

## A pilgrimage for Grandpa's opłatek

By: **Robert Strybel**,  
Polish/Polonian Affairs Writer

(Based on the true-life experience of Stanley Konieczny of Bellville, Illinois, as presented in Father Czesław Krysa's highly recommended book "A Polish Christmas Eve")

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Grandpa's strength was waning and his low spirits hinted that his 95th Christmas could well be his last. So sons, daughters and grandchildren scoured area department stores for a special gift to delight the family patriarch. The hunt netted a pile of flannel shirts, thermal underwear and even an electric blanket.

A small Christmas tree twinkled in the front window, and Christmas Eve morning found Uncle Joe and Aunt Helen on duty in the kitchen. The traditional, meatless Vigil supper had been a tradition which Grandpa and Grandma had maintained even after they came to the United States at the turn of the century. It included fish, potatoes, cabbage and the most delicious sautéed mushrooms that ever graced a cast-iron skillet.

The whole house was filled with the warm, spicy aroma of a holiday kitchen. Grandpa stood in the doorway surveying the long dining-room table set for company, then turned and said: "Staś, where is the opłatek?" "Oh, I guess we just forgot about the wafer this year, grandpa" came his distracted reply. "But how can we have Christmas without the wafer?" he asked. In a moment, weeks of planning had crumbled. The gifts, the lights and tinsel, the fine dinner were nice, but they were not essential. His Christmas

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## POLSKIE BETLEJEM...

By *Lila Ciecek*

*Jezus Malusieńki w ubogiej stajence,  
Słodko kwili, błogosławi Najświętszej  
Panience.*

*Dziecię porodziła, Boga prawdziwego,  
W pieluszkę Go owinęła, w żłóbeczku,  
biednego.*

*Kołysankę zanuciła Syneczкови swemu,  
Czule szepcze Mu i spiewa, Dzieciątku  
Bożemu.*

*Gwiazdka Betlejemka na niebie zaślniła,  
Królów, mędrców i pasterzy blaskiem  
sprowadziła.*

*Podniósł rączkę Jezus, wita pastuszkę  
polskiego,  
Przybył z dali, z stron ojczystych, do Pana  
swojego,  
Przyniósł maki, chabry, kłosy, choinkę  
zieloną,  
Kromkę chleba z polskiej ziemi, miłość  
nieskończoną.*

*I opłatek polski, biały, Dzieciątku podaje,  
Prosi, Jezu pobłogosław nasze chaty, gaje,  
I w Betlejem, w noc tę świętą polskie  
brzmia koledy,*

*Bóg się Rodzi, moc truchleje !.. Święty,  
Święty, Święty !*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo !. z nad Wisły pieśń  
płynie,  
Brzmi Wśród Nocnej Cisy !.. z tatrzańskiej  
doliny.*

*Lulaj, Lulajże Jezuniu !.. Dziecię  
ukochane,  
Polskie serca, hold i wierność w darze Ci  
składamy.*

*Jak w Betlejem, w polskich domach miłość  
niech zagości,*

*Przy Twym żłóbku, prosim Jezu o laskę  
obfitości,*

*Daj nam wiarę, radość, pokój co z stajenki  
płynie,*

*Niechaj blask tej Świętej Nocy nigdy nie  
przemienie...*



## Orange County News

By: **Lila Ciecek (714) 544-2458**

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In this Holy Season, as we joyfully anticipate the Birth of Christ, the Community of the Pope John Paul II Polish Center in Yorba Linda extends best wishes to the Editors, Staff and readers of the News of Polonia: Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Wesolych Swiat! Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku! We wish you an abundance of blessings which flow from the Manger of Bethlehem, and may the wonder of Christmas, peace, joy and love dwell in your hearts and in your homes. In this busy time of the year may our thoughts and activities reflect the true meaning of this Season, and while the world around us tries to exclude God from many areas of our lives, may we remember to "Keep Christ in Christmas", and joyfully celebrate His coming!

A variety of Christmas events are taking place at the Polish Center in Yorba Linda – traditional events, so special and dear to every Polish heart. Annual "Jasełka" (Nativity Play) beautifully performed by the students of the Helena Modrzejewska Polish School was followed by the "Wigilia" Dinner, sharing of the Opłatek and singing of carols. Members of the Knights of Columbus Father Jerzy Popiełuszko Council has spread Christmas cheer at the annual dinner and lighting of the Christmas sign and tree at the Center. Members of the Ladies Guild enjoyed friendship at the Christmas Brunch at a local Country Club.

Since this Holy Season would not be complete without some charitable action, Polish Center's community participated in sharing Christmas spirit with the less fortunate, and assisted poor and needy in the area with donations of food and life's necessities. Sick and homebound were remembered with visits and Christmas cards.

Many members of the Center attended and enjoyed the "Opłatek and Polonia Awards" Dinner, sponsored by the Polish American Congress, Southern California Division. This event took place at the Polish Church hall in Los Angeles, and included Polonia Awards ceremony during which member of our Center: late Zbigniew Janczur was honored posthumously. His wife Zofia accepted the award. Also honored were: Janina and Franciszek Kosowicz and Henry Si³ka (posthumously).

Following the "Andrzejki" Dinner Dance held in November, the Polish Center's "Polanie" Folk Dance Group is busy planning another famous "Sylvester" – a New Year Eve Gala which will take place at the Center to usher in the New Year 2009. Information and reservations: V. Turek (949) 459-7884, D. Dobrowolska (949) 495-7542, U. Grzeleska (714) 964-9165. An evening of "Kolędownie" (Caroling) by "Polanie", as well as an Opłatek of the PAC Orange Chapter and PNA "Piast" Lodge will take place on January 10th.

Once again we wish everyone a very Blessed, Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Wesolych Świąt! i Dosiego Nowego Roku! ☐



# HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES

from the

**Pope John Paul Polish Center - Yorba Linda,, CA !**

*Tak obyczaj każde stary, według naszych ojców Wiary  
Chcemy złożyć Wam życzenia w dzień Bożego Narodzenia  
Niech ta gwiazdka Betlejemka, która wschodzi tuż po zmorku  
Da wam szczęście i pomyślność w 2009 roku !*

*Rev. Henryk Noga, SVD, Director*