

St. Mark's Cathedral in Port Pirie

Polish Community Picnic in Port Pirie

Pilgrimage – April 30, 2023



In April, the third annual Polish Community Picnic took place in Port Pirie at the invitation of Bishop Karol Kulczycki. Fr. Michał mobilized the faithful and organized bus transportation for those who, for various reasons, did not use private cars. From the participants' accounts, we know that the atmosphere on the bus was very pleasant, with religious songs being sung and funny stories being told, often interrupted by bursts of laughter.

You could say that these annual gatherings have become a tradition, and that the Polish Picnic has secured a permanent spot in the calendar of religious events for the Polish community in South Australia.



The participants of this outing were parishioners from all Polish churches in Adelaide.

The celebration began with a Holy Mass in honor of Our Lady, Queen of Poland.

The Mass was offered for the homeland and the Polish community living in Australia.

The Holy Mass was presided over by Bishop Karol Kulczycki, and he was assisted by four priests, including Fr. Michał Skiba, Fr. Jimmy Panton, Fr. Krzysztof Kowalczyk from the Kadina parish, and Deacon Gary Stokes.

The Polanki Choir, under the direction of Ms. Jola Kozak, gave a solemn and festive atmosphere to the Holy Mass with their resonant and professional singing. After the service, we moved to Memorial Park, which is located across the road. There, a picnic took place.

Trips to Port Pirie are multicultural events because both native Australians and

emigrants from various parts of the world attend the Parish in Port Pirie. We, Poles, are curious about the traditions of other nationalities, just as others are interested in how we Poles live, our customs, and how our Polish culture differs from others. Therefore, during this gathering, conversations, discussions, and even confessions of personal experiences were eagerly undertaken. Friendships were formed, and mobile phone numbers were exchanged.

Music accompanied us throughout the picnic, inspiring and encouraging both younger and older participants to dance. A few women, led by our friend Andrzej, progressed from simple foot-tapping to a more challenging form of dance, starting the “kozaczek” with squats. Amazingly, none of them experienced a painful encounter with the surface of our beautiful planet.

However, the weather, although it rained in the morning, in the afternoon (someone mentioned a prayer for this) the sun revealed its burning face, accompanying us until the end of the day!

It's impossible not to mention the delicious and diverse dishes. The management of the Cathedral put a lot of thought and effort into receiving us well—from greeting us with coffee and a cookie to get us back on our feet after the journey, to the long picnic table filled to the brim after the Holy Mass.

It should also be noted that most of those who came from Adelaide brought dishes with them to share with the other participants.



Two very nice and communicative nuns from Port Augusta, both from India—

specifically the Chennai region in the southeastern part of India—drew attention with their interesting attire. Sister Sheila Thomas and Sister Elizabeth work with the Aboriginal community, and they also visit prisoners daily to talk to them individually when necessary. Additionally, they lead prayers in three different nursing homes and organize visits to families in need of various types of support.



Mr. Ryszard Buczak participated in the picnic, this time accompanied by his Australian wife, who shares his interest in everything Polish. They have both been to Poland, where Mr. Ryszard's family welcomed them very warmly. They both fondly remember their stay in our homeland

Many parishioners from Port Pirie, especially the women, were adorned in Polish white and red scarves and wreaths on their heads, purchased two years ago in Polish Hill River.

The atmosphere was wonderful, with friendly, kind, and smiling people.

We returned home uplifted and content, with hope in our hearts that we will return to Port Pirie next year to once again participate in prayer and gatherings together.

On behalf of the visiting faithful from Adelaide, heartfelt thanks are due to Bishop Karol Kulczycki and the organizers from Port Pirie for inviting us and for the effort put into organizing such a wonderful reception. Thank you.

Leszek Gajewski