

Special Sunday at St. Stan's

By Joseph Feckanin

Last Sunday, April 2, the Shrine Church of St. Stanislaus marked the 12-year anniversary of the death of the beloved Polish pope, Saint John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla), at the 10 a.m. Mass. The service concluded with veneration of three relics, those of John Paul II, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Padre Pio (the Padre Pio chalice).

The relic of John Paul is housed at St. Stanislaus, but the relic of Maximilian Kolbe was brought to Cleveland by Brother Donald Thielsen, OFM Conv., of the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe in Libertyville, Illinois, and the Padre Pio chalice is kept by The Padre Pio Prayer Group of Cleveland. Cindy Klimkowski Russo is the group leader of the prayer group and custodian of the chalice.



Shown above are, from left: Jolanta Bartosik, Cindy Russo holding the St. Padre Pio chalice, and Brother Donald Thielsen, holding the St. Maximilian Kolbe relic. Photo by Joseph Feckanin

The late Pope John Paul II canonized Maximilian Kolbe (he died at Auschwitz during World War II taking another's place in a death cell). St. Padre Pio, known for the "stigmata," was revered by the young Karol Wojtyla, who met him in the late 1940's after the war. During their meeting, Padre Pio told Wojtyla that one day he would be pope.

The three relics, all connected in some way, came together last Sunday, the anniversary of the date John Paul II died 12 years ago. What a testimonial to the three men who walked in the footsteps of the Savior, Jesus Christ, and continue to this day to witness the faith by their examples.