

God's Field

100th Anniversary



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Issue #6

The Call to Preach the Word of God

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

In this year of 2023 several celebrations within our Holy Church come together, some by design and some merely by chance, but because this has happened it allows us to take note, as well as to see what we can discover concerning our Lord's call to us.

June has long been celebrated within the Polish National Catholic Church as Sacred Vocations Month, and we can assume that this is, in part, because June is the month containing Father's Day. While we honor our earthly fathers on the third Sunday of the month, our minds are also drawn to our spiritual fathers, the bishops, priests and deacons of our Holy Church.

We are reminded also that these spiritual fathers play a vital role within our lives, within our church and within our world. Therefore, each and every one of us must be concerned about the increase of vocations within the Church. We hear of this concern from the time of our Lord with the Gospel reading on the 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time and we express that concern in prayer during the days of this Sacred Vocations Month. In the Gospel of Matthew we read: "When [Jesus] saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" (Matthew 9:36-37)

To our reflection on this Gospel, we add our own prayers for the increase of priests from the PNCC Prayer Book: "Almighty and eternal God, in Your plan for our salvation You provide priests as shep-

herds for Your people. Inspire men to answer Your call to become priests, because the harvest is great but the laborers are few. Grant Your Church an increase of priests and keep them faithful in their love and service to You and the people entrusted to their care. Through their faith and ministry may Your light shine in the world and Your kingdom be built among us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Amen."

Certainly, this reflection and this prayer should be a part of our life not only throughout the month of June, Sacred Vocations Month, but in fact, if we hold dear the importance of the priests within our lives, will become a part of our regular prayer life. The desire for an increase of priests is something that should not be restricted to only one month, but must be a daily part of our strong relationship with Almighty God. Within the Book of Exodus that we hear on the 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, we hear God speaking to Moses concerning His relationship to His chosen people. On the mountain God says: "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is Mine, but you shall be for Me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:4b-6a)

Again, as we reflect on this reading, we see that we, as the members of the body of Christ, the members of God's Holy Church, have been grafted unto this priestly kingdom and holy nation. But if we are a priestly kingdom then we must offer sacrifice,

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the sacrifice of the Eucharistic worship and therefore we must have priests, called forth from the people to offer this sacrifice.

But within the Gospel reading that we cited above, we also see that our Lord connects together several actions with the calling of His apostles, His priests. First, we must realize that this truly is a call. The Gospel of Matthew reading continues: "Then Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness." (Matthew 10:1) After giving the names of the Apostles, then the Gospel says: "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ... As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (Matthew 10:5a, 7-8)

So then, the call of Jesus has two parts, a summons and a sending. At its face we know this because the priests of God's Church are called, or summoned, to a life of dedication and devotion to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and His body the Church, but this life of dedication and devotion is lived as they are sent into parish life to exercise this ministry among God's people.

But the thing is that because this summons and this sending is true for the priests of the Church, then it must also be true for all the people of God, exactly because we are priestly people. We are summoned to the feet of Jesus because the apostles, bishops and priests are summoned, we offer our sacrifice through the actions of the priests and bishops, we are sent into the world to live the gospel of Christ, exactly because the bishops and priests are sent into the world to preach this Word to us.

Within the Sunday reading the first instruction given to those sent is: "As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'" (Matthew 10:7) How fitting that we hear this gospel on Word of God Sunday within the Polish National Catholic Church. Beginning with the 1909 Synod, the Polish National Catholic Church has recognized that the Word of God, heard and preached, has sacramental power. The PNCC Catechism speaks to the importance of receiving this sacrament, not only when we gather for Holy Mass, but at any other time the people of God gather together. The Catechism states in Question #323: "Why should we receive the Sacrament of the Word of God?" With the answer: "We should receive the Sacrament of the Word of God because Christ commanded us to receive and proclaim it. Holy Scripture says this: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19); The

seed is the Word of God. (Luke 8:11); Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and observe it. (Luke 11:28); You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God. (1 Peter 1:23); One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4).

During the Holy Mass for Word of God Sunday we are called to show special honor to the Book of Gospels, both before, during and after the proclamation of the Gospel to the Church. This honor can be showed in many ways. We may carry the Gospel during the procession into Church; we may proclaim the gospel in the body of the Church to show that it is for all the people, the entire body of Christ; we may incense the Book of Gospels to show its importance and exalted position in the Liturgy of the Word. Along with these actions, the Book of Gospels can also be displayed during the entire liturgy in a prominent place to show that it is another way in which Christ is present within His Holy Church.

As we think of these ways in which we honor the Word of God within our parishes, we are also reminded that the open Bible forms an important feature within the symbol of the Polish National Catholic Church. But the Bible within the Symbol of the P.N.C.C. is not closed, it is open to remind us that the Word of God is not static, it is active. In fact, Scripture itself tells us: "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

This activity is explained further within our catechism where the question is given: "What is the Sacrament of the Word of God?" with the answer: "The Word of God is the sacrament through which we: 1) Learn so that we know the Divine Will of God; 2) Become strengthened in faith; 3) Are united with Christ our Lord, and; 4) Become better qualified to labor for the kingdom of God.

My brothers and sisters, as we focus on this last Sunday before we fully enter the season of Ordinary Time, the Sunday of the Word of God, let us realize that we must pray for the bishops, priests and deacons of the Church as they proclaim to us the Word of God. Let us pray for the increase of vocations that others will come to offer themselves for this important ministry of the Church. And also let us realize that like those priests, we are both summoned and sent. Summoned to gather at the feet of Jesus, in worship as we receive Him present in the Blessed Sacrament and in His Word, but also sent into the world to live a life, entirely united to Christ.

P.N.C.C. Future Direction
June 2023
True Enlightenment that Comes to Us
from the Sacred Scriptures

Introduction

As we continue with our reflections for the Future Direction Program of the Polish National Catholic Church, this month we begin to reflect on the actual resolution portion of the accepted document of the XXVI General Synod. Along with this, on the third Sunday following the Solemnity of Pentecost, the Polish National Catholic Church celebrates Word of God Sunday. This short season following the birth of the Church at Pentecost, celebrates the foundational elements of the Church: the faith in God revealed to us as the Holy Trinity; the food of the Church, the Body and Blood of Christ; and, within the Polish National Catholic Church, the Word of God, heard and preached, as making Christ present within the proclamation of Church.

Scripture

Hebrews 4:12 – Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Isaiah 55:10-11 – For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Reflection

Following all of the items which we acknowledge within the Resolution of the XXVI General Synod of the P.N.C.C., we come to the point where we state, “We hereby resolve.” The second point that is resolved is: “To seek the true enlightenment that comes to us from the Sacred Scriptures and through the holy teachings of the Church.”

Although the Sacred Scriptures are certainly foundational to every denomination of the Christian Church, within the Polish National Catholic Church there has been a particularly strong recognition of the ongoing reality of our Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Word of God within the worship and gatherings of the Church. At the General Synod in 1909, the delegates gathered, led by the teachings of Bishop Hodur, recognized that the Word of God, heard and preached, has sacramental power. As a Sacrament, this means that when the clergy preaches, and when we hear God's Word opened and explained to us, we come into a stronger and special relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ Himself told us, “Whoever listens to you listens to Me, and whoever rejects you rejects Me, and whoever rejects Me rejects the One Who sent Me.” (Luke 10:16)

So then we can see with this understanding that the ‘true enlightenment’ that we seek in the reading of Sacred Scripture, or the hearing of sermons, the Sacrament of the Word of God, within the Church, is in fact to hear the very words of Jesus spoken directly to us, and this means to us as individuals as well as to us as the community of Christians gathered within the parish to worship God and receive Jesus, present both within the Eucharist and within His Word.

Within the Ritual of the P.N.C.C. for the clergy, there is a meaningful reminder to the preacher: “In preaching the deacon, priest or bishop takes the place of Jesus Christ and the apostles, therefore his preaching should be grounded in Scripture and preached with dignity. Homilies should not stray into mundane matters or personal issues. The preacher should remember that the object of each homily is to: 1) Instruct the faithful in evangelical principles, 2) Uplift the faithful to holy and noble ideals and 3) Win as many as possible for Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.” (P.N.C.C. Ritual)

Although meant for the clergy, this instruction is also important for each of us who hears preaching as well. We should desire to receive the evangelical principles expounded by Jesus throughout His ministry. We should seek to be uplifted to the holy ideals of Christ found throughout the pages of Scripture. We should also seek to be changed through this preaching that through our changed lives we may help to win others for Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

(Continued on bottom of Page 5.)

Clergy Pension Fund

Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski
St. Mary Parish - South Bend, Indiana

As we approach Father's Day and the traditional time to think about supporting the Clergy Pension Fund, I would like to share something our parish has been doing to increase contributions. Ever since the inception of this fund, our parish would follow the norm and emphasize a good collection on Father's Day. Our parishioners have always been generous, following the inspiration of those who helped clear the way for our Church to create this fund.

Though our parish was never larger than average size, our collection usually placed us in the top 20 among parishes in the P.N.C.C. But about 8 years ago, we were inspired to try and do more. Recalling the efforts of the National Church's campaign to raise funds, we decided to begin our own Clergy Pension Fund "campaign" which would take place every year. In our first year, we determined that our campaign would begin on Father's Day, and continue until the end of July.

Each week we explained in the Bulletin and during announcements how the pension fund operates and how it is funded. We personalized it by describing the retired priests, or their surviving widows who received the pensions. We made it more real by detailing actual dollar amounts received, and that the only way to make improvements was to collect more. We were pleased that the response to that first effort was a near doubling of what was collected the previous year!

Each year going forward, we reminded the congregation of what was collected the previous year, and set a higher goal. We also invited our parish organizations to join in. Every year we met our increased goals, to the point that our annual campaign now is collecting more than \$2000 each year, 600% more than when we first started having campaigns. This has placed us in the top 5 of parishes in the P.N.C.C.

Our national Church leadership wants to increase the pension amount for our retired priests, or their surviving widows. But this can only be done if each parish strives to collect more each year. It's not as difficult as it seems. Having an annual campaign raises awareness not only among our members, but also relatives and friends of parishioners, and even those outside of the parish who may be interested in helping. Unexpected benefits may also come to the parish.

We are happy to share more of what we have learned over the years. If you would like to organize a campaign style annual effort, please contact us and we would be glad to help you!

(P.N.C.C.Future Direction June 2023 - Continued from Page 4.)

Action Item

As we reflect on the understanding of the Sacrament of the Word of God within our parish churches and especially for us as individuals, we must remember to ask Almighty God to allow us to fully hear and understand what Jesus desires to reveal to us as a parish and each one of us individually as a beloved child of God. It is for this reason that every sermon in church begins with the singing of a hymn to the Holy Spirit.

At moments when such a hymn cannot be sung, or also when you read the Sacred Scriptures privately, pray this prayer from "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a Kempis. "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears. I am Your servant and beg You for the understanding to know Your commandments. Incline my heart to follow Your holy teachings, that they may seep into my soul as dew seeps into the grass. Speak to me Yourself, Lord, for Your servant is listening. You alone have the words of eternal life; speak them to me to amend my whole life: all to Your everlasting honor and glory." (The Imitation of Christ, Book 3, Chapter 2)

Then as you listen to a sermon or as you read the Sacred Scriptures, allow God to speak to you as His beloved child. Ask Him to direct your life in accord with His teachings.

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

Honor Your Father on Father's Day

Clergy Pension Fund Polish National Catholic Church



As we all remember all of the important father figures within our lives, we pray especially for those listed below. Thanks are also extended to all those who contributed to the Clergy Pension Fund's "Honor Your Father on Father's Day" program, as it continues to support those members of the clergy who have retired after many years of faithful service to God's Holy Church.

- In memory of father, Walter Sobiechowski, offered by Bishop Paul and Karen Sobiechowski
- In memory of father, Stanley Kiska, offered by Bishop Paul and Karen Sobiechowski
- In honor of godfather, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, offered by Jacob Stankowski
- In memory of David Petrosky, offered by John and Mary Stankowski
- In memory of father, Michael J. Mietlicki, offered by Michael and Mary Gorgol Mietlicki
- In memory of father, Dr. John Gorgol, offered by Michael and Mary Gorgol Mietlicki
- In memory of grandfather, Michael R. Mietlicki, offered by Michael and Mary Gorgol Mietlicki
- In memory of grandfather, Zygmunt Gorgol, offered by Michael and Mary Gorgol Mietlicki
- In memory of father, John Wunderlich, offered by Very Rev. Donald E. Wunderlich.
- In honor of son-in-law, Rev. Jason Soltysiak, offered by Paul and Rose Kazinetz.
- In honor of pastor, Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid, offered by Paul and Rose Kazinetz.
- In memory of father, William W. Krajewski, offered by Paul and Rose Kazinetz.
- In memory of father, Paul Kazinetz, Sr. offered by Paul and Rose Kazinetz.
- In memory of brother, William J. Krajewski, offered by Paul and Rose Kazinetz.
- In honor of pastor, Rev. Bruce Sleczkowski, offered by Pamela Hammer.
- In honor of pastor, Rev. Bruce Sleczkowski, offered by Johanna Pardoe.
- In memory of father, Arthur Basinski, offered by Beverly Basinski.
- In memory of grandfather, Anthony Basinski, offered by Beverly Basinski.
- In memory of grandfather, Stanley Oleszak, offered by Beverly Basinski.
- In memory of godfather, John Oleszak, offered by Beverly Basinski.
- In memory of father, John Mulka, offered by Diane Williams and Donna Schouten.

In memory of father, Joseph W. Brinsko, offered by Joseph W. Brinsko, Jr.
In memory of father, Thomas, E. Chockley, offered by Larry Chockley.
In memory of grandfather, Thomas D. Chockley, offered by Larry Chockley.
In memory of grandfather, Robert Furry, offered by Larry Chockley.
In memory of uncle, Arnold Pillar, offered by Larry Chockley.
In memory of grandfather, Joachim Jedynak, offered by Kathy Chockley.
In memory of grandfather, Chester Marsh, offered by Kathy Chockley.
In memory of father, Larry Marsh, offered by Kathy Chockley.
In memory of uncle, Al Lane, offered by Kathy Chockley.
In memory of father, Clyde L. Sharik, Sr., offered by Debbie and Joe Parknavy.
In memory of father, Joseph R. Parknavy, offered by Debbie and Joe Parknavy.
In honor of pastor, Rev. Bruce Sleczkowski, offered by Debbie and Joe Parknavy.
In honor of father, Joseph J. Parknavy, offered by Joey, Jonathan, Jen, Joel and Chelsea Parknavy.
In memory of grandfather, Joseph R. Parknavy, offered by Joey, Jonathan, Jen, Joel and Chelsea Parknavy.
In memory of grandfather, Clyde L. Skarik, Sr., offered by Joey, Jonathan, Jen, Joel and Chelsea Parknavy.
In honor of husband, Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, offered by Carol Mikovsky.
In honor of brother, Francis J. Golembeski, offered by Carol Mikovsky.
In memory of father, Francis J. Golembeski, Sr., offered by Carol Mikovsky.
In memory of father, Anthony J. Mikovsky, offered by Carol Mikovsky.
In memory of brother, Robert A. Golembeski, offered by Carol Mikovsky.
In memory of father, Florian Giczkowski, offered by Robert and Chris Giczkowski.
In memory of grandfather, Peter Giczkowski, offered by Robert and Chris Giczkowski.
In memory of father, Jan Sliwonik, offered by Robert and Chris Giczkowski.
In memory of Prime Bishop, Most Rev. John F. Swantek, offered by Robert and Chris Giczkowski.
In memory of former pastor, Rev. Feliz Pyzowski, offered by Kay Howden.
In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Swoger, offered by Kay Howden.
In honor of deacon, Rev. Mr. Dave Nichols, offered by Kay Howden.
In honor of pastor, Rev. Michael Selep, offered by Bob and Janice Amend.
In honor of Very Rev. Edward Ratajack, offered by Bob and Janice Amend.
In honor of Rev. James Ploskonka, offered by Very Rev. Joseph and Janice Soltysiak
In acknowledgement of Edward J. Goralczyk, Sr., offered by Edward J. Goralczyk, Jr.
In memory of Rev. Felix Pyzowski, offered by Rev. Mark and Miriam Swoger
In memory of father, William Nichols, offered by Deacon Dave, Roseanne and Justin Nichols.
In memory of father, Paul Koceski, offered by Deacon Dave, Roseanne and Justin Nichols.
In memory of former pastor, Rev. Felix Pyzowski, offered by Deacon Dave, Roseanne and Justin Nichols.
In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Swoger, offered by Deacon Dave, Roseanne and Justin Nichols.
In honor of Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, offered by Kathy Nemkovich and family.
In honor of father, Most Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, offered by Very Rev. Robert and Kathy Nemkovich.
In memory of father, Leon Gorgol, offered by Very Rev. Robert and Kathy Nemkovich.
In memory of Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, offered by Very Rev. Robert and Kathy Nemkovich.

In acknowledgement of father, Leonard R. Guy, offered by Lenny and Kathy Guy.
 In acknowledgement of father, Raymond A. Hohn, offered by Lenny and Kathy Guy.
 In acknowledgement of father, Alex Soltez, offered by Bonnie Zaucha.
 In acknowledgement of Thomas Zaucha, offered by Bonnie Zaucha.
 In memory of father, Bernard Nowicki, offered by Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki.
 In memory of father, John Liberasky, offered by Barbara Nowicki.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Swoger, offered by Natalie Hall.
 In acknowledgement of father, George AE. Popeck, offered by Natalie Hall.
 In acknowledgement of father, Peter Skoworon, offered by Becky McConnell.
 In acknowledgement of father, Richard McConnell, offered by Robin Hershberger and Rock McConnell.
 In acknowledgement of father, George Popeck, offered by Phyllis Evanoka.
 In memory of father, Rev. Francis N. Kaczmarczyk, offered by Mr. and Mrs. Francis D. Kaczmarczyk.
 In honor of Rev. Adam Czarnecki, offered by Jeffrey Tunis.
 In acknowledgement of father, Angelo Puchi, offered by Gene Puchi and family.
 In acknowledgement of father-in-law, Chester Zimak, offered by Gene Puchi and family.
 In honor of all the priests of the P.N.C.C., offered by Gene Puchi and family.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Swoger, offered by Carolyn Pacewicz.
 In memory of Rev. Felix Pyzowski, offered by Tom Pyzowski.
 In memory of husband and father, Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, offered by Deb, Josh and Hannah Bilinski.
 In memory of father and grandfather, David J. Petrosky, offered by Deb, Josh and Hannah Bilinski.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Swoger, offered by Holy Trinity A.N.S. Society, Washington, PA.
 In honor of deacon, Rev. Mr. Dave Nichols, offered by Holy Trinity A.N.S. Society, Washington, PA.
 In honor of bishop, Rt. Rev. John Mack, offered by Holy Trinity A.N.S. Society, Washington, PA.
 In memory of father, John White, offered by Patricia Temesi.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Jason Soltysiak, offered by Patricia Temesi.
 In memory of former pastor, Rt. Rev. Jan Dawidziuk, offered by Patricia Temesi.
 In honor of Prime Bishop, Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, offered by Julie Orzell.
 In acknowledgement of father, Walter Tomkowitz, offered by Richard Tomkowitz.
 In acknowledgement of grandfather, Andrew Tomkowitz, offered by Richard Tomkowitz.
 In memory of father, Joseph R. Parknavy, offered by Carol Burlikowski.
 In memory of father, Thomas J. Zembrzuski, Sr., offered by Regina Pollack and George Urciuoli.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Mark Gnidzinski, offered by Regina Pollack and George Urciuoli.
 In honor of son-in-law, Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, offered by Mary Ann Kiska.
 In memory of husband, Most Rev. John F. Swantek, offered by Arlene Swantek.
 In honor of pastor, Rev. Andrew Tenus, offered by Wanda F. White.

Donations may also be sent to: **Clergy Pension Fund**
Office of the Prime Bishop
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

God bless you all for your thoughtfulness and support of the clergy of the P.N.C.C.

Donations received after June 9, 2023 will be published in the July issue of God's Field.

National Commission on Liturgy Meeting

Scranton, PA

The National Commission on Liturgy of the P.N.C.C. met at the National Church Center in Scranton, PA, Monday, May 22 and Tuesday, May 23, 2023.



First row: Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr.; Rt. Rev. Bernard J. Nowicki; Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky; Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski; Second row: Very Rev. John P. Kowalczyk, Jr.; Rev. Henryk Wos; Rev. Jason Soltysiak; Rev. Dr. Scott J. Lill (via Zoom); Rev. Carmen Bolock



Supreme Council Meeting Minutes

Manchester, NH

The Annual Meeting of the Supreme Council was hosted by the Eastern Diocese at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manchester, New Hampshire on April 25, and April 26, 2023. Prime Bishop Mikovsky called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Bishop Mack, Vice Chair of the Supreme Council, offered the opening prayer.

Attendance

Most Rev Anthony A. Mikovsky PhD, Rt. Rev. John Mack, Rt. Rev. Bernard J. Nowicki DD, Rt. Rev. Jarosław Rafalko, Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak, Very Rev. Marian Pociecha, Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Rev. Scott Lill, D. Min, John Andrzejewski III, Cathy A. Bilinski, Diane Cheek, Laurel Curylo, Ronald DeLuca, Robert T. Giczkowski, Paul Gorgol, Bruce S. Kaniewski, Michael R. Mietlicki, Kathryn Nemkovich, Raymond J. Pieczarka, Joan Scheuneman, Martin Wachna, Jr.

Absent: Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid

Guests: None

Proposed Agenda

The proposed agenda was amended to focus on the Realignment of the Dioceses and the PNU Transformation right after the approval of previous minutes.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the April 26-27, 2022, Annual Meeting, the October 21, 2022, Organizational Meeting and the January 31, 2023, Zoom Meeting were approved without modification. The Prime Bishop thanked Cathy Bilinski and Michael R. Mietlicki for taking excellent minutes.

Realignment of Dioceses

The Prime Bishop reported the Diocesan Bishops meet every two weeks at which time this topic is discussed. Based on these meetings and the Supreme Council Meeting held in January of 2023, the diocesan realignment comes down to three matters that can be progressed separately over time. The first is the role of Bishop of the Central Diocese. The second is the administration of the Diocese of Canada and the third is the resizing of the Central Diocese to make its size more equal with the size of other dioceses. The Prime Bishop shared the recommendations of the Bishops on these matters. The Supreme Council unanimously supported their recommendations. An announcement of this support will be released from the Office of the Prime Bishop when it is appropriate.

Transformation of the PNU

Martin Wachna, PNU CEO, distributed a presentation that outlined the current status of the PNU Transformation. While the information within the presentation was confidential and cannot be published at this time, the main focus of the PNU Transformation is to protect its members and that will be accomplished. Mr. Wachna reported the Insurance Department of Pennsylvania is regularly kept aware of the transformation and is pleased with the planned actions. The Supreme Council discussed the impacts the transformation will have on P.N.C.C. entities and took the necessary actions to address these impacts. Expressions of thanks and gratitude were extended to Martin Wachna and John Andrzejewski for doing an unbelievable job guiding the PNU through this transformation. The members of the Supreme Council offered them a round of applause.

Treasurer's Report

The Supreme Council reviewed the Treasurer's Report prepared by Joan Scheuneman, the P.N.C.C. Treasurer, that included Balance Sheets as of February 2023, Investment Schedules, Fund Summaries, Parish Loans, Savonarola Theological Seminary Funds, and a Schedule of Parish Receipts. The stock market values of some investments were lower, but some stock improvement has been seen. Royalties from Cabot Oil and Gas were particularly good during the past year. Monies from these royalties were applied to the mortgage on the National Church Center to buy down the mortgage and also transferred to the Clergy Pension Fund. A bequest of \$181K was received from Rose Papish, earmarked for the Clergy Pension Fund. The cost of the Clergy Hospi-

talization Program remained consistent over the past two years at approximately \$210K. The Book Department expenses rose because new mass books, with minor updates but stronger covers, were printed. The supply of mass books was depleted. Seminary expenses increased because of the student in residence. The Treasurer's Report remains unaudited because of the historically short time between the fiscal year closing and the meeting of the Supreme Council. It is an ongoing problem. The Supreme Council approved the Report of the Treasurer pending the audit. The Prime Bishop thanked Joan for her excellent work as the P.N.C.C. Treasurer especially during a time when she faced health issues.

Audit Report

The audit of the financial records is planned for the first week of May by Cindy Whitehead CPA.

Investment Committee

The Prime Bishop and John Andrzejewski reported the investments are managed by Medallion Wealth Management. The P.N.C.C. maintains a fiduciary relationship with Medallion. As such, Medallion manages the investments on a day-to-day basis. The Prime Bishop meets annually with representatives of Medallion in Scranton to review the results and discuss the short- and long-term needs of the P.N.C.C. He also speaks with them on a monthly basis to discuss the financial needs of the P.N.C.C. and cash flow. P.N.C.C. investments are long term and continue to generate interest and dividends. P.N.C.C. cash needs have been minimal during the past year because of the increase in Cabot royalties.

Future Direction

The Prime Bishop has been unsuccessful in finding a chair for the Future Direction Subcommittee of the Supreme Council. The template that was set up for Future Direction in the past is excellent and includes an introduction, a scripture reading with a reflection and an action item. This is published from the Office of the Prime Bishop with Prime Bishop writing the reflections. During Covid the Future Direction program provided an excellent venue for the P.N.C.C. to stay connected to its people. The Prime Bishop asked for volunteers and new ideas for the program going forward.

During discussion, the following points were highlighted. One of the major benefits of the program is that it focused parishes and P.N.C.C. organizations on community involvement. For example, the Eastern Diocese is asking each parish to support four community service programs each year. *God's Field* and social media all show parishes throughout the P.N.C.C. involved in community outreach. It may make sense for the National Mission Commission to incorporate some aspects of Future Direction into its program. Especially the recording of videos and focusing parishes on community service projects. The National Youth Association may be another group that can incorporate components of Future Direction into its program as a national project. There may be other P.N.C.C. organizations that can help as well. The YMS of R has done an excellent job of supporting community service through an annual clothing drive. Possibly, the components of Future Direction can be supported by other organizations of the P.N.C.C., such as the Adoration Society and United Choirs. It was reported that the Adoration Society of the Eastern Diocese has been very actively focused on Future Direction over the past eight years. It has become a part of everything they do. Since there is no formal committee or report, a motion to accept a report on Future Direction was not necessary.

Clergy Hospitalization Insurance

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of Julie Orzell, Plan Administrator. Clergy Hospitalization is and has been the single largest expense of the P.N.C.C. for two or three decades. The Prime Bishop continues to investigate options for supporting this program at reduced costs.

There are rules for parish reimbursement. These rules are sent to parishes every year and are enforced. The plan also covers the widowed spouses of priests.

During the discussion the following points were offered. Obtaining a national health insurance policy for the entire church is too expensive. Obtaining state by state policies has not been fully researched but experience with the regional plan in Scranton has shown that it is very restrictive as to who can join the plan. The Supreme Council unanimously accepted the Report on the Clergy Hospitalization Insurance Plan.

(Continued on Page 12.)

(Supreme Council Meeting Minutes- Continued from Page 11.)

Clergy Pension Fund

The Supreme Council reviewed the distributed report submitted by Prime Bishop Mikovsky that included the status of the transfer of fund documents from the Western Diocese, and income for the fund. The transition of the fund to the Office of the Prime Bishop continues. An actuarial review of the fund is currently being conducted. The results of this review will determine how much money will be needed annually to sustain the pension. Informal estimates indicate \$200K annually may be required. This amount is well below what PNC members and parishes contribute to the Clergy Pension Fund. The Principal recommended and will conduct an actuarial review of the pension every three years. As mentioned in the Treasurer's Report the late Rose Papish recently left the fund \$181K, a wonderful way to memorialize one's legacy.

During discussion the following points were made. Over the past years, the Eastern Diocese has contributed \$150K to the Clergy Pension Fund. Both the Eastern Diocesan Council and parishes of the Eastern Diocese have been very generous in their donations. Likewise, last year Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA also made a \$25K donation to the fund. The Clergy Pension Plan is a defined benefit pension. It is not an ERISA based pension plan. There is no added monetary benefit for the priest who remains an active pastor following age 70. The rule of the pension is 20 years of service as a pastor with a retirement age of 70. Those priests who retire prior to age 70 receive a reduced pension regardless of the number of years of service they have served beyond 20. The Supreme Council recognized the excellent work Prime Bishop Mikovsky has done to centralize the pension plan documents within his office, and his efforts to understand the plan and its funding requirement. It also acknowledged its responsibility to accept ownership of the Clergy Pension Plan by appointing two of its members, Raymond Pieczarka, and Bruce Kaniewski, to review the financial structure of the plan and recommend a sustainability plan to the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council unanimously accepted the Report on the Clergy Pension Fund.

God's Field

The Supreme Council reviewed the report of the Editor, Julie Orzell. Prime Bishop thanked Julie for her excellent work as Editor and he encouraged all parishes to send articles to *God's Field* to publicize the great events occurring in parishes. The Supreme Council unanimously accepted the Report of the Editor of *God's Field*.

Savonarola Theological Seminary

The Supreme Council reviewed the report submitted by Father Senior Zbigniew Dawid, Vice Rector of the Savonarola Theological Seminary. One student, Cleric Sean Dodd, resides at the seminary and just recently received Minor Orders. During discussion, the benefits of having a retired clergyman live at the seminary and act as a moderator / spiritual mentor to the seminarians were raised. It was agreed that would be beneficial and it needs to be a paid position. It will prove to be a challenge to find a retire priest to fill this role. The Supreme Council unanimously approved the Report of the Vice Rector.

Spójnia, Inc.

The Supreme Council reviewed the Spójnia Inc Report submitted by Prime Bishop Mikovsky, President of Spójnia, Inc. A major project is underway to remodel the pavilion at a cost of just under \$500K. The board is also planning a capital funding campaign to address future campus upgrades, including a chapel and adult lodging. As a result of the closure of Spójnia Manor, Spójnia, Inc is in a financial position to plan major projects to position the facility for next generations. Over the past four years, over \$500K in improvements have been made, including a new pool and central air conditioning for the retreat center while increasing the equity of Spójnia, Inc. by six percent over that time period. During discussion, the following items were noted. Members of the Supreme Council were thanked for returning the Spójnia, Inc. survey focused on developing a long-term strategy for the Spójnia Farm Campus. The Spójnia, Inc. Board is working well under the guidance of the Prime Bishop with each member taking responsibility for a particular managerial aspect of the campus. The late David Petrosky was a valued member of the board, and his contribution to it is missed. Most of the campus pays real estate tax but at a low rate because it is zoned agricultural. Bruce Kaniewski, a retired city planner, who sits on the Supreme Council, offered to share his talent with Spójnia, Inc. as it plans building placement on the campus. Prime Bishop Hodur's insight in buying over four hundred acres in Wayne County in Pennsylvania in 1929 was applauded. The property was purchased from the former mayor of Scranton, Mayor

Edmund Jermyn, who needed to liquidate his horse farm in Waymart, PA. The Supreme Council unanimously approved the Report of Spójnia, Inc.

National Church Center

John Andrzejewski, Building Manager, summarized his prepared report highlighting the income, expense, and rent status. He reported 968 square feet of space on the second floor will soon be leased resulting in an additional income of \$15K per year. Covid guidelines have always been followed and are being lifted as the end of the pandemic approaches. The LED sign project has been completed. However, more signage space is requested from the building's tenants. A project to upgrade building security just began. This will include electronic door locks and high-definition cameras. Another project being considered is upgrading the building air flow system from an old pneumatic system to an electronic one. The side panels and white windows on the front of the building will need replacing. Contractors are being sought for estimates for the windows and masonry work that is needed on cracked bricks and border joints on the building's trim. High level estimates to complete this work were submitted to the Budget Committee. All renters are current with their payments. *The following points were made during the discussion. There are escalation clauses in lease agreements* covering items such as tax increases. Rents rise when leases are renewed, bringing them in line with inflation. An extra \$5K is paid on the building mortgage each month. It is a percentage of royalty income capped at \$5K per month. A few years ago, the Prime Bishop negotiated a five percent interest cap on the mortgage. This is saving the P.N.C.C. money since commercial mortgage rates are probably in the eight or nine percent range. The current outstanding mortgage is 1.2 million dollars. The Supreme Council resurrected a prior subcommittee and appointed Father Senior Robert Nemkovich, Jr., John Andrzejewski, and Bruce Kaniewski to study the long-term space requirement of the Office of the Prime Bishop and the P.N.C.C. and make appropriate recommendations to the Supreme Council at its April 2024 meeting. The Prime Bishop will be a member of this subcommittee ex-officio. As per past practice, the Supreme Council abated the rent to the PNU since its CFO also acts as building manager of the National Church Center. The Supreme Council unanimously approved the Report on the National Church Center.

P.N.C.C. Website

The Supreme Council reviewed the prepared report of Fred Aebli, Chairman of the Website Commission, that included P.N.C.C. Website and Facebook analytics. The Prime Bishop noted the site is constantly attacked by IP addresses from outside of the United States. Actions have been taken to limit these attacks. This included software upgrades with more robust security. During discussion, it was noted that even if the software used to create the site can block users from certain countries, attacks from countries are often masked, and thus their identity is not associated with a country. Some negative search results on Google associated with the pncc.org site needs time to clear out on the Google search engine before they disappear. The Prime Bishop encouraged anyone seeing negative search results on the pncc.org site or other site issues to notify his office. Since Phase One of the website design was completed a few years ago, it might be time to begin Phase Two that includes verifying that each parish of the P.N.C.C. has a website. If they currently don't have a site, then a template can be provided that has a consistent look. Some parishes have a Facebook page but no website. The Eastern Diocese is actively reviewing the web presence of its parishes, so sites are standardized. They are also hiring a digital program manager to assist parishes with this effort. The Western Diocese is also taking steps to upgrade its diocesan website.

The benefits of having consistent email addresses for priests of the P.N.C.C. that are based on a standard domain, like pncc.org, was noted. This would provide the P.N.C.C. with a stronger marketing presence. It would also be beneficial if each parish had a standard email address to facilitate better communication with parishes and parish committees. It was also noted that social media platforms, such as Facebook and others, are more popular and effective than websites. Many people initially learn about the P.N.C.C. from social media and use websites to obtain more detailed information. It was the general consensus of the Supreme Council that the Website Commission move forward on Phase Two of the website design. The Supreme Council unanimously approved the Report of the Website Commission.

The Residence of the Prime Bishop

The Supreme Council unanimously approved four necessary repairs needed at the residence of the Prime Bishop. Monies for these repairs are in the 2023 budget.

(To be continued in Volume 101, Issue #7, July 2023 God's Field.)

29th National Convention and 72nd Eastern Diocese Convention of the Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament (SAMBS) May 19-20, 2023

Holy Trinity Parish, Plantsville, CT

The 29th National Convention and 72nd Annual Diocesan Convention of the United Women's Societies for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament was held on May 19-20, 2023, hosted by the sisters of the Eastern Diocese and Holy Trinity Parish, Plantsville, CT. There were 46 people in attendance (30 delegates, 8 clergy and 8 guests). The theme of the convention was "Be the Light," emphasizing service to others and following along with the Future Direction Committee's theme of discipleship.



Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord was celebrated by the Right Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, assisted by the Rev. James Konicki (Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Schenectady, NY) and Sub-deacon Justin Daviault (Holy Trinity Parish, Plantsville, CT). Seated in the sanctuary were the Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church; the Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski (Holy Trinity Parish, Plantsville, CT); the Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, chaplain of the ED-SAMBS (St. Joseph's Parish, Westfield, MA); the Rev. Robert Koerber (Holy Name of Jesus Parish, South Deerfield, MA); and the Rev. Christopher Rogalski (Divine Providence Parish, Norwich, CT).

The sermon was preached by Prime Bishop Mikovsky. The readers were Cheryl Weinhold and JoAnn Menzies. The Gospel was proclaimed by Father Konicki. Karen Sobiechowski led diocesan choir members in appropriate hymns including the post-Communion hymn, "Go Light Your World." Father Senior Krusienski, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, extended greetings from his parish and the parish SAMBS.

Following the Mass, The Convention was called to order in the Parish Hall and an election to the executive board of the National ANS was held, followed by Prime Bishop Mikovsky administering the oath of office to the elected board. Results of the election: Kathy Cortazar, President; Vice President & rotating Recording Secretary, Buffalo-Pittsburgh, Eastern and Western Diocesan SAMBS Presidents; Treasurer, Deb Lehman; Auditors, Kathy Yannick and Katherine Gnat; Organizer, Cheryl Weinhold.

An activity based on the theme "Be The Light" was led by Janice Klimczak. Guest speaker Victoria Triano, Senior Pastor of Christ Community Church, Haddam, CT, gave a very inspiring talk about letting the light of Christ shine through us.

Following the convention everyone proceeded to the church to participate in the Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament by Prime Bishop Mikovsky.

Submitted by Janice Klimczak



NATIONAL UNITED CHOIRS
36th General Convention/28th Music Workshop
Hosted by Central Diocese NUC
Wednesday, August 9 – Friday, August 11, 2023
At Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Dupont, Pa

Please join us as we expand our music education, lift our voices in praise to God, and enjoy the fellowship of other Music Ministers.

Convention - Wednesday, August 9

3:00 pm Registration Opens
 5:00 pm Opening Mass / 6:00 pm Dinner
 Convention 6:45 pm

Workshop – Thursday, August 10

8:30 am Registration Opens
 Sessions and Rehearsals including Morning Prayer
 Lunch
 Sessions and Rehearsals
 Dinner
 Evening Entertainment

Workshop – Friday, August 11

8:45 am Sessions and Rehearsals including Morning Prayer
 Meals
 7:00 pm – Concert

REGISTRATION DEADLINE – JULY 8, 2023

Registration Fee: \$30.00 Includes Convention and Workshop, any or all days.

Accommodations: \$82 per night plus taxes and fees (\$97 total) at SpringHill Suites, 19 Radcliffe Dr, Moosic, Pa 18507, phone 570-207-1212. Reservations are to be made under Polish National Catholic Church.

Attire: For the Concert, dark bottom and white top.

For Additional Information Contact: Al Micka, Workshop Chairman at: home 570-569-2510 or cell 570-430-7685

REGISTRATION FORM
36th GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL UNITED CHOIRS OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
28th MUSIC WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY August 9, 2023 – FRIDAY August 11, 2023
HOLY MOTHER OF SORROWS PNCC
212 Wyoming Avenue
Dupont, Pennsylvania

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, ST, ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ MOBILE PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

PARISH NAME, CITY _____

Soprano _____ Alto _____ Tenor _____ Bass _____ / Instrument _____

Registration \$30, due by July 8. This amount includes lunch for Thursday and Friday and dinner on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

____ CONVENTION AND WORKSHOP - Wednesday thru Friday

____ CONVENTION ONLY - Wednesday

____ WORKSHOP ONLY - Thursday and Friday

____ DAILY WORKSHOP THURSDAY ____ DAILY WORKSHOP FRIDAY

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS _____

Please make check or money order payable to: **Music Workshop**



Please mail to:
NUC Convention/Workshop
736 Beechwood Drive
Olyphant, PA 18447-1310

Hotel Accommodations are at the **SpringHill Suites, 19 Radcliffe Dr., Moosic, Pa 18507, phone 570-207-1212** at a rate of **\$82.00** per night plus taxes and fees (\$97 total). Complimentary shuttle from the airport. **Reservations must be made by JULY 8th under Polish National Catholic Church.**

BID TO SERVE FORM
36th GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL UNITED CHOIRS OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
WEDNESDAY August 9, 2023
Dupont, Pennsylvania

I wish to serve in the capacity indicated:

THE NATIONAL BOARD

<input type="checkbox"/> President	<input type="checkbox"/> Vice President
<input type="checkbox"/> Recording Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Corresponding Secretary
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/> Librarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Director*

*Diocesan Directors must be elected at Diocesan Convention. In the event that no Diocesan Convention is held, the Diocesan delegates in caucus at the National Convention shall elect the Director (Art. IV, Sec. 2)

THE MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

<input type="checkbox"/> Music Scholarship Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Secretary
<input type="checkbox"/> Music Scholarship Reviewer*	

*A reviewer cannot be elected for more than two consecutive 2-year terms.

THE MUSIC COMMISSION

<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Music Commission Member
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THE 33RD GENERAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

<input type="checkbox"/> Mandate	<input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions
<input type="checkbox"/> Auditing	<input type="checkbox"/> Nominating

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY, ST, ZIP _____
 PHONE _____
 EMAIL _____

I am a member in good standing of the Polish National Catholic Church at:

PARISH _____ CHOIR _____
 CITY, ST, ZIP _____
 SIGNATURE _____

Present this form to the NUC Corresponding Secretary; in person at the convention or email on or before July 30th, 2023:
 NUCPNCC@GMAIL.COM

Central Diocese

Central Diocese Music Commission Workshop

Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish Wallington, NJ

On Saturday, May 13, 2023 Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish of Wallington, New Jersey was the site of the fourth music workshop of the Central Diocese Music Commission workshop on singing the Ordinaries at Mass, “There is Nothing Ordinary About Singing The Ordinaries”.

Fourteen church musicians from Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish, Wallington, NJ and Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Passaic, NJ attended. Fr. Sr. Gregory Młudzik, Pastor, and Music Ministers Valerie Banish (Passaic) and Dawn Wassman (Wallington), coordinated the successful event. Thanks to all others who helped, especially those who prepared the beautiful luncheon.

The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the new booklet published by the Music Commission, [A Selection of Simple Sung Ordinaries for Holy Mass](#). This booklet consists of six or seven selections for each of the Ordinaries, and The Litany (Bishop Hodur), along with The Blessing and Dismissal. The publication of the booklet was made possible by the Enlivening Church Growth Program of the Central Diocese.

The Ordinaries are compliant with the liturgical language approved by the Polish National Catholic Church. We have properly secured copyright permissions. They are ready to be easily used by all parishes. Each parish present received copies of the booklets, along with an accompaniment book, according to their needs.

Parishes in the Central Diocese that would like more information regarding the workshops, booklets, or the work of the Commission can contact the Central Diocesan Music Commission via email at musiccommissioncd@gmail.com, the Central Diocesan website, or write to Music Commission, Central Diocese, 515 E Locust Street, Scranton, PA 18505.



1st Row: Regina Pollack, Peggy Kotula, Leslie Pietrowitz, Denise Cathro, Dennis Puzak, Dawn Wassman, Valerie Benish, Linda Bielski

2nd Row; Frances Skrzypek, Barbara Puzak, Ed Helstowski, Jon Johnson, Tatiana Młudzik; Fr. Sr. Gregory Młudzik, Rebecca Elfman, Jan Ćwikła, Barbara Nowicki

Missing from photo: Chris Suralik and Kathy Korczynski



Eastern Diocese

**Blessed Trinity Parish Happenings
Fall River, MA**

On the afternoon of May 7th, Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich participated in the wreath laying ceremony at the Kosciuszko Monument and dedication of the SGT Robert J. Barrett Armory in Fall River, MA. We honored great patriots who faithfully served our nation. May God bless those who serve, those who have served and their families.



On May 19th, Fr. Sr. Rob offered prayers at the kick-off for the Fall River Memorial Day/Week commemorations at the Civil War Memorial in Oak Grove Cemetery.



On May 16th, Fr. Sr. Rob dropped off some grinders and chips prepared by a local bakery to the Fall River Police Department for the officers to enjoy during National Police Week. May God bless them as they protect and serve the Fall River community



The 7th Sunday of Easter was the end date of the Parish Baby Shower. Items collected by parishioners will help others with babies in need in the local Fall River community. On May 25th, the baby shower items — infant formula, diapers, wipes, clothing, baby food and toys — were delivered to the People Incorporated Children’s Center. Thanks to all who donated to this annual effort to help others with babies and young children in need in the greater Fall River community.



On May 17th, Fr. Sr. Rob went to the Veterans’ Kitchen at the Corky Row Club in Fall River to pray with and to serve some local veterans.

Western Diocese

Very Rev. John P. Kowalczyk, Jr. - Youth Chaplain
2023 Western Diocese Youth Gathering
Polish National Catholic Church
6629 W. 133rd Avenue - Cedar Lake, IN 46303-7503
(219) 374-7621 wduya@sbcglobal.net

Dear Youth, Youth Advisors and Clergy of our Holy Church,

The Western Diocese Youth Commission and the Western Diocese United Youth Association are excited to announce that the 2023 Western Diocese Youth Gathering **“Connect with God”** will take place on July 31 – August 3 at Walnut Ridge Retreat Center, in Morgantown, Indiana.

An inspirational and fun time is planned for you, your friends and all those from your Parish. Remember to tell your family and friends what a great time you had two years ago and invite them to come with you in July!

If you need additional assistance with directions, please use your computer and go to mapquest.com or a different map site in order to get specific directions from your house or parish.

After consulting with Bishop Rafalko, the registration price will be set at \$125.00/person. The 2023 Youth Gathering Committee realizes the financial strain this type of event can place upon a family or parish, so we have done our very best to keep the price as low as possible. Please note that the actual cost of the Walnut Ridge Retreat Center is much closer to \$225.00/person. This low registration cost is a direct result of the importance being placed upon the young adults and youth within our Diocese.

You are kindly asked to arrive at Walnut Ridge Retreat Center no earlier than 10:30 a.m. on Monday, July 31. Please let me or Mrs. Christine Wachna (christine.wachna@att.net) know if you intend on arriving later than 3:00 p.m. Please complete the registration form, one per person and submit payment no later than June 30, 2023.

Our Diocesan Bishop, the Right Reverend Jaroslaw Rafalko., the members of the Western Diocesan Youth Commission, the Western Diocese United Youth Association, as well as myself are looking forward to a great time and can't wait to meet all our veterans as well as the newcomers to our 2023 Western Diocese Youth Gathering!

In His Service,



Very Reverend John P. Kowalczyk, Jr.
Youth Chaplain of the Western Diocese Polish National Catholic Church

**The Western Diocese of the
Polish National Catholic Church Presents...**



July 31- August 3 at Walnut Ridge Retreat Center, in Morgantown, Indiana
Open to all Youth & Young Adults (Ages 8* – 25) & Adults
*(*parent/legal guardian is required to attend for those ages 8-10)*

\$125.00 per person

All registrations must be submitted no later June 30, 2023.

Checks made payable to: <u>Western Diocese PNCC</u>	Mail completed & signed forms with payment to: St. Michael the Archangel Parish Attn: Youth Gathering 2023 6629 W. 133 rd Avenue Cedar Lake, IN 46303-7503
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Participant Information:

Participant Name _____ Sex: M or F
 Birth Date ____/____/____ Age _____ Email address _____
 Address _____ Apt # _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Home (____) _____ Cell (____) _____
 Parent's/Guardian's Name *(if applicable)* _____
 Parish Name _____ City/State _____
 Chaperone's Name _____ Parish _____
 Room Buddy (List 1 Person) _____ Parish _____

Emergency Contact Information: *(not attending Youth Gathering)*

Emergency Name _____ Relation to Participant _____
 Home (____) _____ Work (____) _____ Cell (____) _____

Transportation Information *(please ✓)*

Will you be traveling: *Alone* *Group* → If you checked *Group*, how many in your group? _____
 Will you be traveling by: *Bus* *Car* *Van*

Health Information: *(If additional space is needed, please attach a separate sheet.)*

Participant's Doctor _____ Phone (____) _____

Insurance Co. Name _____

Medical Insurance _____

ID number

Group number

Cardholder's name

Participant's allergies, if any, including medication and foods with reactions _____

Participant's special dietary needs _____

Participant's chronic medical problems *(e.g. diabetes, epilepsy)* _____

Participant's current medication *(RX & OTC)* _____

Participant's other physical restrictions *(if any)* _____

General Information *(please ✓)*

T-Shirt Size: *(Adult Sizes)* Small Medium Large X-Large XX-Large XXX-Large

Would you be willing to serve as... acolyte choir member lector musician* usher

*If you checked "musician", which instrument do you play? _____

WESTERN DIOCESE PNCC YOUTH GATHERING WAIVER:

I, _____, am either an emancipated adult or the parent or guardian of a minor child who will be participating in the YOUTH GATHERING '23 OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH ("YOUTH GATHERING '23") I am fully aware that my own/my child's participation in The Event is totally voluntary. In consideration of YOUTH GATHERING '23's agreement to permit me/my child to participate in The Event, the receipt and sufficiency in which consideration is hereby acknowledged, I agree as follows:

I, individually, and on behalf of my minor child, if applicable, and our respective heirs, successors, assigns and personal representatives, hereby:

1. Release, acquit and forever discharge YOUTH GATHERING '23 and their employees, agents, servants, officers, trustees and representatives, in their official and individual capacities, from any and all liability whatsoever for any and all damages, losses or injuries to persons or property or both which arise out of, during or in connection with my/my child's participation in The Event which may be sustained or suffered by me/my child or any person in connection with my/my child's association with, or participation in, activities at, sponsored by, or arising out of my/his/her travel to or from The Event;
2. Agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless YOUTH GATHERING '23 and their employees, agents, servants, officers, trustees and representatives, in their official and individual capacities, from any and all liability, loss or damage they incur or sustain as a result of any claims, demands, actions, causes of action judgments, costs or expenses, including attorneys fees, which result from arise out of relate to my/my child's participation in The Event including my/his/her travel to or from The Event.

I hereby acknowledge and accept that:

1. There are certain risks arising from various activities, including but not limited to bodily injury, that could result from my/my child's participation in The Event. I have knowingly and voluntarily decided to assume the risks of these inherent dangers in consideration of YOUTH GATHERING '23's permission to allow me/my minor child to participate in The Event;
2. My and, if applicable, my child's personal property is at my risk entirely;
3. YOUTH GATHERING '23 reserves the right to decline to accept or retain me/my child in The Event at any time should my/his/her actions or general behavior impede the operation of The Event or the rights or welfare of any person. I understand that I/my child may be required to leave The Event in the sole discretion of YOUTH GATHERING '23's agents and representatives. In such an event, no refund will be made for any unused portion of The Event. I understand that YOUTH GATHERING '23, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel The Event or any aspect thereof prior to commencement.

I represent and warrant that I am/my child is covered throughout The Event by a policy of comprehensive health and accident insurance which provides coverage for injuries which I/he/she may sustain as part of my/his/her participation in The Event. I agree to complete the HEALTH INFORMATION above to the best of my ability and, by its completion, I hereby release and discharge YOUTH GATHERING '23 of all responsibility and liability for any injuries, illnesses, medical bills, charges or similar expense/he/she may incur while participating in The Event. By completing the form, I hereby authorize YOUTH GATHERING '23 to obtain any necessary medical treatment to myself/my child, consent to any necessary examination, treatment, or care under the supervision and/or advice of any properly licensed medical professional and explicitly authorize YOUTH GATHERING '23 to release medical information about me/my child to any person or entity to whom YOUTH GATHERING '23 refers me/my child for medical treatment.

I agree that this Agreement is to be construed pursuant to the laws of the State of Illinois and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by law, and if any portion hereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance hereof shall continue in full legal force and effect. In addition, I agree that any legal action arising out of or in relation to this Agreement must be brought in a Cook County, Illinois court.

I hereby grant to YOUTH GATHERING '23 my consent without reservation to use, assign, convey, reproduce, copyright, publish or sell my/my child's name, voice, image, and/or likeness that arises from his/her participation in The Event, whether still or motion pictures, audio or video tape, for promotional, instructional, business or any other lawful purposes, at YOUTH GATHERING '23's sole discretion.

In signing this Agreement, I hereby acknowledge and represent that I have read this entire document, that I understand its terms and provisions, that I understand it affects my legal rights as well as, if applicable, those of my child, that it is a binding Agreement, and that I have signed it knowingly and voluntarily.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Western Diocese Youth Gathering 2023 July 31 – August 3, 2023

Rules and Regulations

For all Participants, Guests, Clergy and Chaperones

This list of Rules and Regulations is for everyone in attendance and is intended to allow you to have an enjoyable and safe experience at Youth Gathering & Walnut Ridge Retreat Center.

We encourage you to...

- have an awesome time at Youth Gathering!
- follow all rules and regulations of Youth Gathering and Walnut Ridge Retreat Center.
- be aware that you are responsible for your conduct at all times.
- attend all sessions, activities, Mass and Prayer Services.
- dress appropriately at all times.
- be sure to limit all social activity to public areas only.
- use recreation equipment and facilities in a proper and safe manner.
- put away all recreation equipment that was used.
- respect your fellow neighbors at night and be considerate of their needs, especially those younger participants.
- respect for all plant life and wildlife.
- stay on the property of Walnut Ridge Retreat Center at all times.

We discourage the following...

- use of electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) is not permitted during Holy Mass, Prayer Services, sessions or activities. All are either to be left at home, locked in your car or in the secured in your room during these activities.
- socializing in lodging rooms with members of the opposite sex.
- inappropriate dress (no lewd or profane t-shirts, clothing that is too small, too tight, etc.).
Everyone is to wear modest non-revealing clothes; this includes bathing suits.
- use of foul or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- loud noises after 10:30 p.m.
- use of alcohol, illegal drugs, fireworks or firearms are strictly prohibited by all participants.
- use of tobacco, must be of legal age and in designated areas only.
- not to rearrange beds or other furnishings without permission from Bellwether Farm Staff.
- leaving Walnut Ridge Retreat Center under any circumstances, unless granted permission by the diocesan Youth Chaplain, Father Senior John Kowalczyk.

Violation of these rules and regulations will be handled by the Youth Gathering Tribunal.

I have read and understand these rules:

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent signature is required for all participants 17 years of age or younger

Clergy Retreat and Conference

Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski - Western Diocese Clergy Circle Chairman



Bishop Jerry Rafalko, Ordinary of the Western Diocese, called for the annual clergy retreat and conference to take place May 15 to 17, 2023. We had an excellent turn out for this year's event, which once again took place at the Joseph and Mary Retreat House in Mundelein, Illinois. The following clergy participated with Bishop Jerry - Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak, Very Rev. John Kowalczyk, Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Rev. Antulio Alvarado, Rev. Carlos Aranda, Rev. John Cramer, Rev. Gabriel Flores, Rev. Henry Galas, Rev. Henryk Pawelec, Rev. Jim Ploskonka, Rev. Jose Rojas, Rev. David Rowinski, Rev. Nazario Salas, Rev. Jason Soltysiak, Rev. Zbigniew Talaga, and Rev. Mariusz Zochowski.

Rev. Jim Ploskonka was chosen to be the retreat master, as the newest ordained priest in the diocese. He shared with all present his journey to the priesthood, giving the priests an opportunity to reflect on their own journeys, and to recall the events of their own ordinations. The priests were also able to chart their own highs and lows, with many sharing that some of the best moments in their lives were church related.

The conference followed the retreat, in which Bishop Jerry informed the clergy about matters taking place in our Church, as well as national and international matters. He emphasized the importance of always being available for congregational members and to fulfill all duties and responsibilities to the parish, diocese, and our Church. The clergy thanked Bishop Jerry for always looking out for them, and for his many efforts to help strengthen our parishes and our diocese.

The clergy assembled the first evening for a prayer service with emphasis on the examination of conscience, and a devotion to the Blessed Mother Mary on the second evening. Following both evening prayers and devotions was fellowship and visiting. All enjoyed the special Polish deli snacks and beverages donated and prepared by Bishop Jerry, which were so delicious!

Mexican snacks, pastries and beverages were also donated by Fr. Carlos, and some other beverages were donated anonymously.

Mass of the Holy Spirit was held Tuesday morning celebrated by Bishop Jerry, and concelebrated by the priests. It is a long time tradition that the celebrant for the Mass on Wednesday morning rotates among the priests of the diocese. This year the celebrant was Fr. Sr. John Kowalczyk, who also prepared the liturgies for the Masses and evening devotions.

A brief business meeting of the Clergy Circle took place on Wednesday before lunch, in which Rev. Mariusz Zochowski was welcomed as a priest of our diocese. The priests also thanked Bishop Jerry for all he does to support the clergy, and for all his efforts in the diocese and our Church.

We always marvel at how well we are treated by the staff of the retreat house, who always go out of the way to host us! This along with the beautiful grounds makes us look forward to next year's retreat and conference, which will be held May 13 to 15, 2024.

Elevations

By Rev. Jason Soltysiak



Subdeacon David Talaga, Bishop Jerry Rafalko, Subdeacon Douglas Scott

Every year, clergy from each diocese in the Polish National Catholic Church gather at the behest of the Diocesan Bishop on Tuesday of Holy Week to bless and consecrate the Holy Oils during the Mass of Chrism.

In our Western Diocese, we travel about half the time outside of our Cathedral of All Saints to celebrate this important annual Mass. This was one of the years we had a reason to be at the Cathedral – not only did we gather to celebrate priesthood and renew our priestly vows within the Holy Mass, we raised in prayer two men who are a few steps into carving their own ministerial path.

Cleric Doug Scott (All Saints Cathedral; Chicago, IL) and Cleric David Talaga (Our Savior; Mosinee, WI) have advanced in their studies within our diocesan diaconate program and were deemed ready to be elevated to the final “Minor” Holy Order – Sub-Deacon. This was to take place within the celebration of the Chrism Mass.

Our clergy met for a bit of Holy Week prep earlier in the day, and after, “the boys” were given their final prep both for the elevations and for participation in the Chrism Mass. Nearing the conclusion, the skies darkened and marble-sized hail fell from the sky- while pondering what this ominous sign may have meant, two trees in the adjoining parish cemetery were struck by lightning, one within a few yards of our bishop’s office window!

The Rt. Rev. Jarosław Rafalko, Bishop-Ordinary of the P.N.C.C. Western Diocese and pastor of All Saints served as celebrant of the Chrism Mass, main consecrator of the Sacred Chrism, and would elevate the candidates to Sub-Deacon. Shortly after processing into church and having the attending clergy take their places, Holy Mass began, with the elevation ritual beginning after Bishop completed the opening prayer.

The Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, who serves as the head of the diaconate program and served as Arch-Deacon of the Mass, called forward the two candidates by name.

Clerics Scott and Talaga approached bishop vested in an alb with cincture and a partially-prepared amice, while carrying the tunic, the symbol of office of sub-deacon. They also carried a lit candle. Upon being addressed by Bishop, they are reminded what their new duties would entail. They were then presented first, with the chalice & paten. They were charged to keep these clean and prepared for the celebration of Holy Mass. They were then presented with filled cruets and a purificator. They were given the ability to assist at Holy Mass in a greater capacity.

Upon receiving a blessing, the amice, a symbol of purity of speech, was placed upon their heads and then completed in vesture. This represents their ability to potentially preach at events if given permission. They were both then vested in the tunic, a garment of gladness that represents their divine office. The Book of Lessons is then presented, giving each the ability to read in the Church of God.

(Continued on bottom of Page 28.)

Prayer for the Clergy

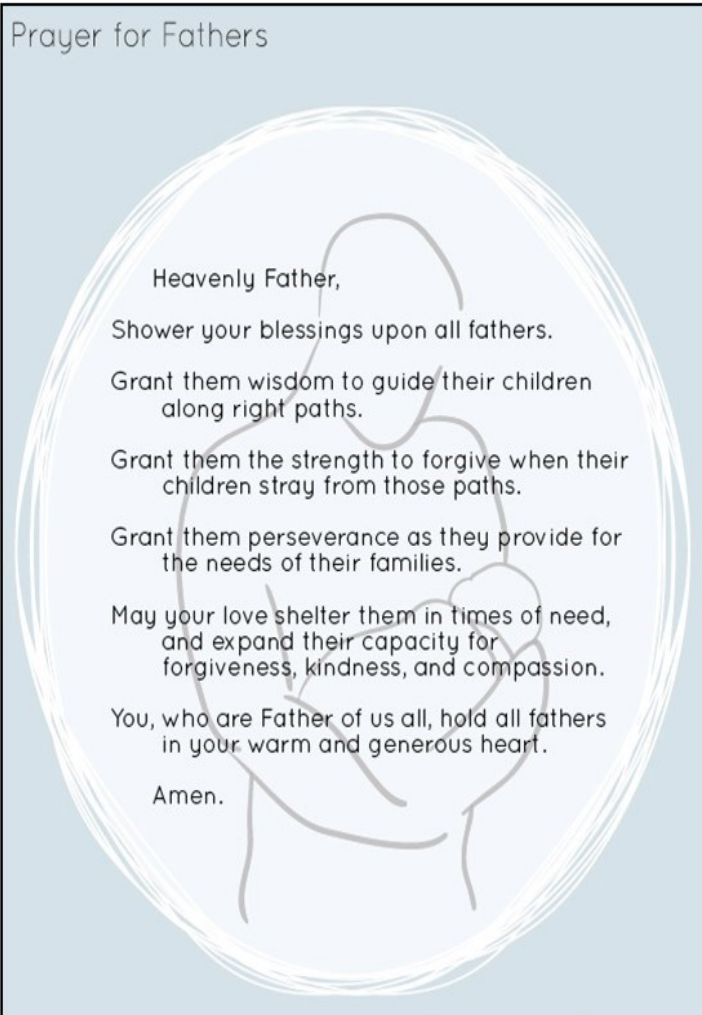
Lord Jesus, Great High Priest and Eternal Shepherd, for the building and expansion of Your Kingdom You have called forth men to apostolic orders to serve in Your Church. By the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthen the prime bishop, bishops, priests and deacons. Endow them with the gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, guide them with Your counsel, give them strength to fulfill their ministry. Fill them with the spirit of piety and the fear of the Lord so they can be true witnesses of Your Gospel. When the time should come for them to cross the threshold of life, receive them into Your heavenly kingdom. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Increase of Priests

Almighty and Eternal God, in Your plan for our salvation You provide priests as shepherds for Your people. Inspire men to answer Your call to become priests, because “the harvest is great but the laborers are few.” Grant Your Church an increase of priests and keep them faithful in their love and service to You and the people entrusted to their care. Through their faith and ministry may Your light shine in the world and Your kingdom be built among us. Through Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Amen.

From A Book of Devotions and Prayers Polish National Catholic Church

Prayer for Fathers



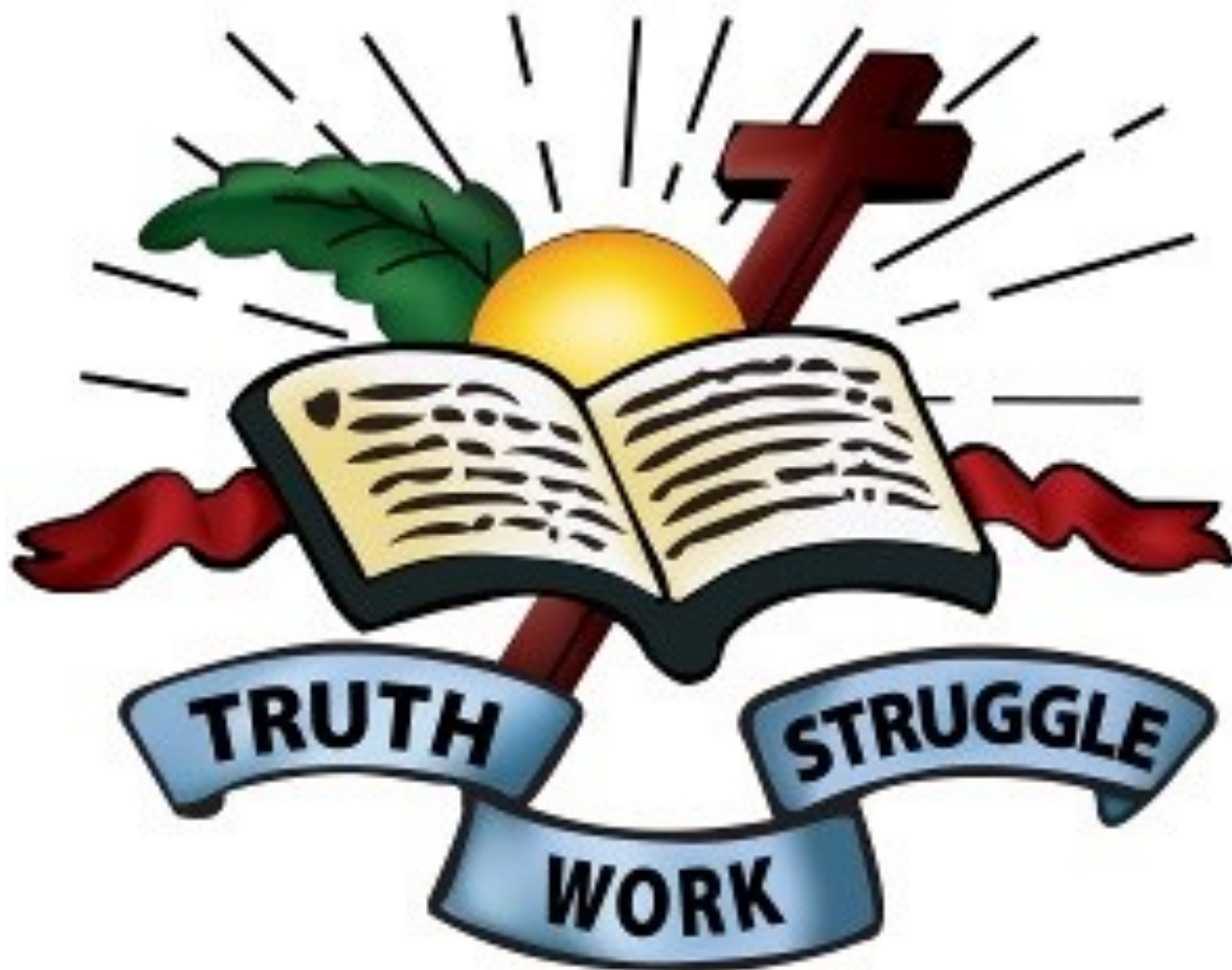
Heavenly Father,
 Shower your blessings upon all fathers.
 Grant them wisdom to guide their children
 along right paths.
 Grant them the strength to forgive when their
 children stray from those paths.
 Grant them perseverance as they provide for
 the needs of their families.
 May your love shelter them in times of need,
 and expand their capacity for
 forgiveness, kindness, and compassion.
 You, who are Father of us all, hold all fathers
 in your warm and generous heart.
 Amen.

Celebrate

the upcoming
Fourth of July
 and welcome the
Kurs Campers
on Saturday, July 1, 2023
 at
Spójnia Farm
611 Honesdale Road
Waymart, PA



Holy Mass —11:00 AM
 followed by
Picnic until 4:00 PM
 Plenty of Food
 &
 Plenty of Family Fun



(Elevations - Continued from Page 26.)

Sub-Deacon Talaga then read the lesson for the Holy Mass, and Sub-Deacon Scott took his place at the left-hand of the bishop to assist throughout the rest of Mass, each fulfilling a portion of the newly-appointed office.

Chrism Mass continued as it normally does, in a grandiose fashion within Holy Week's Passiontide. It was a High Holy Mass, with incensing at the processional, Entrance Verse, the Gospel, the Offertory and recessional. Bishop Rafalko celebrated a Pontifical Mass from his throne, approaching the Altar upon its preparation by the Masters of Ceremony: Very Rev. John Kowalczyk, (St. Michael Archangel, Cedar Lake, IN) Rev. Antulio Alvarado (Divine Word; Chicago, IL) and Rev. Jason Soltysiak (St. Mary's; Parma, OH). Rev. Mr. Thomas Opala (St. Mary's; West Allis, WI) served as Deacon of the Mass with all other priests in attendance as concelebrants.

A joyful dinner followed Holy Mass, with much of Sub-Deacon Scott's and Sub-Deacon Talaga's family in attendance. The blessed and consecrated Holy Oils were prepared to be received at Mass on Holy Thursday at each Western Diocesan Parish and, well-prepared for the week ahead, the clergy and families returned home.