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The Museum - Family Home of John Paul II, Poland

## **The Museum - Family Home of John Paul II**

The Museum - Family Home of John Paul II, which lies at 7 Kościelna Street in Wadowice, has operated since 1984, as a unit of the Archdiocese in Krakow. This institution, run by the Sisters of Nazareth, has attracted great interest among pilgrims and tourists from around the world. Every year the museum has been visited by 300-400,000 people. The project of the reconstruction of the Holy Father's family home was designed in 2008. This project has used the newest methods adopted for the interior design of museum exhibits.

The Museum - Family Home of John Paul II was created on 12 April 2010, as a new cultural institution. The museum was established under an agreement between the Archdiocese of Krakow, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Local Government of the Małopolska Region and the Mayor of Wadowice. The signatories of this document committed themselves, through a newly created institution, to implement the project of the reconstruction of the Holy Father's family home, created in 2008.

The reconstruction of John Paul II's family home began on 13 September 2010. The authors of the exhibition project are Barbara and Jaroslaw Kłaput (the authors, among others, of the highly acclaimed Warsaw Uprising Museum), and the author of the architectural design is the Project Office Łatak Lewicki from Cracow, (the author, among others, of the arrangement of the Ghetto Heroes Square in Cracow). The project of renovation and of the new exhibition is very ambitious. Its aim is not only to reproduce the Wojtyła apartment, but also to recall the atmosphere of Wadowice before the War. The elevation of the building has already been reconstructed. It will regain its original appearance from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (what was the remake of the post-war time). The Wojtyła family apartment will regain the appearance of the 20's of the last century. The atmosphere of a family home will be restored. After the reconstruction, the exposition space will increase fourfold - from the old 200 to over 1000 square meters, located on the four floors. The new exhibition will

tell the story about a man - from his birth to his death. The exhibition will be remarkable (no cream cakes), atmospheric (the restoration of the pre-war atmosphere of Wojtyła's apartment) and educational (games and activities for children). The project is part-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the European Union funds within the Małopolska Regional Operational Programme and by the Małopolska Region. Its execution is scheduled by the end of the first quarter of 2013.

There is a possibility that due to commitment, kindness and mobilization, the project will be completed within two and a half years. The first step of the reconstruction was completed in December 2010. Currently, the second step which includes all construction works is nearing completion. Simultaneously, the third and final stage which includes the preparation of the exhibition has started. Its completion is scheduled for the end of the first quarter of 2013. Construction crews work in three shifts, under the watchful eye of numerous groups of pilgrims who visit Wadowice in crowds (in 2011, at the exhibition, that temporarily replaces the new one and which is a 1:1 scale replica of the Wojtyła apartment, nearly 250 thousand people visited).

Currently, the preparation of the large elements of the exposition is in progress. We have mounted the replica of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, which was created in Albano near Rome (the first exhibit in the new museum). In the Polish studios, new elements of sculpture and painting were created, for example a replica of the cross from Warsaw's Victory Square, the columns, altar and capitals of the Wawel's St. Leonard's crypt (some already mounted), and the twelve papal encyclicals (painting compositions on wood in the art of "writing icons"). These elements will be assembled gradually during the course of construction. At the same time, there are in progress the request for and the purchase of furniture from that period, designed for the Wojtyła apartment.