

January 2024 New Issues Polonus Philatelic Society

150th Anniversary of the Birth of Wincenty Witos

The Polish statesman and political leader Wincenty Witos is honored on this A-denominated (3.90-zł) postal card, the first issue of the new year. Witos has been recognized several times by the Polish Post, including stamps issued in 1984, 1988, and most recently in 2018. [See description of stamp issue of November 11, 2018, that appeared in Polonus Bulletin 579 in June 2020.] In addition, Polonus issued a commemorative souvenir sheet showing Witos in 1974.

The imprinted postage on the card shows his family home in the village of Wierzchosławice in Tarnów County within the Lesser Poland Voivodeship in southern Poland; it is now open to the public as a museum. The left side of the card shows a portrait of Witos by the contemporary artist Wojciech Korcuć.

Date of Issue	January 21, 2024
Printing Method	Offset
Designer	Jan Konarzewski



World Leprosy Day

This A-denominated (3.90-zł) postal card calls attention to World Leprosy Day, an annual event observed since 1954 on the last Sunday in January in an effort to expand public awareness of leprosy or Hansen's Disease. The Polish Jesuit priest and missionary, Jan Beyzym (1850-1912), is shown on the imprinted postage on the card. He joined the Jesuits in 1872 and was ordained a priest in 1881. After serving as a teacher in Jesuit boarding schools, he left Poland in 1898 to work as a missionary alongside lepers on Red Island (now Madagascar or Malagasy Republic) until his death. He was a pioneer in this work. He promoted the construction of a hospital for lepers completed in 1916, and which still exists today. Beyzym was titled as Venerable by the Church in 1992, and beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2002.

The image of him shown is from a stained glass window at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Nowy Sącz in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship in southern Poland. It is the work of Piotr Ostrowski, a contemporary Polish artist. The left side of the card shows a black and white photo of the hands of a woman suffering from leprosy.

Date of Issue
Printing Method
Designer

January 28, 2024
Offset
Jarosław Ochendzan



100th Anniversary of the Congregation of Orionist Fathers in Poland

The Congregation of Orionist Fathers in Poland (*Zgromadzenia Księża Orionistów w Polsce*) is recognized on this A-denominated (3.90-zł) postal card. The Orionist Congregation was established in Turin, Italy, in 1893 by St. Fr. Liugi Giovanni Orione (1872-1940). The Congregation aims to help the poor, homeless, and individuals rejected by society; and is also engaged in educational and missionary activities. It is also known as the Sons of Divine Providence, and operates through its independent provinces in 25 different countries, including Poland. Orione was beatified in 1980, and in 2004 he was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

The Orionist Congregation in Poland was established in 1923 by Fr. Aleksander Chwiłowicz. After arriving from Italy, he set up a Mission House in the city of Zduńska Wola and this was later expanded into a college. Over the years, the organization has grown and established numerous other facilities in Poland.

The imprinted postage on the card portrays the Polish priest Bl. Fr. Franciszek Drzewiecki (1908-42), shown holding a crucifix, with St. Fr. Orione, shown in the background. Drzewiecki, who had studied at the Orionist college in Poland, was imprisoned by the Nazis at Dachau in 1940, and later sent to the gas chamber in Hartheim Castle in Austria, near Linz, where he was executed. He was beatified in 1999 by Pope John Paul II in a group of 108 Polish martyrs.

Date of Issue
Printing Method
Designer

January 29, 2024
Offset
Poczta Polska S.A.



100th Anniversary of the Currency Reform of Władysław Grabski

This 3.90-zł stamp honors the politician, economist, and historian Władysław Dominik Grabski (1874-1938), best known for his extensive work on monetary and financial reform in the early 1920's. Deriving from a noble family with a history of public service, he came to serve Poland in a time of great national upheaval.

In 1919, he served as Director of the Central Liquidation Office to address wartime financial issues. In December 1919, he became a member of the delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, while at the same time serving as Minister of the Treasury under Prime Minister Leopold Skulski. After the fall of Skulski's government in June 1920, Grabski was nominated Prime Minister, serving as a non-partisan leader. His government immediately focused on the difficult issues of agricultural and banking reform. However, he was forced to resign due to the difficult political and economic conditions in the country.

His successor, Wincenty Witos, selected him to serve (a second time) as Minister of the Treasury. Grabski formulated a plan for an independent national economic policy that emphasized stabilization of the Polish mark. However, he lost his office again in November 1920 because of the enormous challenges in implementing economic reform. Nevertheless, he continued to serve in the government in other positions and as a university professor.

Following the assassination of President Gabriel Narutowicz in November 1922, Władysław Sikorski became Prime Minister. In January 1923, he called upon Grabski to serve as Minister of the Treasury (for the third time). Grabski then proposed plans to limit military expenditures, abandon subsidies for the railroads, introduce a wealth tax, and impose other austerity measures. But, above all else, he proposed indexing taxes in accordance with the gold standard – in practice, using the Swiss franc as the standard for Polish currency.

Following the fall of Sikorski's government in May 1923, the new Prime Minister, Wincenty Witos, re-appointed Grabski as Minister of the Treasury. However, the political difficulties in implementing his economic plans led to Grabski's resignation in June 1923. His successors attempted to continue his reform programs, but without success. The alarming national hyperinflation and resulting social unrest finally led to the failure of the Witos government.

In December 1923, Grabski was nominated Prime Minister (for the second time), but this time he also retained management of the Treasury Ministry. His attempts to gain support from both left- and right-wing political parties achieved success. In the January 1924 Act of Authorizations, the Sejm granted Grabski's government full powers on the repair of the State Treasury and currency reform for a period of six months. Grabski's government enacted numerous measures for both fiscal and currency reform, including establishment of the Bank of Poland. In April 1924, a new currency, the złoty, replaced the Polish mark at a rate of 1,800,000 Polish marks = 1 złoty, and with a value set at 1 US dollar = 5.18 złoty. Although his mandate for reform was extended in June 1924, the difficulties he faced led him to ultimately resign in November 1925. In his lifetime, Grabski wrote over 150 articles and books related to economics, banking, political science, history, and rural sociology.

The stamp features a 1924 silver one złoty coin, with a portrait of Grabski on the left.

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