

THE POLISH MINERS’ UNIFORMS

At this concert, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Szydlo, will present to the Men of the Deeps two ceremonial Polish miners’ uniforms, specially made in Poland for this occasion. These will later be displayed at the Cape Breton Miners’ Museum. Miners’ uniforms are worn for special occasions, such as St. Barbara’s Day (December 4 – the patron saint of miners). The wearing of uniforms dates to the 18th and early 19th centuries, depending on regions, and reflects the high esteem for miners in Poland. Each component of the uniform has a special meaning. The brush used for cleaning blasting holes became the decorative, symbolic feather on the headpiece of the uniform. The short cloak evokes the cape protecting the miner from water. Pockets were used to hold the fuses and flints necessary in blasting. There are special insignia to show a miner’s function.

UPCOMING EVENTS TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF ST. MARY’S POLISH PARISH

For a complete list of events – and for a “virtual tour” of the historic church – please go on-line to www.stmaryspolishparish.ca

Thursday, July 25 – Opening of Parish Centenary Historical Exhibit – Wendy Bergfeldt (CBC Radio) to broadcast live, 4-6 p.m. – Polish Village Hall

July 25-28 – Conference of the Canadian Polish Research Institute www.polishcommunitiesconference.ca .

July 25 – Parish centenary art exhibit opening

Saturday, July 27 – Parish dinner theatre production – The Odyssey of the Polish Treasures – based on the true and rather dramatic story of how the Polish state treasures were kept safe in Canada while Poland was occupied during World War II and later under Communism; Polish Village Hall; tickets: 563-1226. *Tickets will also be on sale during the concert intermission this evening.*

August 2-4 – Parish family reunions, Mass, and picnic on parish grounds (Sunday)

Friday, September 6 – Centenary banquet

Sunday, September 8 – Main Centenary Mass and Polish Festival

October 16-18 – Visit and workshops/performances by Jedliniok (renowned folk group from Wroclaw, Poland)

October – Unveiling of the Cape Breton Polish tartan

December – Special community Polish carol singing and Sylwestra ball (Feast of St. Sylvester – Dec. 31) to usher out the centenary year.

This summer, we will also be releasing a special parish centenary cookbook – complete with facts, stories and anecdotes about our community!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The St. Michael’s Polish Benefit Society and Cape Breton University wish to acknowledge the Men of the Deeps; the Choir of St. Mary’s Polish Parish; the Rada Parafialna (Parish Council) of St. Mary’s Polish Church; Cape Breton University’s Eastern and Central European Communities Project (Patricia Nalepa); the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland for sponsoring the video recording of this concert and for contributing the Polish miners’ uniforms; Todd Hiscock (Manager, Boardmore Theatre); John MacLeod, Stephen Muise, and Jack O'Donnell of Men of the Deeps for their excellent collaboration in planning the concert; sound technician Trevor Turnbull and his team; Destination Cape Breton Association; Harbourview Elementary School; and everyone who contributed and participated in any way.





STO LAT!

MEN OF THE DEEPS
Concert



HONOURING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. MARY’S POLISH PARISH

With the participation of the Choir of St. Mary’s Polish Parish

Hosted by the St. Michael’s Polish Benefit Society in co-operation with Cape Breton University

BOARDMORE PLAYHOUSE, CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY
8 p.m., Saturday, July 6, 2013

PROGRAMME

NASZE STULECIE ST. MARY’S POLISH PARISH CELEBRATES ITS 100th ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR

Atlantic Canada’s only Polish parish – Parafia p.w. Narodzenia Najświętszej Maryi Panny -- is marking its centenary with prayer, various community service projects, exhibits, concerts, and celebrations. There are events and projects throughout the year

The story of the parish’s first century is a story of determination and perseverance. It’s a true Cape Breton story.

Construction of the Sydney steel plant started in 1899. Among the waves of immigrants was a contingent of Poles, leaving a country under foreign occupation and rural regions plagued by economic crisis.

Despite appalling, unsafe conditions in the steel plant and in the coal mines, where some Poles had already found employment before the construction of the steel plant, the Poles stayed and settled throughout industrial Cape Breton.

In 1909, the St. Michael’s Polish Benefit Society was established to provide a semblance of a social safety net and a cultural gathering place. But the new Society’s immediate priority was to petition the Catholic Bishop of Antigonish for a Polish parish, which could also serve other Slavic immigrants and their descendants.

The struggling labourers and their families who built the church donated everything they could spare. They and their descendants have sustained the church through good times and bad.

Most Polish Cape Bretoners are second- third- and fourth-generation Canadians -- proud Canadians. But they are stewards of a regionally distinctive Polish culture, which has held on to its roots, colourful traditions and language, while incorporating aspects of other cultures in the Cape Breton mosaic.

The parish is the community’s base -- the base for the Pogoria Polish Folk Ensemble, the base for the only Polish choir in Cape Breton, the base for various unique service projects in aid of the broader community.

It is also the home parish for the St. Michael’s Polish Benefit Society, whose organizational structure was recently modernized by a special Act of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, the first law in Canada with official Polish text. The Society owns and operates the Polish Village Hall, which has just completed a major renovation.

Pope John Paul II, a Pole, addressed Polish communities wherever he travelled. When visiting Nova Scotia in 1984, he exhorted the Polish Cape Bretoners to maintain their parish and their culture.

The parish home in Whitney Pier is a beautiful landmark church, provincially designated under Nova Scotia’s Heritage Property Act, the only designated site honouring Polish Nova Scotians.

Community-development agencies have worked with the parish community and its affiliated organizations. These parish organizations have assisted in welcoming newcomers and maintaining the area’s cultural diversity.

Please join us throughout the year as we celebrate a century of faith and service. Serdecznie zapraszamy!



THE CHOIR OF ST. MARY’S POLISH PARISH

Directed by Mary Pierrynowski, the Choir of St. Mary’s Polish Parish sings in Polish every Sunday – and its trademark is a resonant a capella. Its repertoire includes countless hymns, even including some that have almost disappeared from other Polish churches. The only Polish choir in Cape Breton has been called a “living treasure” and has done much to keep the language and heritage alive. Sometimes referred to as “St. Cecilia’s Choir,” after the patron saint of church music, the 14-member, all-women choir represents the parish at various community festivals, such as Pierscape. Some of the choir members have decades of service to their credit, and are determined to transmit the language and their knowledge to the young generation of Cape Bretoners of Polish heritage



The Men of the Deeps



The Men of the Deeps is a choir of working and retired coal miners from the island of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada. Inspired by Glace Bay activist Mrs. Nina Cohen and famed Nova Scotia folklorist Dr. Helen Creighton, the group was organized in 1966 as part of Cape Breton’s contribution to Canada’s Centennial Year (1967) with the specific aim of encouraging the people of Cape Breton to preserve in song some of the rich folklore of that island’s coal mining communities.

Since 1967 the group has been singing of the work and lifestyle of the Cape Breton coal miner to audiences throughout most of Canada and the United States. In 1976 the men became the first Canadian performing group to tour the People’s Republic of China after diplomatic relations between the two nations were restored in 1972. And as recently as September 1999 the men traveled to Kosovo in the former Republic of Yugoslavia at the request of Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs where they performed in a gala festival organized by actress Vanessa Redgrave on

behalf of the United Nations Children’s Fund. The most recent concert tours have brought the choir as far north as the Ekati diamond mines in Canada’s Northwest Territories, and as far south as Arizona, Alabama, Florida and the Appalachian coal mining communities of Kentucky, Virginia and Pennsylvania. In September 2008 the Cape Breton miners were invited to perform in Las Vegas at the International Mine Expo Conference where sold-out audiences enjoyed their unique blend of songs and stories for six consecutive nights.

Many of the Men of the Deeps’ songs are “home grown” – composed by contemporary Cape Breton bards, or traditional songs which trace their roots to their Celtic forebears in the old country. The most recent CD release, *The Men of the Deeps: Forty Years Young*, is a moving testament to the group’s long history as singing ambassadors of Cape Breton and the province of Nova Scotia.

The musical director of The Men of the Deeps is John C. (Jack) O’Donnell, Retired Professor of Music and Professor Emeritus at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. For most of the past four decades, Professor O’Donnell has been traveling almost weekly to Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, where he rehearses the singing miners – a round trip distance of 485 kilometers. In 1983 Professor O’Donnell’s efforts were honoured by the federal government when he was made a member of the Order of Canada. Other awards have included the “Commemorative Medal” marking the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in 1992 and Her Majesty the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal which he received in 2002. And in 1993 his efforts were recognized by the University College of Cape Breton (now Cape Breton University) when the degree Doctor of Letters was conferred upon him at its Spring Convocation. That same honour was conferred upon the entire group in the year 2000.

