

Institute of National Remembrance

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The IPN Deputy President Mateusz Szpytma attends 3rd World Gathering of Polish Youth at Monte Cassino

On 6-7 October 2026, Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the IPN, took part in the 3rd World Gathering of Polish Youth from Poland and Abroad at Monte Cassino. The event brought together around 500 young Poles from Poland and Polish communities around the world.











The programme combined commemorative ceremonies at sites

associated with the soldiers of the Polish II Corps with historical education addressed to the younger generation. The event was held under the Honorary Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Karol Nawrocki.

On 6 October, the IPN delegation attended the opening ceremony at the Polish War Cemetery at Monte Cassino. The ceremony included a Roll Call of the Fallen, the laying of wreaths and lighting of candles, prayers, and an address by Bishop Wiesław Lechowicz, Military Ordinary of Poland.

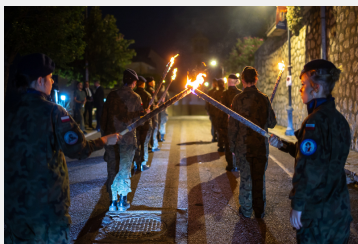
An evening roll call on the hill of Piedimonte San Germano, a site associated with the fighting of the 6th “Children of Lwów” Armoured Regiment, was attended by IPN representatives, with the ceremony including the laying of wreaths, singing the Polish national anthem and a joint rendition of the war-time song “Red Poppies on Monte Cassino”.



3rd World
Gathering of
Polish Youth at
Monte Cassino.
Photo: Sławek
Kasper (IPN)



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A key part of the second day's visit was Mateusz Szpytma's meeting with young participants at the "Przystanek Cassino" ("Cassino Stop") event area. The discussion focused on Monte Cassino and why its history is so important to young Poles today. Rather than taking the form of an official speech, the meeting provided an opportunity for

direct conversation, followed by questions from the young participants. Speaking to the gathered youth, Mateusz Szpytma said:

Poles were the only nation who fought for universal values – for independence, freedom, and human dignity – from the initial moments of World War II right up until its very end. Poles not only defended their own country with heroism, but also fought for the independence of Norway, France, and Great Britain. After a few years they also fought for the liberation of France, Belgium, Holland, and – what should be underlined here – also Italy.

Mateusz Szpytma recalled the significance of the victory of the Polish II Corps under General Władysław Anders in the Battle of Monte Cassino and the extraordinary wartime journey of its soldiers, many of whom had previously endured Soviet repression, deportation and imprisonment in the Gulag. He also addressed the fate of Poles who, after World War II, could not or chose not to return to a Poland under communist rule.

A central theme of the meeting was the responsibility of the younger generation to preserve historical memory. The presence at Monte Cassino of young Poles from both Poland and Polish communities

abroad demonstrated how the memory of previous generations can unite the Polish community regardless of where its members live.

Speaking to the gathered attendees, Deputy President of the IPN, Mateusz Szpytma underlined:

Patriotism must have various aspects. It is the traditional love for one's homeland which emerges through the respect for our history, for our ancestors, for our heroes. It is hard to think about real patriotism without these things. However, this is not enough. It is also important that each one of us works towards the success of Poland, thanks to our talents, our work, our honesty – wherever we may find ourselves, whether it be at school, at university, at work or in retirement.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to highlight the Institute of National Remembrance's international project "Trails of Hope. The Odyssey of Freedom", which tells the story of the wartime journeys of Polish soldiers and civilians across numerous countries and continents. Monte Cassino is one of the most important landmarks on this historical trail.

The 3rd World Gathering of Polish Youth was a symbolic meeting of generations: of the soldiers of the Polish II Corps, the teachers and

educators who have preserved their memory, and today's young Poles, who will carry that memory forward.

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