

Pieniny mountains

John Paul II.'s childhood - Strokes

Pope John Paul II. alias Karol Wojtyla was born in Wadowice nearby Cracow on 18th May 1920. He had a brother and a sister - the last dying short after her birth. Pope John Paul II. grow up in a religious and traditional, but also tolerant family. Unfortunately his childhood was full of strokes because his loved mother also deceased. Then the same happened to his fourteen years older brother - his ideal - who contracted scarlet fever as doctor in a hospital. From this time the father of Karol Wojtyla had to care for him alone.

Best pupil - Theatre enthusiast - Actor - Poet

Karol was the best pupil at school with nearly only A grades. Nevertheless he was very much liked by his classmates, who said he was no swot, no bookworm, he simply excelled in everything. Later Karol Wojtyla discovered his passion for theatre and joins the theatre club of his school. John Paul II. was characterised by an unusual gift: He had an almost photographic memory and was a great actor and poet. When Karol Wojtyla passed his A-levels and finally left his hometown Wadowice in 1938 to study Polish language at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, all thought he would become a great Polish actor or producer. There were only few signs of a future spiritual career.

Birthplace of John Paul II - Museum

Originally the Wojtyla family lived only in a small two-room flat. Nowadays the house, where John Paul II was born, is a museum and therefore shows by using much larger space remainders and relics about Karol Wojtyla and his family. Since the death of John Paul II. Wadowice has become one of the most important pilgrimage site in Poland. So longer waiting times for tourists who want to visit the pope's house are not unusual. It is also worth visiting the nearby basilica, where John Paul II. was baptised (the baptistery are preserved) and where a John Paul II. chapel was created.