

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 71 (2005)
Heft: [4]

Rubrik: [Impressum]

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Editorial

I suppose what we all began to realise several weeks ago as being inevitable soon, has come to pass. Pope John Paul 11 has died. I feel sure he himself realised at least two weeks before his passing that his earthly life was ebbing to a close, that is almost certainly the reason for his refusal, for nearly the first time in his life, to take his physicians advice and go back into hospital, less than two weeks before his death. No, he was determined to spend his last days in his beloved Vatican, which had been his home for almost one third of his whole life, amongst his loyal friends and helpers, the high ranking Cardinals holding office in the administration of the Vatican who were always at the Pontiffs beck and call for advice and help, the priests and brothers, and the loyal Polish nuns who took care of his daily household needs, for, even a Pope needs to eat, drink and have tidy living quarters!

So who was this man who became such a revered and loved Spiritual Leader of eleven hundred million Catholics throughout the world! Karol Wojtyla, as we all know by now, was born in Poland in 1920 and by all accounts grew up like your average Polish kid during those uneasy years between the two World Wars. He loved amateur theatre and by the time he reached his mid-teens he was quite a good actor!

But, in Poland, as in most other countries economic conditions were quite tough during the 1930s and in his mid-teens young Karol had to leave school to go and work in a factory just to provide the basic needs for life. I think perhaps at this young age already there developed in him a strong sense of a better social justice for the working classes and the poor and sick. "There must be a better way for all to live", I'm sure went through

his keen young mind already then. This would explain his tenacious insistence in later years for social justice for all people and under democratic and free Governments, and, no more hunger anywhere in the World! It was almost certainly this conviction and his deep religious faith which gave him his great personal courage and bravery. That he had courage is indisputable! Remember the story that about the early 1940s, during the Nazi occupation of Poland, young Karol was walking home late one night after visiting a sick friend. If I remember correctly, he was already a 1st or 2nd year Seminarian, studying for the Priesthood, and on his way back to the Seminary. Cutting through a country lane to shorten his way, he came across a teenage girl hiding in fear under the roadside hedgerow. Suspecting the worst, he introduced himself almost in a whisper and told her not to be afraid. Then he asked if she was Jewish. The terrified girl nodded. Karol told her to trust him and he would take her to a safe hiding place from the Germans. The girl nodded again, but then whispered she could not walk any further because her feet were so terribly blistered. Karol told her to climb on his back and thus he carried her for several kilometres to a convent where he knew the nuns would hide her and she would be safe!

Almost fifty years later, on a visit to Jerusalem, this same girl was brought before the Pope at her request. Now an elderly lady whose hair was now as grey as the Popes', she wanted to thank him in person for saving her all those years ago, for, had they been caught by a German patrol on that fateful night, it is unlikely that either of them would have survived the concentration camps!! This is just one of the several stories of his personal courage.

After being elected the 263rd successor of the first Pope, St Peter, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla wasted no time in criticizing all dictatorships, concentrating his efforts particularly on communist-ruled European countries, especially his homeland, Poland! For, there can be little doubt that his sometimes almost vitriolic attacks on these regimes brought about a rapid collapse of them in an almost domino effect. On the one hand he could be such a rigid, uncompromising man and on the other he showed such enormous love and compassion for his fellow-humans!

Farewell Karol Wojtyla, brave Son and Patriot of Poland, Priest, Bishop, Cardinal and finally Pope John Paul 11. R.I.P.

Bye for now, hope to see as many of you as possible in Hamilton soon, Paul.

SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

PATRON: Mrs Sylvie Matteucci-Keller Ambassador of Switzerland

PRESIDENT: Marianne Drummond, Salisbury Road, RD 24, Stratford.

Phone 06 762 8757. Fax 06 762 8753.

Email: littleacres@xtra.co.nz

VICE PRESIDENT/TREASURER: Walter Seifert, Denbigh Road, RD 24, Stratford. Phone 06 762 8559.

Fax 06 762 8590.

Email: walterseifert@xtra.co.nz

SECRETARY: Silvia Schuler, 536 Ahipaipa Road, RD11, Hawera.

Phone 06 272 6707. Fax 06 272 6706.

Email: frank.silvia@xtra.co.nz

RIFLEMASTER: Mark Kiser, 140 Pukengahu Rd, RD 23, Stratford

Ph 06 762 2922.

DELEGATES TO THE SWISS ABROAD CONFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

DELEGATE: Heinz Leuenberger, 33 Russell Terrace, Putaruru.

Phone/Fax (07) 883 8537, Email heileun@xtra.co.nz

DEPUTY DELEGATES: Beno Noetzli, State Highway 50, RD, Hastings.

Phone 06 874 9677.

Roland Schutz, 35 East St, Petone, Wellington.

Phone 04 568 6772.

EDITOR: Paul Amstalden, 421 Wortley Rd, RD 9, Inglewood

Phone 06 756 7064.

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

Auckland

Secretary: Trudi Fill, 51 Clifton Rd, Herne Bay, PO Box 40152, Glenfield, Auckland. Phone/Fax (09) 376 4923, Email weidfill@xtra.co.nz

Hamilton

Secretary: Anita Zuber, PO Box 11-026, Hamilton. Phone (07) 856 2414.

Email: zuber@xtra.co.nz

Taranaki

Secretary: Paul Amstalden, Wortley Rd, RD 9, Inglewood. Phone 06 756 7064.

Wellington

Secretary: Theres Scherrer, 66 Heretaunga Square, Silverstream, Upper Hutt.

Phone 04 528 7698. Email: theresas@free.net.nz

Embassy of Switzerland: Panama House, 22 Panama St, PO Box 25004, Wellington.

Phone (04) 472 1593 or (04) 472 1594 • Fax (04) 499 6302.

Honorary Consul: Peter Deutsche, PO Box 90-209, Auckland Mail Centre.

Phone/Fax (09) 366 0403. Email deutsche@clear.net.nz