

Papal gifts shown in Rome, Poland

Cindy Wooden/CNS

VATICAN CITY — For 25 years Pope John Paul II has been holding audiences, greeting heads of state, traveling the world and receiving gifts on each occasion.

More than 400 objects given him — most from his fellow Poles — are part of an exhibit that opened in Poland in late July in preparation for the pope's silver jubilee in October.

Literally thousands more gifts are on display at the Dom Polski Jana Pawla II, a sprawling hostel for Polish pilgrims on the outskirts of Rome.

The hostel is home to the John Paul II Documentation Center and its massive collection of gifts given to the pope, books and newspaper articles written about him, books and documents written by him and even photocopies of articles he has read and made notations on.

Father Jan Glowczyk, who runs the center, said it includes about 10,000 gift objects and a library of about 20,000 volumes "in every language imaginable."

He said he goes to the Vatican two or three times a month to pick up things the pope wants the center to have and to select objects he believes coincide with its special focus on Polish art and culture.

"It is not like we get everything," he said, standing in a corridor of the hostel where the walls are covered with paintings of Mary and the Child Jesus.

"These are not so much articles of material value, but gifts from the



Catholic Press Photo/CNS

Paintings and icons of Mary, given to Pope John Paul II over the years, line the walls between guestrooms at the Dom Polski Jana Pawla II hostel for Polish pilgrims in Rome. The hostel houses the John Paul II Documentation Center and its collection of papal gifts and documents.

heart," the priest said.

"Especially before 1989 (and the fall of communism), if Poles could get to Rome, they brought what they could as gifts for the Holy Father," Father Glowczyk said. "They brought anything and everything as signs of their love and trust."

A scale model of a Krakow church, constructed with 40,000 wooden matchsticks, sits on top of a filing cabinet near a desk-filled room where students can examine books and manuscripts.

Father Glowczyk said that when the pope receives gifts from a visit-

ing head of state, groups or individuals who would not think of showing up at a Wednesday general audience empty-handed, the bounty is taken to the papal apartments.

Some of the gifts stay there. Wine, baked goods, fruit and other edibles either go to the papal kitchen or to the Vatican soup kitchen run by the Missionaries of Charity.

Most of the objects are sent to the *Floreria* (an office and warehouse charged with safekeeping furnishings and items belonging to the papal apartments), useful liturgical items to the papal sacristy and "se-

rious" art to the Vatican Museums.

The artistic and monetary value of the gifts at the Dom Polski is as diverse as the materials from which they are made. They fall into general categories: painting, sculpture, medals, bas relief, tapestry, needle-point, stained glass, drawings, vestments, swords, letters, painted glass and Polish paper cuttings.

The formal display space in the hostel was filled long ago, Father Glowczyk said. Now the objects line the hallways and stairwells, hang in the dining room, meeting rooms and even the guest kitchen.

The hostel chapel, featuring stained-glass images of Poles beatified or canonized by Pope John Paul, includes a red fabric-lined niche where their relics are displayed.

In the choir loft corner, fanned out as if they were choir members about to sing, stand a hodge-podge of ceramic and wooden statues.

"We display things where there is room," Father Glowczyk said.

The 25th-anniversary exhibit traveling through Poland until December "is our first real opening to the general public, rather than just the Polish pilgrims who stay here or students who come to consult our archives," he said.

Many of the items in the center's collection and featured in the Polish exhibit are tied to Poland's history, he said.

Especially while Poland was still under communist rule, the priest said, people gave the pope letters, documents and objects for safekeeping or as a testimony to a loved one who had died during World War II or under the communist regime.

A rosary made from tiny pearls of bread, smashed and rolled between someone's fingers, and a miniature Mass kit used in a Siberian prison are kept under glass at the documentation center.

The traveling exhibit includes a bracelet worn by Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a Polish priest involved with the then-outlawed Solidarity labor union, who was killed in 1984 at the age of 37 by agents of Poland's Interior Ministry.

The priest was buried with a rosary given to him by Pope John Paul; after the funeral, his mother gave the pope his bracelet.

"These things illustrate an exchange of gifts," Father Glowczyk said. "The Holy Father offers his presence, traveling, praying, talking and listening, and people give him these things in return."

The gifts, he said, "often are humble materially, but they speak volumes."

Priesthood Sunday set for Oct. 26

CHICAGO (CNS) — The National Federation of Priests' Councils, joined by several national Catholic organizations, has asked U.S. Catholics to observe Oct. 26 as "Priesthood Sunday."

The NFPC called on parishes across the country to take that occasion "to celebrate the gifts of priesthood in service to the Catholic community."

Others supporting the initiative include the National Association for Lay Ministry, Serra International, Pastoral Summit, the Raskob Foundation and The Official Catholic Directory.

The federation said this year's readings for Oct. 26, the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, are especially apt for focusing on the priesthood.

The first reading, from Jeremiah, speaks of the Lord gathering, guiding and consoling his people. The second, from Paul's Letter to the Hebrews, speaks of the priest "taken from among men and made their representative before God," not by his own choice but by God's call. The Gospel passage, from Mark, speaks of Jesus curing a blind man.

In announcing the initiative, the federation quoted a response from Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo, Texas, who said he totally supported it. "More than ever we need to pray for each other, to tell the story about the good things our priests are doing and to encourage our lay people to give them full support," Bishop Pfeifer wrote.

The federation, whose member councils represent most of the

country's 44,000 priests, has established www.priestsunday.org, a Web site to provide ideas for liturgies, social celebrations and other events for the day.

It said the day is intended especially to promote dialogue.

"Priesthood Sunday will offer an opportunity for priests and their parishioners to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and build a stronger working relationship for the future. Priest and parish can use this day to honestly look at the challenges of the future and how they can work together in the parish to be 'church together,'" it said.

The federation said it planned to send a mailing in late August to all parishes encouraging their participation in the observance.

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Bishop Matture at virtualings, said the great instrument of faith development.

"The biggest element of their eyes and 'Yes, I'm not alone."

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Much of this industry sprang from laid by The Patrick Fox, no formation at St. Penfield. Until staple in diocesan teens was Bishop one-day convention for both junior students.

As WYD '99, Theisen said he were ready to commitment to youth recalls a strong reaction as well, Youth Day and from 1993 — the during which "a parishes identify ministry as a vocation."

Following the grimage to Detroit to maintain the with Youth had celebration, guesting and workshop the program is event for high-schoolers.

Since the first numbers have yearly. At the participation a dramatically. I was promoted director of diocese said these chances with hundreds of is "an incredible are on fire."

That fire was group of youth Owego, St. John Newark Valley, tonk. Dan and ministers, brought Diocesan Youth at SUNY College.

"It was extreme first. Here we part of the diocese called of her first trip to the

But by the co said, "The kids brought their noted that tripled for the her region has bers ever since