

# ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS CAMPUS COMMUNICATOR

ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER ❖ ST. MARY'S PREPARATORY ❖ POLISH INSTITUTE OF CULTURE & RESEARCH

**JANUARY 2025**

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,  
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." ~ Romans 15:13*





## IN & OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

Students from the Advanced Liturgy class went on a field trip to Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. They were given a tour, then a vocations talk about what life as a seminarian looks like. OLSM alumni Daniel Whalen (P'18) and Brendan Tabone (P'16) are both studying for the priesthood, greeted our students, and visited with them.



◀ OLSM's Campus Ministries members welcomed Fr. Matthew Zetouna from St. Thomas Chaldean Catholic Church who visited students to share some of the history of the Chaldean Catholic heritage and what it means to be a practicing Catholic.



▶ Thank you, Lily Hale, for her nursing presentation to the Medical Club! The students had a great time learning about this field.



◀ For Christmas, Robin Goddard and several Boys Division students took time to decorate the Orchard Lake Schools founder, Fr. Joseph Dabrowski's, gravesite at Mt. Elliott Cemetery in Detroit.



▶ Music Appreciation (10<sup>th</sup> grade boys) presented their My Playlist Projects. This is an opportunity for students to share their favorite music and artists with others and explain in depth why they enjoy it. Music Technology's 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls have been busy learning about music notation!



## INSPIRING THOSE IN NEED

Prep students took part in a pink-out/ugly holiday sweater dress down day on December 13, 2024, in support of the upcoming February 8, 2025, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Pink in the Rink hockey games versus Brother Rice tradition in support of the Karmanos Cancer Institute, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and the Desmoid Tumor Research Foundation.





# A LETTER FROM HUDSON'S MOM, KAREN WIECZOREK, TO OLSM HOCKEY COACHES . . .

Dear Brian and Kurt,

I wanted to send a note regarding yesterday's event for Hudson taking his last chemo pill. The following boys showed up and represented not only the hockey program, but OLSM as a whole. They were mature, respectful and engaging and I was very proud of them. There were 100+ friends and family in attendance, and we received many compliments on how incredible it was that these kids were involved and invested in the cause.

I could tell by their genuine smiles that the boys were very touched by the moment Hudson ran under their sticks to his last chemo pill. They were all beaming. It was quite special. I sent the video to Lisa (Klanow). I hope you both get to see it! :) I would appreciate you passing along my gratitude to the players for a job well done. They should know what one family member said to me after: "Hudson will remember these boys being here today for the rest of his life, and we hope the boys do, too."

~ Karen Wieczorek



## SERVICE IS STRONG ALL YEAR AT OLSM

In December, our OLSM Band performed their annual Christmas Concert with the price of admission being food donations to the Sr. Judie Outreach Food Drive! to help provide for families in need throughout the holiday season.

Our students, their families, and our faculty and staff supported the annual Adopt-a-Family program during the holiday season that once again helped benefit Better Way Detroit, a nonprofit founded by Fr. Marko Djonovic to provide dignity for those experiencing homelessness. The program offers the

opportunity to work for pay during the holiday season where they create a store of donated items so families can provide Christmas for their families. The Adopt-a-Family tradition began in 2006 with Betsy and Bob Moran adopting families from our community who were in need during the Christmas season. Now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, our St. Mary's community continues to share its blessings with those who are struggling. Giving help and hope allows us to show our Christian faith and encourage those who may need it.





3RD ANNUAL

Saturday, February 8, 2025

OLSM vs. Br. Rice

**PINK  
IN**



**THE  
RINK  
2025**



St. Mary's Athletic Complex

3535 Indian Trail

West Bloomfield, MI 48324



Orchard Lake Hockey Association

Game Times

Friday 6p-8:15p

Saturday 8a-12:30p

High School Game Times

3p JV

5p Varsity White

7p Varsity Red



DONATE

SCAN ME







# STATE CHAMPIONS!

## BRINGING HOME THE LEGACY

On November 23, 2025, in the Eaglets first semifinal football game since 2016, (#15) OLSM (10-3) beat (#7) Birmingham Groves (12-1) 28-27 with the game ending field goal in OT at the MHSAA Division 2 Semifinals play at West Bloomfield High School, clinching their State Championship trip to Ford Field with a chance to cement The Legacy of the 2024 team!

OLSM alumni really showed up to cheer on THE TEAM, posting video send offs to encourage their fellow Eaglets, share their stories, and offer advice.

Two highly touted teams and ranked programs met in the MHSAA D2 state title game on Friday, September 29 at 7:00 PM at Ford Field – #15 Orchard Lake St. Mary's (11-3) vs. #12 Byron Center (12-2) but the Eaglets soared to victory (35-19) with a dominant running game to bring home the FIRST DIVISION 2 title in school history, the first state title since winning the Division 3 trophy in 2016, and the FIRST to win in Divisions 2, 3, and 4!

In just the third year as OLSM Head Coach and Athletic Director that alumnus Jermaine Gonzales (P'99) has reached the state finals, the feelings are extra special. Gonzales and his team were 1999 state champs and the opportunity to capture the state championship as coach is incredible!

What a TEAM, a journey, and memories for our athletes, coaches, trainers, support staff, parents, students, alumni, and the Prep community of fans near and far!



# OLSM ATHLETICS SHINE BRIGHT



Congratulations to the following varsity football team members on their honors!

**AP All-State First Team:** CHRISTOPHER COATES, RYAN HARRINGTON, BRYSON WILLIAMS

**AP All-State Second Team:** ANTONIO JOHNSON, DJ WHITE

**MHSFCA All-State Team:** RYAN HARRINGTON, BRYSON WILLIAMS



Michigan State University is a strong advocate for OLSM athletics. Last month, Prep seniors **JAYDEN SAVOURY** and **DJ WHITE** signed their National Letter of Intent (NLI) to play football for MSU in the fall 2025 season!

Congratulations to the following athletes on these additional volleyball honors:

**All Region:** JILLIAN GIBBS, AVERY KAPELLER

**All State Honorable Mention:** AVERY KAPELLER

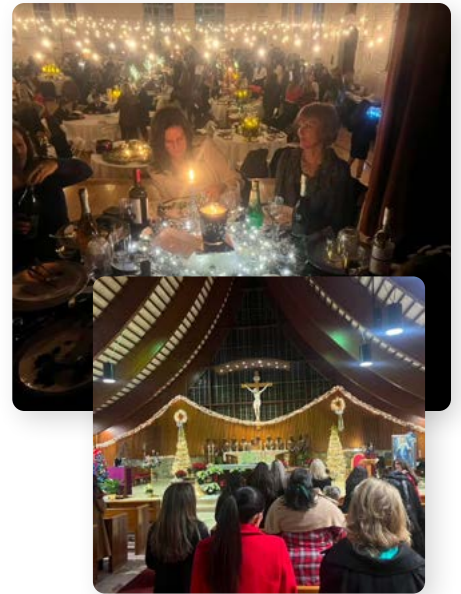
**Academic All-State:** AMELIA CZARNIK, MIRIAM CZARNIK, CHLOE MOUTAFIS, KADIE TARASIEWICZ.





# WHAT A NIGHT FOR CANDLELIGHT

On the first Thursday of December, we celebrate the annual Advent by Candlelight tradition here on campus with a vigil Mass at the Shrine Chapel followed by a personalized dinner, this year in the Fr. Rakoczy Old Gym, draped in twinkling lights and candlelight. Weeks before the event, tables are made available, many of which are reserved by Prep parents who choose to become a table hostess, and each hostess can decorate her table as she chooses with seasonal and festive accents. Each hostess invites her guests, friends, and/or family, and typically host the meal or desserts. Creativity is encouraged as the table set up, which must include candles, takes place the afternoon prior to the event on a first come basis without any cost for hosting a table. Table or individual donations to the The Mary Project Grotto beautification are greatly appreciated.



## AT THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

Oh, what a night to recognize Chancellor's Senate members for supporting the HEART of the Orchard Lake Schools! Current and new members came together for the annual Chancellor's Senate Recognition Dinner at Wabek Country Club. Thank you to all those who participated from within our campus community, including our OLSM student representatives, for your time, talents, and treasures.

If you would like to join the Chancellor's Senate, an embodiment of an "inner circle," difference makers, future thinkers, and community builders that help us map out how we move forward, contact Lisa Gray at (248) 392-9974 or [lgray@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:lgray@orchardlakeschools.com).





On behalf of the Orchard Lake Schools, we wish to thank the following sponsors, donors, and volunteers for helping to make “Jingle All the Way” so magical for all those who shared in this time-honored tradition!

## SPONSORS

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DANIEL CAMPBELL  
MR. AND MRS. KAMAL DEDDEH





# THE MARY PROJECT

AT ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS

After many years of thoughtful footsteps, the pathways of the Marian Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Orchard Lake St. Mary's have given way to age and are in need of repair. The Mary Project needs your help to sustain this prayerful space.

We are soliciting your support to repave the walkways and paths, starting with the walkway from the Grotto towards the lake. It will be paved with custom bricks to make it much more attractive and durable than poured concrete, and we are asking that you donate one or more of the bricks.

You may individualize a brick for you, or your family, honor a loved one or create an in-memoriam message. The donated bricks will become a part of the Grotto, paving the way for generations of visitors. As a friend of the Grotto and Orchard Lake Schools, please take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to have your commemorative brick(s) become a permanent part of this prayerful space.

Construction of Phase 2 will begin in early November. Sales for Phase 3 (continuing towards the lake) begin September 15, 2024. There is plenty of space for additional commemorative bricks. Bricks purchased for Phase 3 are \$150 each and will be installed in November 2025.

The bricks are 4" x 8" x 2 1/4" and are engraved using state-of-the-art laser technology. Every brick engraving is guaranteed for life!

All donations are tax deductible. EIN: 82-5453994

**ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2025**

**PLEASE PROOF READ CAREFULLY! \$20.00 FOR CHANGES MADE AFTER ORDER IS PLACED**

☐ **\$150 - 4x8 Brick**

Enter your text: 3 lines of text, 20 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation)

LINE 1  
LINE 2  
LINE 3


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL FORM AND PAYMENT TO:**

The Mary Project  
3535 Commerce Road  
Orchard Lake, MI 48324

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

The Mary Project

If you have any questions,  
please contact: Maureen Gross  
themaryproject@myyahoo.com





## ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER UPDATE

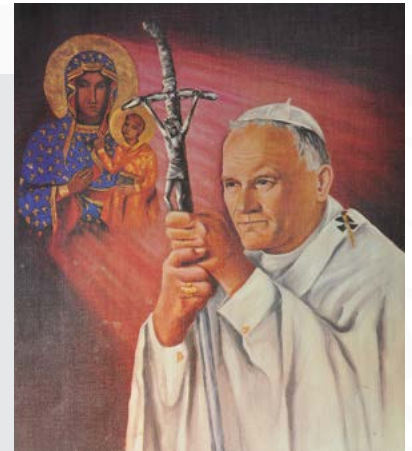
On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis opened the Jubilee Year 2025 and in all other dioceses the Jubilee Year was inaugurated on the following Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>. The Catholic Church celebrates the ordinary jubilee year every 25 years. The Church also declared an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy for 2015–2016. The last ordinary jubilee year was inaugurated by St. John Paul II, the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. We may read again the words of his invitation to that Jubilee:

*The period of the Jubilee introduces us to the vigorous language which the divine pedagogy of salvation uses to lead man to conversion and penance. These are the beginning and the path of man's healing, and the necessary condition for him to recover what he could never attain by his own strength: God's friendship and grace, the supernatural life which alone can bring fulfilment to the deepest aspirations of the human heart.*

*Jesus reveals the face of God the Father "compassionate and merciful" (Jas 5:11), and with the sending of the Holy Spirit he makes known the mystery of love which is the Trinity. It is the Spirit of Christ who is at work in the Church and in history: we must listen to him in order to recognize the signs of the new times and to make the expectation of the glorified Lord's return ever more vibrant in the hearts of the faithful. The Holy Year must therefore be one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity, the Most High God. At this point, the poetic words of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, come to our aid:*

*"Glory to God the Father and to the Son, King of the universe. Glory to the Spirit, worthy of praise and all holy. The Trinity is one God who created and filled all things: the heavens with heavenly beings, the earth with creatures of earth, the sea, the rivers and springs with creatures of the waters, giving life to all things by his Spirit, that all creatures might sing the praises of their wise Creator, who alone gives life and sustains all life in being. Above all others, let the creature who reasons celebrate him always as the great King and good Father".*

*May this hymn to the Trinity for the Incarnation of the Son rise with one voice from all who have been baptized and share the same faith in the Lord Jesus. (Incarnationis Mysterium, Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000)*



**FR. BERNARD WITEK**

Director, St. John Paul II Liturgical Center

# ZAPRASZAMY

**You are invited to join us for Polish 1st Sunday!**

*A special Mass at the Orchard Lake Schools to pray for Polonia*

**Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> • 1:00 PM**

- Polish Lunch after the Mass in the Dining Hall - Cost: \$20 (Kids Pizza for \$5)
- Please RSVP to the dinner by Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- For more information, call (248) 602-7579 or [bernardwitek@yahoo.com](mailto:bernardwitek@yahoo.com).



*at the Shrine of St. John Paul II, celebrated by Fr. Bernard Witek*





## ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER SPONSORS 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CAMPUS "WIGILIA" MASS AND DINNER

In the Polish culture, "Wigilia," (*Christmas Eve*) is undoubtedly the most festively celebrated religious holiday. Although there may be some minor regional differences, "Wigilia" is celebrated uniformly throughout Poland. It begins with decorating the Christmas tree followed by reading the Nativity story from the New Testament, then wishing each other well by sharing the "opłatek," then a meatless 12 course dinner, Christmas carols, the exchanging gifts, and finally, midnight Mass.

Celebrating and promoting Polish language and culture is an important objective of the St. John Paul II Liturgical Center. Polish culture and Catholicism are inextricably linked. Sponsoring "Wigilia" on campus fulfills one dimension of this objective. The campus celebration began with Polish Mass in the Shrine Chapel accompanied by the Filarets Polish choir followed by a traditional "Wigilia" dinner in the Campus dining hall and concluded with Polish and English Christmas carols.

This year's attendance set a record of 116 attendees. Many contributed to its huge success. Fr. Bernard Witek, Margaret Wozny and Joe Majcher of the Liturgical Center organized the event. Marco Santia and the dining hall staff did a great job serving the food. Will and Cheri Cosnowski of the Moms & Dads Club helped with waiting on the tables. Robert Mazur and Lisa Gray of the Development department did a great job decorating the Dining Hall. Doug Fackler and the maintenance department helped with the Dining Hall and chapel set-up. Charlene and Dr. Harry Morris, along with Nadia Metti, decorated the Shrine Chapel.

*Centrum Liturgiczne Świętego Jana Pawła Drugiego dokłada wszelkich starań aby obchodzić najważniejsze polskie święta oraz pielegnować język polski i kulturę na terenie Szkół w Orchard Lake. Obchody Wigilii na terenie Szkół pomagają w realizacji tego celu*

## ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER CELEBRATES 106<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF POLAND REGAINING ITS INDEPENDENCE AT NOVEMBER 10, 2024 MASS & LUNCHEON

**CENTRUM LITURGICZNY ŚW. JANA PAWŁA II OBCHODZIŁ 106 ROCZNICE  
NIEPODLEGŁOŚCI POLSKI 10 LISTOPADA 2024R. Z MSZĄ ŚW. I OBIADEM**

Geographically, Poland is located between two historically aggressive and warring nations, Germany and Russia. It also finds itself at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe. Poland has typically been a peaceful nation. However, it has been invaded from the east and west many times over the centuries, and it has been divided by its neighbors three times over the past several centuries.



In 1795, Poland was partitioned into three parts and these parts were annexed by Russia, Prussia, today's Germany, and Austria. Poland disappeared from the map for 123 years. Poland's deep-rooted Christianity preserved its national identity even though it was subjugated. World War I gave Poland the opportunity to regain its independence. Quietly, Poland was able to reconstitute an army that fought heroically towards regaining its independence. Many Polish soldiers fought valiantly and sacrificed their lives. Poles sacrificed much to attain their independence.

Many Polish Americans joined this fight as evidenced by the monument of General Haller, a gift from the Polish Government's Institute for National Remembrance, in front of the campus Galeria. General Haller organized the famous Polish Blue Army which was named after the blue French style uniforms the Poles wore. In 2023, the Polish Institute of Culture and Research at Orchard Lake, in cooperation with the Polish Government, was instrumental in erecting new, prominent headstones at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield for 59 of these Polish Blue Army Veterans. In 1918, the United States government, led by President Woodrow Wilson, recognized Poland's independence again due in large part because these Polish soldiers fought alongside the Allies.

An important lesson for all: once freedom is lost, regaining it is exceptionally difficult. Today, in Poland as in the United States, patriotism and love of God and country is not nearly as sacred as it was in previous generations. This is an ominous sign that we must diligently and fervently guard against.

# SAVE THE DATE



## THE ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS AMBASSADORS BALL

*SUPPORTING THE ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS AMBASSADORS ENDOWMENT*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2025**  
ORCHARD LAKE COUNTRY CLUB



THE GREATEST GALA ON EARTH

SAINT MARY'S PREP

# AUCTION GALA

EST 1885



SATURDAY  
FEB. 01 2025

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OLSM.MAESTROWEB.COM

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NOV  
SUBURBAN  
SHOWPLACE



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: FACING WESTERPLATTE

On Saturday, November 23, at a fundraiser for flood victims in Poland sponsored by the Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake, one of our Polish presenters referred to a “Westerplatte Moment.” Our interpreter—who did an otherwise admirable job—struggled to put this in terms Americans could understand.

Though the term is not familiar to most of us, it is an important idea for people of all ages, especially for young people. But first a little historical background ...

Westerplatte (pronounced “Ves-ter-plah-tah” in Polish) is a small spit of land in the harbor of the city of Gdańsk in northern Poland. After World War I when Poland regained independence, the mostly German city of Danzig/Gdańsk became a Free City. Poland policed its borders but most of the German inhabitants wanted to rejoin Germany, especially after Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933. Westerplatte was a piece of sovereign Polish territory inside of the Free City that allowed Poland to receive shipments of military supplies and transfer them to Poland though the otherwise pro-German city. A small, lightly armed Polish garrison of less than 200 men was posted to the site.

On September 1, 1939, at 4:45 a.m., the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein, on a supposedly peaceful visit to Danzig opened fire on the Polish outpost at Westerplatte, joined by land-based guns that pulverized every inch of the small peninsula. These were the first shots of World War II. German navy stormtroopers and Danzig SS men attacked expecting to find little left of the Polish defenders. Instead the Poles emerged from underground bomb shelters and repelled the repeated attacks by Hitler’s troops. For the next seven days, bombarded by ships, aircraft, and artillery and outnumbered 15 to 1, the Poles refused to surrender until they expended all their ammunition and many of them were incapacitated by wounds.



In 1987, while the communists were still in power in Poland, Pope St. John Paul II visited Westerplatte and spoke to a group of young people there:

*Each of you, my young friends, will find in life some personal “Westerplatte.” Some measure of tasks that have to be undertaken and fulfilled. Some rightful cause for which one cannot avoid fighting. Some duty, or necessity, which one cannot shun. From which one cannot desert. Finally, some order of truth and values, which must be held and defended, like this Westerplatte, within oneself and around oneself.*

A Westerplatte moment is when we must choose to fight not because we wish to but because if we do not, we lose ourselves and perhaps even our souls. It is to choose something that is more valuable than life itself. For

most of us, our Westerplatte will not come in a dugout battling waves of SS stormtroopers with a rifle in our hands. But perhaps we will be asked to betray a friend. We will be told to agree that a lie is the truth. We will be asked to turn on a co-worker if we wish to keep a career we love.

Had the Polish defenders of Westerplatte simply surrendered their lives would have been easier. We know we are facing a “Westerplatte” when just “going along” provides far more rewards. What kind of crazy person would agree to be shunned by friends or family, or lose a well-paid job, when all you must do is agree that a lie is the truth, and that truth is a lie?

When the late Holy Father spoke about “facing Westerplatte” it is about these moral crossroads we all must face and cannot avoid nor pretend we are neutral. They are never easy to face, but how we face them determines who we are. John Paul II preached “heroic virtue” or what in an earlier age was known as honor. We can prepare ourselves through prayer and the sacraments but in the end, we cannot walk away from Westerplatte.

**JOHN RADZIŁOWSKI, PH.D.**

*Director, Polish Institute of Culture & Research*

## AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING OF PHILANTHROPY



On November 23, the Galeria at Orchard Lake hosted a memorable benefit dinner for Poland's flood victims. Grzegorz Górny and Rafał Porzeziński delivered engaging and insightful lectures, skillfully blending depth with humor to inspire the audience.

The highlight of the evening was Angelika Korszyńska-Górny's stunning performance, featuring songs in Polish, Hebrew, Ukrainian, and Hungarian. Her powerful voice captivated the room, with many guests softly humming along, creating a beautiful sense of unity.

Mrs. Dorota Bocheński's dinner elevated the evening, complementing the warmth and shared purpose that defined the event. Sincere thanks to all who supported this impactful cause including our dear OLSM volunteers!





## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE POLISH INSTITUTE,

I hope everyone had a joyful and peaceful Christmas, filled with the beauty and meaning of this cherished season. As we welcome 2025, I wish you much happiness, health, and success in the year ahead. Looking back, 2024 was a year of remarkable achievements and heartfelt connections. In March, we celebrated women and culture with Blooms of Tradition, a stunning fashion show by Recultured Designs. This event highlighted Polish heritage through exquisite designs modeled by young women from St. Mary's Preparatory and our Polonia community.

Spring brought the joyful traditions of Easter with three sold-out Pisanki workshops. Hundreds of participants came together to learn the art of Polish Easter egg decorating, celebrating this cherished tradition and strengthening ties to our culture. Throughout the year, we were privileged to host distinguished lecturers and performers. Brother Guy Consolmagno, the Vatican's astronomer, delivered captivating lectures to students and the public alike, bridging science and faith in inspiring ways. Another highlight was the packed motorcoach trip where we brought students to experience the 550<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Exhibit about Nicolaus Copernicus at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy, a celebration of one of Poland's greatest scientific figures.

In December, we embarked on a memorable tour to Grand Rapids to experience Polonia on the western side of the state. A particularly emotional moment was our visit to Holy Cross Cemetery, where we honored the monument dedicated to the Blue Army Soldiers. Together, we lit znicze (Polish lanterns) and placed Polish flags in vases surrounding the statue of the Virgin Mary. Prayers for the eternal rest of these heroes were recited in Polish, and we concluded with a heartfelt and resounding: *Cześć Ich Pamięci!*

We also continued to support the Father Dabrowski Polish Language Center at Orchard Lake, local Polish language schools, and Mrs. Wloch's Polish language class at St. Mary's Preparatory. November brought a moving Day of Service at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, honoring veterans and Orchard Lake community members. December concluded with a meaningful fundraising dinner for flood victims in Poland, featuring powerful performances and lectures that united our community in support of a critical cause.

As we begin 2025, we invite you to visit the Sacred Art exhibit, the inaugural showcase in our newly renovated Galeria. Open to the public until January 31, 2025, this remarkable exhibit will culminate in a closing event hosted by the Polish and Italian Consulates of Michigan. For private viewings, please contact our Galeria Manager, Elijah Majeski, at [emajeski@picrol.com](mailto:emajeski@picrol.com). Let us enter this new year with a renewed commitment to preserving our shared heritage and celebrating our vibrant community. There is so much to look forward to—please visit [www.picrol.org](http://www.picrol.org) for details on upcoming events and programs.

*Życzę Państwu zdrowia, radości i pomyślności w Nowym Roku!*

**ANIA BIECIUK**

*Associate Director for Polonia Affairs, Polish Institute of Culture & Research*



## SACRED ART & MUSIC IN PERFECT HARMONY

A fascinating lecture by Dr. Paul Radzilowski, "Out of the Shadows: Music of the Polish Baroque", offered profound insights into the interplay between sacred music and art. Set against the stunning backdrop of our exhibit, Sacred Images, Holy Spaces: Art & Faith in Poland and Italy, the presentation illuminated how Baroque music and sacred art harmonize to inspire faith and cultural identity.

The evening concluded with musical clips and a lively Q&A session, captivating the audience and providing a deeper appreciation of the Baroque era's artistic legacy. Don't forget to visit the "Sacred Images, Holy Spaces" exhibit, open through January 31, 2025, and experience the sacred beauty that unites art, music, and faith. For more details: [www.picrol.org](http://www.picrol.org).

# CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS AND COMMUNITY

This December, the Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake celebrated the holiday season with a joyful gathering of friends and community partners. Reflecting on a successful year, the event was a time to express gratitude, share accomplishments, and strengthen bonds with those who contributed to the Institute's achievements.

The month was marked by meaningful traditions, including Mikołajki—St. Nicholas Day—hosted by the Father Dąbrowski Polish Language Center. This beloved custom brought teachers, students, and families together to exchange gifts, sing kolędy (Polish Christmas carols), and share a festive meal. The event fostered community connections while celebrating the spirit of Polish heritage.



The Polish Consulate in Chicago also hosted a festive Christmas celebration.

The evening began with the passing of the Bethlehem Light of Peace, led by Scouts of the Polish Scouting Association, followed by a warm welcome from Consul Mrs. Bernadetta Pałka-Maciejewska. Fr. Stanisław Jankowski blessed the wafers for the traditional exchange of opłatek and heartfelt wishes among guests.

These December celebrations showcased the beauty of Polish traditions and the joy of coming together as a community. As we step into 2025, we carry forward the gratitude and unity of this season, wishing all our friends and partners a New Year filled with peace and prosperity.





# A JOURNEY THROUGH GRAND RAPIDS: POLISH HISTORY, FAITH, AND HERITAGE

On December 7, we embarked on a remarkable historical tour to Michigan's western side, a journey organized in partnership with the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan and the Polish Historical Society of Grand Rapids. It was a day of reverence and discovery, where history came alive through sacred spaces, personal stories, and vibrant traditions. The day began with Polish Christmas carols playing softly on the bus, a soundtrack of comfort and connection. Delicious drożdżówki and Polish sweets were shared as we traveled, evoking the warmth of home and the bonds of community.

Our first stop was Saint Isidore's Church, a beacon of faith and perseverance. Monsignor Hankiewicz shared stories of the early parishioners—Polish families who walked miles, up and down hills, through snow and rain, to attend Mass and send their children to school. It was here, amid the richly carved wood, radiant stained glass, and solemn beauty of the altar, that a community was built. The church was more than a place of worship; it was a sanctuary where Polish immigrants found solace, unity, and strength. Their sacrifices, etched into the very walls of the church, remain a testament to their unyielding faith and love for one another.

From there, we visited Jackson Street Hall, an extraordinary landmark that has served as the heart of Grand Rapids' Polish community for over a century. We learned that this is not only the oldest functioning Polish social hall in Michigan—it is the oldest

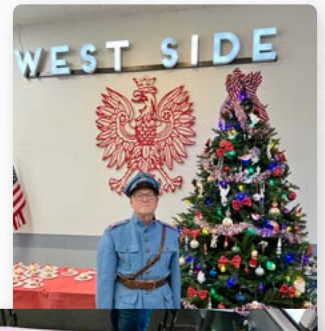
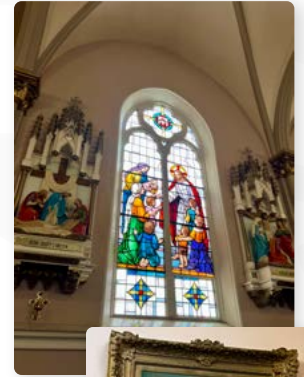
continuously operating ethnic hall in the United States. Through economic hardship, Prohibition, and wars, its doors never closed. The hall became a gathering place for celebrations, support, and fellowship, preserving the customs and traditions of those who called it home. Today, that mission lives on through Busia's Boutique,

where clothing and assistance are provided to families in need—a modern reflection of the same community spirit that has sustained it for generations. The hall radiated a profound sense of love, dignity, and pride—a living archive of resilience.

Our journey continued to

Holy Cross Cemetery, a place where time seemed to stand still. Once the Polish National Cemetery, it holds the graves of local soldiers who trained to join General Józef Haller's Blue Army. These brave young men, determined to fight for Poland's independence, trained at Camp Kościuszko in Canada and marched under the Polish flag with President Wilson's blessing. Though their story was nearly forgotten, the Polish Heritage Society uncovered the truth through tireless research.

Standing before the restored monument to the Haller Army veterans, we were struck by the poignant beauty of Our Lady's statue, her hands extended in welcome: "Come to me. Welcome home." In silence, we lit znicze and placed Polish flags, honoring their sacrifice with prayers spoken in unison: Cześć Ich Pamięci—Honor Their Memory. It was a humbling moment, a quiet tribute to their courage and dedication.







Our final stop brought us to the festive Christkindl Market, where the air was filled with the aromas of mulled wine, roasted nuts, and baked goods. Rows of wooden huts adorned with twinkling lights offered handmade treasures and international wares, creating a sense of wonder and celebration. It was a joyful close to a day marked by reflection, exploration, and the enduring spirit of community. This tour was more than a journey through history; it was a pilgrimage of gratitude and remembrance. It reminded us of the faith, sacrifice, and determination of those who came before us—their stories woven into the churches, halls, and cemeteries we visited. We invite you to join us on future tours throughout the year to walk these sacred paths, explore our shared heritage, and honor the legacy of our ancestors.

*Cześć Ich Pamięci.*

## RESEARCHERS VISIT

In recent weeks, the Polish Institute of Culture & Research had the pleasure of hosting two distinguished researchers in our archives: Gavin Moulton from the University of Notre Dame and Rev. Dr. Michał Mraczek from the Department of Detailed Pastoral Theology at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław.



## OLSM ART CLASSES VISIT GALERIA

The Orchard Lake St. Mary's art classes, led by Mrs. Tara Johnson, recently visited the Galeria for an engaging and in-depth tour of the exhibit Sacred Images, Holy Spaces: Art & Faith in Poland and Italy, guided by Dr. John Radzilowski. Students were captivated by the stunning works on display, including Madonna with Child and other timeless pieces, uncovering the hidden gems of sacred art.

Following the tour, students returned for subsequent sessions held at the Galeria, where they were encouraged to freehand draw an image that inspired them or sparked a personal connection. This experience has been a fantastic opportunity for our students

to explore both creativity and faith through art. We are thrilled to see such curiosity and enthusiasm, as well as the steady stream of visitors to the Galeria!





## POLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS EXPLORE THEIR ROOTS

Polish language students at OLSM, led by Mrs. Wloch, enjoyed an engaging lesson on genealogy, thanks to Therese Leszcz, President of the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan (PGSM). Mrs. Leszcz emphasized the importance of knowing where one's family comes from and the value of discovering one's roots.



Students have been tasked with researching and expanding their own family trees using PGSM's resources. Over the coming weeks, they will delve into online databases, periodicals, and archives to uncover their family histories. We can't wait to see the fascinating stories they uncover!



## ALUMNI NEWS

### TAAF & CLUB 1885

In December, alumni received The Annual Alumni Fund (TAAF) mailing. Contributions to this fund are counted on annually to help support the core of St. Mary's. This means providing an excellent education rooted in Catholic faith on a campus with history and beauty that is second to none. Within that definition, TAAF supports a wide range of things, from maintenance of the grounds to faculty salaries to Eaglet athletics and extracurricular activities.

Visit **TAAF Giving Page** - The Orchard Lake Schools to make your contribution. For questions or more information, please contact Lisa Gray at [lgray@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:lgray@orchardlakeschools.com)

St. Mary's Preparatory was founded in 1885 and, throughout our history, has celebrated the academic and spiritual formation of students on our historic campus. Recognizing our traditions and focused on our future success, the 1885 Club offers young alumni an opportunity to show their commitment to their alma mater by making an annual gift of \$18.85. The 1885 Club is open to any Alumni who have graduated in the past 10 years as well as current students. It offers an affordable way to begin "giving back" to support tuition assistance for current and future Eaglets.

The **1885 Club**, in conjunction with the Alumni Association, will serve young alumni, providing mentoring and networking opportunities while focused on preserving the friendships and sense of family formed at St. Mary's. To donate now, visit: [www.orchardlakeschools.com/ways-to-give](http://www.orchardlakeschools.com/ways-to-give). For questions or more information, contact Don Buchanan at (248) 392-9268 or [dbuchanan@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:dbuchanan@orchardlakeschools.com).

## ANNUAL ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Thursday, February 27, 2025 • Burkacki Academic Center



# CLOSING CEREMONY

FOR THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF CULTURE & RESEARCH  
INAUGURAL EXHIBIT:



## SACRED IMAGES, HOLY SPACES

ART & FAITH IN  
POLAND AND ITALY



~ SPONSORED BY ~



THE HON. PAOLA ALLEGRA BASTROCCHI  
*Consul of Italy in Detroit*

MR. RICHARD WALAWENDER  
*Honorary Consul of Poland in Detroit*



## FOOD & REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

*Appetizers and sweets from Italy & Poland, as well as Italian wine and Polish beer.*

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. YOUR PRESENCE IS WARMLY REQUESTED.

**PLEASE RSVP BEFORE JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>**

To RSVP, please email [info@picrol.org](mailto:info@picrol.org) or [segreteria.detroit@esteri.it](mailto:segreteria.detroit@esteri.it)

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025 • 6:00 PM**

POLISH INSTITUTE OF CULTURE & RESEARCH AT ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS

# FAMILY HONORS DAD, FELIX OLEKSZYK (P'50, C'54), AT CAMPUS SITE OF MARRIAGE PROPOSAL TO THEIR MOTHER

St Mary's has always been a special and meaningful place for our family. My dad, Felix, is an alumnus of St. Mary's Preparatory (P'50) and St. Mary's College (C'54). Growing up, stories of dad's years at St. Mary's were often shared with our family. One story that always stood out was when he proposed to our mom in front of the Galeria (which was then the school chapel). Because of dad's example, I wanted to continue the tradition and attend St. Mary's, too. As a proud alum (P'84), dad and I continue to support the Eaglets cheering them on at football and basketball games and attending campus events and an occasional Mass in the Shrine Chapel (where I married my bride, Cari, of over 30 years). I continue to bring my family (children and grandchild) to campus whenever we can and regale them with many stories of my experience at St. Mary's.

We wanted to commemorate dad's proposal to mom at the site it took place, honor his commitment to faith, his dedication to St. Mary's and his Polish heritage, and his love of family. Surprising my dad on Sunday, November 24, the day of the St. Mary's annual tree lighting, with a commemorative bench at the Galeria is a lasting tribute, a memory that our family will cherish always. I encourage others to consider donating big or small to support St. Mary's and the great work that they continue to do forming strong Catholic men and women. Thanks again for letting me share this with you.



Wishing you all the best and a blessed and joyful New Year,

**JIM OLEKSZYK & FAMILY**



The “Ever Forward” Strategic Plan has been approved, and the Orchard Lake Schools has initiated a new path. We are moving on to the second phase of the Master Plan for campus. “Ever Forward” charts a path forward for the OLS and its three major operational divisions.

That path goes in the direction Fr. Dąbrowski envisioned – it leads toward OLS providing the best possible organizational structures and activities to enable the spiritual formation and educational growth of the people OLS serves.

For more information, visit [www.orchardlakeschools.com/Ever-Forward](http://www.orchardlakeschools.com/Ever-Forward)



# UPCOMING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## JANUARY 2025

- 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR**
- 3 Girls Varsity Basketball** vs. Oxford @ 7:00 PM
- 4 Boys Varsity Hockey** vs. Catholic Central @ 7:30 PM
- 5 POLISH 1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY MASS @ 1:00 PM**  
EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
- 7 CLASSES RESUME**  
**Ski/Snowboarding** vs. Hartland/WL Northern @ Alpine @ 3:00 PM  
**Girls Varsity Basketball** vs. Country Day @ 7:00 PM
- 8 Bowling vs. U of D/Marian** @ Wonderland Lanes @ 3:00 PM
- 9 Girls Varsity Hockey** vs. Grosse Pointe South @ 4:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Basketball** vs. IMG Academy at Oakland University @ 7:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Hockey** vs. Port Huron Northern @ 7:30 PM
- 13 Bowling** vs. De La Salle/Regina @ Sterling Lanes @ 3:00 PM
- 14 Ski/Snowboarding** vs. Marian/WL Central @ Alpine Valley @ 3:00 PM  
**Girls Varsity Basketball** vs. Mercy @ 7:00 PM
- 16 Girls Varsity Hockey** vs. Ann Arbor Pioneer @ 4:00 PM
- 17 Boys Varsity Basketball** vs. Catholic Central @ 7:00 PM
- 18 Girls Varsity Hockey** vs. Sacred Heart @ 4:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Hockey** vs. Livonia Stevenson @ 7:30 PM  
**Bowling Varsity Girls** @ Oak. Co. Championship @ 8:00 PM
- 19 Bowling Varsity Boys** @ Oakland Co. Championship @ 8:00 PM
- 20 NO SCHOOL** • Martin Luther King Day
- 21 Ski/Snowboarding** vs. Novi/W.Bloomfield @ Alpine Valley @ 3:00 PM  
**Girls Varsity Hockey** vs. Cranbrook @ 4:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Basketball** vs. Detroit Pershing @ 7:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Hockey** vs. U of D Jesuit @ 7:30 PM
- 22 Wrestling** vs. UofD/Flint SWestern Tournament @ 5:30 PM
- 23 Bowling** vs. CC/Mercy @ Wonderland Lanes @ 3:00 PM
- 24 Girls Varsity Basketball** vs. Regina @ 7:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Hockey** vs. Flint Powers Catholic @ 7:30 PM
- 27 Bowling** vs. UofD/Marian @ Bowl One Lanes @ 3:00 PM
- 28 Ski/Snowboarding** vs. Lakeland/Milford @ Alpine Valley @ 3:00 PM  
**Girls Varsity Hockey** vs. Mercy @ 4:00 PM  
**Girls Varsity Basketball** vs. Toledo CC @ 7:00 PM
- 31 Ski/Snowboarding** @ Don Thomas JV Race @ TBD  
**Bowling** vs. Divine Child @ Oak Lanes @ 3:00 PM  
**Boys Varsity Basketball** vs. Toledo St. Francis De Sales (Senior Night) @ 7:00 PM

*Check [www.olsmathletics.com](http://www.olsmathletics.com) for more information on MHSAA playoffs, and check for results on Instagram and Facebook.*

### MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS

*Throughout the year, donors to the Orchard Lake Schools enroll their loved ones in the "Friends of the Orchard Lake Schools."*

*Prayers are offered at every mass at the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. John Paul II for those names enrolled.*

*These names are those that have been added from the month of November.*

LUCKA AKKALAYIL	BARBARA LOUISE HIGH	KEN NAVARRE	SYLVIA STINCIC-FERRY
JACK BEAUDOIN	ROBERT "BOB" JEANNOTTE	LISA RANDALLS	ESTHER JANE TONDREAU
LORENZA CARADONNA	KENNETH JOGAT	ANNE E. REILLY	MICHAEL WALSH
MICHAEL G. DEMARTINO	BRIAN LOISELLE	MICHAEL J. REINECK	ROBIN WRIGHT
GUISEPPINA GABBEAT	JOHN LONGO	LACIE NICOLE SANTIA	ARLENE ZAJAC

*For more enrollment information, please contact Lisa Gray at [lgray@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:lgray@orchardlakeschools.com).*

# JANUARY 2025

## MASS SCHEDULE

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1 • SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK • POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. SUHY • LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK • ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 5 • FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK • POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. NGUYEN • LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK • ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
1:00 PM	FR. WITEK • POLISH* <b>POLISH 1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY</b>	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK • POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. WARD • LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK • ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK • POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. WARD • LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK • ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 26

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK • POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. WHITAKER • LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK • ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

\* Feed for the Live stream of the Polish Masses: [www.facebook.com/olsnews](http://www.facebook.com/olsnews)

## EXTRA-LITURGICAL DEVOTIONS

1 <sup>st</sup> THURSDAY 1/2	7:00 PM MASS THEN DEVOTIONS • FR. WITEK	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
1 <sup>st</sup> FRIDAY 1/3	7:00 PM MASS THEN DEVOTIONS • FR. WITEK	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
1 <sup>st</sup> SATURDAY 1/4	9:00 AM MASS THEN DEVOTIONS • FR. WITEK	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
THURSDAY 1/16	<b>BIBLE STUDY</b> AFTER MASS AT 7:45 PM	SEMINARY CHAPEL
FRIDAY 1/17	<b>DIVINE MERCY PRAYERS</b> AT 7:45 PM	SEMINARY CHAPEL
	<b>KRAĞ BIBLIJNY</b> AT 8:00 PM	SEMINARY CHAPEL

## CONFESSIONS

MONDAY-FRIDAY	6:00 PM - 6:55 PM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
SATURDAYS	8:00 AM - 8:55 AM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE