St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938)  
Feast Day 10/5

St. Faustina brought a profound teaching of divine mercy to the Church and the world, and the message that she received from Jesus became the center piece of St John Paul’s Pontificate.

“I am convinced the Shrine of Łagiewniki will become a significant point of reference and a powerful center of devotion to the Divine Mercy. May the rays of light coming down from the temple of Łagiewniki cast their spiritual reflection on the whole of Poland and on the whole world.”
St John Paul II 2002

St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941)  
Feast Day 3/12

Kolbe died in Auschwitz in a sacrificial act of love for a fellow prisoner. He was very interested in communication of the faith and in combating the secularism of the day. John Paul II declared him to be the saint of our difficult century.

“The victory through faith and love was won by him in this place, which was built for the negation of faith—faith in God and faith in man—and to trample radically not only on love but on all signs of human dignity, of humanity. A place built on hatred and on contempt for man in the name of a crazed ideology. A place built on cruelty. In this site of the terrible slaughter that brought death to four million people of different nations, Father Maximilian voluntarily offered himself for death in the starvation bunker for a brother, and so won a spiritual victory like that of Christ himself.”
St. John Paul II, 1979

Raphael Kalinowski, O.C.D. (1835-1907)  
Feast Day 11/19

St. Raphael was a Carmelite priest who opened the Carmel Sanctuary of St Joseph in Wadowice where JP2 received instruction and whose devotion to confession impressed JP2 very deeply. Raphael died in the Carmelite monastery at Wadowice after decades of faithful service in the confessional and in the direction of souls. The pope canonized him on November 17, 1991, naming him a "Martyr of the Confessional."

The Holy Father declared as well: Ordained a priest, Raphael . . . set to work in Christ’s vineyard. He was as esteemed confessor and spiritual director. He guided souls in the sublime, knowledge of the love of God, Christ and Our Lady, the Church and neighbor. He dedicated many hours to this humble apostolate. He was always recollected, always ready to make a sacrifice, to fast, to practice mortification. The man "conquered by Christ." The man whose spirit, after all the difficult experiences of his former life—and even through the experiences which caused him much suffering—discovers the full meaning of the words which Christ spoke in the Upper Room: "As the father loves me, so also I love you . . ." (Jn. 15:9,13).

Saints Cyril and Methodius  
Feast Day 2/14

Cyril’s first work was to invent an alphabet, still used in some Eastern liturgies. Together they translated the Gospels, the psalter, Paul’s letters and the liturgical books into Slavonic, and composed a Slavonic liturgy. Despite opposition, their new liturgy was approved by Pope Adrian II.

Cyril died in Rome. Methodius continued mission work for 16 more years. He was papal legate for all the Slavic peoples, consecrated a bishop for the Czechs. He died on Tuesday of Holy Week, surrounded by his disciples, in his cathedral church.

Opposition continued after his death, and the work of the brothers in Moravia was brought to an end. But the expulsions had the beneficial effect of spreading the spiritual, liturgical, and cultural work of the brothers to Bulgaria, Bohemia and southern Poland. Patrons of Moravia, and specially venerated by Catholic Czechs, Slovaks, Croatians, Orthodox Serbians and Bulgarians, Cyril and Methodius are eminently fitted to guard the long-desired unity of East and West. In 1980, Pope John Paul II named them additional co-patrons of Europe (with Benedict). He also dedicated one of his fourteen encyclical letters to the “Apostles to the Slaves” on faith and culture.

St. Brother Albert Chmielowski  
(1845-1916)  
Feast Day 6/17

St Brother Albert was a Polish freedom fighter and artist who gave up his career as an artist to serve the poor of Krakow as a Franciscan. He founded a brotherhood and a sisterhood for this service. St John Paul II credits him was a decisive role in his own vocation.

Pope John Paul II beatified Albert on June 22, 1983, in Krakow, Poland, and canonized him on November 12, 1989. Declaring that this new saint understood the necessity of "giving one's soul," the Holy Father praised his "tireless, heroic service on behalf of the marginalized and the poor."