Polish Roman Catholic Union of America

Founded 1873
The Polish Roman Catholic Union of America – Mother of all Polish American Fraternal Organizations

• Founded in 1873 – oldest Polish American and largest Polish Roman Catholic Fraternal in the United States

The three founders:

Rev. Teodor Gieryk
Rev. Wincenty Barzyński, C.R.
Jan Barzyński
• Fr. Wincenty Barzyński – the most important PRCUA Founder - of the Congregation of the Resurrection, a very important Pole in Chicago in the late 1800s

• Driving force behind PRCUA – Fr. Barzyński’s desire to create community institutions that would reflect Polish Catholic values

• The founding of PRCUA due to need for an organization to unite all Polish immigrants
• Born in German-occupied Poland in 1837 and immigrated to America after 1866
• Became a priest in Detroit, Michigan
• Proposed the creation of a central society of Poles in America
• Born in Russian-occupied Poland and immigrated to America in 1871

• Worked as agent in Texas for the first serious Polish American newspaper Orzeł Polski

• Worked to begin an organization that would unite Polish Americans and end factional disputes
• Fr. Leopold was an immigrant to Texas in 1854 with a group of 100 Silesian families; established the community of Panna Maria near San Antonio – first permanent Polish community in America

• A Franciscan, he secured the Charter for a Polish seminary
• Born in Silesia, emigrated with parents to Panna Maria, Texas
• Civil War veteran
• Treasurer of the City of Chicago
• One of the founders of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Society whose purpose was to provide aid to needy members and form a Polish parish
• Headquarters on Chicago’s near-Northwest side was built in 1913 at intersection of Milwaukee Ave and Augusta Blvd

• The PRCUA opened a library, and, in 1935, founded one of the first ethnic museum and archives in the United States – a priceless treasury of artifacts from Poland and Polonia – today The Polish Museum of America

• In 2013, the 100th Anniversary of its construction, the PRCUA building was named a Historic Landmark on the National Register
The PRCUA Today

- Approximately 50,000 members across the United States
- Licensed to sell life insurance and annuities in 24 states
- Fraternal membership benefits such as mortgages, scholarships, grants, educational loans
- Sponsorship of numerous national sports tournaments and various cultural events
- Sponsorship of numerous Polish language and dance schools, religious Polish traditional gatherings such as Święconka, Opłatek