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Resurrection of Christ - To See and Believe

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

As we gather on the morning of Easter Sunday, we find ourselves at the end of a very long Lent; a Lent which seems to have lasted, not just for 40 days, but rather since some time back in March of 2020, over 12 months ago. At the Resurrection Mass, we hear within the Holy Gospel of St. John the first account of the Apostles encountering the empty tomb: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scriptures, that He must rise from the dead." (John 20:1-9)

We encounter within this reading three individuals, all of whom knew our Lord Jesus very well and although all would come to faith in the risen Christ in time, they each had a different reaction to their first encounter with the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene first came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. Certainly she must have thought that something was amiss there. Maybe she even took a quick look into the tomb and realized that there was no

longer a body there. Her immediate reaction was that someone had taken the body and placed it elsewhere. She ran to tell this news to the Apostles. With some reflection we can understand that this was a perfectly reasonable response. Even though Mary Magdalene had experienced the forgiving power of Jesus, even though she had heard much of His teaching and experienced His goodness, she probably thought to herself, "People don't rise from the grave, so therefore someone else must have moved Jesus' body." Again on reflection we can certainly understand why she thought this at the time.

Next came Simon Peter. He started out running for the tomb with the other disciple, whom we take to be St. John. Although John arrived at the tomb first, he did not go in. It was Simon Peter, who was always a bit brash, who came running to the tomb and immediately went in. Scripture tells us that he saw the linen wrappings lying there and even the cloth that covered Jesus' head neatly rolled up in a place by itself. But in this encounter with the empty tomb Peter seems to be dumbstruck. We can imagine that it was overwhelming and he might not have been able to decide what to make of the whole situation.

Lastly, John, who arrived at the tomb first and bent down to peer inside, finally enters the tomb. He sees the wrappings and the cloth which covered Jesus' head, just as Peter did, but his response is one that is much stronger. With conviction we hear that John: "saw and believed." (John 20:8b)

As we face the difficulties and challenges within our world today we are often confronted by the exact same realities and response to Jesus Christ. There are very many people who consider Jesus to be a fine

(Continued on Page 3.)

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***God's Field — Rola Boza*
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Email articles and photos to secretarytopb@PNCC.org and to godsfld@PNCC.org. If your submission was successfully delivered via email, you will receive an acknowledgement email stating that your submission was received. To ensure clarity of graphics, please send JPEG or TIFF formatted pictures with a resolution of at least 300 pixels per inch. **Please identify individuals in photographs or caption photographs.**

Typewritten articles and photographs may be submitted to:

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Inside this Issue

Resurrection of Christ - To See and Believe - Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky	1
An Easter Reflection - Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky.....	4
Easter Traditions - Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky.....	6
Easter Greetings.....	8
Accepting Brightness - Rev. Jim Konicki	9
Parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church - History & Archives	10
National United Choirs Convention and Workshop.....	11
National United Choirs Music Scholarship	12
Honor Your Father on Father's Day.....	13
Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese	15
Central Diocese.....	16
Eastern Diocese	19
Western Diocese	22

(Resurrection of Christ - Continued from Page 1.)

example of ethical and moral teaching, but go no farther. They read the Gospels and the letters within the New Testament and claim that there is much there that can be imitated, but go no farther. Just like Mary Magdalene in the Gospel passage, they can't see beyond what they assume is true, or what they have been told is true by others and so while they can honor the moral teaching and philosophical outlook of Jesus, they do not look to the very heart of our Christian faith.

Like Simon Peter in the Gospel, many people have very little to say about faith in Jesus Christ, and oftentimes these are people of the Church as well. They enjoy what the Church has to offer, they think that it is something that should be supported and continue, but it does not flow from a faith in the Risen Jesus. If asked if they believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, they would answer "yes," but they are unsure just exactly how far that belief goes. They can't give a concrete answer to where exactly does their faith lie.

And of course lastly we have the answer of John, "he saw and believed." Now we can't think that at this moment, because John was an Apostle, that he knew and understood everything concerning his faith and belief in Jesus Christ. In fact we know that certainly was not the case, because the Scriptures tell us: "For as yet they did not understand the scripture, that He must rise from the dead." (John 20:9) But this growth in knowledge and understanding came from the basic point of faith, of encounter and belief. Within this Gospel John shows us that total understanding is not needed to come to faith. Rather through a strong encounter with the Risen Lord, our faith then moves us to greater understanding.

My brothers and sisters, we too will have the opportunity this year to gather within our parishes churches to once again encounter Christ in the Easter Sacrament and within the body of Christ that is the membership of our parishes. The pandemic is slowly beginning to subside and more importantly our parishes have gone to great lengths to make sure that everyone is kept safe when they are within our buildings. The Church calls us and our Lord calls us to take part in the great mystery of faith that we encounter on Easter morning and every Sunday when we gather together for worship. And like the Apostles and followers of Jesus we are called to continue to be in His presence. We know that while there may have been some different reactions to the encounter of the

empty tomb, eventually all these individuals came to a strong and abiding faith in the Risen Lord Jesus. This shows us that it is really never too late for us to have that faith and commitment to Jesus.

Each of us is called to be with the Lord Jesus, to encounter Him within the liturgy of the Church, to worship Him as we gather for prayer and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, to receive Him in Holy Communion, and then to spread the message of His resurrection to all we meet. The Christian is called to be an "Alleluia" from head to toe. Each and every part of our lives, each and every aspect of our lives must reflect the fact the Jesus is risen from the dead, and that our lives are changed because of it.

My brothers and sisters, let this Easter season be a chance for us to rededicate ourselves to Christ and His Holy Church. He has died on the cross to bring us the forgiveness of our sins and has risen from the dead to bring us new life in His name. He calls us then to unite ourselves with Him and to worship Him in the Holy Eucharist, the memorial of His Passion, Death and Resurrection. He calls us also to share and witness to the Resurrection of Christ in how we live our daily lives and how we work together to build up the kingdom of God in our homes and within our churches.

As we now see this time of difficulty beginning to come to an end, with many getting vaccines and while still being careful to protect our health, now is the time to once again take up the call of our Lord. It is once again time to come to our parish churches, to stand by the empty tomb, to meet the risen Jesus in worship and in Eucharist. Now is the time to stand with St. John to "see and believe." And then to continue to have our faith grow through our witness to the Christ Who still lives. Let us make an effort to be Easter people, people who know the living Christ, and who proclaim that He is at work within us and within our world.

To my brother bishops, to the priests and deacons of our Holy Church, to all of the faithful of the Polish National Catholic Church, I extend to you all my wishes for a truly joyous time of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ throughout the Easter season. May the Risen Jesus grant His blessing to us all and be with us as we continue to build His kingdom of truth, love and mercy, within each and every home, within all of our parish churches and throughout our world.

Christ is Risen!!! He is Risen, Indeed!!!

An Easter Reflection

During the celebration of the Easter Vigil, the liturgy provides four “Exhortations” which may be read in preparation for the Easter Mass of the Resurrection that will occur on the following Day. It is unfortunate that all those who attend the Mass of Easter Sunday do not participate in the full liturgies of Holy Week. These liturgies, when taken together allow us to more fully understand and appreciate what the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us in our journey of life in the Church.

We share with the readers of God's Field, the Third Exhortation which speaks of the teachings of Jesus Christ concerning the Church and that its work, the ongoing witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ raised from the dead, is accomplished through us today in the ministry of the Church.

The Third Exhortation

Beloved, we are comforted that God, our Father, not only showed Himself as our highest aim, but also left us an abundant teaching of how we are to strive toward this aim. This is what our Lord Jesus Christ says of Himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” (*John 14:6a*) How are we to go His most often winding, difficult and narrow way? Where are we to find the truth that is often unreachable by the human mind? How are we to find eternal life?

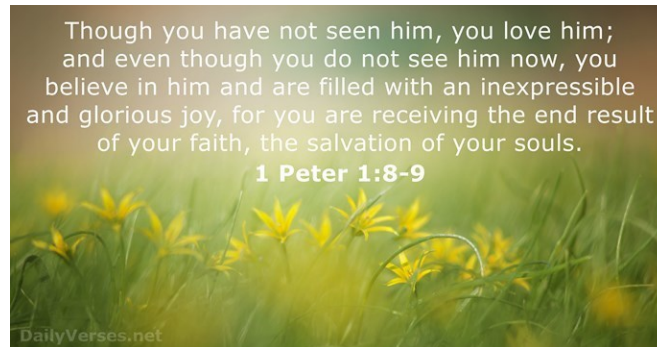


God planted the way and means by which these are to be found in the inexhaustible riches of His Church, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ. This is what He said about Himself: “Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” (*Matthew 16:18a*)

What is this rock? It is the faith of Simon the Apostle, called Peter Cephas, that Jesus is the Son of God. This faith does not flow from the wisdom of man, from the human mind, but rather from the revelation of God the Father, Who is in heaven. Therefore, whoever lives abundantly in this revealed faith, that faith declaring that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, is also a component part of the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ and a participant in God's kingdom.



For our comfort and confirmation the blessed Apostle Peter tells us: “[You are] by the power of God safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, that is imperishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen Him you love Him; even though you do not see Him now yet you believe in Him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, made careful search and inquiry.” (*1 Peter 1:5-10*)



The Savior Himself tells us: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He takes away every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does He prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in Me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit because without Me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in Me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become My disciples. As the Father loves Me, so I also love you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy might be in you and your joy might be complete. This is My commandment; love one another as I love you.” (*John 15:1-12*)



And so, beloved, if we continue with faith in Christ’s love, in word and deed, we have the assurance of the Savior Himself that we are His Church, and therefore have a part in the kingdom of God.

Let us pray. Lord God, You are an immovable power and an eternal Light. Look graciously on this mystery, which is Your whole Church, and the vehicle of our salvation, with unceasing direction and sufficient assistance. May the whole world witness that You raise up the humble, and make old things new. May all humanity come to know that all things return to their pristine existence through Jesus Christ, You Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Easter Traditions

Along with the liturgies of our Holy Church, our faith also flows outward into our lives through the various traditions that accompany us in our journey of faith. One such tradition is the blessing of Easter foods. This blessing usually takes place within our parish churches on Holy Saturday but it may also occur in homes with a visit from the clergy.

These foods are usually shared on Easter Sunday when all return from Holy Mass. After the strengthening of our souls in prayer and Holy Communion, we then strengthen our bodies with these delicious foods. It is also a reminder that our faith in Jesus Christ extends outside of the Church into the everyday parts of our lives as well. It extends even further than just the one day of Easter, as these foods are enjoyed throughout the following week until they are all consumed.

The traditional foods to be blessed at Easter each have a symbolic meaning that relates to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: Eggs, which symbolize life and Christ's resurrection; Easter Bread, symbolizing Jesus as the Bread of Life; A Butter Lamb, representing Jesus as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world; Salt, representing purification and Christ directing us to be salt and light; Horseradish, symbolic of the bitter sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to forgive our sins and; Ham and Kielbasa, symbolic of great joy and abundance. Other items may also be blessed to be eaten as an extension of our Easter joy.

The Easter Blessing consists of four blessing prayers, each for a particular portion of these foods.

The Blessing of Flesh Food – O God, Who by Your servant Moses did command Your people in their deliverance from Egypt to kill a lamb in the symbol of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and did prescribe that its blood be used to mark their door-posts, bless and sanctify this flesh food which we are to receive, and grant that being nourished we willingly perform all those duties which You do assign us.

The Blessing of Bread – Lord Jesus Christ, Bread of the Angels, true bread of everlasting life, bless this bread as You did bless the five loaves in the desert and grant that Your faithful people who thankfully partake of it, may have health of soul and body.

The Blessing of Eggs – Let Your blessing, O Lord, come upon these eggs, that Your faithful people who thankfully partake of them, may find them healthful food in honor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The General Blessing – Almighty and Everlasting God, Creator of all things, humbly we ask You to bless and sanctify this Easter food which we receive from Your bounty, and grant that it be for the strengthening of body and soul. We ask this in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Who with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns God, for ever and ever. Amen.

It is our hope that your celebration of Easter was a joyous one, in joining with others in the celebration of Holy Mass and the reception of Holy Communion, receiving the Risen Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is also our hope that the celebration was extended in the enjoyment of the blessed Easter foods.

If you have not participated in this lovely tradition to extend the joy of Easter, we encourage you to make a resolution to participate as we prepare for the celebration of Resurrection of Christ next year.





Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky blesses Easter foods after returning from the Easter Vigil celebrated at St. Stanislaus Cathedral in Scranton, PA.



Annual Easter Greetings



He is risen!
Death could not hold Him!
Supreme Council of the P.N.C.C.

We wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Easter!
Prime Bishop Emeritus Robert and Florence Nemkovich
Cape Coral, Florida

Happy Easter!
Michael R. & Mary A. Gorgol Mietlicki
Scotch Plains, NJ

The Adoration Society of Holy Trinity Cathedral,
Manchester, NH - Susan Bodner, President
Have a happy and blessed Easter!

Eastern Diocese United Women's Societies
Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Diocesan Bishop
Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, Chaplain

All Saints Cathedral Parish, Chicago, IL
Rt. Rev. Jarosław Rafalko, Pastor
Christ has risen! Christ has risen, indeed!

Easter blessings! *Wesołego Alleluja!*
Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa Parish, Latham, NY
Rev. Mark A. Gnidzinski & Parish Committee

Church of Resurrection, Brooklyn, NY
Wishing all a blessed Easter! *Wesołego Alleluja!*
Rev. Andrew Koterba & Parish Committee

Holy Cross Parish — Hamtramck, MI
Fr. Sr. Jarosław Nowak, Pastor
Alleluia! Love is alive!

Holy Family Parish
1921 Eden Park Blvd., McKeesport, PA 15132
"Christ has risen!" Christ has risen, indeed!

Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Dupont, PA
Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid
Have a happy and blessed Easter!

Wesołego Alleluja!

Holy Trinity P.N.C.C., Plantsville, CT
Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Pastor

Our Savior Chapel, Tripp Park, Scranton, PA
The Right Rev. Bernard J. Nowicki, Pastor
Alleluia — Christ is risen!

Wesołego Alleluja!

Our Saviour's Parish, Woonsocket, RI
Rev. Henryk Wos, Pastor

St. Casimir's P.N.C.C., Lowell, MA
Rev. Andrzej Tenus
Parish Committee

St. Mary Parish — South Bend, IN
www.stmarypncc.org
Wishing all a blessed Easter season!

May this Easter be a first step
for so many to return to the Lord.
St. Mary's Parish, Parma, OH

Wesołego Alleluja! Christ is risen!
St. Michael the Archangel Parish
Cedar Lake, IN

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!
Cathedral Parish of St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr
Scranton, PA

St. Valentine Parish, Northampton, MA
Rev. Adam Czarnecki, Pastor
Życzenia Radosnych Świąt Wielkanonnych!

Polish National Union of America
District 1 — Northeast PA and Lower NY
May you have a blessed Easter!

Polish National Union District Six
Christine Wachna, District Director;
Officers and Members — Happy Easter!

Easter Greetings from the staff of *God's Field*.

Controller: Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky

Editor: Julie Orzell



Accepting Brightness

Rev. Jim Konicki, Chair, P.N.C.C. Vocations Commission

Bright Week is the name used within our Church for the seven days beginning on Easter Sunday and continuing up to (but not including) the following Sunday, which is known as Low Sunday.

According to the 66th canon of the Council in Trullo, also known as the Quinisext Council, held in Constantinople in 692:

from the holy day of the Resurrection of Christ our God until New Sunday for a whole week the faithful in the Holy Churches should continually be repeating psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, rejoicing and celebrating Christ, and attending to the reading of the Divine Scriptures and delighting in the Holy Mysteries. For in this way shall we be exalted with Christ; raised up together with Him.”

Interestingly, the entire week is considered to be one continuous day. This reminds us of the one continuous day to come in the Heavenly Kingdom where we will rejoice without ceasing: the place of no sunset. Look at the Council’s words. We are to concentrate on rejoicing, celebrating, and delighting all the time.

As the brothers and sisters of the Resurrected Christ, the now adopted children of our Heavenly Father, we recall in this time, in the fifty days of Easter celebration (why we do not fast on Fridays in the Easter season), and on each Sunday our bright new life.

New and eternal life in Jesus is acceptance of the brightness Jesus gained for us on the cross and in the resurrection. Our life is no longer dim or gloom.

There is no more ending or stopping. There is no more death. We only have the bright light of life in Jesus in one continuous eternal day.

As God’s family we have to address two problems.

The first, people do not know about the brightness Jesus offers. They walk about, heads down, seeing only struggle, division, dissension, difficulty, and defeat. We can solve that problem by celebrating and proclaiming the brightness offered to all in Jesus. We have to proclaim it.

The second, and perhaps the more difficult problem, is that we ourselves fail to appreciate the brightness we already possess. We can solve that problem by constantly reminding ourselves and by celebrating in bright week, in the fifty days of Easter, and every Sunday.

Addressing problems with solutions takes a couple of things; one being courageous proactiveness, and the other being courageous leadership. In this Easter Season, and every day, let us accept the brightness we already have and the fact that we must step up to realize solutions to lives lived without an understanding or appreciation of Jesus’ brightness.

You are called to offer, as a priest or deacon, the brightness of Christ to those who do not know, and to sustain the people of the Church in the brightness of the life they already possess. Step up today by calling or texting me at 518-522-0944 or by E-mailing me at frjim@holynamenc.org. You can also get info so you can join in on our monthly Zoom meeting.



Parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church

The Encyclopedia of Polish National Catholic Church (P.N.C.C.) will include an article about every parish that is or once was a parish of the P.N.C.C. The article should include the following data: Parish Name; Street Address, City, State, Zip Code; Diocese; date the parish opened; date the parish joined the P.N.C.C.; date the parish was incorporated; identification of whether the parish is still active; list of pastors names and their dates of service; list of organizations and societies in the parish; location of parish cemetery; identification of all parish locations and dates; significant events of the parish such as purchase of a new altar or stained glass windows, overcoming a natural disaster such as a flood or fire; date the parish closed; whether the parish has an Internet site, a Facebook page or other social media presence; and the ethnicity of the parish. In addition, the article should have photographs of both the interior and exterior of every parish church and a history of every parish.

This task might be easy for some parishes because short histories have been prepared for synods. Preparing these summaries for parishes which have closed may be somewhat more difficult. Information for some of these parishes may be available from the anniversary books prepared for the twenty-fifth, thirty-third and sixtieth anniversaries of the P.N.C.C.

There have been many questions about the Polish National Catholic Church over the past years; about

our Church, its beliefs, organizational structure, activities, societies, committees, commissions, mission activity, ecumenical activities, parishes, clergy and lay members. At the present time there is no single source of information about the Polish National Catholic Church. The Polish National Catholic Church History and Archives Commission plans to fill this void with the preparation of an Encyclopedia of the Polish National Catholic Church. It would also give the P.N.C.C. excellent exposure to other denominations, researchers, the academic community and genealogists. It could also be used to focus our energies in further developing this jewel of ours. Prime Bishop emeritus Robert M. Nemkovich often said that our light was hidden under a bushel. I believe that an Encyclopedia of the P.N.C.C. would lift this bushel. Your help is needed to make this a reality. Please write an article about your parish using the guidelines included in this article.

The content of the Encyclopedia has been given and described in the series of articles written by Joseph F. Seliga and published in *Rola Boża* (God's Field) in 2008 and 2021. Our Prime Bishop, Most Reverend Anthony A. Mikovsky, has given the Polish National Catholic Church History and Archives Commission permission to begin preparation of the Encyclopedia of the Polish National Catholic Church.

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





National United Choirs



35th General Convention/27th Music Workshop Concert & Auction

Prepare Ye Your Voice for the Lord

**Holy Cross Parish
2311 Pulaski Street
Hamtramck, MI 48212**

Convention – Wednesday, August 4th, 2021

Workshop (with Concert & Auction) – Thursday & Friday, August 5th & 6th, 2021

Convention Registration \$35 includes Mass, Dinner, Convention, and hospitality at hotel.

Workshop Registration \$115 includes music and supplies, lunch on Thursday and Friday, dinner on Thursday, hospitality at hotel on Thursday, reception after concert on Friday.

Lodging:

Hampton Inn & Suites
32420 Stephenson Highway
Madison Heights, MI 48071
248-585-8881

Room Rate: \$79 per night, plus taxes
Double or King rooms available

Call by **July 21, 2021** to reserve at room at this rate. Use the code **NUC**

Join us for a much-needed rejuvenation of our voices as we lift up our Lord in song! This workshop is dedicated to the memory of the late Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, in recognition of his dedication to the National United Choirs of the Polish National Catholic Church.

Registration Form

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Voice: Soprano ___ Alto ___ Tenor ___ Bass ___

If you have special dietary needs, please email Cathy Bilinski, nucscholarship@gmail.com

Convention & Workshop \$150 _____ Guest \$85 _____

Convention Only \$ 35 _____ Guest \$25 _____

Workshop Only \$115 _____ Guest \$60 _____

Make check payable to: **Detroit Circle - National United Choirs**

Send form and payment to: Cathy Bilinski

4051 Washington Crescent Drive

Troy, MI 48085

DEADLINE IS JUNE 1, 2021

Plans are being made for the Convention and the Workshop Sessions to be held on Zoom as well as in-person (not the concert rehearsals nor the concert).

More details will follow on those registration costs and particulars.



National United Choirs 2021 Music Scholarship Awards

Applications are now available! Are you currently taking paid music lessons for organ, piano, voice, or another instrument? Do you participate in the music ministry of your parish? If so, you may be eligible for a Music Scholarship from the National United Choirs.

All necessary criteria, instructions and forms can be downloaded from the scholarship website: www.nucmusicscholarship.weebly.com

Deadline for submission is May 1, 2021.

Pastors, Organists, and P.N.C.C. members: Please encourage those eligible in your parish to apply to this very rewarding program that has provided financial assistance to so many people in the P.N.C.C. over the past 54 years.

Any questions can be submitted to: Cathy A. Bilinski, Music Scholarship Administrator,
nucscholarship@gmail.com

Honor Your Father



We pray for all fathers, both lay and clergy, past and present, to express our gratitude, remembrance and love for all they have done for our families and for our Church.

For continued support of our Clergy Pension Fund and to acknowledge ALL FATHERS, we will publish in the June issue of God's Field — Rola Boza your name and the name of the father you wish to acknowledge or remember.

For each acknowledgement or remembrance, we are requesting a minimum donation of \$25.00, payable to the Clergy Pension Fund P.N.C.C.

We feel that this will have a two-fold affect, by acknowledging or remembering OUR FATHERS, LAY OR CLERGY, for all they have done for us and also to bolster our Clergy Pension Fund in order to show our continued support for our Clergy/our Church Fathers who make so many sacrifices each day in service to our Church.

All donations received go toward the Clergy Pension Fund of the Polish National Catholic Church.

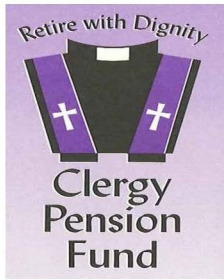
Please complete the form on the opposite page and submit it prior to June 1, 2021, along with your minimum donation of \$25.00 per name, to the

Clergy Pension Fund
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

Please make checks payable to the "Clergy Pension Fund P.N.C.C."

Thank you for your support.

P.N.C.C. Clergy Pension Fund Committee



Honor Your Father on Father's Day

(Limit of one name per minimum \$25.00 donation)

I wish to remember (please circle) my Pastor, Father, Grandfather, or Other _____

I wish to remember (please circle) my Pastor, Father, Grandfather, or Other _____

I wish to remember (please circle) my Pastor, Father, Grandfather, or Other _____

I wish to remember (please circle) my Pastor, Father, Grandfather, or Other _____

Remembered by: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____



Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese**Easter Message from the Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese****Rt. Rev. John Mack****“In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!”**

The words above are taken from a hymn entitled, “Hymn of Promise” written by Natalie Sleeth a number of year ago. It speaks, of course, of the process by which a caterpillar forms a cocoon or *chrysalis* and transforms itself into a beautiful butterfly that emerges from the cocoon when the time is right. The emergence of the butterfly is one of the many symbols that we associate with Easter. Others include: Easter eggs, beautiful spring flowers, pussy willows and many more. To me, the cocoon is so very significant to relate to the last twelve months of what all of us have been experiencing.

All of us have been placed into a cocoon of fear, of anxiety, of doubt and spiritual loss by forces from outside of us and forces that are beyond our control this past year. It has been absolutely bewildering, frustrating, and mind-boggling dealing with issues of employment, relationships, schooling, personal and community health. just to name a few. Even as I sit at my computer, I am aware of yet another parishioner who needs sacraments of the sick and Holy Eucharist because she is failing and yet, I cannot gain access to the nursing facility so that I could bring her the very things, as a faithful Catholic, she needs to receive. This, because of guidelines that are said to protect the health of all and yet in reality restrict and remove the rights (especially spiritual ones) of so many. It is certainly a travesty of epic proportions. Just ask loved ones who have been denied access to husbands, wives, aging parents and grandparents, many of whom die alone and afraid. They have been shattered and had their hearts broken by the experience.

Our local ministerium is just now concluding a series of Lenten services entitled, “Places of the Passion.” One of the weeks highlighted the Garden of Gethsemane. The homilist for that week related how he felt as if he and many others around Him had gone through a year-long Garden of Gethsemane. On the fateful night in that garden Jesus prayed intensely, seeking the strength, the obedience and the power to faithfully fulfill His Father’s plan for mankind’s salvation. Jesus’s prayer was so intense that He experienced *hematidrosis*; drops of blood dripping from his pores. So many people have experienced intense prayer in their own lives these past few months. We have prayed for family, friends, our local communities and our faith communities. We have faithfully prayed for first responders, medical personnel and those who have lost loved ones. In our sufferings, we have shared in the sufferings of Christ.

Even though Jesus knew His fate would bring Him to Calvary the next day, He pressed on. Even as He walked to Calvary, enduring the jeers and taunts of the angry crowd He remained faithful. Even as He hung on the cross, He forgave those who persecuted Him and offered up salvation to the two criminals hanging with Him. Why? Because He trusted in the will of His Heavenly Father. He trusted God’s plan. He knew that beyond the pain, agony and degradation of Calvary, the Father would raise Him on the Third Day and He would stake His claim of victory over death. This promise was not only for Christ, but for all who live and believe in His promise of Eternal Life.

Why has most of the world been so consumed with fear over the preponderance of death this past year? Numbers and fatalities were the focus of most every newscast and plastered on every front page. Could it be that the reason is because of an absence of faith in our society? For so many there exists a lack of intrinsic belief that there is something more beyond this life. Perhaps the person’s only recognition of a “god” comes when they softly speak the phrase: “Thank God it wasn’t me this time” as they view the tragedy of life. Ultimately, it is because most of our modern world fails to see anything spiritual, but dwells only in the physical. This is certainly not to negate any of the loss that so many people have experienced in the death of loved ones this past year. Ask Jesus. He knows human death firsthand, yet He is the One, the Only One who can break for us the shackles of death. He is the Only One who can offer us eternity with the Father.

Returning to our chrysalis and emerging butterfly, the fact remains: The caterpillar’s old body dies inside the chrysalis; it literally disintegrates. What emerges is a new body with beautiful wings appearing in about two

(Continued on bottom of Page 22.)

Central Diocese**Easter Message from the Bishop of the Central Diocese****Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Easter is the greatest celebration in the Christian calendar, and happily this year Easter will be a less muted affair than it necessarily was last year.

For me, Easter feels a long time in coming this year. It seems to me Lent has lasted not seven weeks but rather twelve months all the way from Lent last year. Over that period of time, we have become increasingly anxious and concerned. Fear has stalked so many of us, and too many of us have been made to endure our own personal excruciating Good Fridays with the death of loved ones, relatives and friends. Others who were spared that burning sorrow have known the death of happiness, health and perhaps even the death of hope.

The Gospels record how during Jesus' final earthly weeks anxiety and concern grew amongst His followers who were on edge. The outlook wasn't good back then.

We pray that soon we may be able to take up ever more fully those things that bring us happiness, be in good health, and see hope being restored.

Restoring happiness, well-being and hope are what the words at the heart of Easter did for the first disciples, and what they continue to do for us. At the heart of Easter are the astonishing words, "He is Risen!"

These words changed the course of history.

Because of those words the disciples were filled with happiness, even in their bewilderment. Those whose lives had been turned upside down, and dreams shattered, found life was healthier when lived in the light of the Resurrection. Hope filled the air, beginning with that small group of men and women who had lived alongside Jesus, then spreading out to all the world.

Yet, for all its joy and exultation, Easter never hides from hard daily realities. Instead, it points to God in Jesus bringing life out of death, and transforming darkness into light, and turning fear into tomorrow's joy, and promising hope out of hopelessness.

I think we've seen some of that Easter light already breaking out around us amidst the gloom. Just think of the incredible blessing of the warp speed approach to the production of millions of doses of vaccines available for us and our fellow citizens with more and more available for more of us every day.

The emergency services continue to play their essential part in supporting and helping us; and who hasn't benefited from those unsung heroes who keep supermarket shelves restocked, maintain food supplies, and get up early to ensure deliveries reach us.

Then there are the millions of small acts of kindness that we have witnessed. Community organizing the like of which we've never seen before. Neighbors talking to each other rather than about each other. People caring for strangers and the most vulnerable.

These were the early signs of Easter beginning to dawn; light breaking through into a bleak reality.

When we allow the Easter light to shine through the cracks in our lives, and the Easter song to be sung in our communities, we begin to experience God's healing, restoration and re-enlivening.

Many centuries ago, St Augustine of Hippo proclaimed: "We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!" That's a song worth discovering and singing, especially in these days brightening from darkness to light. So, it's time now to return to church for uplift and fellowship, albeit distanced. Come to church during Holy Week and then on the holiest of days to worship and rejoice! It's safe within our diocesan parish church buildings because of all our virus mitigating processes, and because our liturgies have been changed and adjusted to achieve those same mitigation goals.

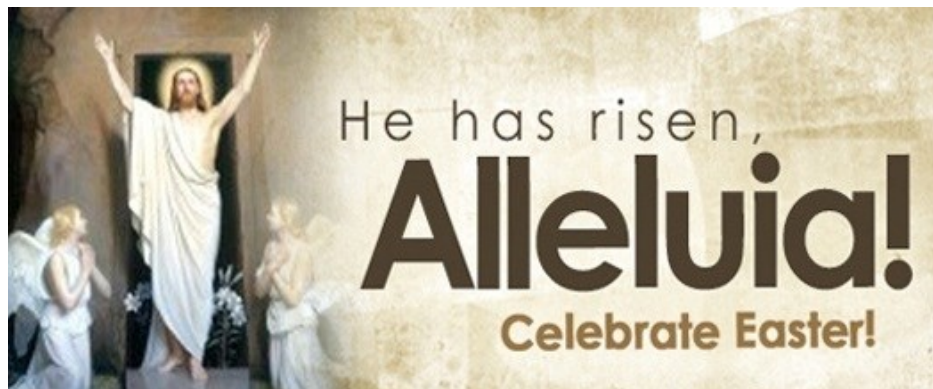
(Continued on bottom of Page 20.)

Holy Week at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish Dupont, PA

All Holy Week Liturgies were very well attended at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA. A multitude of parishioners and friends came to pray and adore Jesus Christ during the Good Friday Vigil - the church was occupied continuously throughout the day.

The Holy Saturday liturgy concluded with the blessing of Easter Baskets. Easter Sunday Masses were joyfully celebrated with many parishioners and children, even amidst the ongoing pandemic. Special thanks to those who helped decorate the church for Easter, and to all readers and ushers who assisted during the liturgies.

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



Lenten Events at Holy Name of Jesus Parish

Schenectady, NY

On March 31, 2021, 310 pounds of donated food that was collected at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY, was delivered to the Schenectady Community Ministries food pantry. Thank you everyone for being so generous in your Lenten giving and sacrifice!



On Saturday, April 3rd, Fr. Jim Konicki, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY, was invited to gather with members of Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church in Albany, NY to focus on the Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross. Many thanks to them for their great kindness in inviting Fr. Jim to join with them on this special day.



The blessing of Polish Easter food baskets, the Świąconka, is a beloved tradition that takes place on Holy Saturday when families bring a sampling of Easter foods to be blessed in church. This year Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY, prepared blessed baskets that people could pre-order and have delivered or pick up.

The Easter food baskets were blessed by Fr. Jim Konicki on Saturday, April 3rd. The baskets contained over 20 imported and locally made items to eat and enjoy on Easter morning, including:

- Kielbasa
- Hard Boiled Eggs
- Homemade Babka
- Beet Horseradish
- Culinary Salt
- Homemade Butter Lamb
- Fruits
- Homemade Kruschiki (Angel Wings)
- Juice
- Tapered Candle
- Traditional Palms
- Pisanki Decorative Egg
- Polish Candies
- Informational Booklet
- And more!



Eastern Diocese**Easter Message from the Bishop of the Eastern Diocese****Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski****The Lord is Risen ! Savor the Experience**

The Church's celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord is more than just a one day celebration. Not just for one day, but for fifty days! We experience Easter for fifty days, until the solemnity of Pentecost.

We embark on a fifty day celebration. Forty days of Lenten introspection are now followed by fifty days of an outward and visible proclamation of our hope in Jesus Christ. By His death and Resurrection, Jesus has lifted humanity from the darkness of death to the light of resurrection life.

The Church's liturgy will focus on the many aspects that make up the Resurrection Story; from the empty tomb to the appearance in the garden, from the appearance on the Emmaus Road to the appearance in the locked Upper Room. We will see Jesus showing his hands to Saint Thomas and His breakfast appearance at the seashore. We will hear Jesus' three-fold restitution of Saint Peter and His commendation of the Great Commission to His disciples.

And throughout the entire fifty days we will be reminded of the great privilege that is ours as believers in the Resurrection. Jeanne Hunt, in her book *Celebrating Saints and Seasons* c.2010, St. Anthony Messenger Press, says, "Keep the joy of Easter morning in your spirits throughout the season. Do everything you can to promote the Alleluia feeling at home, in church, and in the classroom. Easter is not just a holiday full of bunnies and eggs; it is an attitude of inner joy that stays with us long after the jelly beans are gone.

"The earth is returning to life and so is the liturgical year. The paschal mystery is right before our eyes. We see it as the first strains of Alleluia ring through the dawn of Easter and we see it in the spring behavior of plants and animals. These are the mystical days of the paschal mystery that keep us hopeful and keep us believing in something beyond our understanding. The grace of April is the grace of renewal and abundant life. It is to be savored and experienced rather than explained."

Keep this in mind as you plan your April and May activities this year. Share with your children the way the Resurrection is reflected in the butterflies they see and the hard boiled eggs they share at the Polish *Święconka* meal. Take a trip to a local zoo or garden with your family and experience the newborn animals, the newly blossomed crocus, tulips, and other plants. Spring is breaking out all over and this Spring reminds us of our new birth through Christ's victory.

The world is emerging from the shadows of death of a terrible Covid virus. People are being vaccinated. The hope of the world is that humanity will learn from this experience and that a future pandemic will not take us unprepared.

So the Christian, no longer burdened by the sins that Christ took upon Himself, is free to express the Hope the Resurrection gives and the ability to share that hope with others. Death will never take us unprepared because Jesus has overcome death.

When people are happy, when they rejoice, they sing! People love expressing themselves through song. Don't lock the songs of Easter in your Churches. Sing them at home. Sing them with friends. Sing them at family gatherings or on long walks through the neighborhood or on nature trails.

Jeanne Hunt also shares the following prayer: "Risen Christ, surround us in your mysterious light. Search out the darkest places of our souls and flood the shadows of doubt and despair with your marvelous presence. We are standing speechless at the empty tomb. Give us the courage to believe what we do not see. Give us the faith to understand that you are not within the tomb. Once and for all the victory has been won and you invite us to walk away from death's door and discover new life."

(Continued on Page 20.)

(Easter Message from the Bishop of the Eastern Diocese - Continued from Page 19.)

Allow me to share the first, third and fourth verses of Christ is Risen, from our Church's Hymnal:

*Christ is risen, sing O Christian, Wipe the tears of grief away.
He who would now seek salvation, Come rejoice with us this day.
He has risen, Lord in glory, As He had foretold His vict'ry.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Let us sing forth, Alleluia.*

*God Almighty, God of nature, Reigns above all He has made,
Crushes walls, concedes no barrier, Rises boldly from the grave.
Guards fall down in trepidation, Motionless in fear before Him.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Let us sing forth, Alleluia.*

*Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, Humbly we would ask of Thee,
That we might know Thy salvation, And o'er death, know victory,
That we might come with Thy chosen, And behold Thee, Lord of heaven,
Alleluia, alleluia, Let us sing forth, Alleluia.*

Together with all the clergy and faithful of the Eastern Diocese I wish to everyone who reads this message an Easter of joy! **Chrystus zmartwychwstał ! Prawdziwie zmartwychwstał ! The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!**



(Easter Message from the Bishop of the Central Diocese - Continued from Page 16.)

My prayer, then, is that the hope of Easter will begin to lessen fears that you may have, precisely because the new life we have in the victorious and resurrected Christ is being reflected in our new life dawning around us. The protective vaccines are available to us, and we see reduced rates of virus infection. There is a budding yet steady movement towards the normalcy we've been denied for a year with different states reopening and certain restrictions being lifted in certain places.

The meaning of Easter presents us with hope, and hope always wins because Christ gives Easter its meaning. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! May God bless you all.

Blessed Trinity Parish Continues to Give to the Community

Fall River, MA

On March 3rd, Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA, wrapped up the Youth Lenten Day of Caring and Service with some special deliveries and shipping. An entire box full of cards was delivered to a local nursing rehabilitation facility, and many cards were put in the mail. Prayer blankets were dropped off to brothers and sisters in need of healing and several were shipped out in the mail. Discipleship 2021 continues. Thanks to these amazing youth for their efforts that continue to touch others with the Love of Jesus.



On Passion Sunday, March 21st, Blessed Trinity Parish concluded the Drive to help the Fall River Deaconess Home Women’s Shelter. Items collected included hand sanitizer, face mask, KN95s, Crocs, art supplies, paint, paper, coloring books, board games, puzzles and hygiene products. This collection was part of an effort by parishioner Elana and her school. What a blessing to be able to help out and support these young women. Many thanks to Elena for spearheading this collection!



On March 30th, members of Blessed Trinity Parish, Fall River, MA, dropped off three vehicles full of food that was donated by parishioners during the parish’s 2021 Lenten Food Drive. The items were taken to the Citizens for Citizens Food Pantry in Fall River. Thanks to all who donated - what a great effort and Lenten Almsgiving! Great to love and care for others in precious Name of Jesus.



Western Diocese**Easter Message from the Bishop of the Western Diocese****Rt. Rev. Jarosław Rafalko**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

With God's grace we celebrate Easter this year in our churches. We have experienced many challenges during the last year, but thanks to the creativity and initiative of our pastors, our people and our parishes, members of the church attended Holy Mass virtually or in person following all pandemic guidelines.

This Easter we will look differently on that light stream coming to us from the glorified wounds of the Risen Christ. With tears in our eyes we will remember on Easter Sunday and throughout the Easter season the souls of those who have died from COVID 19, and also their families. We will remember those who were and are on the front line responding to the needs of others: doctors, nurses, caregivers, cleaners, providers of transportation, law and order forces, volunteers, our bishops, priests, deacons, supermarket employees, and so very many others. We will remember our families and the efforts of each of us to care for our elderly and our neighbors.

This year, since we can do a little more, I encourage everyone to participate in all the Holy Week liturgies in person. I encourage you to participate in person during your Easter Sunday Masses. Let the glorious Alleluia sounds come again joyously from our hearts. Our parishes follow all pandemic guidelines and the churches are very safe places to be. Let's also take this opportunity to pray that the Risen Christ might lead a joyous return of all our members and friends to a full, active and conscious participation in our Sunday Masses throughout the year.

Thank you for continuing to support our parishes and the ministries of our Church. The Church continues to serve the spiritual and physical needs of people during this crisis. Our Easter joy, strengthened by our faith, hope and trust in the power of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection must shine brighter than ever this year. The cross of this crisis offers us the opportunity for a renewed and lasting appreciation for the gift of faith.

The gift of faith in God has the power to transform our lives.

Please remember that you and all your families are in my heart and in my prayers as we celebrate *the Holy Week*, Easter Sunday, and the Easter Season.

He is Risen! Alleluia!

(Easter Message from the Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese - Continued from Page 15.)

weeks. If you see a partially-opened cocoon, naturalists advise us that we mustn't touch that cocoon; we "cannot help the butterfly emerge." The butterfly must struggle and emerge on its own. My prayer for you my dear ones, is that you emerge this spring from your cocoon. Most certainly, it has been a struggle for all. Nonetheless, spread your newly-formed colorful wings and fly as does the beautiful butterfly. Have belief and faith in all the promises of the Father, but especially in the Easter Promise of Eternal Life. Let us not reserve our joyous Easter greeting of "Christ is Risen, He is Indeed, Risen – Alleluia" for only fifty days until Pentecost, but joyously proclaim these words to the world every day. Christ's presence in the world will only enter in, when it is brought there by faithful followers of our Risen Lord.

I close with a few stanzas of the Hymn of Promise: most appropriate for this festive Feast Day,

"In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see. . . . In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity, in our doubt there is believing, in our life, eternity. In our death a resurrection, at the last, a victory, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

May your Easter be Blessed with every promise of Our Risen and Victorious Lord!

Wesołego Alleluja! Prawdziwie Alleluja!



Lenten Events at St. Mary Parish South Bend, IN

In Lent 2020, it was difficult to do anything, and many events ended up cancelled. Lent 2021 was much different, and more closely resembled a normal season. We launched a drive to support the Oliver Apartments in South Bend, which is supported housing for the homeless. Supported housing is a newer concept where community partners and resources help teach residents job skills and living skills so that they will be able to find employment and eventually be able to live in their own homes. Our parish supported this endeavor right from the beginning. The facility is almost 3 years old and is an emerald level eco friendly efficient building. It is at full capacity, with 36 residents living in separate single bedroom units.



Members and items to Oliver Apartments

We frequently check with the staff to see if the residents need anything. We were specifically asked for toilet paper, laundry detergent, liquid soap, and disinfecting wipes. We were also asked not to donate hand sanitizer, as the alcohol content is too tempting for those who have addictions to alcohol. We had a great drive and collected 177 rolls of toilet paper, 36 hand soap dispensers, 16 containers of disinfecting wipes, 14 bottles of laundry detergent, 7 bottles of dish soap, 3 paper towels, food, and tooth brushes. Fr Sr Charles will also conduct weekly Bible Study, as

requested by the residents. The staff and residents will invite our parishioners for a cookout this summer as a token of their appreciation!

We were so disappointed because we had to cancel last year's Lord's Supper Remembrance, but made up for it this year with new plans and ideas. We were also able to have plenty of space between households. It was a great, spirit filled event, consisting of songs, readings, prayer, and food items similar to what was found at the time of the Lord's Supper. The evening was very uplifting and we are already making plans for next year! We Praise God for His protection, guidance, and inspiration!

Submitted by Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski



Scenes from the Lord's Supper Remembrance

