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Seek the Kingdom of God with Full Participation

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky
Prime Bishop

During the past many weeks within the Gospel readings of our Sunday Masses, we have been hearing our Lord and Savior giving His teaching on the Kingdom of God. We have heard the parable of the Sower which shows us that the Kingdom is abundantly spread within the Word of God, but must have a reception within the good soil of our own lives to reach its full potential of producing a great yield. We have then heard a number of teachings concerning the operation of the Kingdom among us. We were told that we must be forgiving, not only in a limited way, but again in an abundant way. We are called to forgive, not only seven times but rather seventy times seven times.

It was also within this context that we, as Polish National Catholics, celebrate the Solemnity of Brotherly Love. On this Solemnity we hear the Gospel reading of the Good Samaritan, the unexpected one who shows abundant generosity and care to the person who fell in with robbers on the road.

As we continue to spend some time considering these many parables and teachings of our Lord during this Ordinary Time season, we also realize that the work of the Kingdom of God is not something that is yet completed. It was not completed in Jesus' ministry; it was not completed within the work of the Apostles and is not completed down to our own day. The work of building the kingdom of God is a work which must continue anew in each generation and in fact must be taken up anew in the life of each and every Christian.

Jesus Himself tells us this in the Gospel of Matthew in His teaching on our dependence on Almighty God.

Jesus says: "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your lifespan? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will He not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides." (Matthew 6:25-33)

If then we are to be bringing about the accomplishment of the Kingdom of God within our lives and our world today, if we are to help to bring about the realization of the will of God for our world, then we must put the Kingdom of God as a priority within our daily lives. It is exactly this priority that the teaching of Jesus points us to. The work of the Kingdom of God must be placed first within our daily lives and daily action.

We all know that, in fact, our food, our clothing and many other aspects of our daily living are certainly a
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concern within our world today. And this is nothing new, it has been that way for centuries and it was true for those who heard Jesus speak this teaching for the first time. So what exactly is our Lord trying to teach us? It is certainly the concluding line of the discourse, "Seek first the Kingdom of God." (Matthew 6:33) But we must ask ourselves, how are we to go about this within our world today?

We must certainly admit that our lives are much more complicated than even a few years ago, let alone during the time of Jesus. And of course this is not to mention the most concerning thing that most of us have had to deal with in our lifetimes, the current Covid-19 pandemic. So we then ask the question, what are we to do in this situation?

The answer has not changed; seek first the Kingdom of God. As Christians, as Polish National Catholics, we are called to continue in our lives in putting the worship of God and the work of God first. The building up of the Kingdom of God, the seeking of the reign of God within our lives will take some extraordinary effort, especially in times of difficulty like the one we are facing now. But it is still something that must be done.

As a first answer to the question about how do I seek the Kingdom of God, the most basic of answers is, with our participation. It presently is of great concern to me and to the other bishops of the Church that as our parishes have now resumed public worship and the public celebration of Holy Mass, many have chosen to stay away from the worship and work of our parishes. The Church has gone to great lengths to make sure that everyone is safe and protected while at church. Social distancing is the norm, pews are sanitized where needed, pew books and hymnals have been replaced with single use worship aids and many other precautions have been taken as well. But what is missing is the full participation of the people of God.

To this point I encourage all members of the Polish National Catholic Church to reflect on their own religious life. I am told by many that we can 'pray at home', but it's not enough. The Catholic Christian Church is called to gather together, to worship Almighty God as the one body of Christ. We are called to support and encourage each other in this worship and in the work that we do for the Kingdom of God beyond our parish churches. We are called to be to-

gether in our worship, in our commitment and in our help and service to God and His people.

As a point of reflection, I ask each of you to consider the words of the "Hymn of Faith" penned by Bishop Francis Hodur. These words spoke to the people of the Church when they were first written many years ago but they still speak to us today in new situations. It is also important for us to hear the whole hymn, not only the first and last verses that we usually sing at Holy Mass.

"To Thee we come, O Lord, our God, before Thine altar, Father. Thou knowest best our yearning hearts; this supplication answer. Lift up from want, Thy people, Lord, bless us, O God; O Father, bless our toil." In this first verse we ask Almighty God, because He knows us intimately and fully, to supply the wants of His people. We ask Him to bless the toil by which we live and support and love our families and friends and parish. We ask for all this, but we know that it is not the sum total of our living and desiring to build the Kingdom. We know that there is a greater part of being the people of God.

"We ask Thee not for bliss in life, nor golden treasure's splendor but that we enter in the strife, Christ kingdom to engender. Lift up from sin Thy people, Lord, and strengthen us; O Father, bless our toil." Within this verse we realize, with the words of Scripture, that even if we gain the whole world and lose ourselves, we have gained nothing. We, therefore do not ask for bliss or treasure, but rather we ask to enter into the building up of the Kingdom of God. In this we know full well that we will have to turn away from sin and all the things which draw us away from God and rather begin to strive at beginning the work of following God in our lives, in our homes, in our parishes and in our world.

"And grant us faith, sustain our strength, as for Thy cause we struggle, and when we falter punish us, True God and Righteous Leader. And 'neath Thy banner gather us; Renew us, Lord; O Father, bless our toil." Within this verse we recognize that it will take faith and loyalty to God and His way in the world, to begin the work of building up the Kingdom of God and also to sustain it. We also ask God to gather us under His banner. We are to gather together as God's people to worship and to work, seeking always to accomplish His will of love and service to God and all people.

(Continued on bottom of Page 5.)



Music Scholarship Awards Announcement

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise Him. Praise the Lord with the harp, make music to Him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy! - Psalm 33: 1-3 NIV

Make a joyful noise! The awards were announced a little differently this year. A YouTube live broadcast happened on Thursday evening, August 27th from Holy Cross Parish in Hamtramck, MI., since Convo 2020 didn't happen. If you were able to watch it, we hoped you enjoyed it and liked hearing some excerpts from the audition recordings. Here are the recipients of the National United Choirs Music Scholarships for 2020:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Tyler Bagshaw
Holy Family Parish
McKeesport, PA
Voice, organ, piano | Bishop Francis Hodur Award \$1100 |
| Kaitlyn Gingerlowski
St. Stanislaus Cathedral Parish
Scranton, PA
Violin | Edward F. & Frances A. Bialoglowicz Award \$1000 |
| Madison Gradowski
All Saints Cathedral Parish
Chicago, IL
Voice | Adam B. Pikulski Award \$1200 |
| Devin Junko
Holy Trinity Parish
Washington, PA
Piano, organ | Bishop Eugenuisz Magyar Award \$1000 |
| Victoria Konicki
Holy Name of Jesus Parish
Schenectady, NY
Piano | Bishop Francis Bonczak Award \$1000 |
| Lauren Lightcap
Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral Parish
Lancaster, NY
Flute | Bishop Francis Bonczak Award \$1000 |
| Maks Oliveira
Blessed Trinity Parish
Fall River, MA
Guitar | Junior Incentive Award \$100 |

Rachel Quirbach

St. Casimir Parish

Lowell, MA

Piano, Guitar, Accordion,

Bishop Walter A. Slowakiewicz Award \$2900

Christina Supinski

Holy Name of Jesus Parish

Schenectady, NY

Viola

Bishop Francis Bonczak Award \$800

9 Awards, \$10,100

Since inception in 1966: 1112 Awards, \$332,985

Congratulations to these talented people! They have received a special gift from God, have acknowledged that gift, and have used it to glorify God in their parish and the PNCC.

Our scholarship program has been so successful because of the generous donations we get from the faithful of the PNCC. Thank you for your support and we hope we continue to be so blessed with funding and talented applicants.

Information on the scholarship program can be found on our website: nucmusicscholarship.weebly.com

Questions can be addressed to nucscholarship@gmail.com

Cathy A. Bilinski

Music Scholarship Administrator



Saint Cecilia by Rocca, Michele (c.1670-c.1751) CREDIT: BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

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And the final verse states: “Under Thy cross we stand prepared, to serve Thee with devotion; be it with sweat, of blood, or tears, or humble resignation. For we Thy people are, O Lord, save us, O God; O Father bless our toil.” As a part of this last verse, we gather beneath the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, ready to serve God and each other, ready to offer ourselves, all we are and all we have, to build up the Kingdom of God and accomplish the Will of God. We realize that this will be accomplished within the lives of each of us in different ways. Each person is called to fulfill this service or work as best we each can. We do this hard work “with sweat.” We sacrifice ourselves even to the point “of blood.” We desire to convert and better ourselves and our world “with tears.” And through all of it, “with humble res-

ignation,” we continue to gather in the celebration of Holy Mass, we continue to support and love each other, we continue to help and care for those around us. And because of this faith and loyalty, because of the work that they engender, we pray that God will bless what we do, that He will bless our toil, and that finally we will be accepted into His kingdom. We pray that because we are His children that He will save us.

My brothers and sisters, I encourage you to sing to yourselves and with each other our Hymn of Faith. But also when you sing it, pray that it will become a reality within your life. That you will be a full participant, “with sweat, of blood, or tears, or humble resignation,” in building up the Kingdom of God within the worship and work of our parish churches.

Kurs 2020 - The Show Must Go On!

Article 2 - Debut Performance

By Nick Kazinetz

Last month's Kurs article featured our chaplain and counselors reporting on what we had to do to prepare to launch the first Virtual Kurs. In this article the counselors will explain how we carried the show out.

It's June and we are getting closer to camp. Registration is open, Kurs goodie bags are getting sent out, WiFi is up and running. How do we engage the campers? Jack Wall had the plan for that.

Jack Wall

As 2020 began this year, much like every year in my past, I began to get excited for my annual return to "the farm," the colloquial term we use for the Bishop Hodur Retreat and Recreation Center at Spójnia Farm. As the months drew closer, it became apparent that this year might not be feasible. But if I know anything about being a member of this Kurs family, it is that "no" or "we can't do that" are not terms lightly taken. We were determined to make something happen in whatever way we could that would be safe.

As we began the concept for a "virtual kurs" we decided that we should utilize Google's services for not only the encryption and other security features, but also with using a service called Google Business Suite, so we could integrate the Google Classroom. This allowed our staff to assign activities for the campers. Through Google Mail we could communicate in a way that wasn't being broadcast on social media where there is limited privacy.

In order to use the Google Business Suite of apps, I registered a domain name, www.campkurs.org, that we could use with the Suite. By having this domain to use with Google Suite, we could operate apps like Classroom through newly-generated emails that each camper was given if they registered for Virtual Kurs. For example, I registered my username as Jack-Wall@campkurs.org, which would give me a Google mailbox where I would receive updates about upcoming events, activities, or lectures and to help me receive points for my group.

My personal responsibilities were to coordinate with Stacey, Paul and Father Jim with the registration rec-

ords from the campers' parents or guardians so that I could generate them an @campkurs.org email and login that would work in coordination with all the apps. I was also directly in charge of making sure the campers could access the Suite and that all the configurations for the apps were correct.

I wasn't sure what to expect earlier in this year when we realized the state of the country, but I am proud that as a staff we were able to come together and utilize the technology available to us to create an experience that could help fill the void of a physical camp experience. We understood how hard it would be for the campers to have nothing, and as a staff we were not willing to also concede to having nothing this year. I have nothing but excitement fueling me for the upcoming year for the Reunion Tour 2021, and I have you all to thank for that.

After we had secured a safe way to meet with our campers, Andrew Humphreys became our site Administrator, using the skills he has as an online educator, he was the go-to person.

Andrew Humphreys

When the decision was made to go virtual with Kurs this year, we knew we had to get creative to make this as interactive as possible for the campers. Using the Google suite and a lot of "behind the scenes" work went into making this system work for us. The first day was awkward. No campers, no real registration. No problems. This was going to be easy. Then it hit. We ran in circles for a bit and then realized we needed a team effort and no one job was more important or less important than another. We had counselors working on a recording team, a video editing team, a prep team for the activities to be carried out, a teacher team that checked assignments, and a cooking and sanitizing team also to keep us nourished and safe.

Once we figured everything out, we utilized the Google Classroom to communicate daily with the campers, and we were able to send them daily assignments to complete. Each day the counselors held a live session with the campers through Google Meet in the afternoon, where we watched a prerecorded video of the counselors completing the activity that

was on the schedule for the day. Pre recording these activities kept the counselors very busy, because we were not only engaging the campers in the activities of the day but also planning, preparing, and recording the games and activities the campers would complete the next day. It was a total team effort to pull this off.

During the afternoon live session, the campers were also instructed to gather up family and friends, and record themselves playing the games they had just watched. Later in the evening, during a second “live” session with the counselors, the campers got the opportunity to share their videos and pictures of the activities with the group. Just like when they are in person at Kurs, the campers received points for their group, for participating in the games. Using the assignments feature of Google Classroom, we were easily able to assign point values for completing many camp traditions such as dressing up for dinner themes, playing the games, and volunteering to be a reader for Mass, just to name a few.

Other than the Google suite, our team also needed a lot of high-tech equipment to make this possible. Fortunately, many of the counselors were gracious enough to lend their personal equipment like HD cameras, microphones, speakers, computers, and editing software, saving us thousands of dollars. Also, I cannot forget to mention the upgrades completed by the Spójnia Inc. Board at the camp, which also made our success possible. If it were not for the creativity of the Kurs staff and the availability of this new technology, I do not believe the virtual Kurs encampment would have been the success that it was. Thank you, Andrew!

Let's hear from one of our editors Mikey Mludzik who has put many Kurs YouTube and Facebook videos together with Jennessa.

Mike Mludzik

Camp Kurs 2020, a virtual year that we hope to never have to repeat. A summer camp without the kids, but we were determined to make it work. Oddly enough the virtual week was just as busy as it would be with 72 campers. The schedule was run in the same way that it normally does. 7:30 a.m. wake up, 8 a.m. line up, walk down for a delicious breakfast, followed up by a hike back up the hill for our daily 9 a.m. Mass celebrated by our chaplain, Father Jim Konicki. After Mass the tech crew reposition the cameras and other equipment from the altar to the

Google Meet set. The other third of the staff was probably running around setting up the activities that needed to be recorded at 11 a.m. At around this time you could find the last third of the staff in the editing cave where we looked through the footage and assembled everything together so that it could be presented later that day or the one to follow.

Everyone had a role, and after we got over some minor “humps” in the beginning of the week, the staff was running like a well-oiled machine fueled by Mama Kaz’s coffee and French toast

Lunch was now around the corner and somehow, we were already hungry for our next meal when we just ate merely three hours earlier. Something about that Waymart air makes everyone's appetites spike, or maybe it's just the cooking. At that point I ate three too many potato pancakes and I was struggling to walk back up that hill to catch up on some editing. The video was halfway done and it was to be presented in 45 minutes, so I had to get my jog on.

Andrew and Nick were getting ready for the daily WKURS broadcast (our fake radio station where you get all of your daily Kurs news) and behind the scenes the tech crew was rushing around to make sure everything was in place. It was then two minutes till we went live; everyone in their seats, keeping a respectable social distance, and keeping the microphones muted! I was still struggling to upload the video I just finished and it was scheduled to be shown in seven minutes I guess Andrew and Nick were going to have to come up with some improv to buy me some time. (Sorry guys it won't happen again. Until probably around the same time tomorrow.)

The video was finally ready and the campers received it - broadcast to them live. The reactions of the staff and even more so the campers made all the hard work worth it day in and out. Four o'clock rolled around and it was finally time for some free time. The staff regrouped by the brand-new pool for a refreshing swim. That was my favorite daily activity, largely because of the great weather we had all week. “Okay guys — 5 p.m.— go get ready for dinner.”

Dinner-themed outfits on; flag lowering ceremony; a prayer before dinner; and put your masks on around the food. It was time for pizza. Charlie was around seven slices in and I was about to go grab my fourth. I ended up eating way too much, but how can I not?

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(Kurs 2020 - Continued from Page 7.)

It was Waymart Hotel pizza, and I don't get this luxury often. Now it was time to go back to the editing cave to finish up another video because we were going into our next virtual session at 7 p.m. I grabbed another slice for the road.

During the late virtual session, we watched the videos that the campers made, which was always very entertaining, largely because our campers are very talented video producers. Afterward, we would watch the videos that we created as a staff.

We showed videos daily, throughout the week. We made sure to capture Camp Kurs classic activities ranging from Flour Tag, to Awful Waffle, to the infamous Spójnia Olympics. We also had a running series of videos that were scripted. These were reenactments of some timeless camp moments such as registration/move-in day, the candy shop, and the legendary formal dinner. These scripted videos can be found on the Kurs Facebook page.

After the video presentations we had nightly sing-alongs followed by an evening prayer service lead by Father Jim Konicki. Then it would be 9 p.m. and our camp day had come to an end. Time to relax and talk about what could be done better the following day.

Although it was very different without the campers, the week will remain a lasting fond memory for all of those who participated. I want to thank our whole staff for their hard work, great spirit, and dedication to the youth of our church. Lastly, I would truly like to thank the Polish National Catholic Church for providing us the opportunity to organize such a special program at such a special place in our hearts.

Thank you, Jack, Andrew, and Mikey, for your articles and a great summary of the daily life of a virtual Kurs Counselor. The Final Kurs Article will be in the next issue and we will hear from our Emmy Award winning Staff!

A P.N.C.C. Celebration, the Solemnity of the Christian Family — Sunday, October 11, 2020



The P.N.C.C. is again offering to the parishes a full-color brochure describing the Solemnity of the Christian Family, a unique feast of our Church. This is a perfect point of information to include in welcome packets or to have in bulletin racks.

The brochures are available for purchase from the P.N.C.C. Book Department:

25 brochures:	\$8.50
50 brochures:	\$15.00
75 brochures:	\$21.50
100 brochures:	\$27.50

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An Abridged History of the Polish National Catholic Church - Part 1

This 82-page booklet was published by the Polish National Catholic Church National School of Christian Living Commission in 2012. It has 18 chapters, an appendix and a bibliography. The 18 chapters are: Prime Bishop Francis Hodur, Vatican I and the Declaration of Utrecht, Immigration and Independent Religious Movements, St. Stanislaus - The Scranton Story, The First Synod, The Consecration of Bishop Hodur in 1907, Building on the Foundation, The Roaring 20's, The 1930's, The End of the Hodur Era (1940-1953), The Transition (1953-1969), The Next Generation, The Declaration and Union of Scranton, P.N.C.C. National Organizations, P.N.C.C. National Church Programs, Governing Structure and Functioning Commissions, P.N.C.C. Publications, P.N.C.C. Solemnities. The Appendix includes: The Confession of Faith of the Polish National Catholic Church and the Declaration of Scranton. This article will cover the first nine chapters. Quotations from the book are in italic font.

The chapter on Prime Bishop Francis Hodur is a short biographical sketch starting with his birth in Zarki, Poland on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866, continuing to St. Anne's High School in Krakow and then to the Roman Catholic Seminary in Krakow in June 1889 at the seminary. He became politically active in the Young Poland movement led by Father Stanisław Stojalowski. "Father Stojalowski's goal was to raise the level of human dignity, spiritual awareness and the living conditions among Poland's poor." After complaining about the poor food and the spiritual atmosphere, Hodur and other identified ring leaders were expelled. Perceiving that he had no prospects in Poland, he left for America on Dec. 31, 1892 on the M.S. Sorrento, arriving on January 23, 1893. After arriving without a sponsor, he wrote an advertisement in a Polish paper asking for sponsorship. His plea was answered by Father Benvenuto Gramlewicz of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania. Father Gramlewicz arranged for Hodur's enrollment in St. Vincent Roman Catholic Seminary in Beatty (now Latrobe), Pennsylvania. Hodur was ordained on August 19, 1893 by Bishop O'Hara and assigned to Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary parish, Scranton, Pennsylvania as assistant pastor under Rev. Richard Aust. "At Sacred Hearts, Father Hodur demonstrated his concern for the plight of the Polish people by refusing to collect money from the poor Polish immigrants." For this activity, he was

sent to a Convent to conduct Holy Mass for the nuns. In 1895, he was assigned as pastor of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, newly organized because of a dispute between Father Gramlewicz and his parishioners. While there Father Hodur became involved with the Polish National Alliance and the Polish Youth Alliance and also organized a theatrical group which also performed plays that he wrote.

Vatican I was held in 1869 by Pope Pius IX. Two decisions were made at it; 1. Papal Infallibility ("This means that when the Pope speaks on faith or morals in his official capacity, he does so without error.") and 2. Universal Jurisdiction of the Pope ("This states that the Pope has sole authority and complete control over the entire Christian Church."). These two decisions were not accepted by all Roman Catholics because these decisions were not found in the Holy Scriptures and in the Tradition of the Undivided Church and led to the formation of the Old Catholic Church and the Union of Utrecht. This formation followed with the Declaration of Faith signed on September 24 1889, "which traces its faith, its orders, its sacraments and its liturgy back through the ages to the ancient church of the first centuries, that is to the Church of Christ and His Apostles. The Church was undivided until 1054, when it split in two, Orthodox (Eastern) and the Catholic Church (Western)."

In chapter 3, it was said that many Catholic ethnic immigrant groups complained about lack of representation; Irish about French pastors and bishops, Germans about Irish pastors and bishops, Poles about Irish pastors and bishops. "Unlike the petitions of the Irish and German immigrants, the petitions of Polish immigrants were ignored by the hierarchy." The lack of representation led to discontent. The Polish National Alliance (PNA) was formed in 1880 with membership open to all Polish immigrants regardless of religious beliefs and affiliations. The Polish Roman Catholic Union was formed by Roman Catholic priests. The conflict between these organizations led to the denial of sacraments to PNA members, eviction from church and exclusion from memberships in some organizations and societies.

In 1894, Father Anthony Francis Kołaszewski, a pro PNA priest from Cleveland, Ohio organized several parishes into the first independent movement. The

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(An Abridged History of the P.N.C.C. - Continued from Page 9.)

bylaws of the Cleveland parish were: “congregational ownership of parishes, congregational election of pastors, and complete supervision of parishes by elected committees.” These bylaws served as a model for other parishes. A synod was held in 1894. Bishop Rene Joseph Villatte, an unaffiliated bishop was invited; “his goal was to establish a multi-ethnic American Catholic Church.” The synod wanted an exclusively Polish ethnic organization.

Independentism also arose in Chicago, Illinois and Buffalo, New York. In Chicago, people rallied around Rev. Anthony Kozłowski and in January 1895, the independent parish of All Saints was organized. In 1897, at a synod, Rev. Anthony Kozłowski, was elected bishop. “On November 21, 1897, he was consecrated by Bishop Eduard Herzog of the Swiss Christ Catholic Church, one of the old Catholic Churches.” At a Polish Catholic Church Synod on March 14, 1898, a church constitution and a catechism based on the principles of Old Catholic Church was accepted. After Bishop Kozłowski’s death in 1907, the Polish Catholic Church united with the Polish National Catholic Church.

At St. Adalbert in Buffalo, New York, tensions arose between parishioners and the priest regarding church property. On Candlemas Day, February 2, 1895, while parishioners processed to church, they were attacked by police with clubs. Those attacked and expelled, built a new church and turned to Father Kolaszewski of Cleveland to bless the cornerstone, which he did on August , 1895. He recommended that the parish contact Father Stephen Kaminski of Freeland, Pennsylvania. Father Kaminski accepted their offer, went to Buffalo and became their pastor in 1896. Several other parishes in the Buffalo area met in a synod in 1896 where Father Kaminski was elected as leader of the independent movement and bishop. He was consecrated by Bishop Rene Joseph Villatte at the Church of the Holy Mother of the Rosary, Buffalo, New York. Bishop Kaminski led the congregation and movement until his death on September 19, 1911. The property was sold at auction by Father L. Zakrewski. After protracted litigation, the church was returned to the parish and they united with the P.N.C.C. Father Valentine Gawrychowski, assigned by Bishop Hodur led the parish for the next eight years

In Scranton, Pennsylvania, the parishioners of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary became upset when Father

Aust began asking for additional collections for enlarging the parish cemetery. “They demanded that all such collections be handled not by the pastor, but by a committee chosen by a parish assembly.” Father Aust responded by a threat from the pulpit to excommunicate anyone who would resist or criticize his actions. A group of parishioners visited Bishop O’Hara and asked him to compel Father Aust “to organize a parish committee that would be elected by a general parish assembly; the Bishop refused.” About 800 men and women blocked Father Aust from entering the church on Sunday, August 30, 1896. A riot ensued when police arrived. The disgruntled parishioners visited Father Hodur and asked him for advice. After listening to their grievances, he told them that they had two alternatives, 1. Accept the rulings of their Bishop, or 2. Build a new church. They chose the latter. On December 19, 1896, the new parish, St. Stanislaus Polish Roman Catholic Church was chartered. In February 1897, Bishop O’Hara was asked to consecrate the new church; he refused because the parish refused to surrender the deed. The people again turned to Father Hodur and offered the pastorate to him. He accepted, conducting the first High Mass on Sunday, March 21, 1897 followed by a parish organizational meeting.

Father Hodur did not intend to breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church. He tried to have the needs of his parishioners accepted by Rome. He traveled to Rome in January 1898 to present their program: “(1) Legal ownership of church property by the local parish; (2) parish governance by parish committees elected by the Parishioners; (3) appointment of pastorates approved by the Parishioners; (4) appointment of Polish bishops by priests and parishioners, subject to confirmation by the Pope.” He was told that this program was unacceptable. He went back to Scranton and reported to the congregation. They “unanimously voted to sever relations with the Roman Church and to work diligently in building the National Catholic Church.”

The First Synod resulted from the growth of the National Catholic Church. It was held on September 6, 7, and 8, 1904 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Delegates included not only clergy and lay people of the churches, but also “representatives of various Polish organizations and societies that were supportive of this independent movement. Major decisions made at the First Synod were: Broke ties with Vatican; Established funding for a future seminary; adopted a

Church Constitution; Named Straż (The Guard) the official organ (newspaper) of the Church; Elected Father Hodur as Bishop; Established the Great Council, composed of six clergy and six lay people plus Father Hodur to govern the Church between Synods (The Supreme Council now fulfills this function).” Bishop Hodur and the synod body tried to establish a union with the Polish Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of Bishop Kozłowski.

“In August 1906, a Special Synod was convened in Scranton to continue and complete the work of the First Synod of 1904. Decisions made at the synod were: Apply and obtain for the National Church a general charter from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Trybuna (The Tribune)” would now be the official church organ (newspaper); Institution of the Feast of Brotherly Love and the Feast of the Humble Shepherds; Locate a seminary near St. Stanislaus Church in Scranton; establish the Bartosz Głowacki Preparatory School in Scranton as a school for training teachers and priests; A Committee was selected to translate Church rites and hymns into the Polish language; Bishop-elect Hodur was given increased power to appoint and depose priests; Bishop-elect Hodur pledged financial and cultural support to keep Polish heritage alive due to the political situation in Poland at that time.”

Chapter 6 is about the Consecration of Bishop Hodur. He pursued consecration because he wanted to ensure Apostolic Succession for the Polish National Catholic Church. It wasn't until Bishop Kozłowski died in 1907, would the Old Catholic Church consider consecrating a bishop in the United States. Their policy was one Old Catholic Bishop in a country. In the Old Catholic Church Consecration a two-step process was used; step 1 was the approval of the faithful and the clergy of a church and step 2 was the acceptance by the Old Catholic Bishops. “On September 29, 1907 Father Hodur was consecrated a bishop at St. Gertrude's Cathedral in Utrecht, Holland by the Archbishop of Utrecht, Gerard Gul, Bishop of Haarlem, William Van Thiel; and the Bishop Deventer, Michel Spit.” The three positive results of his consecration were: “1. Valid Apostolic Succession recognized by Orthodox and Catholic theologians, 2. Bishop Hodur was now the head of the entire Independent Movement and 3. The PNC Movement was a part of the larger Catholic family.”

The development of the church continued after the consecration of Bishop Hodur. The Roman Catholic

Church consecrated their first Polish bishop, Paul Rhode in 1908, which eliminated one of the complaints of Polonia. One of the other side effects is that the Polish National Alliance, originally a supporter of the P.N.C.C. lessened its support. As a consequence Bishop Hodur organized the Polish National Union in 1908 to offer life insurance, loans and fraternal support. The Second General Synod called in 1909 had two decisions: 1. “The Word of God, heard and preached to a sacrament in the Polish National Catholic Church, and 2. The official legal name of the church would be the Polish National Catholic Church of America.” At this Synod, the question of two additional Bishops was discussed and rejected. “However, a compromise was reached when Bishop Hodur said that he would appoint three Vicars General to help administer parishes within the various regions of the country.” Bishop Hodur prepared a statement of beliefs for the Polish National Catholic Church. It is called the Confession of Faith, and would complement the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed. This was discussed at three Provincial Synods held in Passaic, New Jersey, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania and Chicopee, Massachusetts. Following, a Third General Synod accepted the Confession of Faith. Three Feast Days were also established at this Synod: Feast of the Christian Family, the Feast of the Institution of the P.N.C.C., and the Feast of the Fatherland. “After the end of World War 1, Bishop Hodur sent Father Bronisław Krupski to Poland to explore the possibility of expanding the P.N.C.C. from North America to Poland.”

The great expansion of the Church began in the 1920s with more than 20 new parishes. At the Fourth General Synod, there were 162 delegates representing 57 parishes in the United States and Canada. At this Synod, the Hymn of the Church was adopted along with the following: Introduction of General Confession; Abolishment of mandatory clerical celibacy, The beginning of the mission for the Church into Poland and the adoption of the symbol for the church created by Bishop Hodur. In December 1923, God's Field (Rola Boża) became the official church newspaper. Straż (The Guard) remained the official newspaper of the Polish National Union. On the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Church Bishop Hodur wrote “The Eleven Great Principles.” The Fifth General Synod, held in Scranton, Pennsylvania on July 15 and 16 created three dioceses, Central, Eastern, and Poland and elected four candidates for

(Continued on Page 12.)

(An Abridged History of the P.N.C.C. - Continued from Page 11.)

bishop. Consecrated on August 17, 1924, were: Bishop Valentine Gawrychowski, Bishop Leon Grochowski, Bishop Francis Bończak and Bishop John Gritenas. Bishops Gawrychowski and Grochowski were assigned to the P.N.C.C. in America, while Bishop Bończak “was assigned to establish and oversee churches in Poland” and Bishop Gritenas “was assigned to lead the Lithuanian Catholic Church.” The Supreme Council created the Western Diocese to serve increases in parishes from Cleveland to Chicago and Western Canada. Bishop Grochowski was assigned as Diocesan Bishop in 1926. Increases in parishes in Western New York and Western Pennsylvania led to a Provincial Synod which created the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese in 1928 and Father John Jasinski was elected as a Bishop. He was consecrated on June 7, 1928 and assigned as Diocesan Bishop to the newly created Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese. Expansion of the Church in Poland led to the First Diocesan Synod in Poland in 1928, conducted by Bishop Hodur. This Synod elected Father Władysław Faron. He was consecrated in 1930 and assigned as Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of Poland. “Bishop Hodur and leaders of the P.N.C.C. and PNU recognized the need to care for the elderly and other members who could not care for themselves.” A farm in Waymart, Pennsylvania was purchased in 1929, where the Home for the Aged and Disabled as well as a summer camp for youth were established.

The 1930s were stressful times for the Church, the country was in an economic depression and the Nazi's were devastating the parishes in Poland. At the Sixth General Synod, Bishop told the delegates that the Church was not heading in the direction he envisioned. He thought that “the Church members were not as enthusiastic or involved in the reform as they had been when the parishes were first organized.” He told the Synod “If our Church should further tolerate such a state of affairs, if it should fear truth, decisiveness, it would not be worth the work, the trouble and the sacrifice. That kind of Church which does not give something better is worth nothing; it does not deserve to exist because it is not needed. If there is in the parishes no new, better, religious, national and social life according to the requirements of the gospel, but only a swamping stagnation along the whole line, or a handful of tricksters together with a priest falsely and in an unworthy

manner maintaining a semblance of life, then such a Church I cannot acknowledge, such a Church I did not establish. Such a Church I did not want and will not lead. These words may be painful, but true, and it is necessary to understand them as coming from a heart which is dying from pain at the sight of the fall of a work for which it undividedly sacrificed its whole life.” The Sixth Synod dealt with several theological matters; The reaffirmation of the true Catholic belief of the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist; That the priest is the minister of the Sacrament of Matrimony; The reintroduction of the practice of the early Church with an Altar of Sacrifice facing the people. The Sixth Synod also decided that the Diocesan Bishop was to confirm and approve an elected parish committee prior to their installation. At a meeting of the Supreme Council in 1934, Bishop Hodur introduced his plan for seniorates, which would be headed by an older priest so that the clergy and lay representatives would meet regularly to “discuss the actual matters of the church for its benefit and development.” At the Special Synod in 1935, the seniorates were adopted and the title of Senior Priest was officially implemented. This Synod also elected Father Senior John Misiaszek a candidate for bishop. The Diocese of Poland held its Second Synod in 1935 and elected Father Joseph Padewski a candidate for bishop. The consecration of both Father Senior John Misiaszek and Father Joseph Padewski was held on August 26, 1936. Bishop Misiaszek was appointed the Coadjutor Bishop of the Central Diocese and Bishop Padewski was named the Diocesan Bishop of Poland. In 1937, Father Senior Joseph Leśniak was elected a candidate for bishop at the Eastern Diocesan Synod. He was consecrated on November 16, 1937 and named bishop of the Eastern Diocese. In 1941, the Polish Diocese was forced by the Nazis to break ties with the P.N.C.C. It was then named the Old Catholic Church of the Utrecht Union of the General Government.

Every member of the church should read this book and should also buy a copy and donate it their local library. Chapters 10 through 18 will be described and discussed in a later article.

Joseph Francis Seliga,
Chair, P.N.C.C. Commission on History and Archives



Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese**Chaplain Corps Bids Farewell to One of Their Own****By Mel Slater, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School**

Courtesy Photo | Army Chief of Chaplains, Chap. (Maj. Gen.) Thomas Solhjem (left) presented the Distinguished Service Award to Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Robert F. Pleczkowski (right) for 29 years of faithful service during the retirement ceremony at The Heart and Home of the Army Chaplaincy at Fort Jackson on August 31. (Photo by Mr. Mel Slater, U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School)

The Army Chaplain Corps, established in 1775, is one of the Army's oldest branches. It's also one of the smaller branches. When a member of the Chaplain Corps departs, it is felt by many across the branch.

The Chaplain Corps said farewell to a longstanding member and faithful servant leader and his Family in a ceremony Aug. 31.

Chap. (Maj. Gen.) Thomas Solhjem, Army Chief of Chaplains, hosted the retirement ceremony for Chap. (Brig. Gen.) Robert F. Pleczkowski at U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School at Fort Jackson.

Since COVID-19 remains an issue, the event was held in the USACHCS Auditorium with less than full capacity, social distancing and mask use. The event was also streamed live on social media to allow those who could not be physically present to view the event from their locations.

The 208th Army Band was on hand to provide music for the event and the Cannon Salute Battery provided a ground shaking salute from the grounds of the USACHCS campus. Pleczkowski was presented a shell casing symbolizing the last round fired in his honor. He also received a U.S. flag from his son, Sgt. Matthew Pleczkowski.

For his service, Pleczkowski received the Distinguished Service Medal, letters from the current president and two former presidents and several certificates. An avid Pittsburgh Steeler Football fan, he also received a letter from veteran and former Pittsburgh Steeler Rocky Bleier. His wife, Mary Lynn Pleczkowski, also received the Distinguished Spouse Award, certificates and a necklace from Solhjem and his wife.

"It's humility in action that's how I describe Bob, you know, never a loss for words to share, always excited, exuberant and enthusiastic, same with Mary Lynn they make a great team that way," Solhjem said. "When they are asked to do something, they are all in."

(Continued on Page 14.)

(Chaplain Corps Bids Farewell to One of Their Own - Continued from Page 13.)

Guest attendees for the ceremony included Fort Jackson Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Milford H. “Beags” Beagle, Jr., Chap. (Brig. Gen.) William Green, Chaplain Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, Sgt. Maj. Ralph Martinez, Chaplain School Commandant, Chap. (Col.) Bryan Walker and Command Sgt. Maj. John Tanchak, Chaplain School senior enlisted leader, and numerous current and former members, many from the Reserve Component, of the Army Chaplain Corps.

“To Bob and ML (Mary Lynn) thank you for your friendship and everything you brought to our team” Beagle said. “One thing I can truly say about Bob, when I think about him is his attitude, passion and enthusiasm. Those are things you can never doubt and he always brought to the table whenever he came to the table which was every single day... So, for me and all of my team we thank you for you service, your service here at Fort Jackson and the rest of the Army as well.”

Pleczkowski joined the Army in 1991 and has served in many chaplain positions in the Army Reserve. In 2006, he transferred to the Active Guard and Reserve Program and continued to serve in various positions. In 2017, he was selected as the Deputy Chief of Chaplains, Reserve Component at the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. In this position, he also served as the director of the U.S. Army Institute for Religious Leadership here at Fort Jackson. He also deployed to Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division.

“We’re grateful for the opportunities we’ve been given, we’re extremely grateful for the friendships we got to make, for the wonderful people we got to spend time with and make magic for God and Country,” Pleczkowski said. “Just blessed because of it, that we’re better people because of it, we’re holier people because of it, and I think we just have a lot more inner strength to go on and be ready for what’s next because of all of you. So, I want thank you all for that.”

Pleczkowski and his wife, Mary Lynn have been married for over 34 years and have two adult children. They have experienced Army life together and have been solid members of their communities and of the Chaplain Corps.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Partners with Parish and American Legion

Lilly, PA

Earlier this year, the churches of Lilly and Washington Township in Pennsylvania — Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Polish National Catholic Church, Lilly United Methodist Church, Our Lady of the Alleghenies Roman Catholic Church and St. Luke Lutheran Church — partnered with the Lilly American Legion to collect much needed craft supplies for the VA Home in Hollidaysburg.

Although delivery was delayed by Covid restrictions, here is Fr. Scott Lill, pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Polish National Catholic Church, presenting them to Diane Miller, Director of Activities and Volunteer Services for the VA Home.

Thanks to all who helped out with this great project!



Eastern Diocese

Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat 2020

August 17 - 19, Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA



Because of Covid-19 the 47th Annual Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat 2020 could not be conducted at Camp Howe in Goshen, MA, as usual. Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA, opened its doors to host the retreat this year. “Discipleship 2020” was the theme and more than 30 youth, adults, and clergy from 5 parishes across the Eastern Diocese gathered for a wonderful, inspiring, and faith filled 3-day retreat.

Session topics and presenters included St. Joseph: Protector of the Lord - Obedience, Trust and Patience, by Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr.; Mary and Martha of Bethany by Kathy Nemkovich; The Canaanite Woman by Cleric Justin Daviault; St. Paul by Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski; Mary Magdalene by Julie McLean, assisted by Kaylana and Peyton.

Along with time spent in sessions and in prayer and worship during prayer services and Masses each day, participants became involved in many fun-filled and spiritually-themed events: pizza parties, a cookout, a sub party, taco night, beach outings, movie night, a mobile ice cream truck social (sponsored by District 3 PNU), an excursion to the woods for a campfire, s’mores and camp songs lead by Eric Nemkovich,

themed games and activities coordinated by Joanne Oliveira and Kathy Nemkovich, a community service project to clean up a local park, and a trip to Battleship Cover in Fall River (sponsored by District 3 PNU).

Many thanks to all! We look forward to our Winter Youth Gathering this coming December at Blessed Trinity Parish.



During the retreat the 2020 Camp Spirit Award was presented to Zachary Richard (Holy Cross Parish, Central Falls, RI) and Peyton Oliveira (Blessed Trinity Parish).

Prayers and Blessings for Students Returning to School

Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA and Holy Cross Parish, Central Falls, RI

On Sunday, August 23, 2020, during Holy Mass at Blessed Trinity Parish, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich and offered prayers for the youth and blessed the parish students and their backpacks as a new school year begins with much uncertainty.



On Sunday, August 23, 2020, during Holy Mass for the youth at Holy Cross Parish, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich congratulated Zack Richard as being a co-recipient of the Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat's 2020 Camp Spirit Award. Fr. Sr. Rob also offered prayers for the new school year and blessed Zack's backpack.



Congratulations to Rev. Andrzej Tenus

St. Casimir's Parish, Lowell, MA

On September 3, 2020, Rev. Andrzej Tenus graduated from the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School (USACHCS) Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course (CHBOLC) at Fort Jackson, SC.

The CHBOLC is an intensive, entry-level military training process for newly accessioned chaplains and chaplain candidates. The training in this course provides unique opportunities for professional, physical, academic, and spiritual growth.

The entire Church joins St. Casimir's Parish in congratulating Fr. Tenus!



USACHCS Commandant, Chap. (COL) Bryan Walker presents Chap. (CPT) Andrzej (Andrew) Tenus with his diploma.

Western Diocese

CHANCERY OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE
Polish National Catholic Church



920 N. Northwest Highway
Park Ridge, IL 60068-2358

Phone (847)698-0578

Bishop-Elect Jaroslaw (Jerry) Rafalko Administrator of the Diocese

August 14, 2020

Dear Prime Bishop Anthony and all the delegates to the XVIII Synod of the Western Diocese.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to guide, instruct, teach and comfort us all gathered at the XVIII Synod of the Western Diocese Polish National Catholic Church. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for empowering us to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ. Father our Savior we praise You. Each day You carry us in Your arms. You are the God who saves. Please, save all our parishes.

COVID 19 has opened our eyes for new ways of communication. The Lord has provided us with needed technology and the people who know how to operate new equipment. During this difficult time the Church has to keep moving, we have to keep in touch with the Lord, wherever our challenges are in the world and we need to keep in touch with each other.

During the Synod we set up our visions, now we ask You o Lord to show the ways how to reach our goals. While the pandemic has halted economic productivity and social connectivity, the work of the Kingdom of God continues to move forward. Each parish and organization has been doing great projects in order to spread God's word and to keep the doors of our churches open. We are asking now: 'How can we do things better? How can we improve? How can we be blessed with more members? Let us share our experiences. Sharing will help to develop new plans in each parish and reach the goals to provide better services for our communities, to be more visible and to improve communication with each other.

Dear friends, we have received Holy Spirit that made us strong with God's great Love, that heals, energizes, liberates us to flourish, and sets us free as God's children. Since we received God's Love, there is no room within us for fear. God's Words coming from the Holy Bible frequently remind us: 'Do not be afraid'. "There is no room in love for fear" says St. John from his First Letter. (1John 4:18-19). Fear holds us back but the love of God leads us on.

We confess that the same Holy Spirit who resurrected Jesus from the dead now dwells within us. We believe that this Holy Spirit is our Comforter and our Helper. Now we depend on our Comforter and Helper asking Him to be with us as the members of the Polish National Catholic Church, as the members of parish committees, as the representatives of our different societies and organizations. We need our Comforter and our Helper to implement directions given by the Holy Synod and the Future Direction Commission to set up our plans for the next four years.

We are living in an uncertain time, where we constantly need the hand of the Lord in our lives. Our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ know us, love us and are watching over us. And we can be certain that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead and guide our lives. Show us o Lord areas in our personal lives that we need to get in order so that we will not bring You sorrow by the way we live. Help us to get rid of all bitterness and anger. Instead, show us how to be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven us through Christ Jesus.

May God Bless you all.

Bishop-Elect Jerry Rafalko
Administrator of the Western Diocese
Polish National Catholic Church

XXVIII Synod of the Western Diocese

Park Ridge, IL



Dcn. Jim Ploskonka, Very Rev. John Kowalczyk, Bishop-Elect Jerry Rafalko, Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Rev. David Rowinski

The XVIII Synod of the Western Diocese was called to take place August 12 & 13, 2020 by the Office of the Bishop-Elect. In response to successful digital ventures by the United Y.M.S. of R. and other individual parishes in running services and events, trust was built in the ability to develop and host a synod in a dual setting.

The Western Diocesan Council met on June 6, with a special follow-up Synod-planning meeting on June 25, and under the organization of Deacon Jim Ploskonka, the plan was in place to host the Synod at All Saints Cathedral in Park Ridge, IL, with a select group of in-person attendees and all others encouraged to attend via the Zoom app.

The Synod appropriately began with prayer, a solid 9 days before it began. A Novena to the Holy Spirit was distributed to all participants, with pastors encouraged to share with their congregations. The first day was prayed over the Zoom app, as was the ninth day. The ninth day also served as a prep period of sorts for how the synod would be running.

On Wednesday morning, Holy Mass was celebrated in-person at All Saints Cathedral, shared on the Zoom app to participants, and posted on Facebook Live via the Western Diocese Facebook Page. It was celebrated by Bishop-Elect Jerry Rafalko, with Fr. Charles Zawistowski and Fr. David Rowinski serving as con-celebrants. Deacon Jim Ploskonka was Deacon of the Mass, and Fr. John Kowalczyk served as

Master of Ceremonies. Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky offered the homily remotely from the National Church Center Chapel in Scranton. His words swirled upon the work of the diocese that he has had a special touch on over the last decade, the continuing work of the Church, the Work of the Advocate, and the Holy Spirit within our hearts.

The proceedings on Wednesday served to be more business-based, going over the reports of various commissions and organizations that were forwarded to delegates weeks prior to the Synod. Additional presentation and discussion took place on some of the reports including Financial Obligations and Guidelines, Budget and Finance, as well on one of the truly unique portions of the Western Diocese, the Bishop Kardas Memorial Home.

A feeling of “change” was omnipresent throughout our first day, as we continually heard from Bishop-Elect about the plans he envisions for the diocese. Since everything moved along so nicely, we were able to wrap up without having the planned evening session. As our day’s agenda was fulfilled, we had evening prayer together before dismissing to dinner and for the evening.

Thursday began with Morning Prayer at 8:30 am with Fr. John Kowalczyk calling upon his parishioner, Jim Szalony, to lead. After prayer, a break for breakfast took place.

We welcomed via Zoom Fr. Sr. Rob and Kathy Nemkovich to lead a discussion portion of the Synod on the past, present, and “future” of the Future Directions of the Polish National Catholic Church. Fr. Sr. led a recap of the development of the Future Directions Program, as well as its implementation in various parishes. A look back of each year's theme over the past number of years was presented, allowing the Synod body to reminisce as well as see the thought processes behind each selection.

Kathy then moved on towards the outreach portion of their presentation, which highlighted some of the easy and not-so-easy things that were done at the two parishes Fr. Sr. leads in the Eastern Diocese of the PNCC. Their presentation included various videos and pictures from the events that they've led over the last few years. Extremely interesting was the different paths they took in service to community and parish during the current Covid-19 Pandemic.

After a break, Bishop-Elect Rafalko began his session on his 4-year vision of the Western Diocese. He began with recollecting the past works of former bishops of the diocese and quoted multiple verses of scripture, which reflected on love and freedom. “Let my people go” was his rallying cry during the opening point of his talk, which he came back around to at the close of sharing his vision for the future. He stated his desire for each parish to develop or perhaps redevelop their mission statements and mission work. Some parishes are operating without, and he communicated how vital it is for each parish to have a developed program.

He then moved to more direct work of the diocese, updating some diocesan groups to Commissions, and

speaking to opportunities for streamlining and realigning others to fit within his 4-year vision. Bishop-Elect offered his appointments for the upcoming 4 years. Many smiles were shared as responsibility for portions of the work of the Western Diocese was entrusted to them. Congratulations to all, and especially to the two newly-appointed Senior Priests of the Western Diocese: Very Rev. John Kowalczyk and Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski.

After a lunch break, we returned to enjoy another portion of the presentation prepared by Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich. For anyone who has ever experienced a presentation by Fr. Sr. Nemkovich, he graciously allows time in his presentations for reflection, especially as he includes popular Christian music videos. Discipleship examples from various Polish National Catholic Parishes were given, noting that these should be seen as celebrating accomplishments in ministry, ideas for parishes to follow, and not as proudly boasting before others.

Father Senior and Kathy were shown great appreciation for their time and effort in presenting to our Synod with a virtual standing ovation. Bishop-Elect Rafalko then addressed the Synod a final time, as did Prime Bishop Mikovsky.

Having completed all matters at hand, a call for adjournment was made, with the motion placed by the secretary of the Synod. Bishop-Elect offered his heartfelt thanks for all who made the Synod possible, and shared his excitement for the upcoming years of faith. After a blessing, the XVIII Synod of the Western Diocese concluded with hope and excitement for the future.

Submitted by Rev. Jason Soltysiak



Prime Bishop Mikovsky offered the Homily from Scranton, PA.



Limited delegates attended at All Saints Cathedral in Chicago, IL.

The Most Reverend Anthony A. Mikovsky, Ph.D.
Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church

along with

The Council of the Western Diocese
Polish National Catholic Church

request the honor of your presence at

Installation and Pontifical High Mass for
The Right Reverend Jaroslaw Rafalko

as

The Ninth Ordinary of the Western Diocese
Of the Polish National Catholic Church

and

Pastor of All Saints Cathedral

Saturday, the third of October, two thousand and twenty
at 10 o'clock in the morning

All Saints Polish National Catholic Cathedral
9201 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois

CELEBRATORY LUNCHEON FOR
RT. REV. JAROSLAW (JERRY) RAFALKO

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD, 2020 AT 1 PM

THE WHITE EAGLE
6839 NORTH MILWAUKEE AVENUE, NILES, ILLINOIS

PLEASE RESPOND WITH PAYMENT ON OR BEFORE
SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2020

CONTACT NAME _____

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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL PARISH

MAIL TO: 9201 W. HIGGINGS ROAD, CHICAGO, IL 60631

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CONTACT FATHER DAVID ROWINSKI AT 773-875-1438

Confirmation at SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish

Chicago, IL

During two separate Masses on Saturday, August 15, 2020, Bishop-Elect Jarosław Rafalko administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to two groups of young people at SS Cyril & Methodius Parish in Chicago, IL. Assisting during both Masses was Rev. Nazario Salas, Administrator of the parish.

Submitted by Bishop-Elect Jarosław Rafalko



Confirmation at Divine Word Parish

Chicago, IL

During three separate Masses on Saturday, August 22, 2020, Bishop-Elect Jarosław Rafalko administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to three groups of young members at Divine Word Parish in Chicago, IL. Rev. Antulio Alvarado, pastor, and the Sunday School teachers of the parish are to be commended for a job well done. May God Bless you all!

Submitted by Bishop-Elect Jarosław Rafalko



Holy Cross P.T.O. 2020 School Supply Drive

Hamtramck, MI

On a lovely, sunny, Tuesday morning, September 1st, after attending 8:00 am Mass, members of Holy Cross Parish delivered all of the school supply items collected over the summer to Tau Beta School on Hanley Street. We met with Principal Kimberly Winiarski. She was very gracious and very happy to receive (on behalf of their 285 students, grades K through 8) the many boxes of supplies and bags of winter coats, hats, and gloves we brought. We were not allowed to enter the building per Covid restrictions so the custodians unloaded the vehicles and brought the supplies into the school.

This was our P.T.O.'s 13th year of sponsoring the drive and once again we surprised the school when they saw what our parish family was able to buy in

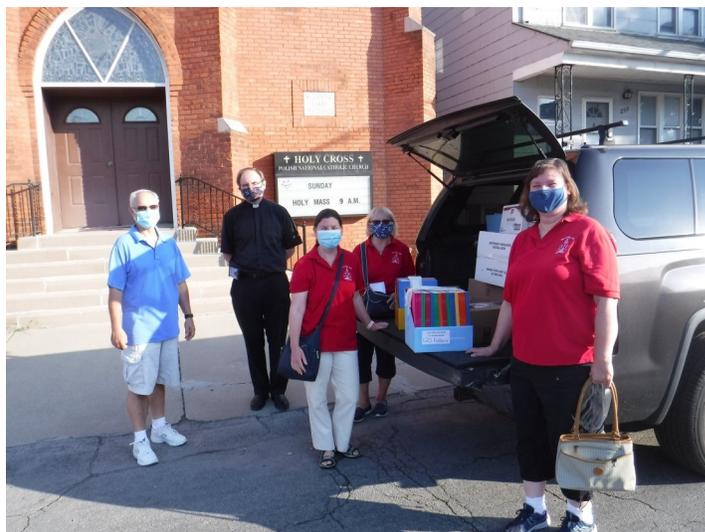
just a very short time. In this Covid-19 Pandemic world the students will be taught in-person and on-line as needed. More than ever, the teachers will still need every single item they receive to allow their classes to be prepared for the school year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who either donated funds, purchased items, packed boxes or helped to deliver all of the supplies. We especially give thanks to those who allowed us to use their vehicles for the trip. We filled a truck and an SUV!! A very special thank you to Father Senior Nowak, JoHanna Banicki, the Chockley family and Greg Filipowicz (I was there also)...our delivery team. God Bless each and every one of you!

Submitted by Nancy Wisbiski on behalf of the Holy Cross P.T.O.



School Supplies and Volunteers



The Delivery Crew



Unloading Vehicles at Tau Beta School



Donations Included Winter Outerwear and Dry Erase Boards



God's Field Appeal for Christmas Greetings

It is not too early to start thinking about publishing your Christmas greetings in the December issue of *God's Field*.

In past years your responses to our appeals have been very enthusiastic and we sincerely hope your generosity and support will continue this year.

The cost for publishing Christmas greetings for individuals, parishes and organizations is \$20.00. Due to space constraints in the page setup of the *God's Field*, greetings are limited to up to three (3) lines of text.

An online form can be found on the pncc.org website on the God's Field page (http://www.pncc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/online_greeting_form_2020.pdf).

ALL GREETINGS, ACCOMPANIED BY PAYMENTS, MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 30, 2020 IN ORDER TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE.

Please send 3-line greetings, along with payments in the form of check or money order payable to God's Field, to:

*God's Field - Christmas Greetings
National Church Center
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505*

Thank you for your continued support.

