

Information from Melbourne

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the oldest Polish settlement at Polish Hill River in 2006, a special celebration took place at the Polish center. Under the leadership of Andrzej Czechowicz, as chairman, the Organizing Committee for the 150th Anniversary of Polish Settlement in South Australia was established.

The celebrations announced the participation of clergy, including Bishop Ryszard Karpiński. Various events were also planned, including a picnic for the descendants of the pioneers from Polish Hill River, a Mass, a meeting for Poles, as well as exhibitions and concerts.

A jubilee pilgrimage was also announced in Melbourne, both to mark the 150th anniversary of Polish collective settlement in Australia and the 100th anniversary of the death of the first Polish chaplain, Father Leon Rogalski.

These were four days of exceptional attractions and spiritual experiences, attended by priests Wiesław Słowik and Ludwik Ryba, among others.

The varied pilgrimage program included: Departure from Melbourne on Friday, April 28, 2006 (from Richmond and Essendon).

On Saturday, April 29, there were celebrations at Polish Hill River, a Mass (presided over by Bishop Ryszard Karpiński), lunch, a picnic, a museum tour, Vespers, a meeting with pastors from Adelaide and Polish pilgrims, a visit to the old cemetery in Sevenhill, and the grave of Father Rogalski.

On Sunday, April 30, there was a tour of the museum of Blessed Sister Mary MacKillop in Norwood, a Mass, more sightseeing, and an overnight stay in Mt. Gambier, followed by a return to Melbourne.

On the occasion of the anniversary, a colorful informational brochure titled *150 Years of Polish Settlement in South Australia, 1856-2006* (Adelaide 2006, 44 pages) was published, prepared thanks to the collaboration of Fr. Andrzej Paweł Bies, Władysława Jadczak, Krystyna Łużny, the curator of the Museum, Susan Marsden, Krystyna Ruchniewicz-Misiak, Rosslyn Whitcher, and descendants of the Młodystach family. Józef Jarosz, the editor of the *Tygodnik Polski*, ensured that as much information as possible with photographs about the anniversary and the history of the oldest Polish center was published in the press.

In celebration of the anniversary, particular attention was given to individuals who have been especially significant to the center. The *Tygodnik Polski* featured a report titled "Around Us," which highlighted the figure of Józef Glapa, the caretaker of the Polish center in Polish Hill River for 35 years and the long-time president of the Polish Association in Adelaide, who regularly visited the Polish center every three weeks for several days to carry out necessary work with friends.

The final note of the anniversary events was the pilgrimage of Polish youth to World Youth Day in Sydney on July 11, 2008. It involved 120 young people and 14 Polish priests, including those from Dąbrówka in Greater Poland. They were gifted 20 t-shirts with the inscription "Polish Hill River" and around 40 informational booklets about the Polish museum. The Polish Christoferian priests from Adelaide took care of the pilgrims.

In 2009, Ernestyna Skuriat-Kozek, in her report titled "Shared Heritage, Shared Care: The Tenth Anniversary of the Polish Hill River Church Museum," described how she brought a "bundle" of brochures, documents, leaflets, photocopies, press clippings, as well as recordings and photographs received from the curator of the Museum, prepared for the occasion of this celebration.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning the obelisk erected in Sevenhill in honor of the fallen and participants of both world wars, which bears the Polish names of Borowski, Polomka, Cichoń, Janeczek, Kozłowski, Pawelski, and others. On the old parish cemetery by the church in Sevenhill, there are 39 beautiful Polish graves that testify to the history of Poles in this region.

On this cemetery, Professor Jerzy J. Smolicz (1935-2006), one of the most distinguished Poles in South Australia—sociologist, professor at the University of Adelaide—was buried on November 11, 2006, next to his parents.

Although the Polish settlement of Polish Hill River has yet to receive a major scientific monograph, many more or less groundbreaking chapters in books, press articles, and contributions have already been written about it, not only by the esteemed historian Lech Paszkowski but also by Jesuits Józef Janus, Wiesław Słowik, Ludwik Grzebień, and Andrzej Paweł Bies. The time has come to create a work worthy of this unique phenomenon, which was the first cohesive group of Polish emigrants in Australia in the 19th century.