



Official Publication of the Polish National Catholic Church

Volume 102

April 2024

Issue #4

The Extension of Easter

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

As we find ourselves at the end of the month of April, we continue in the weeks of Easter. In fact, if we consider the entirety of the Sundays which revolve around the Solemnity of the Resurrection, there are those which are a preparation for Easter and those which are the extension. Before Easter there are 3 Pre-Lenten Sundays, 5 Lenten Sundays and then Palm Sunday for a total of 9 weeks. Following Easter there are 6 more Sundays in the Easter season, followed by the Solemnities of Pentecost, Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi. Again, there are a total of 9 weeks. Beginning this year as well the Polish National Catholic Church will celebrate the Solemnity of the Word of God following Corpus Christi Sunday (this year June 9) so in fact the extension of Easter is one week longer than the preparation.

I mention this because people often mention to me that the Lenten season seems so long to them, but they never mention that reality for the Easter extension even though its longer. I suppose this is in part because the Lenten season places demands upon us in terms of the Lenten disciplines, and most of us aren't fond of demands. But I suppose it is also because when Lent begins we know that we are looking forward to Easter. We see it from 9 weeks away as Pre-Lent begins, then 6 weeks away when we come to Great Lent and so on.

When we consider the weeks following the great celebration of Easter, we don't often consider it in reference to that day at all, especially as we get further from it. The resurrection of the Lord is somehow in the past, even if it's the very recent past and we focus

rather on the appearances of the Lord to His disciples and finally upon the ascension of Jesus to heaven and the Descent of the Holy Spirit followed by the great solemnities of the time of the Church. This is an attitude that we need to begin to change. We must keep our connection to the Risen Christ.

Yes, these weeks after Easter each have their own themes. The first few deal primarily with the encounters of the disciples with the Risen Lord, in fact most occurring on the day of, and the week following, the resurrection. In the following weeks, we move on to the celebration of our Lord as the Good Shepherd and in the fifth week to a focus of our Lord as the vine and all of us, as His disciples, being attached to Him, abiding in Him.

This image is the one that we need to begin to change our view of what is actually occurring during the entire Easter season as well as when we enter the time of the Church, the solemnities following Easter and then Ordinary Time. In all of these celebrations we are called to abide in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And this means to abide in all that He is as He lives today. At Easter we celebrated the triumph of Jesus over sin and death, and we confess that in and through this we too are forgiven and saved. As we celebrate this freedom from our sins, we join ourselves with the passion and death of Jesus as well as His resurrection. It is partly for this reason that we do not put away the crosses within our Churches, or even our homes, when Lent is over. The passion and death of Jesus is always a part of who we are. But

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Publication Information**

The deadline for article submissions is the 1st of the month; online publication date is mid-month. Submissions received after the 1st will be included in the following month’s issue.

Email articles and photos to secretarytopb@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:

God’s Field
Polish National Catholic Church
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505-4109

Identification Statement

The Official Publication of the Polish National Catholic Church, **GOD’S FIELD - ROLA BOŻA**, is published monthly for the U.S. **\$48.00**; Canada **\$62.00**; Foreign **\$87.50 per subscription year** (March through February) by

**Polish National Catholic Church
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505-4109**

Individual issues of *God’s Field* are available for purchase from the National Church Center for \$2.00 each (pickup) or prepaid \$4.00 each (U.S.); \$5.25 each (Canada); \$7.30 (Foreign).

Send payments and address changes to:

**GOD’S FIELD
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505-4109**

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Opinions expressed in various articles published in *God’s Field* do not necessarily reflect the doctrine of the P.N.C.C.

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we must bring the same attitude in consideration of the Resurrection of Christ. If we reflect on the matter, we must say that we live today in our Christian faith because Christ lives. We must be intimately connected to the resurrection life of Christ.

As we hear the Gospel on the Fifth Sunday of Easter, we must reflect on the full implications of the image. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in Me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit He prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in Me as I abide in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in Me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become My disciples." (John 15:1-8)

We notice that the word "abide" occurs many times in this particular Gospel selection. The word from Greek which translates to 'abide' means a little more than just 'to dwell'. It means to 'remain', 'be present', to even to 'be held and kept'. We must then bring all of these realities to the entirety of our life of prayer, worship and work. When we gather for Holy Mass we encounter there the risen Christ, and it is not just a brief encounter. We do not leave Christ at the door when we return to our homes and to our lives. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ 'remains' with us as we go about our daily lives. And if we give our lives over to Him, if His 'word abides in us' then we will begin to be changed and perfected by His presence. This is what it means to "bear fruit" for God, the vine-grower.

Certainly we know that this 'fruit' is shown in the actions of loving kindness that we can show for one another. Every act of kindness or love to another, every good and kind word of encouragement or help,

every good and holy thought are certainly good fruit. But it must go even deeper than this. These actions, or words, or thoughts are not what will save us. It is being configured to Christ, abiding in Him. Then when we abide in Christ all of these actions, words and thoughts will flow from a life united to the resurrection life of Jesus.

It is in this that the last definition of 'abide' may be the most important for us, 'to be held and kept.' Jesus desires to hold our lives united to His and He desires that we are captured for God and His kingdom. But we certainly do have freewill. Jesus will not impose this on us. So ultimately, we must ask ourselves, 'Do I desire to be held and kept by Jesus?' And also, "What am I doing to help this become a reality?"

We recall here another Gospel of the Easter season, the Road to Emmaus, "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them the things about Himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if He were going on. But they urged Him strongly, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So He went in to stay with them. When He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him." (Luke 24:27-31a)

If we desire to be held and kept by Jesus we must pray that "He stays with us." We must invite Him into our lives and all that we are. We must allow ourselves to feel the burning of our hearts within us as we hear His word and allow it to abide in us. Then at these times, and most fully in the breaking of the bread, that is the Eucharist, we will fully encounter the Risen Christ as these disciples did.

In the extension of the Easter season that we are presently in and in its continuation in the next many weeks, seek to be held and kept by the Risen Christ. Surrender your life, will and all that you are to Him. Abide in Christ the vine, allow the vine-grower to prune you to bear good and holy fruit for the kingdom, and then the risen and living Christ will fully abide in you. And you abide in Him, you will have life because of Jesus.

P.N.C.C. Future Direction
April 2024
Mary, Our Mother

Introduction

As we continue in this year of 2024, the Future Direction writings will focus some of this year's reflections on the various aspects of our Catholic Christianity, especially as it concerns our daily living, life of prayer and liturgical worship. We will reflect on the catechism and various liturgical aspects of the Church, to see how we can enter more deeply into our Catholic faith, strengthen our own spiritual lives and begin to change ourselves as we grow ever closer to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Scripture

John 2:3-5 – When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Luke 1:26-31 – In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him, Jesus.”

Luke 2:41-51 – Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ... When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ... His mother said to him, “Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? ... Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Acts 1:13-14 – When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Reflection

In the upcoming month of May, the Church will focus our attention on the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Various liturgical celebrations will be held throughout the month within our parishes. There will be May Crownings of Mary, celebrations of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and individuals attention to Mary's intercession for us all in the daily praying of the Hail Mary or the Rosary.

As I have the opportunity to celebrate the Litany once a week in the Cathedral during this entire month, I am always moved by the portion of the Litany that attach various images to the person of Mary. Within the Litany we sing of Mary as “Seat of Wisdom, Cause of our joy, Spiritual Vessel, Vessel of honor, House of gold, Ark of the Covenant, and Morning Star.” These fall in two sections of the Litany and they allow us to focus our attention on the role of Mary in salvation history and therefore in our salvation.

Each of these names show us that in our devotion and honoring of Mary, she always points to Jesus. Mary is the “Seat” where Wisdom, Jesus our Lord, sits. Mary is the “Cause” of our joy in bringing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into the world in His nativity. Mary is the “Vessel” that carried the Lord Jesus in her womb. Mary was the “House” that contained the pure gold of Jesus. Mary is the “Ark” that carried the new covenant, Jesus Christ. Mary is the “Morning Star” that appears early in the morning before the sun (Son) appears.

(Continued on bottom of Page 6.)

95th Anniversary of Spójnia Farm

Blessing of the Great Hall Renovations

July 4, 2024

We invite all to join us at Spójnia Farm and the Bishop Hodur Retreat and Recreation Center for a day of worship, fellowship and enjoyment on July 4, 2024.

On July 4, 2024 we honor the 95th anniversary of the blessing and dedication of the Spójnia Farm property by Bishop Francis Hodur on July 4, 1929. Holy Mass will be celebrated by Prime Bishop Mikovsky at 11:00 a.m. followed by the blessing and dedication of the major renovation of the Great Hall/Pavilion.

Members of the Spójnia, Inc. Board of Directors will be on hand to show all the wonderful updates for Spójnia, Farm as well as our plans for years to come.

During the afternoon, the United Y.M.S. of R. will host a “Family Day Celebration” with prizes, games, activities and, of course, delicious food – Homemade potato pancakes, gołąbki, kluski, pierogi, kielbasa with sauerkraut and other picnic foods.

This day is also the opening of the United Y.M.S. of R. Kurs Encampment, so you will have the opportunity to encounter and spend time with many youth from around the P.N.C.C.

Spójnia Farm - The Home We Share

Andrew Humphreys

Spójnia, Inc Board of Directors

As Polish National Catholics, we share a lot in common with one another. No matter where we are from, these commonalities transcend across our faith beginning with the very first generations of our church. Language, food, traditions, worship, and music; these are just some of the similarities we all share. There is something though that separates us from one another and can often be the most difficult to overcome; distance. From New England to New Jersey, Scranton, Buffalo, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, and locations further scattered throughout this country and abroad, the families and friendships created within our church sometimes have great distances to overcome to be present with one another. Distance though has a great enemy. One which motivates us to defeat distance by almost any means, this being our desire to be home. Home can mean many things to each of us, but anywhere one can find comfort, friendship, and safety, one can find home. Which leads us to begin thinking about all those places we once considered home or still do. A place to which no matter the distance we all desire to return, to rekindle friendships and memories, to find peace or comfort, or just to feel a sense of safety and wellbeing. Luckily enough, whether you realize it or not, there is a home which all Polish National Catholics share. A home where many of us have formed the strongest friendships of our entire life, learned to be leaders within the church, felt the call of vocations for the first time, met our spouses, found peace in the nature that surrounds us, and looked forward to returning year after year. If distance has kept you away for several years or maybe you have never visited, consider this your call to return home.

95 Years ago, Bishop Francis Hodur went in search of this home. A place where all Polish National Catholics could gather for religious retreats, family and parish reunions, children’s encampments, patriotic picnics, a dwelling for the elderly, and work for new immigrants. After considering many locations throughout the country, this home was found in Waymart, Pennsylvania at what he called. “Spójnia Farm.” Bishop Hodur himself, found at Spójnia Farm, qualities that bring together a home we desire to be at. Fast forward those 95 years to today, and Bishop Hodur’s vision and mission for this home still lives on at Spójnia Farm. Many changes have taken place these past 95 years on the property, but the true characteristics of a home still shine to this day. Imagine for a moment; the houses of the town fading behind you as you round the corner onto the Spójnia Farm property, taking one quick look around you, you begin to understand why as Polish National Catholics, we are meant to be there. Much work and dedicated efforts have taken place at Spójnia farm over the last ten years, to ensure Bishop Hodur’s vision and mission for Spójnia Farm, lives on for generations to come. So, they too may all have a place to share, that they can call home.

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(Spójnia Farm - The Home We Share- Continued from Page 5.)

I urge you to take this as your invitation to return home or come for the first time. Not sure when? That is an easy answer, July 4th, 2024. Join us as we celebrate the 95th anniversary of Spójnia Farm, the dedication and blessing of the completely renovated Great Hall (formerly known as the pavilion/cafeteria), welcome the campers at their arrival for the Kurs encampment, participate in Holy Mass celebrated by our Prime Bishop, enjoy a wonderful meal of ethnic and patriotic foods, and take this opportunity to visit with friends both new and old. I also encourage you to start a conversation within your parish, about having a family weekend at Spójnia Farm.

I simply say to you, this is the home we share, so let us use it as a home we share. I think you will find the updates completed over the past few years nothing short of incredible. Being able to live out our faith together as one, at the home we all share, may be one of the greatest treasures we hold as Polish National Catholics. There are not many times and places in our lives where we can find this sense of peace and comfort, so I encourage you to come and see. Come to see what home feels like or rediscover this feeling you once had. I often try to imagine what Bishop Hodur would say and think about the updates and progress that have taken place at Spójnia Farm, and I always come to the same conclusion. I think he and any other individual who has spent any amount of time at Spójnia Farm would reencounter the same feelings they felt the very first time they stepped foot on this property. The feeling of being Home. I look forward to seeing you all on July 4th, 2024 and may God bless you all.

(May 2024 Future Direction Message - Continued from Page 4.)

In our reflection upon these various ways in which we consider the role of Mary, we can then begin to think of ways in which we might fulfill the same roles, for ourselves, for each other and for the entire church, the people of God. We must recognize that, like Mary, we are called to carry Jesus Christ into the world. We are to be the place where His wisdom (His word) sits, or resides, among our parishes and our families. For ourselves we are to be the House where the pure gold, the unmatched precious gift, of the presence of Jesus in Holy Communion comes to be with each of us.

Action Item

As an action item during this upcoming May, attend the liturgical celebrations of the Blessed Virgin Mary within your parish church. And while you do so, spend some time in reflection upon what is said within these services. As you pray ask our Lord to allow you to fulfill the important role of a disciple like Mary did. Be inspired by the Scripture readings above, when Mary says, “Do whatever Jesus tells you.” Model your life after that of Mary as being one that is “devoting yourself to prayer.”

If you cannot attend these services or if they are not available near you. Pray the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary as it is found within the PNCC Prayer Book. Also you may augment these devotions to Mary by the recitation of the Hail Mary or by the praying of the Rosary. All of these prayers allow us to grow closer to Mary, and especially to her entire focus of pointing to Jesus.

Prayer to Conclude the Litany

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be found worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O Lord, we ask You, pour forth Your grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We continue to implement the five themes the Synod determined for our Future Direction Committee:

- Growth and Membership
- Increase Spirituality
- Lifelong Learning
- Sacred Vocations
- Community Involvement and Presence

United Y.M.S. of R.

of the

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Mr. Nicholas Kazinetz, President



March 25, 2024

Dismas, the Good Thief, NT

My dear brothers of the Polish National Catholic Church:

The men of the Young Men's Society of the Resurrection have remained steadfast in their collective effort to heed those infamous words of "Always Forward, Never Back." To that end, we have sustained some long-running events and created new ones for the good of the Polish National Catholic Church.

This is our seventh iteration of our Men's Spiritual Retreat in Waymart, PA, graciously monikered: "Bishop Stanley Bilinski Memorial Men's Spiritual Retreat." Bishop Bilinski offered our organization so much support as the idea for this event was being formed, made manifest by his presence and participation. It takes place this year Wednesday-Saturday, June 12-15, 2024.

Our retreat is titled "Iron Sharpens Iron" and is based on scripture from *Proverbs 27:17: As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.* This was a theme we have been swirling around for a few years and are excited to have it lead us in 2024. Echoing the theme, we have invited a speaker of no little renown, Sgt. Earl Granville, to be part of our retreat: Sgt. Granville is a combat veteran who sustained numerous injuries and has lived to tell his story. He is originally local to the area as well and is looking forward to sharing time with the men at our retreat.

For past attendees, we look forward to being back in the "lower kitchen" for our meals, now the Great Hall, which has been tremendously upgraded with our group being the first to use it in retreat. The "back kitchen" area of the Great Hall will feature new professional-level "bar fixtures" like a pool table, darts, and more to keep fellowship flowing in the downtime.

Save the date! We prayerfully invite you to be with the men of our beloved church for a few days before summer begins. For info, visit the United YMSofR Facebook page or register today on our retreat site: <https://sites.google.com/view/ymsofrmensretreat/home>

Sincerely in Jesus Christ our Lord,

2024 Bp. Stanley Bilinski Memorial Spiritual Retreat Planning Sub-Committee



Please join us for the 2024 National YMSofR
 Bp. Stanley Bilinski Memorial Spiritual Retreat
 Bp. Hodur Retreat Center, Waymart, PA:

June 12-15, 2024

Open to all men-

\$150 for 4 days/3 nights

Contact unitedymsofr@gmail.com for more information!



**7th Annual National YMSofR
Bishop Bilinski Memorial Spiritual Retreat
Bp. Hodur Retreat & Recreation Center
554 Honesdale Rd. Waymart, PA 18472
June 12-15, 2024**

“Iron Sharpens Iron”

Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”

Items to Bring

For your room:

- Bedding (pillow & pillowcase, twin sheet, blanket or sleeping bag)
- Hangers for the closet
- Laundry Bag
- A fan (it may get warm or it may not)
- Phone Charger

For the Bathroom

(bathrooms are shared, though they have individual shower stalls, individual bathroom stalls, and separated sinks):

- Towels/Washcloths
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, razor, etc.)
- Flip flops/slides/shower shoes/crocs

In general:

- A ring of kielbasa! We are having a tasting the first night and are hoping for each region represented by those in attendance – Show us your kielbasa! Smoked, fresh, exotic, etc!
- Warm clothes (it will get chilly at night)
- Outdoor clothes (ones you might not mind getting dirty)
- Poncho/umbrella
- Swimming Trunks & extra towel (it might get hot!)
- A Bible
- Flashlight
- Hiking boots or shoes and athletic shoes- good to have a spare
- Golf clubs (for a possible trip if you play)
- Outdoor chair (for around a bonfire...or wherever)

**7th Annual National YMSofR
Bishop Bilinski Memorial Spiritual Retreat
Bp. Hodur Retreat & Recreation Center
554 Honesdale Rd. Waymart, PA 18472
June 12-15, 2024**

“Iron Sharpens Iron”

Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”

BHRRRC is Bishop Hodur Retreat & Recreation Center (main building),

GH is Great Hall – Kitchen & Lower Hall. All meals will take place here

Day 1 – Wednesday, June 12, 2024

3-5pm – Arrivals

5:30pm – Dinner

7pm – Evening Prayer – Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

7:30pm (BHRRRC) – Opening session – Rules & Regulations, Questions

8pm (GH) – Icebreakers – “Show us Your Kielbasa”

9pm – Bonfire and/or evening singalong

Day 2 – Thursday June 13, 2024

8am – Breakfast

9:15am – Flag Raising

9:30am – Holy Mass of the Day

11am – Retreat Session

12:00 Noon – Afternoon Prayer & Prayer before lunch

12:15 – Lunch

1pm – 6pm – Free Time – Choices:

A: Lake Wallenpaupack & More Tour

B: 9-hole golf outing

C: Personal Retreat Time (Pool, Reflection, Sunbathing, nothing)

D: Trip to local PNCC Sites

6:30pm – Dinner (Outdoor BBQ on the patio)

7pm-7:30pm – Eucharistic Devotion #1 – “Jesus, Pre-Figured”

7:30-8pm – Eucharistic Devotion #2– “Jesus, Revealed”

8-8:30pm – Eucharistic Devotion #3 – “Jesus, Lived”

9pm – Evening Activity

Day 3 – Friday June 14, 2024 – Flag Day

8am – Breakfast

9:15am – Flag Raising – (special prayers for Flag Day and blessing of a new Flag)

9:30am – Retreat Session

10:45am – Holy Mass of the Day

12pm – Prayer before Lunch and Lunch

1:15-2:15pm – Silent time – technology off!

2:30-3:30pm – Word of God Study

3:30-5:30pm – Free time

5:30pm – Dinner

7pm (BHRRC) – Speaker – Sgt. Earl Granville

8pm –Refreshments and time with Sgt. Granville

9pm – Evening Prayer – Litany of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Day 4 – Saturday June 15, 2024

7:45am – Morning Prayer & Flag Raising-

8am – Breakfast

9am – Retreat Session

10:30am – Holy Mass to close our Spiritual Retreat

11:30am – Closing Lunch & final words

**7th Annual National YMSofR
Bishop Bilinski Memorial Spiritual Retreat
Bp. Hodur Retreat & Recreation Center
554 Honesdale Rd. Waymart, PA 18472
June 12-15, 2024**

“Iron Sharpens Iron”

Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Name of Your Parish (if applicable) _____

City _____ State _____

Do you plan on staying from Wed.- Sat (\$150) _____ or Thu-Sat (\$125) _____

Do you need transportation from the airport/train stations? Yes No

Airline _____ Flight # _____ (if known) Airport _____

Name of person to contact in case of an emergency: _____

Home/Work # _____ cell _____

for any questions, contact Fr. Jason Soltysiak: frjason82@gmail.com or 216-978-6645

Please send completed form & appropriate check per person by **Friday, June 7** to:
Andrew Humphreys 1054 Hamlin Highway, Lake Ariel, PA 18436 or make pay arrangements
with him by calling/texting 570-561-5187

****Plan to arrive Wednesday, June 12, 3-5pm
or by Thursday morning, 9:30am***

Faith and Psychology on the Path to Enduring Love

Rev. Dr. Stan Jasiurkowski

Introduction

Have you ever looked into your partner's eyes and felt swept away by the overwhelming surge of love and connection? Last month, as I facilitated the Oxygen retreat for couples, a moment of profound intimacy unfolded. During one session, I invited them to engage in a simple yet powerful exercise: to simply gaze into each other's eyes, holding the space of presence without words. As a soft melody filled the air, a beautiful transformation took place. Emotions stirred, glistening in tear-filled eyes and silent connections blossomed from the shared experience. It was a powerful reminder of the depth of love that can be found simply by being present, together. Perhaps you still remember those early days of dating that were filled with stolen glances, whispered secrets, and the promise of a future together. While initial sparks may ignite a flame, enduring love necessitates more than mere infatuation. Long-term love demands commitment and continuous effort. In this article, I want to offer guidance and tools for cultivating lasting intimacy in your long-term relationship. Drawing upon the wisdom of the Bible and evidence-based psychological principles, this guide aims to equip you with the knowledge and resources necessary to nurture a love that truly stands the test of time.

God's Design for Love and Marriage

The Bible presents a beautiful picture of love as a reflection of God's character. In Genesis, we witness the creation of Eve as a companion and helper for Adam, highlighting the inherent need for connection and partnership for human beings (Genesis 2:18). Throughout scripture, we encounter many texts emphasizing the importance of love, commitment, and selflessness, all of which serve as fundamental building blocks for a strong and lasting relationship.

During many wedding ceremonies, couples and guests listen to the powerful words of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, often known as the "love chapter": "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor the other, it does not seek its own, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." This passage beautifully summarizes the essence of Christian love, urging us to prioritize our spouse's needs, practice forgiveness, and remain steadfast in our commitment even during challenging times.

While impressive gestures can be impactful, prioritizing your partner's needs is truly about the everyday actions that demonstrate your genuine care. This approach finds strong support in Philippians 2:3-4, which reminds us: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each to the interests of the others." Saint Paul challenges us to move beyond self-centeredness and actively seek to understand and fulfill our spouse's needs, fostering a sense of mutual respect and appreciation.

The key to effectively prioritizing your partner lies in genuine understanding. Therefore, you must take the time to learn about your spouse's personality, needs, preferred ways of receiving information, and how she or he feels most loved. This will guide you in making decisions that truly resonate with them, like choosing a thoughtful gift that aligns with their specific interests rather than your own.

The practice of forgiveness is deeply woven into the fabric of Christian teachings. Ephesians 4:31-32 instructs us to "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger. Stop yelling and speaking evil of one another. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Forgiveness is not excusing wrongdoing, but rather releasing ourselves from the burden of resentment and choosing to move forward in love and understanding. This aligns with the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35), illustrating the transformative power of forgiveness and its crucial role in maintaining healthy relationships.

Additionally, steadfast commitment forms the backbone of a long-term relationship, particularly during turbulent marriage times. Malachi 2:14-16 reminds us, "(...) the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of

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your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. 'The man who hates and divorces his wife,' says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'does violence to the one he should protect,' says the Lord Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful." This passage emphasizes the importance of honoring the vows made during marriage, even when faced with difficulties. It encourages couples to remain committed to their journey together, seeking guidance and support from God and their community.

By integrating these scriptural principles into our daily interactions, we cultivate a foundation of love that prioritizes our partner's well-being, embraces forgiveness, and remains firm in its commitment. This, coupled with the insights offered by psychology in the next section, equips us to navigate the complexities of marriage and nurture a love that endures through life's journey.

The Psychology of Love and Intimacy

Love is one of the most profound and powerful emotions that humans can experience. The Bible offers a powerful framework for understanding love and marriage, but understanding how our emotions and behaviors play a role is equally important. Psychology helps us navigate the complexities of human connection and provides tools for fostering intimacy in a long-term relationship. Love can be one of the most complex and challenging emotions, as it evolves and changes over time. In this section, we will explore how love develops and matures in romantic relationships, and how couples can enhance their intimacy and connection through emotional availability and vulnerability.

According to Sternberg's triangular theory of love, love consists of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment (Sternberg, 1986). Intimacy refers to the emotional closeness and connectedness that partners feel. Passion denotes the romantic and physical attraction that fuels the desire for physical touch and romance. Commitment refers to the decision to maintain the relationship in the long term, despite any difficulties or obstacles.

In his theory, Sternberg proposed that different types of love result from different combinations of these three components. For example, infatuation is love based on passion alone, without intimacy or commitment. Friendship is love based on intimacy alone, without passion or commitment. Romantic love is love based on intimacy and passion but without commitment. Consummate love is love that involves all three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment.

One of the common challenges that couples face is the transition from the initial stage of romantic love, characterized by intense passion, attraction, and infatuation, to a more mature stage of consummate love, characterized by deep affection, commitment, and friendship. This shift can be confusing and disappointing for some couples, who may mistake the decrease in excitement and freshness for a loss of love and interest. However, this transition does not mean that love is fading or dying. Rather, it means that love is maturing and deepening into a more stable and secure form of attachment, based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding. By recognizing and appreciating this shift, couples can avoid feeling disillusioned and dissatisfied with their relationship and instead focus on nurturing and strengthening their bond.

To illustrate this theory and its application, I want to share with you a vignette from one of my counseling encounters. I worked with John, a seasoned Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the Army, and Susan during a series of counseling sessions. This couple was married for 17 years at that time. They came to counseling feeling a lack of excitement in their relationship. They missed the spontaneity and passion they experienced during John's early deployments to Iraq when communication was limited, and he sent her handmade postcards out of Meat Ready to Eat (MRE) boxes – which she keeps as a treasure. Their reunions after deployments were filled with intense emotions, fun, and spontaneity. As I explored their concerns, I started discussing with them the concept of love evolving. Through guided exercises, they were able to identify and appreciate the deeper connection they had built, the shared experiences they had had, including John's deployments, and the comfort and security they found in each other during these most challenging times. This helped them shift their focus from chasing fleeting feelings of passion to appreciating the unique strength and stability of their mature love.

Understanding and embracing these psychological insights can empower you and your spouse to navigate the inevitable transitions in your relationship and nurture the various aspects of love that contribute to lasting intimacy.

Practical Strategies for Nurturing Lasting Intimacy

It is natural for daily routines and busy schedules to create distance between partners. One of the best ways to combat this is to set aside dedicated time for uninterrupted and quality conversations. This could be a daily check-in over coffee before work or a designated "date night" free from distractions. These moments offer valuable opportunities to share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences on a deeper level, and can make a big difference in improving your relationship.

Another way to strengthen your bond is to find areas of compatibility and engage in shared activities and hobbies. Whether it is taking long walks together, trying new things, or volunteering in the parish community, these experiences contribute to a sense of connection and partnership. It is important to remember that even small gestures of affection can go a long way in keeping your relationship strong. I teach my soldiers, for example, to write love notes or send short text messages to let their partners know they are thinking of them. Simple acts like giving a massage, bringing home flowers, or holding hands during a walk can make a big difference in keeping the flame of love burning bright.

The Power of Shared Purpose

In my previous article, I emphasized the importance of having shared visions, dreams, and plans with your partner. A common vision for the future, whether it is planning a family vacation, starting a business together, or simply volunteering in your church, provides a sense of purpose and direction that strengthens your bond. During your quality time together, it is important to work on discovering and nurturing your shared goals and dreams. This will inspire you to work effectively together towards a future that you both envision and like.

As a chaplain, I work with couples to help them create a safe and supportive space for each other. It is important to respect your wife or husband's boundaries and privacy, and not pressure them to share more than they are comfortable with. However, each partner must be honest and trustworthy, and not lie, cheat, or betray his or her spouse. It is also essential to be respectful and compassionate and not judge, criticize, or blame your partner. In every situation, it is crucial to be empathetic and understanding, and not dismiss, invalidate, or minimize your partner's feelings.

Being a secure partner means that you can seek and offer feedback and appreciation. Therefore, do not hesitate to ask your spouse for their opinion and advice on important matters, and value their input and perspective. If you ask for feedback, be open-minded and listen to your spouse, and do not push back or become defensive. It is your spouse's view and assessment, and you may disagree with it but do not push back or argue about it. If you do, they may never again provide honest feedback for you. Additionally, you should ask your partner for their feedback and suggestions on how to improve your relationship and be open and receptive to their ideas. Thank your partner for their contribution and participation in your relationship, and acknowledge their efforts and cooperation. Praise your partner for their growth and progress, and celebrate their successes and achievements.

Lastly, it is important to remember that while you have shared future objectives as a couple, your individual goals and aspirations are also important. Instead of being jealous, you must be each other's cheerleader, celebrate your achievements with pride, and offer encouragement and support when faced with challenges. A thriving relationship fosters individual growth alongside a shared foundation, as both partners feel secure in their mutual love.

Keeping Romance Alive

Physical affection is a powerful way to express love and maintain a deep connection with your partner. It can be as simple as holding hands, cuddling, offering hugs and kisses, or maintaining intimacy. By expressing affection through physical touch, you communicate care and strengthen your emotional bond.

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It's important to break away from daily routines and create special occasions to reignite the spark in your relationship. Plan regular date nights or weekend getaways, allowing you to focus solely on each other, reconnect, and create lasting memories. These dedicated times of shared experiences nurture excitement and keep the feeling of love alive. If you have small children, find a babysitter for your getaways, even if it's just for a couple of hours, as this time is the most valuable investment in your marriage.

Finally, don't forget to acknowledge and celebrate milestones along the way. Birthdays, anniversaries, and other significant moments in your relationship deserve recognition. Express your gratitude for your partner and appreciate their presence in your life. These expressions of appreciation, both big and small, fuel the fire of love and remind each other of the special bond you share.

When to Seek Help

Maintaining a healthy and fulfilling relationship can sometimes be challenging, even for the most committed couples. However, recognizing when to seek outside help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Here are some signs that professional guidance might be beneficial.

If you experience chronic conflict in your marriage, despite your best efforts, I would advise you to seek professional help from a pastor or Christian counselor. When it seems like every conversation turns into an argument, and you're unable to resolve conflicts constructively on your own, seeking professional guidance can equip you with valuable communication and conflict-resolution skills. Learning how to communicate effectively and navigate disagreements can significantly strengthen your relationship and prevent resentment from building up over time.

A persistent sense of emotional disconnection, loneliness, or lack of intimacy within the relationship can also be addressed through therapy. Couples can rediscover connections and rebuild their bond with the help of therapists, who provide a safe space for couples to explore the root causes of disconnect, learn effective communication tools, and develop strategies for nurturing emotional intimacy.

If you're considering separation or divorce, seeking professional support can help you explore all available options in a safe and objective setting. Therapy can help you gain clarity on your individual needs and desires, understand the potential consequences of your choices, and potentially work toward reconciliation if that is the goal for both partners. A therapist can offer guidance and support as you navigate this difficult decision-making process.

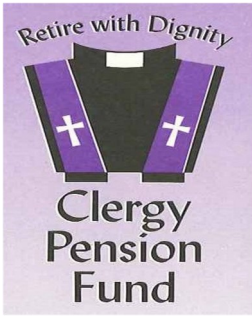
Pastors and Christian counselors can offer valuable guidance and support rooted in both faith and a psychological understanding of relationships. They can provide a safe space for couples to explore their challenges, navigate difficult conversations through the lens of their faith, and strengthen their bond within the context of their beliefs. Additionally, secular therapists can also offer effective tools and strategies for improving communication, managing conflict, and fostering healthier relationship dynamics, regardless of their religious background.

Conclusion

Cultivating everlasting love in marriage is an ongoing journey, not a destination. It requires dedication, effort, and a willingness to grow and learn together. By incorporating the principles discussed in this article – drawing upon both the wisdom of scripture and practical psychological insights – you can equip yourselves with the tools necessary to navigate the inevitable challenges and nurture a love that endures. Remember, choosing to love each other, day in and day out, is an act of commitment and devotion. Embrace the journey, celebrate the victories, and withstand the storms together. With faith, dedication, and the willingness to seek help when needed, your love has the potential to blossom and flourish for years to come, serving as a testament to the enduring power of love and commitment in God's eyes.

Reference

Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119-135.



Honor Your Father on Father's Day

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 cut out & complete the form, below, and submit it prior to June 1, 2024, 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

..... CUT HERE

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

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

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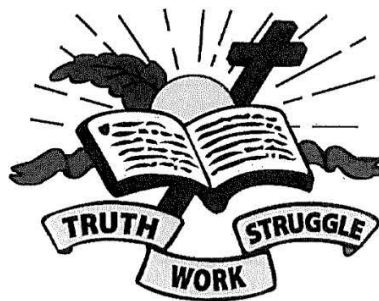
I wish to remember (please circle) my Pastor, Father, Grandfather, or Other

Remembered by: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Application for the Arthur W. Zabierek Scholarship



- Complete and sign the application.
- Include all necessary documentation.
- Applications must be submitted to:

Arthur W. Zabierek Scholarship Selection Committee
National Church Center
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

- All applications must be postmarked by June 15, 2024 to be eligible for the scholarship.
- Notification of the Selection Committee decision will occur by August 1, 2024.
- All awards will be mailed directly to the College or the University where the recipient will be attending in the Fall for tuition only.

Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese**Clergy Conference & Chrism Mass of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese****Holy Trinity Parish, Woodlawn, NY**

The Buffalo-Pittsburgh Clergy Conference was held on Tuesday, March 26th at Holy Trinity Parish in Woodlawn, NY. Bishop Mack celebrated the Chrism Mass at 7:00 pm that evening.



Central Diocese

St. Stanislaus Cathedral Meal in the Upper Room

Scranton, PA

On Sunday, March 17th, St. Stanislaus Cathedral held The Meal in the Upper Room in the Parish Hall. It was a truly moving and engaging experience that was beautifully assembled by volunteers from many organizations within the parish.



Front, seated: Very Rev. William Chromey, Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky; Rear, standing: Rev. Janusz Lucarz, Deacon Sean Dodd, Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid

Photos of Activities Held at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in March Dupont, PA



Parishioners Attending the Meal in the Upper Room
at St Stanislaus Cathedral



Children at Breakfast with the Bunny



Volunteers at Lenten Potato Pancake Dinner





Volunteers Who Decorated the Church for Easter



Easter Food Blessing

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



SOCL and Catechism Classes



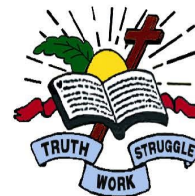
Easter Procession



Eastern Diocese



Eastern Diocese
 Polish National Catholic Church
 166 Pearl Street - Manchester, NH 03104
 (603) 668-5087
 Right Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, *Ordinary*
 Email: revpauls@yahoo.com
 Website: easterndiocesepncc.org



April 6, 2024

To: Parishes, Clergy, Laity, Diocesan Council and Societies of the Eastern Diocese

Re: Seventeenth Diocesan Synod – October 5, 2024

Dear Eastern Diocesan Faithful:

In accordance with Article 7, Part C, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Polish National Catholic Church, and trusting in the guidance of our Lord, Jesus Christ to guide us in our efforts, I hereby call the Seventeenth Synod of the Eastern Diocese to take place October 5, 2024. I also remind our diocesan council members that our next council meeting will take place on Saturday, June 1, 2024.

This year both the diocesan synod and the diocesan council meeting will once again be via Zoom. For reasons of time, cost, etc. the Zoom vehicle for bringing us together has proved its value. Therefore, prior to both the Synod and Council Meeting emails with the Zoom hyperlink details will be sent to all Synod delegates and council members.

The Diocesan Synod will begin at 10:00 AM with Prayer and will hopefully be completed in five hours or less. The Diocesan Council will also begin with prayer at 10:00 AM and will hopefully be completed in three hours.

In order to achieve these two schedules it will be necessary that all reports be submitted ahead of time for proper distribution and adequate study by all participants.

Therefore, I ask that all Synod delegates submit their e-mail addresses that they may receive the agenda and reports that will be presented. Further synod details will follow in the coming months.

both

If there have been any e-mail address changes for diocesan council members, I ask that these be forwarded to my office as well.

Because of the very active schedule and the Church calendar this year and the shoulder replacement surgery I experienced February 21 (and the approximate five-month recovery) I will be reaching to many of our diocesan faithful for assistance.

I am asking all those individuals and organizations who have traditionally presented reports to both the Diocesan Council and to the Synod prepare them and send them via e-mail to my office. Mailing two months prior to the Council and Synod will aid in the efficient distribution to all participants.

Agendas and further details regarding both the Synod and Diocesan Council will be sent out in the future. Should any have questions or concerns regarding either the Diocesan Synod or the annual diocesan council meeting, please share them with me either by e-mail or phone.

May God bless all of you in your service to Him, to our Eastern Diocesan family, and to the Polish National Catholic Church.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Rt Rev Paul Sobiechowski

✠ Paul
 Bishop, Eastern Diocese
 Polish National Catholic Church

Western Diocese

NE Seniorate of the Western Diocese Lenten Retreat
Resurrection Parish of the P.N.C.C., Temperance, MI



The Lenten Retreat of the Northeast Seniorate took place on Saturday, March 16 at Resurrection Polish National Catholic Church in Temperance, MI.

The title of the retreat was “LEnT: Love Everyone iN Truth”. Fr. Sr. Jarosław Nowak, Administrative Senior of the Northeast Seniorate, administrator of the host parish and pastor of Holy Cross in Hamtramck, MI, gave the welcome and the opening session on “Love”, which highlighted aspects of Love in scripture and beyond in a well put-together PowerPoint presentation.

Fr. Jim Ploskonka, reserve priest of the Western Diocese presented on “Everyone” next, which highlighted the scope of God’s creation as well as shining the light on some recent statistics in Christianity.

Fr. Jason Soltysiak, pastor of St. Mary’s in Parma, OH presented on “Truth”, focusing on the question that Pontius Pilate posed, “What is truth?”, ultimately focusing on how scripture reveals Jesus, our Savior, as truth.

Fr. Sr. Charles Zawistowski, administrator of the Western Diocese of the PNCC and pastor of St. Mary’s in South Bend, IN, was in attendance with his wife Susan and after a brief catechesis, imparted the Sacrament of Penance for all in attendance.

Fr. Henryk Galas, administrator of Our Savior in Dearborn Heights, MI, offered the blessing on lunch before we broke for the day. A delicious luncheon of cold cuts and all sorts of accoutrements was served to all those in attendance from each parish from the Seniorate.

Submitted by Rev. Jason Soltysiak



