I D  
 P T D L S C A N D L E S Z U  
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 L Y E S G F S Y R Q B O M Q  
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 P R T X R H V J Z U S F E K



CARDS	PINK	LOVE	ROSES
BOW	SWEETS	HEART	FEBRUARY
CANDLES	PASSION	KISS	HONEY
CUPID	LETTERS	HUGS	POEM

4. Color the picture.



Answers on pg. 20



Welcome to February – the month that brings to you the celebration of love, romance and connection (Valentine’s Day); patriotism and leadership (Presidents’ Day); feasting, parades, and revelry (Mardi Gras); fasting, repentance, and reflection (Ash Wednesday); and the 35th Shirley Ann Galanty Michigan State Ball (2/21). As you can see, much is packed into the shortest month of the calendar year. Bridged between winter and spring, February’s energies encourage a period of quiet reflection, healing, and intentional growth, setting a strong spiritual foundation for the year ahead. So, let the reflection begin with a recap of the last two months!

December 2025 was quite eventful. For a total of 44 years, Agnieszka Bastrzyk and Julie Prado have played integral roles in the PRCUA. Through various levels of responsibility and authority, they gained experience, enhanced skills, and successfully led their departments. Both individuals know the PRCUA from the ground up and are duly prepared for their new positions as officers of the PRCUA. Agnieszka first changed the course of PRCUA history when she was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 2018. Until then, officers, although professionals in their own right, were elected from the fraternal, not the business side of the PRCUA. On December 5, 2025, Agnieszka Bastrzyk became the first woman President of the PRCUA, and the very next day, Julie Prado, the Secretary-Treasurer. I proudly



PRCUA Executive Committee (l-r):  
Secretary-Treasurer Julie Prado, President Agnieszka Bastrzyk, Vice President Micheline Jaminski

serve with these two consummate professionals. Rest assured the PRCUA is in good hands.

Among the Christmas pageants and parties hosted by our PRCUA dance groups and language schools, I attended another successful Christmas recital of the Southwest Center of Polish Song and Dance (Anna Winkler, Manager; Richard Jaminski, Artistic Director and Choreographer) with a guest appearance by the Wesoly Lud Polish Folk Dance Company on Sunday, December 7. It is al-

ways inspiring to see our PRCUA youth and young adults celebrating the Christmas season with Polish dance and song. Congratulations to the cast and staff of the SWCPSD on a job well done.

The annual *Oplatek* was held on January 11, hosted this year by the Polonia Polish Folk Song and Dance Ensemble (Anna Krysinski, Manager; Jaclyn Krysinski, Artistic Director and Choreographer) together with District 7 (Ewa Cholewinski, National Director). Polish kolędy resounded through the halls of Allegra Banquets as the various age groups of Polonia performed a Christmas pageant before family and friends. All three PRCUA officers with families, *Naród Polski* Editor Lidia Kowalewicz, Director Elizabeth Dynowski, Cinderella Ruby Konopacki and Prince Charming Piotr Tumiel at-

tended the festivities. *Wiwat Polonia!* Bravo to the performers and staff for a wonderful presentation! Article and photos on p. 1 & 11.

On January 18, the Adult Culture Group of PRCUA hosted its Afterglow – an informal gathering to share photos from the last Cinderella-Prince Charming Ball and begin preparations for the 50th Annual Fashion Show set for March 8. I had the privilege of presenting the commemorative plaques to the royal couple and runners-up Zosia Kuzmiuk and Kevin Wenc. PRCUA President Bastrzyk attended with her son, Aleksander, who was a candidate. An impromptu January birthday celebration for ACG President Liz Dynowski (1/15), Vickie Kroplewski (1/1), Krystyna Lech (1/2), and many others in attendance. *Sto Lat!* [While on the subject of January birthdays – Happy Birthday to Director Colleen Bonkowski (1/27), former Convention Chair Barbara Toboy and daughter, Ania (1/28), Sales Coordinator Marge Grzeszczuk (1/29), Sales Associates Joanna Blach (1/25) and Lily Prado (2/1), and Polanie/SWCPSD Choreographer Michael Dziadkowiec (1/31)].

The Henryk Sienkiewicz Polish School (Ilona Sobiech, Principal; Renata Kaleciak, President) hosted 650 graduates together with the principals, board presidents, and teachers from 40 Polish high schools in the Chicagoland area at the Drury Lane Theater in Oak Brook, IL on Saturday, January 24. The chairperson of this beautiful tradition, known as the *Studniówka* (a prom marking one hundred days left until graduation) is known for her unique creativity and elegance in event planning, as well as a very persuasive and enthusiastic fundraiser. She and her team secured \$40,000 in contributions for all the graduates who were deemed the best of the best from their respective schools – receiving from \$700-\$1000 each. The PRCUA



SWCPSD Staff with PRCUA Vice President Micheline Jaminski and D-8 Director Myron Cislo



Wesoly Lud



SWCPSD Christmas Show



SWCPSD Staff with PRCUA Vice President Micheline Jaminski and D-8 Director Myron Cislo



January birthdays at the afterglow



2026 royal couple and runners-up

congratulates all those selected the Best of the Best. Among this elite group were the following PRCUA members and the schools they represent: Anna Harbut (Jan Karski PS, Palos Heights, IL); Adrian Anszczak (Mikołaj Kopernik PS); Monika Bednarczyk (Maria Konopnicka PS, Oak Lawn, IL); Dominica Zyskowska (St. John Paul II PS, Lemont, IL); Jessica Hoffman (Queen Jadwiga PS); and Laura and Lena Turek (Henryk Sienkiewicz PS, Romeoville, IL). Principal Sobiech procured the artistic talents

of Richard Jaminski to choreograph a special Polonaise. Dancers from *Wesoły Lud* (who also performed during dinner) together with the Sienkiewicz graduates executed the first portion, then escorted dignitaries (including President Bastrzyk as well as yours truly) and guests onto the dance floor with Principal Sobiech the lead couple, followed by the remaining graduates. Needless to say, every space in the banquet hall was filled with dancing and excitement. Bravo! Bravissimo! Nicely done, Sienkiewicz School! PRCUA is proud to be a sponsor.

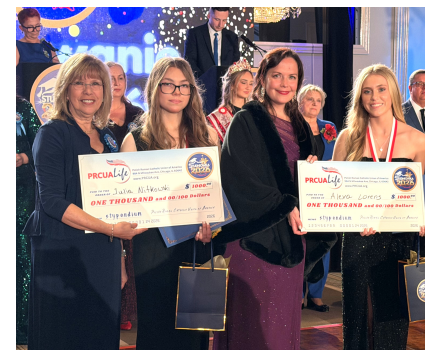
January ended, February began with many *zabawy* (Polish dances), and the PRCUA groups and schools were not to be upstaged. *Wesoły Lud* in Lemont, IL and *Zajaczek* in Sterling Heights, MI both hosted *zabawy* – the former, a Diamonds ‘n Denim theme; the latter, an 80’s theme on



The Best of the Best 2026 Polish high school graduates

January 31. The Sienkiewicz School will continue to party at their school dance on 2/7, the St. R. Kalinowski Polish School (Munster, IN) will host a Valentine Dance on 2/14, and as mentioned earlier in this article, on February 21, the 35th Shirley Ann Galanty Michigan State Ball (Kelly Malinowski, Choreographer and Chair) will honor: Nina Aniela El-Alayi (Gwiazda Dancers, Hamtramck, MI); Bailey Rosemarie Sayle (Halka Dancers, Detroit, MI); Autumn Nicole Marcinowski (Malbork Dancers, Grand Rapids, MI); Hannah Anastazia Palion (Opole Dancers, Warren, MI); Alexa Jade Chiu, Kylie Grace Digna, and Sophia Grace Leonard (Rogalin Dance Troupe, Wyandotte, MI); Ava Ritarose Lackey, Dane Thomas Lackey, and Camden Rose Walters (Tatry Dancers, Dearborn Hts., MI); Vanessa Kinsey (Wieliczka Dance Ensemble, Redford, MI); Amanda Jane Hess and Jenna Ella Jablonski (Zajaczek Dance Ensemble, Sterling Hts., MI).

My sincere condolences to Edward and the family of Sharon Quinn on her untimely passing. She served on the Board of Directors during my first term as Vice President. She was eloquent and professional. Oh, how she loved her husband and family! She spoke of them often and was dedicated to them. *Eternal rest*



Best of the Best, PRCUA recipients  
- Julia Nitkowski (St. Urszula Ledóchowska Polish School) and Alexa Lorens (St. Ferdinand Polish School)

*grant unto her, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.*

Condolences to Gabriel Morales and his family including their 22 month old daughter, on the tragic death of his wife, Eliza Nickole, and unborn daughter. The Morales family were like family to D-8 Director Elizabeth Dynowski and we are all horrified by these senseless deaths. Please keep Gabe and his daughter in your prayers. May Nicki and her baby rest in peace. Amen. "The people we love never truly leave us; they live on in the way we speak, the choices we make, and the love we continue to give."

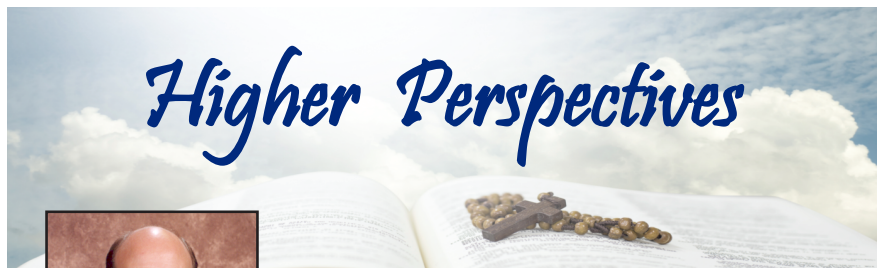
Until next time....stay safe...stay healthy....stay loved.



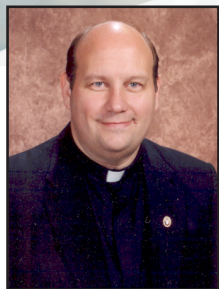
Henryk Sienkiewicz Polish School - graduates and organizers



2026 Shirley M. Galanty Ball graduates sneak peak



# Higher Perspectives



By Very Rev. Canon  
Walter J. Ptak  
National Chaplain,  
PRCUA

## These Forty Days of Lent O Lord

This month, on February 17th, we will begin the Holy Season of Lent. It seems impossible that Lent is almost here but Easter falls early this year on April 5th. In Polish it is called 'Wielki Post' which is translated as the "Great Fast" as it is the most important fast of the entire year. Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. In order to make this Lent more meaningful, it might be helpful to review the basics of Lent proposed to us by the Church for our spiritual growth.

Traditionally, there are three disciplines that are associated with Lent: **prayer, fasting and giving alms.** These three disciplines cause us to look beyond ourselves to a great good. Prayer deepens our relationship with the Lord. Fasting helps us to focus our attention away from our own wants and desires. Giving alms reminds us that others are in need and as followers of Christ; we are to show them His love and compassion, assisting them from our many blessings.

These disciplines can be a very practical guide for us during the season of Lent. Many times, we may not even think about practicing all three disciplines during Lent as it seems so many of us get caught in the trap of thinking about fasting, the "what can I give up" frenzy that often becomes associated with Lent. While fasting or abstaining from something we really like during Lent can be helpful in our growth in holiness, *prayer and giving alms, which includes giving of ourselves can be equally or even more important for our spiritual growth.* Sometimes prayer and almsgiving can be harder for us than anything we may have chosen to give up.

Here are some practical examples for putting into practice these disciplines. In the area of prayer, consider praying the Stations of the Cross at your parish or at home during Lent or attending a daily Mass. In the area of fasting, abstain from snacking between meals during the entire season of Lent or if that seems too daunting, pick a specific day of the week to do so. In the area of giving alms, write a check to your favorite charity, especially if that charity serves the poor or make a visit to someone who is in a nursing home or hospital.

The Church offers us these three disciplines in her wisdom and her concern for our spiritual growth. I am inclined to think at these three disciplines work together in harmony to help us on not only our Lenten journey but also our journey toward genuine holiness. We are all called to grow in holiness and to help others along the way that leads to eternal life!

During this season of Lent, let us pray for each other that we grow in holiness by prayer, fasting and giving alms, returning to the basic of the Lenten Season, as we prepare to ascend the Holy Mountain of Easter with great joy. Praying that this Lent is a time of renewal and spiritual growth for you. A Blessed and Holy Lent to all of you!

The  
Season  
of  
Lent



**WYANDOTTE'S ONE AND ONLY  
PACZKI DAY POLKA FEST**

**TUESDAY – FEBRUARY 17, 2026 – NOON – 8 p.m.**

**P.R.C.U., 1430 Oak Street, Wyandotte, MI**

**\$5.00 COVER \*\*\*\*\*CASH BAR\*\*\*\*\*POLISH KITCHEN AVAILABLE**



**LIVE BROADCAST WITH – KENNY KONOPKA  
& THE POLKA JAMMER NETWORK**

**Noon – 4 p.m.**

**LIVE MUSIC 4 – 8 p.m. featuring  
HOLY TOLEDO JAM BAND**





**Polish Pride of Michigan will also be on site with their  
assortment of T-Shirts, Trinkets and Treasures!!**

For Details Contact:  
Stan Pasko (313) 815-5230  
Mike/Phyllis Izbicki (734) 284-3857

**\*\*OUTSIDE FOOD/BEVERAGES PROHIBITED\*\***

## The Echoes of Poland Pierogi Dinner

**March 13, 2026  
4 to 8 p.m.**

**PRCUA Hall, 5255 N. Detroit, Toledo, OH**

**Adults \$13 - Children \$6**

**Menu: 4 pierogi, vegetable, salad, bread/butter, dessert, coffee/punch**

**Dozens available - \$13.00: cheese, potato, mixed (no kraut dozens)**

Call or text: 419-304-7430

**Electronic payments available**



## The Echoes of Poland Pierogi Dozen Sale

**March 27, 2026  
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.**

**PRCUA Hall, 5255 N. Detroit, Toledo OH**

**\$13.00 per dozen: cheese, potato, mixed (no kraut dozens)**

Call or text: 419-304-7430

Order by March 18, 2026

**Electronic payments available**

# 280<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF THADDEUS KOŚCIUSZKO



Thaddeus (Tadeusz) Kościuszko stands as one of the most compelling symbols of transatlantic freedom in the late eighteenth century. A Polish patriot, military engineer, and idealist shaped by Enlightenment values, Kościuszko devoted his life to the belief that liberty was a universal right. His remarkable career linked two revolutions—the American War of Independence and Poland’s struggle against foreign domination—and revealed a consistent moral commitment to political freedom, national self-determination, and human equality.

Born on February 4, 1746 into a modest noble family in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Kościuszko received a strong education at the Corps of Cadets in Warsaw, where he absorbed Enlightenment ideas about republicanism and civic duty. Further study in France exposed him to modern military engineering as well as radical political thought. These formative experiences shaped his conviction that freedom depended not only on ideals but also on practical action and sacrifice. When opportunities for advancement in Poland were limited, Kościuszko looked abroad, ultimately finding his first great cause in the American colonies’ rebellion against British rule.

Kościuszko arrived in North America in 1776 and soon joined the Continental Army. Though initially unknown, he quickly proved invaluable as a military engineer. His most significant contribution came during the Saratoga campaign, where his fortifications helped American forces secure a decisive victory over the British in 1777. This victory convinced France to ally with the colonies, making it a turning point in the war. Later, Kościuszko designed the defensive works at West Point, demonstrating both technical brilliance and strategic

foresight. Throughout his service, he earned the respect of leaders such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, not only for his skill but for his humility and dedication.

Kościuszko’s commitment to freedom in America extended beyond national independence. He was deeply troubled by the existence of slavery in a republic founded on liberty. His friendship with Jefferson was rooted in shared Enlightenment ideals, yet Kościuszko pushed these principles further. In his will, he left his American estate to be used for the education and emancipation of enslaved people, reflecting his belief that freedom must be universal rather than selective. Although this provision was never fully carried out, it remains a powerful testament to his moral consistency.

After the American Revolution, Kościuszko returned to Poland, determined to apply what he had learned to his homeland’s crisis. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was weakening under internal corruption and external pressure from Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Kościuszko supported reforms embodied in the Constitution of May 3, 1791, one of Europe’s first modern constitutions. When these reforms were crushed by foreign intervention, he emerged as the leader of a national uprising in 1794, now known as the Kościuszko Insurrection.

As commander of the rebellion, Kościuszko sought not only national independence but social justice. He issued the Proclamation of Połaniec, which reduced serfdom and extended limited rights to peasants, aiming to unite all social classes in the fight for freedom. This was a radical step in a society long dominated by the nobility and reflected his belief that a nation could only be free if its people were free. Despite early successes, the uprising ultimately failed due to overwhelming enemy forces. Kościuszko was wounded, captured by Russian troops, and imprisoned.

Though released in 1796, Kościuszko never regained the ability to liberate Poland during his lifetime. He spent his later years in exile, refus-

ing to support authoritarian solutions that contradicted his republican principles. Even in defeat, his legacy endured. For Poles, he became a national hero and enduring symbol of resistance. For Americans, he represented the international dimension of their revolution and the universal appeal of its ideals.

Thaddeus Kościuszko’s life was defined by a rare coherence between

belief and action. Whether fortifying American battlefields or leading Polish peasants into revolt, he fought for a vision of freedom that transcended borders, classes, and races. His story reminds us that the struggle for liberty is interconnected, and that the most enduring heroes are those who defend freedom not only for their own nation, but for humanity as a whole.

## FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it is packed with celebrations that reflect history, tradition, and a love of community. From quirky folklore to heartfelt romance and lively parades, February offers a mix of observances that brighten the winter season and bring people together in meaningful ways.

Groundhog Day, celebrated on February 2, is one of the most lighthearted traditions of the month. Rooted in European weather lore and popularized in the United States, the holiday centers on a groundhog emerging from its burrow to predict the arrival of spring. According to tradition, if the groundhog sees its shadow, six more weeks of winter are expected; if not, an early spring is on the way. While few rely on the prediction for actual weather forecasts, the celebration thrives on humor and ritual. Towns like Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, host festive gatherings, reminding people that even in the coldest part of winter, optimism and fun can still take center stage.

Later in the month comes Presidents Day, observed on the third Monday of February. This holiday honors the legacy of U.S. presidents, most notably George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, whose birthdays fall in February—February 22, 1732 (Washington) and February 12, 1809 (Lincoln). Presidents Day serves as a time to reflect on leadership, democracy, and the nation’s history. Schools often use the occasion to teach students about civic responsibility and the impact of presidential decisions. For many adults, the day is also associated with public ceremonies, museum visits, and discussions about the evolving role of the

presidency in modern society.

Valentine’s Day, celebrated on February 14, brings a completely different tone to the month. Dedicated to love and affection, the holiday is marked by exchanging cards, flowers, chocolates, and thoughtful gestures. While traditionally focused on romantic relationships, Valentine’s Day has grown to include appreciation for friends, family members, and even oneself. Classrooms exchange handmade valentines, restaurants fill with couples, and social media overflows with messages of care. At its heart, Valentine’s Day emphasizes emotional connection and the importance of expressing gratitude and love openly.

Mardi Gras, which this year falls in February, adds color and excitement to the winter calendar. Meaning “Fat Tuesday” in French, Mardi Gras is the final celebration before the solemn season of Lent in the Christian calendar. It is best known for vibrant parades, elaborate costumes, lively music, and festive food. In places like New Orleans, the celebration becomes a citywide event filled with traditions such as bead throwing, masquerade balls, and culinary delights like king cake, jambalaya, gumbo, shrimp po’ boys, and beignets. Mardi Gras celebrates joy, excess, and cultural heritage, blending influences from French, African, and Caribbean traditions.

Together, these February celebrations showcase a wide range of human expression—from humor and history to love and exuberance. They help transform a cold, quiet month into a season of reflection, connection, and celebration, proving that even winter can be rich with meaning and joy.

# POLISH FAWORKI AND PĄCZKI

## FAWORKI (CHRUST)

- 2 ½ cups flour
- 6 egg yolks
- 5 tablespoons sour cream (more may if needed)
- 1 tablespoon vinegar/vodka/rum
- 1 pinch salt
- 6 cups vof oil for frying
- powdered sugar to sprinkle faworki

Combine flour, egg yolks, sour cream, vinegar or alcohol, and salt in a large bowl. Mix, move onto the board and then knead to form a pliable (but not sticky) dough. Additional flour or sour cream can be added if the dough is too hard or too sticky. Wrap the dough in plastic and let it rest for 30 minutes at room temperature.

Roll the dough out as thin as possible on a slightly floured surface. Cut into strips 4 inches long and ¾ inches wide. Cut a slit in the middle of each strip. Twist and pull one end through the slit.

Heat oil in a deep-fryer or saucepan. Test the temperature by dropping a piece of rolled dough in the oil - the oil is ready when it floats to the surface and browns. Fry faworki in batches until golden brown, about 1 minute per side. Drain on a plate lined with paper towels. Dust with powdered sugar.

## PĄCZKI

### Dough:

- 3 ¾ cups all-purpose flour (plus more for dusting)
- ¾ cup whole milk, warmed (about 110°F)
- 2 ¼ teaspoons active dry yeast (1 packet)
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 4 large egg yolks, room temperature
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 1 tablespoon vodka or rum (traditional, helps prevent greasiness)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6–8 cups vegetable oil or lard (traditional option) for frying
- powdered sugar to sprinkle pączki
- jam for filling

In a small bowl, stir the warm milk with 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Sprinkle the yeast over the top and let it sit for 5–10 minutes, until foamy.

In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and remaining sugar until pale and slightly thick. Add the melted butter, salt, vodka, and yeast mixture. Stir to combine. Gradually mix in the flour until a soft, sticky dough forms. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for about 8–10 minutes, until smooth and elastic (it should be soft but not wet).

Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl, cover, and let rise in a warm place for about 1–1½ hours, until doubled in size.

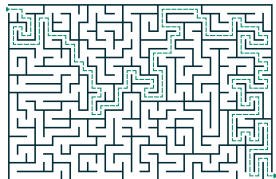
Punch down the dough and roll it out to about ½-inch thickness. Cut into 3-inch rounds. Place them on a floured surface, cover loosely, and let rise again for 30–40 minutes until puffy.

Heat oil to 350°F in a heavy pot. Fry pączki in small batches, about 2–3 minutes per side, until deep golden brown. Avoid crowding the pan.

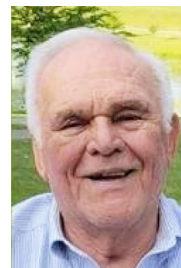
Remove and place on paper towels or a wire rack to drain. Let cool slightly. Use a piping bag fitted with a long tip to inject jam or cream into the side of each pączek. Dust generously with powdered sugar.

## ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLES ON PG. 15:

- Find 8 differences:
- Which way?:
- Find all the words in the puzzle:



# ROBERT S. MACEK DIED



Robert Stanley Macek, age 85, of Warren, passed away on December 19, 2025.

Robert was the loving husband of the late Ann Macek and a devoted father to Laurie (John) Macek-Carver, Kristi (Joseph) Mihalic, and Daniel Macek. He was a proud and cherished grandfather to Samantha (Cody) Schneider, Kristin (Marjorie) Dehnke-Mihalic, Michael Mihalic, Joshua Carver, Matthew Carver, Morgan Macek, Colton Macek, Landon Macek, and Ashlyn Macek, and a beloved great-grandfather to Cooper Schneider.

Robert worked for many years as an electrical technician in the automotive industry, where he was known for his dedication, skill, and strong work ethic. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

The funeral Mass for Robert Macek was celebrated on December 27, 2025 at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Canton, Michigan, followed by entombment at St. Hedwig Cemetery in Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

Robert was a member of PRCUA Society #87.

May he rest in eternal peace.

Please remember Mr. Macek and his family in your prayers.

## DEARLY DEPARTED PRCUA BROTHERS AND SISTERS



Member	Society	State	Member	Society	State
Berkey, James A.	237	PA	Muttart, Bonnie M.	78	MI
Cole, Dolores	1147	IL	Naszkievicz, Richard	943	IL
Dubey, Kathleen E.	718	MI	Peters, Jacqueline	1593	MI
Gawel, Lawrence J.	1552	MI	Rejnis, Stanley	2220	OH
Gelato, Barbara	20	NJ	Schmidt, James	1000	IL
Hemel, Marianne	2109	OH	Schwarzer, Daniel	2220	OH
Jagielski, Frances	1617	OH	Shldeler, Raphael G.	1000	IL
Jasulevicz, Barbara	29	PA	Stambeck, Patricia A.	1034	IN
Jerome, Pamela	1593	MI	Thompson, Raymond	2001	NJ
Karnowski, Michael	817	WI	Trentowski, Eleanora	531	PA
Klubek, Thomas	385	NY	Vliek, Barbara	509	MI
Kruszynski, Alfreda	2013	PA	Wolenter, Charles J.	295	PA
Kwilas, Donna	593	IL	Woloszyn, John	540	NY
Lawrence, Frances L.	1027	NY	Yakubisin, Mary Ann H.	463	CA
Lonczak, Mary	750	NY	Zuber, Robert	308	IL
Menotti, Stephanie	1620	IL			

*PRCUA extends deepest condolences to the families of our members who departed recently. May eternal light shine upon them. Please remember our deceased members and their families in your prayers.*

## SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!

Did you become proud parents or grandparents? Did someone in your family graduate, get engaged or married, receive an award or accomplish something significant? Share your story with our PRCUA family.

Submit your news and photos to: [lidia-kowalewicz@prcu.org](mailto:lidia-kowalewicz@prcu.org) and we will publish them in the *Naród Polski*.

Oferta ważna do 30 kwietnia 2026 r.

ZARÓB WIĘCEJ



ZWIĘKSZ SWOJE  
DOCHODY NA  
EMERYTURĘ

POWIĘKSZ  
ZWROT PODATKU

**SERIA 7 LETNIA** 10% WYPŁATY  
DLA WIEKU 0-90 LAT ROCZNIE BEZ KARY

WARIANT CENOWY 1

**\$100,000**  
I WIĘCEJ

WARIANT CENOWY 2

**\$50,000 –**  
**\$99,999.99**

WARIANT CENOWY 3

**\$5,000 –**  
**\$49,999.99**

KARA  
REZYGNACYJNA

ROK	WARIANT CENOWY 1	WARIANT CENOWY 2	WARIANT CENOWY 3	KARA REZYGNACYJNA
ROK 1	5.50% <small>GWAR.</small>	5.25% <small>GWAR.</small>	5.00% <small>GWAR.</small>	10%
ROK 2	5.50% <small>GWAR.</small>	5.25% <small>GWAR.</small>	5.00% <small>GWAR.</small>	9%
ROK 3	4.50% <small>GWAR.</small>	4.25% <small>GWAR.</small>	4.00% <small>GWAR.</small>	8%
ROK 4	4.50% <small>GWAR.</small>	4.25% <small>GWAR.</small>	4.00% <small>GWAR.</small>	7%
ROK 5	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	6%
ROK 6	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	5%
ROK 7	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	NIEGWARANTOWANE	4%

**MINIMUM GWARANTOWANE 2.4% APY**

WSZYSTKIE CERTYFIKATY PRCUALife SĄ ZABEZPIECZONE WYMAGANYMI REZERWAMI

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Podane oprocentowanie może ulec zmianie. Aktualne oferty można znaleźć na naszej stronie internetowej [www.prcua.org](http://www.prcua.org). Produkty PRCUALife nie są dostępne we wszystkich stanach.

Więcej informacji:

**Marge Grzeszczuk, ALMI**  
Koordynator Działu Sprzedaży

**Joanna Blach, ALMI**  
Przedstawiciel Działu Sprzedaży

**(800) 772-8632 EXT. 2755**  
[sales@prcua.org](mailto:sales@prcua.org)

**PRCUA.ORG**

202601-7YA-PL-NP

## UBEZPIECZENIA BEZ TAJEMNIC

**Robert Sobczak**

Specjalista ds. ubezpieczeń

Drodzy Państwo w dzisiejszym artykule przybliżymy zakres świadczeń i pokryć związanych z dwoma podstawowymi częściami oryginalnego Medicare tzn. częścią A i częścią B (Part A i Part B) na rok 2026. Przypominamy jednak, że po kompletnej liście świadczeń pokrywanych przez Medicare należy zwrócić się do biura Social Security Administration, zadzwonić na 1-800-MEDICARE lub wejść na stronę [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Część A częściowo pokrywa medycznie konieczną hospitalizację. W roku 2026 przykładowe koszty, za które odpowiedzialny jest posiadacz części A Medicare są następujące:

- \$1,736 odpowiedzialności własnej (deductible) za pobyt w szpitalu do 60 dni;
- \$434 odpowiedzialności wspólnej (coinsurance) za każdy dzień pobytu w szpitalu w dniach 61-90;
- \$868 odpowiedzialności wspólnej (coinsurance) za każdy dzień pobytu w szpitalu po 90 dniach pobytu, z dożywotnego limitu (lifetime reserve day), który wynosi maksymalnie 60 dni na całe życie;
- **Wszystkie koszty** powyżej 150 dnia pobytu w szpitalu.

Ponadto część A pokrywa koszty:

- Krwi;
- Pobytu w hospicjum;
- Domowej opieki medycznej;
- Wykwalifikowaną opiekę pielęgniarską i rehabilitacyjną tylko po 3-dniowym pobycie w szpitalu, do 100 dni. W roku 2026, beneficjenci zapłacą \$217 za dni pomiędzy 21 a 100;
- Pobytu w klinice psychiatrycznej (do 190 dni z dożywotnego limitu).

Part A nie pokrywa opieki długoterminowej (long term care).

**Benefity Medicare Part B**

Część B Medicare odpowiedzialna jest częściowo za następujące koszty:

- Koniecznej wizyty u lekarzy ogólnych i specjalistów;
- Zabiegów w przychodni przy-

szpitalnej;

- Badań laboratoryjnych i testów diagnostycznych;
- Terapii i opieki psychiatrycznej;
- Sprzętu medycznego;
- Lekarstw i środków medycznych niezbędnych w trakcie wizyty u lekarza pierwszego kontaktu lub specjalisty.

Posiadacze części B Medicare oprócz stawki miesięcznej w wysokości \$202.90 odpowiedzialni są za roczną odpowiedzialność własną (deductible) w wysokości \$283 na rok 2026. Po uiszczeniu deductible odpowiedzialni są oni dodatkowo za 20% tzw. odpowiedzialności wspólnej (coinsurance) za większość serwisów pokrywanych przez część B Medicare.

Serwisy prewencyjne pokrywane przez część B:

- Jednorazowa wizyta prewencyjna „Welcome to Medicare”;
- Coroczna wizyta prewencyjna;
- Szczepionki na żółtaczkę typu B lub grypę;
- Testy na nadużywanie alkoholu - co 12 miesięcy (w niektórych przypadkach);
- Badania masy kostnej (w niektórych przypadkach co 24 miesiące);
- Jednorazowe badanie na tętniaka aorty brzusznej;
- Badanie układu krążenia - co 5 lat;
- Test na raka jelita grubego;
- Coroczne testy antydepresyjne;
- Testy cukrzycowe dla osób podwyższonego ryzyka;
- Szkolenie dla cukrzyków;
- Coroczne badania na jaskrę dla osób podwyższonego ryzyka;
- Test na żółtaczkę typu C;
- Coroczne badania na obecność wirusa HIV;
- Terapia behawioralna dla osób z chorobami krążenia;
- Badania na raka płuc;
- Mammografia;
- Terapia żywieniowa dla cukrzyków i osób z chorobami nerek;
- Badania i doradztwo dla osób z nadwagą;
- Cytologia i badania macicy co 24 miesiące dla wszystkich kobiet, co 12 miesięcy dla kobiet podwyższonego ryzyka;
- Coroczne badanie na raka prostaty dla mężczyzn powyżej 50 roku życia;
- Testy na choroby weneryczne;
- Konsultacje antynikotynowe.

### Koszty innych serwisów pokrywanych przez część B:

- Karetki pogotowia;
- Koszty chirurgicznej opieki laboratoryjnej;
- Krwi;
- Sprzętu dla cukrzyków;
- Rehabilitacji pozawałowej;
- Niektórych usług chiropraktycznych;
- Defibrylatora;
- Aparatury medycznej;
- Koszty pogotowia;
- Okularów po operacji na kataraktę;
- Badania i leczenie stóp dla diabe-tyków;

- Badania słuchu i balansu;
- Opieki domowej (dla osób kwalifikujących się);
- Dializy nerek;
- Poza szpitalnej opieki psychiatrycznej;
- Fizykoterapii;
- Protez stomatologicznych;
- Rehabilitacji po chronicznym zapaleniu płuc;
- Drugiej opinii chirurgicznej;
- Nauki mówienia;
- Przeswietleń rentgenowskich, rezonansu magnetycznego, tomografii komputerowej;
- Zabiegów i leków niezbędnych po przeszczepach.

### Główne serwisy nie pokrywane przez część A i B:

- Akupunktura;
- Rutynowe badania dentystyczne;
- Zabiegi kosmetyczne;
- Aparaty słuchowe;
- Opieka zdrowotna podczas podróży poza Stany Zjednoczone (z wyjątkami);
- Buty ortopedyczne;
- Lekarstwa na receptę;
- Rutynowe badania stóp;
- Rutynowe badania wzroku i okulary;
- Szczepionki z wyłączeniem tych pokrywanych przez część B

i część D;

- Koszty insuliny;
- Niektóre testy i badania laboratoryjne (na przykład testy na tarczycę).

Jak widzicie Państwo, posiadanie samego oryginalnego Medicare składającego się z części A i B nie wydaje się być wystarczającym rozwiązaniem. Dlatego warto pomyśleć o uzupełnieniu do Medicare. W razie jakichkolwiek pytań lub wątpliwości prosimy o kontakt z Medicare po PolskuApod numerem 844-654-5185.

## KOLEDA, KOLEDA... DOROCZNY OPLATEK PRCUA

W niedzielę 11 stycznia w sali bankietowej Allegra w Schiller Park, Illinois odbył się tradycyjny *Oplatek* PRCUA, którego gospodarzem był Dystrykt 7 PRCUA, a organizatorem Zespół Pieśni i Tańca „Polonia”. Częścią programu artystycznego były staropolskie „Jasełka” w wykonaniu wszystkich grup zespołu, przedstawiając kolędników przybywających „po kolędzie” do polskiej chaty gdzieś w okolicach Łowicza.

W jasełkowe postacie kolędników, gospodarzy, domowników, króla Heroda, śmierci, diabła i anioła wcielili się tancerze grupy reprezentacyjnej oraz „Młodej Polonii”. Młodsze grupy „Małej Polonii” i „Średniej Polonii” odegrały rolę aniołków oraz pasterzy, a „Krasnoludki” - elfików.

Jak w tradycyjnej szopce, nie zabrakło Maryji i Józefa, których odegrali Ola i Michał Watson z dziećmi w rolach dzieciątka Jezus i aniołka.

„Jasełka” były ekspresyjną lekcją malowniczych bożonarodzeniowych obrzędów przy wigilijnym stole, starych polskich tradycji ludowych i repertuarze najpopularniejszych swię-

tecznych kolęd i pastorałek przy akompaniamencie dyrektora muzycznej Bogusławy Nedzkiej-Sciążko, z asystą Krystiana Baran (akordeon) oraz Connora Chłopek (trąbka).

Kolędnicy przynieśli ze sobą radość i kolędę, a łowiccy gospodarze ugościli ich symbolicznie według tradycji z prawdziwą polską gościnnością oraz biblijnym humorem, legendą i odrobiną historii. Na koniec zawitał Dziadek Mróz z wielkim workiem prezentów dla dzieci, nad organizacją czego czuwała Kasia Evans z niezawodnymi rodzicami grupy młodszych zespołu.

Scenariusz, reżyseria i koordynacja jasełek - Dorota Romek; kostiumy - Ewa Wszolek; choreografia tańców - Jaclyn Krysinski, Nicole i Nina Romek. Realizacja przedstawienia odbyła się dzięki wszystkim wspólnym dzieciom, młodzieży oraz ich wytrwałym rodzicom. Dziękujemy za udział, wsparcie i wszelką pomoc w jasełkowym wielkim sukcesie, jak również za oddanie i dzielenie z nami pasji krzewienia polskiej kultury, języka, śpiewu, tańca i przepięknych

polskich tradycji z nadzieją ich przetrwania wśród polonijnej społeczności.

Modlitwę odmówił i udzielił błogosławieństwa proboszcz parafii św. Ferdynanda w Chicago ks. Peter Gnoiński.

PRCUA reprezentowali: prezes Agnieszka Bastrzyk z rodziną, wiceprezes Micheline Jaminski z mężem Ryszardem, sekretarz-skarbnik Julie Prado z córką Lily, dyrektorki krajowe Ewa Cholewiński (D-7) i Elizabeth Dynowski (D-8), przedstawiciele Grupy Kulturalnej Dorosłych z Kopciuszką i Księciem 2026 Ruby Konopacki i Piotrem Tumielem, była wiceprezes Anna Sokołowski, redaktor „Narodu Polskiego” Lidia Kowalewicz i asystent prezesa Mary Jane Robles.

Imprezę swoją obecnością zaszczytali: wicekonsul RP w Chicago Agata Grocholska i wicekonsul Sylwia Rusak, prezeska Zrzeszenia Nauczycieli Polskich Urszula Gawlik oraz członkini zarządu Ewa Jabłonski, wiceprezeska Kongresu Polonii Amerykańskiej - Oddział Illinois Bożenna Halaszkiwicz, b. prezeska Związku Lekarzy Polskich w Ameryce dr Anna Szpindor, Druga Dama Dworu Parady 3-Majowej Patrycja Niznik oraz przedstawiciele polo-

nijnych mediów.

*Za Kolędę dziękujemy, zdrowia, szczęścia Wam życzymy na ten Nowy Rok, a żeby Wam się darzyło, mnożyło w oborze, komorze daj Wam Panie Boże!*

Zespół „Polonia” istnieje pod patronatem PRCUA i jest organizacją niedochodową, zajmującą się ludową oraz narodowo-historyczną edukacją artystyczną dzieci i młodzieży. Od 40 lat, zespół bierze aktywny udział w życiu kulturalnym i społecznym w środowisku polonijnym i amerykańskim. Jest ambasadorem kultury polskiej w USA i na całym świecie, koncertując w 28 krajach na wszystkich kontynentach.

Serdecznie zapraszamy w nasze szeregi, a zapisy do wszystkich grup wiekowych odbywają się wieczorem w każdą środę w parafii św. Jana Brebeuf w Niles, Illinois.

Informację na temat działalności zespołu, wyjazdów, koncertów, występów czy cotygodniowych spotkań poszczególnych grup można otrzymać od dyrektora Anny Krysińskiej, tel 847-529-2555 oraz znaleźć na wszystkich popularnych mediach społecznościowych: Facebook: Polonia Polish Folk Song & Dance Ensemble; www.poloniaensemble.com; Tik Tok & Instagram: Poloniaensemble-chicago.



## ŚWIĘTO MATKI BOSKIEJ GROMNICZNEJ

Święto Matki Boskiej Gromnicznej, obchodzone jest 2 lutego. Jego oficjalna nazwa liturgiczna to Święto Ofiarowania Pańskiego, jednak w polskiej kulturze ludowej na stałe zakorzeniło się określenie związane z gromnicą – specjalną świecą święconą tego dnia w kościołach. Święto to łączy w sobie elementy religijne, symboliczne oraz ludowe.

Geneza święta sięga wydarzeń opisanych w Ewangelii według św. Łukasza, kiedy Maryja i Józef przynieśli małego Jezusa do świątyni w Jerozolimie, aby ofiarować Go Bogu zgodnie z prawem Mojżeszowym. W świątyni spotkali starca Symeona, który nazwał Jezusa „światłem na oświecenie pogan”. Motyw światła stał się kluczowym symbolem tego święta i znalazł swoje odzwierciedlenie w obrzędzie święcenia świec.

Gromnica to duża, często bogato zdobiona świeca, nierzadko z wizerunkiem Matki Bożej lub scenami religijnymi. W polskiej tradycji wierzono, że zapalona gromnica chroni dom i jego mieszkańców przed nieszczęściami, burzami, piorunami i innymi klęskami żywiołowymi. Stawiano ją także przy łóżkach osób

chorych i umierających, wierząc, że jej światło pomoże w spokojnym przejściu do życia wiecznego. Gromnica była więc symbolem bezpieczeństwa, opieki Maryi oraz obecności Boga w codziennym życiu.

Matka Boska Gromniczna często przedstawiana jest w polskiej ikonografii jako postać trzymająca zapaloną świecę i chroniąca ludzi przed złem, mrokiem i niebezpieczeństwami. W ludowych podaniach Maryja z gromnicą broniła wioski przed wilkami, co dodatkowo podkreślało Jej rolę jako opiekunki i obrończyni. Takie obrazy wzmacniały wiarę ludzi w Jej bliskość i pomoc w trudnych chwilach.

W ludowych przysłowiach i obserwacjach przyrody próbowano przewidywać w ten dzień pogodę na nadchodzące tygodnie.

Współcześnie Święto Matki Boskiej Gromnicznej pozostaje ważnym dniem w kalendarzu liturgicznym i kulturowym. Dla wielu osób jest okazją do refleksji nad symboliką światła, wiary i nadziei.

Gromnica, często przechowywana jako pamiątka, przypomina o tradycjach, które przez wieki kształtowały polską tożsamość religijną.

dyscypliny.

Po Ostatkach następuje Popielec, czyli Środa Popielcowa, rozpoczynająca Wielki Post. Jest to dzień o zupełnie innym charakterze – pełen wagi, refleksji i skupienia. W Kościele katolickim wierni uczestniczą w obrzędzie posypania głów popiołem, który powstaje ze spalonych palm poświęconych w Niedzielę Palmową poprzedniego roku. Kapłan wypowiada wtedy słowa przypominające o kruchości ludzkiego życia i potrzebie nawrócenia.

Popiół jest symbolem przemijania, pokory i oczyszczenia. Przypomina, że życie doczesne nie jest celem samym w sobie, a człowiek powinien zwrócić się ku wartościom duchowym. Popielec wprowadza wiernych w czterdziestodniowy okres przygotowania do Wielkanocy, który ma służyć pracy nad sobą, modlitwie, postowi i jałmużnie.

Z Popielcem wiążą się także konkretne zasady, takie jak post ścisły, obejmujący ograniczenie ilości i rodzaju spożywanych posiłków. Jednak sens tego dnia nie sprowadza

się jedynie do wyrzeczeń fizycznych. Jest to przede wszystkim zaproszenie do wewnętrznej przemiany, zastanowienia się nad własnym postępowaniem i relacją z innymi ludźmi. W tradycji ludowej Popielec był dniem bardzo skromnym – rezygnowano z muzyki, zabaw i głośnych spotkań.

Zestawienie Ostatków i Popielca pokazuje wyraźny kontrast między radością a zadumą, zabawą a ciszą. Ten kontrast ma głębokie znaczenie symboliczne i wychowawcze. Uczy równowagi między korzystaniem z życia a odpowiedzialnością duchową. Współcześnie wiele dawnych zwyczajów zanika lub przybiera nową formę, jednak sens tych dni pozostaje aktualny.

Ostatki i Popielec nadal przypominają, że w życiu człowieka jest czas na śmiech i wspólne świętowanie, ale także czas na refleksję, wyciszenie i pracę nad sobą. Dzięki temu stanowią ważny element zarówno religijnej, jak i kulturowej tożsamości, przekazywanej z pokolenia na pokolenie.

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## OSTATKI I ŚRODA POPIELCOWA W POLSKIEJ TRADYCJI

Ostatki i Popielec to dwa następujące po sobie momenty w kalendarzu liturgicznym i obyczajowym, które wyraźnie zaznaczają przejście od czasu zabawy do okresu skupienia i refleksji. Choć różnią się charakterem i nastrojem, są ze sobą ściśle powiązane i od wieków zajmują ważne miejsce w polskiej tradycji.

Ostatki, nazywane także zapustami, to ostatnie dni karnawału, przypadające bezpośrednio przed Środą Popielcową. Jest to czas radości, tańców, spotkań towarzyskich i obfitego jedzenia. W tradycji ludowej wierzono, że im huczniej spędzi się ostatnie dni karnawału, tym lepszy i bardziej dostatni będzie nadchodzący rok. Dlatego Ostatki były okazją do pożegnania zimy oraz do nacieszenia się zabawą przed okresem postu.

Charakterystycznym elementem Ostatków były uczty, podczas któ-

rych na stołach królowały potrawy tłuste i sycące, takie jak mięsa, kielbasy, smalec, pączki czy faworki. Szczególnie ważny był Tłusty Czwartek, który rozpoczynał ostatni etap karnawału. Jedzenie miało nie tylko sprawiać przyjemność, lecz także symbolicznie przygotować ludzi na nadchodzący czas wyrzeczeń. W wielu regionach Polski organizowano zabawy przebierańców, kuli, tańce i muzyczne biesiady, które integrowały lokalne społeczności.

Ostatni dzień karnawału, często nazywany „ślędzikiem”, miał już bardziej symboliczny charakter. Był to moment pożegnania zabaw i stopniowego wyciszenia. W niektórych zwyczajach pojawiały się żartobliwe obrzędy, takie jak „wieszanie ślędzia”, które miały przypominać o końcu ucztowania i zbliżającym się poście. Było to przejście między światem radości a światem duchowej

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