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Lent

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

As I write this article, we find ourselves at the beginning of the season of Great Lent. Because of the calendar calculations this year, the celebration of Easter is rather quite early, March 31, 2024. In fact, it is somewhat rare that Easter occurs in March, but it is bound up with the coming of Spring and the phases of the moon. Easter occurs on the Sunday following the full moon following the Spring equinox, which is March 21. Therefore, Easter can be any day from March 22 to April 25. And of course, once the date of Easter is calculated we merely count backwards for the weeks of the Lenten season.

Some have questioned whether this is a good idea and maybe things would be better, or at least easier, if the celebration was just some fixed week during the year, but, after some consideration I think that this would certainly lose something of what is occurring. That said one of the things that would remain the same is the fact that our Lenten season begins at the end of winter or in the early spring when the weather is still a bit cold (at least in the northern areas).

As we begin the Lenten season, the nights are long and sometimes bitter cold. It reminds us that often our moral and spiritual lives are darker and colder than they should be. We need light and warmth to come and take us over. But first we must confront the dark and cold. It is within our Lenten practices and devotions that we accomplish this. It began with our planning that was done during the season of Pre-Lent. It was there that we examined our spiritual sit-

uation and in the final days of decision before Ash Wednesday, set ahead of us a course for our Lenten journey. On Ash Wednesday we acknowledged that we are sinners in need of the healing and comforting presence of God and throughout the season we strive to more fully embrace the passion and death of Jesus in our Lenten practices.

Fasting and abstinence are not the easiest of practices and yet they are vital to our spiritual awareness. The recent pamphlet of the P.N.C.C. on Fasting says: "Fasting and prayer can improve our relationship with God. Fasting can remind us of our dependence on God and it is a way to humble ourselves before God (Psalm 35:13). It is a spiritual discipline of denying ourselves food to feast on the things of God. Fasting is an important way to demonstrate to God as well as to ourselves that we are serious about our relationship to Him."

I must say that for myself, the practice of fasting and abstinence is not mostly an act of self-denial, although I suppose it is that as well. Because I certainly do enjoy fish, even canned tuna fish, the giving up of meat in Lent is not a huge sacrifice. As is traditional, during the season I abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays and I strive to give up sweets on these days as well. What this does is make my eating a little more intentional. And therefore, it makes my daily living a little more intentional. It is in this way, as the pamphlet says, it can "remind us of our dependence on God and a way to humble ourselves."

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The season of Great Lent is also a time of increased prayer, but again this prayer should be directed to help us join with the passion and death of Jesus. I strive to pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day. Sometimes I do this in the chapel at the National Church Center, other times while at home, but I also must admit that sometimes daily living gets in the way. Each Lent I renew these efforts to be a bit more intentional about my prayer life. Maybe I get up a little earlier to have a few extra moments for prayer. Maybe put aside some time every evening to turn to God in prayer. During Lent, our lives must also be lived in a little more intentional way because we must plan to attend Stations of the Cross or Bitter Lamentations in our own parishes. These devotions are especially important as they bring us into connection with the passion and death of our Lord. Before Lent begins, I immediately mark the times of these devotions in my calendar and do not allow other items to intrude on them. Since Bitter Lamentations is not celebrated here at the Cathedral in Scranton, I also put aside time on Friday afternoons to sing this devotion myself. This reminds us that even if we cannot, for some legitimate reason, attend Lenten devotions in our parish church, we can still celebrate these devotions as they are found in the P.N.C.C. Prayerbook.

We must also be more intentional in this season of Great Lent to our penitential practices. We certainly have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance each and every time Holy Mass is celebrated, but the season of Great Lent allows us to focus our attention on this Sacrament in a little greater and intentional way. Certainly, this can begin by attending a Lenten Retreat or Penitential Devotion, but it can also mean taking a little extra time in preparation before receiving the Sacrament of Penance when we are at Mass. The P.N.C.C. has given us several different reflections to allow us to prepare for Penance. There are Examinations of Conscience at the beginning of

the Mass Book at Church and there are others in the P.N.C.C. Prayerbook. It is also a good practice to just spend some time in prayer before Mass seeking the forgiveness of Almighty God knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ went to the Cross to extend salvation to us and grant us His mercy.

As a final thought I want to return to the situation mentioned above about the determination of the celebration of Easter, and therefore the season of Great Lent being tied to nature around us. This practice allows us to stay in connection to the celebration of Passover in the Old Testament. It is a part of the realization that the entire life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the culmination of a plan from the foundation of the world to save us.

Our intentional way of living together with nature during this season is very important. We know that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ became fully human in the Incarnation. He became human so that we could unite ourselves with what is divine. But we do not do this by shunning all of the things of this world, but rather we strive to put them in their right place so that the things of this world can help us to unite ourselves with Jesus Christ. As I said above we live in an intentional way and the intention is to use whatever we are doing, whatever is around us, to grow closer to Christ, especially in this season of His saving passion and death.

My brothers and sisters, let us adopt the practices of the season of Great Lent in an intentional way. Consider the world around us. It grows from cold to warmer, and dark to lighter. Let us allow our practices of fasting and abstinence, our increased prayers, our increased giving and our attention to Lenten devotions to unite our spiritual life to this reality. Let our cold hearts become warm, let our lives darkened by sin become lightened by the presence of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Let us be intentional in Lent, that we may rejoice fully at Easter.



P.N.C.C. Future Direction February 2024 Lenten Devotions

Introduction

As we begin this new 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 and life of prayer. 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 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 – But God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:18-19 – Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

1 John 4:10 – In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

John 10:17-18 – For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father."

Isaiah 53:5 – But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

John 1:29 – The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Reflection

Within the Polish National Catholic Church, two devotions make up much of our Lenten devotional practices. These are Stations of the Cross and Bitter Lamentations. The Stations of the Cross are celebrated throughout the Catholic world as we seek to unite our journey through daily life to the journey of Jesus to the Cross. The Stations remind us of the great love of Jesus in overcoming His physical exhaustion to proceed to Calvary where He died for the salvation of the whole world.

Though history, the Stations grew out of a practice of pilgrimage to walk the way of our Lord while He carried the cross through the streets of Jerusalem. Certainly not everyone could make this long trip to the Holy Land, but anyone could make the journey in a spiritual way through prayer. In time, images were attached to these moments of prayer, and placed within our parish churches to allow anyone to make this journey with Christ. Also over many years, standard sets of prayers and meditations were written to allow entire groups to pray these devotions together, especially during the Lenten season.

The devotion of Bitter Lamentations (Gorzkie Żale) is of a much more recent time, being developed in the 18th century in Poland. The Vincentian Fathers began these devotions as a way to codify a number of folk meditations and songs on the suffering, passion and death of Jesus. They also added liturgical aspects to these celebrations. Traditionally the devotion, divided into three cycles, was celebrated on Lenten Sunday afternoons and Good Friday. The first cycle on the first and fourth Sunday of Lent, the second cycle on the second and fifth Sunday of Lent, the third cycle on the third Sunday of Lent and Palm Sunday. On Good Friday all three cycles are celebrated.

Bitter Lamentations is a devotion that allows us to focus our meditations on the passion of Jesus from the time after the Last Supper until His death and burial. It also focuses our thoughts on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout the passion. The devotions allow us to join our sorrows to Mary's suffering. Although

within our parish church this devotion is usually celebrated together with the exposition and benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, it can also be celebrated in a very simple manner, even apart from the clergy.

Action Item

Be intentional concerning your Lenten devotional life. Mark on your calendar the days when Stations of the Cross or Bitter Lamentations are being celebrated within your parish church. Attend these devotions as a way to increase your prayer life within the season of Great Lent.

Spend a bit of time walking the Stations outside of the celebration of the devotion. Take a moment to reflect on the scene depicted and give thanks to Almighty God that the Lord Jesus suffered all this to accomplish our salvation. If you have a bit more time, pray the meditations for the Stations given within the P.N.C.C. Prayer-book as you walk and meditate on the Station images.

If your parish does not celebrate Bitter Lamentations, read or sing these devotions while spending some moments in prayer before a crucifix.

Through all of these devotions, allow them to help you have a deeper and more profound gratitude to Almighty God for the gift of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ and His life-giving Passion and Death.

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



2024 Liturgical Reference Calendar (Ordo) Order Form

The cost of the 2024 Ordo is \$12.75 per book for pick-up orders or \$17.00 per book for mail orders to U.S. (Please email secretarytopb@pncc.org for Canada shipping costs prior to ordering your Ordo(s).)

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2024 ORDO			Total Remitted
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Thank you for your payment.			

Union of Scranton Theological Conference

“The Faith of the Undivided Church: Ecclesiology in The Road to Unity”

February 2 - 5, 2024, Mainz, GE

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church and Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr., P.N.C.C. Ecumenical Officer, participated in the Union of Scranton Theological Conference on February 2 - 5, 2024, in Mainz, Germany. The conference was attended by men and women from the Nordic Catholic Church in Germany, Scandinavia, England and Ireland. It was a very special time for prayer, worship, theological reflection and discussions, fellowship and friendship united in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



On Friday, February 2, 2024, the Solemnity of the Presentation of the Lord, Prime Bishop Mikovsky celebrated the opening Mass of the Union of Scranton Theological Conference. Fr. Sr. Nemkovich concelebrated Holy Mass.

Fr. Sr. Nemkovich blessed candles and then conveyed the opening presentation on The Road to Unity — The Old Catholic-Orthodox Agreed Statements to all present.



On February 3, 2024, the Feast of St. Blaise, Prime Bishop Mikovsky delivered a presentation to the conference attendees on the Church the Apostles Left Behind as an example to live our Catholic faith today.

During morning prayer that day Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich blessed throats at St. Martin's Cathedral in Mainz. Most Rev. Roald Flemestad, Bishop of the Nordic Catholic Church in Norway, and Rev. Dr. Frederik Herzberg of St. Willibrord Parish in Dusseldorf, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, presented the topic of Faith of the Undivided Church.



On Sunday, February 5th, at the conclusion of the Union of Scranton Theological Conference, Holy Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Daniel Gerte of the Nordic-Catholic Mission in Germany; Bishop Ottar Myrseth of the Nordic Catholic Church in Scandinavia preached God's Word to the congregation and Fr. Joachim Danz, a newly-ordained priest of the Nordic Catholic Church in Germany, gave the clergy and faithful a special blessing after Mass concluded.



We hope that God may continue to bless these efforts for the building of His Holy Church as we continue in the faith of the Undivided Church.

To learn more about the Union of Scranton, go to the website at <http://theunionofscranton.org/>.



Communication: The Lifeline of a Christian Marriage

Rev. Dr. Stan Jasiurkowski

Welcome to the second article in our series on building healthy marriages. In the previous article, I discussed the key factors that contribute to a successful marriage, drawing from both theological and psychological perspectives. I emphasized the importance of open and honest communication, and in this article, we will dive deeper into this important topic. Effective communication is essential for a strong marital foundation, and it involves much more than just talking. We will explore the significance of couples' communication by discussing Biblical principles, psychological benefits, the concept of the "Four Horsemen" as presented by Dr. John Gottman, and key strategies for building a communication bridge. By the end of this article, you will have a better understanding of how to communicate effectively with your partner and build a stronger, healthier marriage.

Biblical principles that support healthy relational dialogue

I am convinced that great communication between couples is like a "Golden Gate Bridge" gracefully connecting two beautiful landmarks. When communication flows freely and honestly, it forms a vital link between spouses, allowing them to navigate life's problems and tighten their connection. In the realm of couples counseling, a recurrent theme underscores the importance of dialoguing with one's spouse. Therefore, the ability to communicate effectively can make the difference between a growing relationship and one that deteriorates. This is the reason why communication is so important for Christian couples.

The Bible gives us clear guidance on how to communicate effectively and lovingly with our partners, and that communication is based on the principles of grace, wisdom, and gratitude. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul encourages us to avoid harmful words in our conversations, even when we feel angry. This verse primarily emphasizes avoiding "corrupting talk" - anything hurtful, harsh, or disrespectful to another person. This applies to all communication, particularly with our partner. Words can leave lasting scars. Therefore, we must choose them carefully and avoid at all costs sarcasm, belittlement, insults, and criticism that tears down instead of building up. We always need to focus on using words that "build-up." It means that you must encourage, affirm, and express appreciation for your partner. Acknowledge your wife or husband's efforts, celebrate their successes, and offer words of comfort during difficult times. Words of affection and support can strengthen your bond and create a positive atmosphere in your relationship.

Ephesians 4:29 also urges us to use "fitting words for the occasion." It means that before you speak or engage in a conversation, you need to consider the situation and your partner's emotional state. When you do this, you will choose your timing wisely and tailor your words to be helpful and relevant to the current situation. But keep in mind that what might be constructive feedback in one context could be hurtful in another. Therefore, Scripture demands that you speak with grace. "Giving grace" signifies speaking with kindness, empathy, and understanding. Even when addressing concerns, we have to maintain a respectful and loving tone, listen actively, try to see things from our partner's perspective, and communicate to find solutions together.

Additionally, Saint Paul in Colossians 3:16 encourages us to fill our minds and hearts with the word of God and to share it with our partners wisely and gently. When we communicate with wisdom, we seek to understand, advise, and correct each other constructively and compassionately, and we also follow the wisdom that God has given us. Additionally, this verse reminds us to communicate with gratitude, expressing our appreciation and joy for our partners and God. When we communicate with gratitude, we celebrate the good things that God has done in our lives and our relationships. By following these biblical principles, we can communicate with our spouses in a way that honors God and strengthens our bonds.

Psychological aspects of communication

Open communication is not just a cornerstone of healthy relationships – it is a vital tool for nurturing both the mental and emotional well-being of our partner. When couples approach each other with understanding and

respect, they gain a wealth of psychological benefits. Deeper bonds are developed in the honest dialogue, fostering resilience and adaptability as spouses navigate life's inevitable challenges. I witnessed this development while working with Mark and Lisa. Mark described himself as a stoic, strong introvert, and emotionally not accessible. However, during one session, he opened up about his childhood insecurities, and his wife, Lisa, for the first time listened to him with tearful empathy. This vulnerable sharing unveiled a new side of Mark, deepening their understanding and intimacy. They realized they were not just partners, but confidantes and soulmates journeying together. Open expression allows emotions to flow freely, preventing the build-up of negative stress that can damage individual and relationship health. Clear communication allows each partner to feel important and valued because they better understand and support each other. It is a win-win situation for your inner world and the world you build together.

Another psychological benefit of good communication is the development of trust. Trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship, and it is built through consistent and honest communication. When couples communicate their thoughts, feelings, needs, and expectations, they show that they respect and value each other. They also create a safe space where they can be vulnerable and authentic without fear of judgment or rejection. Sarah was a young military spouse struggling with anxiety about finances. When she finally decided to reveal it to her husband, David, she expected criticism or dismissal. Instead, David listened with open ears and a tender heart. He validated her feelings, shared his concerns, and suggested practical solutions together. This open exchange became a turning point. Sarah felt understood, supported, and less alone. Trust fosters a sense of security and confidence in the relationship, and it also enables couples to deal with conflicts and challenges constructively.

Additionally, good communication fosters intimacy. Intimacy is the closeness and connection that couples share, and it is developed through meaningful and engaging communication. When couples communicate their hopes, dreams, fears, and joys, they reveal their innermost selves to each other. They also learn more about each other's personalities, preferences, and passions. By sharing these things, partners become the best friends. During couples counseling, I usually ask, "Who is your best friend?" If the answer is different than the spouse, I know that there is some fundamental work to be done to rebuild intimacy in their relationship. I remember John who said that when he excitedly shared the news about the promotion with his wife, Mary, he did not just relay the fact, but it meant to him expressing his gratitude, his dreams for their future, and the nervous excitement in his heart. When Mary responded with enthusiasm and expressed her pride in being married to a successful soldier, he found validation and shared joy, strengthening their emotional bond. Intimacy strengthens the bond and the attraction between couples, and it also enriches their spiritual and sexual life.

A third psychological benefit of good communication is emotional well-being. Emotional well-being is the state of being happy, healthy, and balanced, and it is influenced by the quality of communication in the relationship. When couples communicate their emotions, they express their feelings and release their stress. They also acknowledge and validate each other's emotions and offer support and comfort when needed. In one of the sessions, Pete and Samantha told me that they made daily prayer a cornerstone of their relationship. They prayed for each other's needs, for their family, for the safety of all soldiers, and for the peace in the world. This shared communion with God strengthened their faith and bonded them together in a spiritual partnership. Therefore, we can conclude that emotional well-being enhances the mood, mental health, and spiritual well-being of both partners, and it also promotes an optimistic outlook on life.

The "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse"

In the intricate variety of human interactions, there are responses capable of tearing the fabric of intimacy and connection. Dr. John Gottman labeled them as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" for relationships. These are not mythical beasts, but rather, communication patterns including criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling. Each of these horsemen has a weapon that erodes trust, propagates discord, and can ultimately lead to the demise of a relationship.

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Criticism is the first horseman, that uses a weapon of blame. Total attacks like "you never..." or "you always..." leave spouses feeling judged and under siege, setting the stage for defensiveness. When we make these universal statements, it exaggerates the negative aspects of the other person's character or behavior, which can erode the trust, respect, and affection in the relationship. For example, a husband might say to his wife, "You never listen to me. You are such a jerk. You always do whatever you want. You don't care about my feelings at all." The wife might feel hurt, offended, or rejected, and respond with, "That's not true. You are such a liar. You always blame me for everything. You don't care about our marriage at all." This can lead to a vicious cycle of criticism and contempt that destroys the relationship.

The second horseman is always on the defense by raising a shield of justification, deflecting responsibility, and returning fire with counterattacks, effectively shutting down any path to understanding. These individuals use "you" language and directives making the other person feel attacked, blamed, or pushed around, which triggers defensiveness, anger, or resentment. For example, a wife might say to her husband, "You are always late. You don't care about me at all. You should be more responsible and respectful." The husband might feel hurt, offended, or misunderstood, and respond with, "That's not fair. You are always nagging me. You don't appreciate anything I do. You should be more supportive and understanding. I had a tough day at work." This can lead to a heated argument that damages the relationship.

Contempt, arguably the most dangerous weapon, is wielded by the third horseman, who attacks the relationship with poisoned daggers of disrespect, superiority, and mockery. These stabs go deep, destroying trust and leaving scars that hinder reconciliation. Usually, it is done by notorious interrupting or invalidating the other person's feelings. This type of communication can make the other person feel dismissed, or disrespected, which can lower his or her self-esteem, confidence, and happiness. For example, a wife might try to share her feelings about her work, but her husband might interrupt her, change the subject, or invalidate her emotions. The wife might feel hurt, angry, or unappreciated, and think that he doesn't care about her or her problems. The husband might feel bored, or annoyed, and think that she is weak, whiny, or irrational. Many times, this leads to a lack of empathy and compassion that alienates the relationship.

Finally, stonewalling, the silent horseman, that builds a thick wall of emotional withdrawal. This isolation leaves the other partner feeling unheard and abandoned, further fueling the fires of conflict. Avoiding or withdrawing from communication can create distance and resentment in the relationship, which can undermine the intimacy, connection, and emotional well-being of both partners. For example, a wife might try to talk to her husband about their finances, but he might ignore her, walk away, or shut down emotionally. The wife might feel frustrated, lonely, or unimportant, and think that he doesn't love her or value their relationship. The husband might feel overwhelmed, stressed, or guilty, and think that she doesn't trust him or respect his decisions. This usually leads to a lack of communication and understanding that isolates the relationship.

The good news is that the journey of your marriage does not need to end in apocalyptic ruin. Recognizing these horsemen and their weapons is the first step to disarming them and reclaiming the ground of your relationship. Each horseman has an antidote, a gentle touch that can heal the wounds they inflict. Instead of criticism, you can express your very specific concern, focusing on actions rather than your partner's character. To counter defensiveness, you can implement the skill of active listening and take responsibility for your actions. Replace contempt with respect and empathy, even in the face of disagreement. Lastly, break down the walls of stonewalling with honest communication, even if it takes a brief pause to gather your bearings. With mindful communication and a willingness to confront the Four Horsemen, you can cultivate love and connection, proving that even in the face of conflict, love can win.

Strategies for Building a Communication Bridge

I have seen countless marriages thriving when couples invested in building a "Golden bridge" of communication. But how do we translate this beautiful metaphor into practical steps? While we might be born with traits

of an effective communicator, developing, and nurturing them requires deliberate and dedicated efforts. We are not born with the innate ability to perfectly communicate and to navigate the nuanced terrain of emotions with empathy and grace, or to bridge divides with active listening. Yet, with intentionality and persistent practice, we can transform our communication from a stumbling, uncoordinated, and dysfunctional into an outstanding skill. Here are some key strategies to strengthen your communication skills and deepen your connection.

In the first place, I would strongly recommend mastering the art of active listening. This is not simply "hearing" your spouse. When you communicate with each other, you must be fully present with your undivided attention. Therefore, it is obvious that you need to put down your phone, turn off your TV, make eye contact, and nod thoughtfully to show you are actively engaged. When you do that, you can listen not only to his or her words but also to the unspoken hints of their body language and tone. This can reveal hidden emotions, enrich your understanding, and show that you respect your spouse.

We also need to make conscious efforts to eliminate the accusatory "you" statements that erect defensive walls. When you communicate, own your feelings with "I" statements. When your spouse tends to interrupt you, you can say "I feel hurt when you interrupt me mid-sentence," instead of saying "You always interrupt me." This shift focuses on the impact of the spouse's actions on your emotions, fostering constructive dialogue and shared responsibility. Remember, good communication is about seeking understanding, not assigning blame.

In one of our vignettes, John and Mary, did many things right in their marriage, but they regularly argued about finances. I advised them to avoid discussing sensitive topics while tired or even hungry. Therefore, they started scheduling dedicated "money talks" in a calm and neutral space. I also encouraged them to not squeeze crucial conversations into the five minutes before bed when exhaustion is obvious. This simple shift, combined with active listening and "I" statements, allowed them to discuss finances constructively, leading to better budgeting and reduced stress. Perhaps scheduling dedicated "check-in" times every week to discuss thoughts, feelings, and concerns can help to develop or strengthen your emotional bridge.

Most of the time, couples have different experiences, personalities, preferences, and values; therefore, disagreements inevitably will arise. However, maintaining a respectful tone is crucial for the health of their relationship. In any situation, your goal is to understand each other, not win an argument. When differences or challenges arise, your priority is to listen with an open mind and acknowledge your partner's perspective even if you disagree. Empathy is like a soothing balm that calms heated emotions and creates space for a productive conversation.

Final Thoughts

When communication within a marriage becomes an insurmountable challenge, it is important to acknowledge the need for external assistance. However, even when things look good, it is crucial not to underestimate the value of preventive measures in maintaining a healthy relationship. In the same vein, as one would visit a physician for an annual check-up to ensure physical well-being, I actively encourage my soldiers to use counseling services, even when everything in their relationships appears calm. Utilizing the expertise of a Christian counselor, priest, or therapist during times of tranquility can function as a proactive health assessment for the relationship, potentially identifying and addressing minor issues before they escalate. This proactive engagement with pastoral counseling services can serve to enrich a partnership, much like preventative medicine, fostering an environment where the relationship is not just maintained but constantly improved. Seeking professional guidance should be viewed by my readers not as an admission of failure, but rather as a testament to one's dedication to fortify the marital bond and an earnest investment in mutual growth and satisfaction. This proactive approach underscores the importance of nurturing a strong relationship and reflects a commendable commitment to the continuous improvement and resilience of the marital union blessed by God.

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Thank you all for your continued support of **God's Field**. It is that time of year to renew annual subscriptions or sign up for a new subscription.

Because of increased material and shipping costs, the subscription rate is now \$50.00 per year for 12 issues mailed within the U.S. and \$70.00 per year for 12 issues mailed to Canada. This rate is based on the cost of printing, mailing supplies and U.S.P.S. First Class Flat Rate (U.S) and International First Class Flat Rate (Canada) mailing costs.

Single issues of **God's Field** are available for purchase from the National Church Center for \$2.25 each (pickup) or prepaid \$4.25 each (shipped within the U.S.) and \$6.00 each (shipped to Canada). These rates will remain in effect until further notice.

Please note that the gratis online version of **God's Field** will continue to be available to everyone on our website at pncc.org.

If you want to continue to receive **God's Field** for the March 2024 - February 2025 subscription year, please send a check or money order in USD, payable to God's Field, along with current name and full mailing address. Please include zip+4 (U.S.) or postal code (Canada) to ensure delivery of your subscription; if you do not include a complete, valid mailing address including zip+4 or postal code we cannot guarantee delivery by the Post Office.

Only prepaid subscriptions will be mailed, so please make sure your payment is received in the God's Field office prior to the end of the annual subscription year (February 29, 2024). If your annual subscription is not prepaid on time, you may experience a gap in monthly issues of **God's Field**. The order form (below) and payment should be sent to:

God's Field
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

Thank you.

The Staff and Management of **God's Field**—*Rola Boza*

God's Field Annual Subscription Form March 2024 - February 2025

Name:

Make check/money order payable to God's Field.

Return form & payment to:

God's Field
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

Street Address:

City:

State/Province:

Renewal or Subscription (Circle One)

Postal Code:

(Zip+4)

Check No. and Amt:

\$50.00 U.S./\$70.00 Canada



APPEAL FOR 2024 EASTER GREETINGS



It is the time of year for us to appeal to the parishes, the organizations and the individual members of the Polish National Catholic Church -- to publish your Easter greetings in the Official Publication of the Polish National Catholic Church, *God's Field—Rola Boza*.

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

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

Example greetings:

Adoration Society of St. John's Parish, Everytown, USA
Eve Adams, President
Wesołego Alleluja!

St. John's Parish, Everytown, USA
Rev. Abel Adams, Pastor
ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!

ALL GREETINGS, ACCOMPANIED BY PAYMENTS, MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 18, 2024 IN ORDER TO ENSURE THEY ARE INCLUDED IN THE EASTER 2024 ISSUE. We no longer publish greetings submitted without payment, so please be sure to send in your payment with your greeting.

Detach, complete and submit the form, below, along with your payment, to:

God's Field Easter Greetings
National Church Center, P.N.C.C.
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

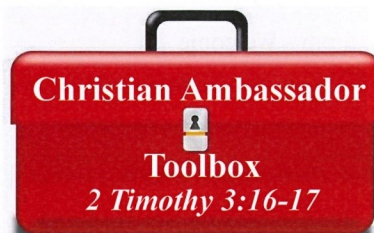
Please send in your greetings and payment
(U.S. \$20.00 check or money order, payable to God's Field)



Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____



“THE AMBASSADOR’S TOOLBOX”
23rd National Mission & Evangelism Workshop
Polish National Catholic Church
Friday, April 12, 2024 to Sunday, April 14, 2024

Most Rev. & Rt. Rev. Bishops, Very Rev. & Rev. Fathers, Deacons
and Faithful of the Polish National Catholic Church,

Greeting from the Mission & Evangelism Commission of the P.N.C.C.

We invite you to the 23rd Mission & Evangelism Workshop, which will be held on **Friday, April 12 through Sunday, April 14, 2024** at **St. Barbara’s Parish of the P.N.C.C. in Houtzdale, PA**. We hope to see you there. Our goal for each Mission Workshop is that the faithful come away with a burning desire to bring the faith-driven work of the Workshop back to their parishes. Please consider participating in this event. Our hotel accommodation is at the **Hampton Inn Clearfield**, 1777 Industrial Park Road, Clearfield, PA 16830.

With this letter are: *(Please make copies if needed)*

Workshop Information – Schedule, names, phone and email addresses you may need.

Workshop Registration Form

You are responsible for your own hotel reservations and confirmation.

You must call the hotel directly for room reservations.

Please use the hotel code **ST. BARBARA** when making reservations. To make your reservation, contact the hotel directly at (814) 765-8300. The cut-off deadline date for obtaining the guaranteed room rate of \$109.00 plus tax is **Thursday, March 21, 2024**.

Please fill out the registration form and send it to St. Barbara’s Parish. The registration fee is \$50.00. Please make the check payable to: St. Barbara’s Parish and mail it with your registration form. The deadline for registration is **Tuesday, April 2, 2024**.

Outreach to the community will be in support of a local charity, **The Moshannon Valley Ministerium**. We will collect monetary donations during the Workshop. We ask you to support this important project. The **deadline for registering for the Workshop is Tuesday, April 2, 2024**. Please make your reservations by that date so St. Barbara’s Parish can adequately prepare for this event.

We hope you will consider joining us for the 23rd National Mission & Evangelism Workshop of the P.N.C.C. We look forward to your attendance.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Commission Chairman, Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak

Phone: (313) 365-0218

Email: Fr.J.Nowak@gmail.com

Respectfully,

Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak

National Mission & Evangelism Commission Chairman

Twenty-Third Annual Mission and Evangelism Workshop THE AMBASSADOR'S TOOLBOX

St. Barbara's Parish
Houtzdale, PA

Friday, April 12, 2024 to Sunday, April 14, 2024

Schedule

Friday, April 12, 2024

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Registration at St. Barbara's Parish, Houtzdale, PA
5:00 p.m. – Welcome – Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky & Fr. Sr. Jarosław Nowak
5:15 p.m. – Icebreakers – Bishop John Mack
6:00 p.m. – Dinner
7:00 p.m. – Looking Back and Looking Ahead – David Kost
7:30 p.m. – Evening Prayer
Return to hotel

Saturday, April 13, 2024

Breakfast at the hotel
8:45 a.m. – Morning Prayer
9:10 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. – Session I – Our Catholic Identity – Fr. Dr. Scott Lill
9:35 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. – Small Group Share
10:30 a.m. to 10:55 a.m. – Session II – The PNCC Living Our Catholic Faith – Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky
10:55 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. – Small Group Share
11:45 a.m. – Group Picture
12:00 p.m. – Lunch
1:00 p.m. to 1:25 p.m. – Session III – The Word of God in Our Life – Very Rev. Brigadier General Robert Pleczkowski
1:25 p.m. to 2:10 p.m. – Small Group Share
2:20 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. – Session IV – Encountering Christ in Liturgy – Karen Sobiechowski
2:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. – Small Group Share
3:40 p.m. to 4:05 p.m. – Session V – Sharing Our Spiritual Journey – Fr. Sr. Charles Zawistowski
4:405 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. – Small Group Share
5:00 p.m. – Dinner – Presentation of donations to charity
6:00 p.m. – Commissioning Service

Sunday, April 14, 2024

8:45 a.m. – Morning Prayer
9:00 a.m. – Holy Mass – Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky
Brunch following Holy Mass and concluding remarks



(Continued on Page 16.)

(Twenty-Third Annual Mission and Evangelism Workshop - Continued from Page 15.)

Hotel & Registration

Individuals are responsible for their own hotel payment:

Hampton Inn Clearfield

Phone: (814) 765-8300

1777 Industrial Park Road

Code: **ST. BARBARA**

Clearfield, PA 16830

Hotel Rate Exp. Date: **Thursday, March 21, 2024**

\$109.00 – Double Queen Bed per night plus tax

\$109.00 – King Bed per night plus tax

Workshop Registration

The 2024 Workshop Registration fee is **\$50.00**.

Please make check payable to: **St. Barbara's Parish**

The deadline for registration is: **Tuesday, April 2, 2024**

Please mail your registration to:

St. Barbara's Parish

23rd Mission Workshop

76 Emery Avenue

Houtzdale, PA 16651

For questions, please contact:

Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak

Phone: (313) 505-2964

Email: Fr.J.Nowak@gmail.com

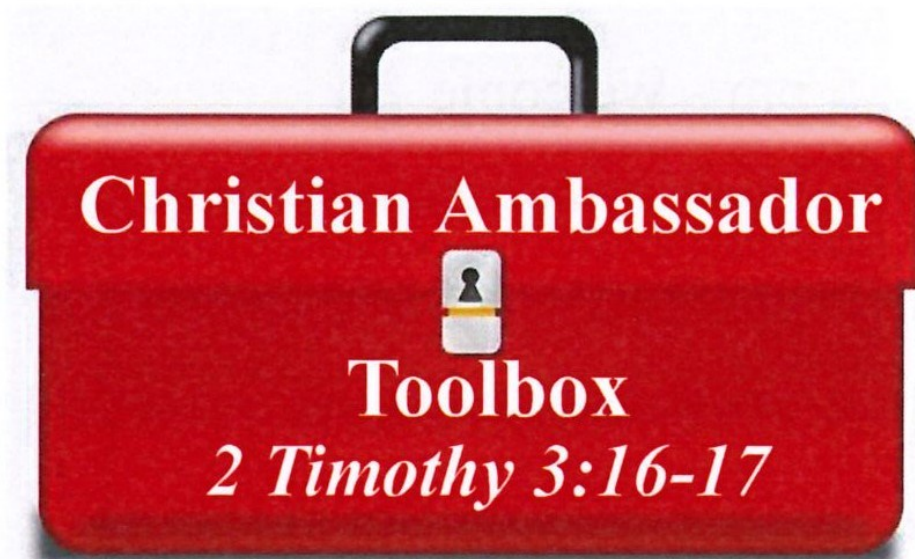
Crissy Lidgett

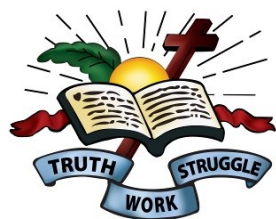
Phone: (814) 577-9520

Carey Huber

Phone: (814) 577-1752

Email: carey.huber@verizon.net





THE AMBASSADOR'S TOOLBOX
23RD NATIONAL MISSION & EVANGELISM
WORKSHOP

POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

APRIL 12 - 14, 2024

ST. BARBARA'S PARISH – HOUTZDALE, PA 16651

2024 MISSION WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell: _____

email: _____

Name of your Parish: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Travel Plans:

Car: _____ Van: _____ Bus: _____ Airplane: _____ Nearest airport are State College Regional Airport (SCE)

Participants are urged to visit the Mission Workshop chat on the PNCC Facebook page to connect with fellow travelers for possible ride-sharing opportunities.

Workshop Registration Fee \$50.00.

Please make a check payable to St. Barbara's Parish

The deadline for registering for the Workshop is **Tuesday, April 2, 2024.**

MaiI your registration to: **The 23rd Mission and Evangelism Workshop**
 St. Barbara's Parish of the PNCC
 76 Emery Avenue
 Houtzdale, PA 16651



United Y.M.S. of R. 2023 Winter Clothing Drive

In what has now become a yearly tradition, and a sign of generosity and good faith by the people of the Polish National Catholic Church, the United Y.M.S. of R. once again held its Winter Clothing Drive to donate to a local charitable organization in their home area.

All Y.M.S. of R. branches and P.N.C.C. parishes collected various pieces of clothing over the past couple of months- such as coats, sweatshirts, shirts, pants, hats, gloves, and more- and to tally up the final results at the end of the drive. The top three parishes who collected the most clothes, would receive a gift from the United Y.M.S. of R. board to be used as a social function for their church.

The parishes were asked to deliver, and boy did they ever as thousands of clothing items have been collected for donations. A total of 4,625 items were donated back to their local communities.

We are aware of other parishes who had clothing drives around the same times as ours and have for decades. The United Y.M.S. of R. wants to thank them for all the work done for their communities and for continuing on the good deeds and faith of the P.N.C.C.

For the third year in a row, St. Mary's Parish of Parma, Ohio took home the title bringing in 13,856 points and 1,799 total pieces collected. Some are beginning to compare the group in Parma to the 90s Chicago Bulls or late 90s Yankees, some other illustrious organizations to claim 3-peats. Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA took second place this year and Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY was third. Congratulations to Rev. Jason Soltysiak, Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid and Rev. Jim Konicki and all the parishioners of those three parishes for going above and beyond the call of duty.

A huge thank you to all of the pastors and parish administrators who advertised this event throughout their churches, and a bigger thank you to anyone who donated. Your generosity continues to be amazing and all communities are better because of it.

Kevin McConlogue - United Y.M.S. of R. Public Relations Director



CONVO 2024

“RUNNING THE RACE”

The Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese will host Convo 2024 from July 22-26th at Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA. We are looking forward to welcoming our youth, guests, chaperones and clergy from around the denomination to this event.

We are striving to present a faith-filled and fun-filled five days of fellowship with Jesus, His Church and with one another. We have chosen the theme “running the race” as this is a Summer Olympics year being held in Paris, France. There are numerous references in scripture that speak to our faith life as “running a race.”

Mercyhurst University is a moderate sized Catholic University set in Erie, PA. It will provide all the accommodations and facilities that we will need for our stay.

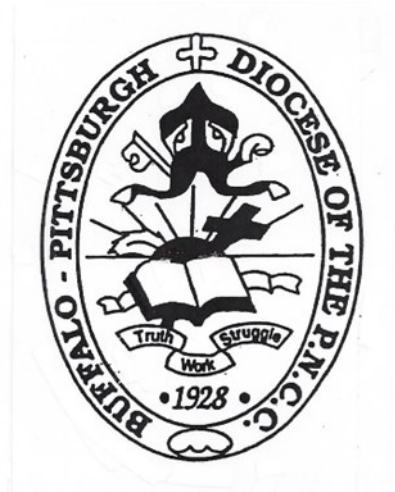
Following past practice, our “excursion” day will feature a trip to Waldameer Amusement and Water Park which is about 20 minutes away from campus. The park is located near the shore of Lake Erie and Presque Isle State Park. Loads of fun and memories are in store for our participants who attend. For those flying to Convo, there is a regional airport in Erie (Erie International Airport – Tom Ridge Field (ERI) or Buffalo International Airport (BUF) which is about 100 miles away.

Prices and registration forms are being finalized and should be sent out electronically in the next few weeks. A Facebook page and website are being constructed and should be available soon.

We look forward to YOUR PARTICIPATION in Convo 2024.

Circle the dates (electronically) in your cell phone and plan on attending! You don’t want to MISS IT!!

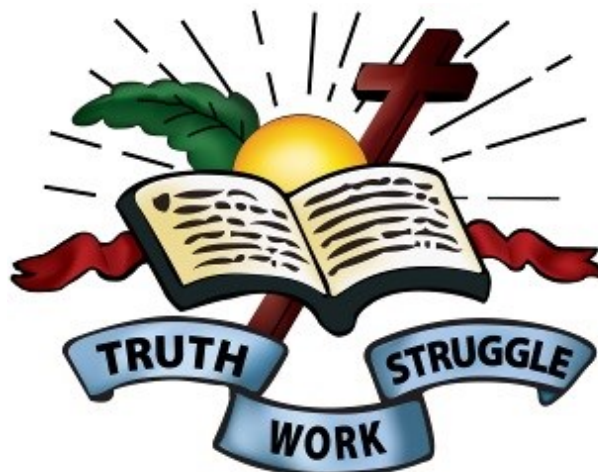


Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese**Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese
14th Diocesan Synod**

In compliance with Article VII – Part C Section 1 of the Constitution, By Laws and Code of Faith of the Polish National Catholic Church, I hereby call the XIV Diocesan Synod of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese to convene on August 22-23, 2024. The opening Mass will take place on Wednesday evening, August 21st at 7 PM. The Synod will be hosted by Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral in Lancaster, NY.

Details with regards to registration information and accommodations will be made available in the near future.

Rt. Rev. John E. Mack Bishop Ordinary
Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese, P.N.C.C.



Canadian Diocese**† sp. Rev. Robert N. Kay**

Rev. Robert Nicholas Kay, 73, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada passed away suddenly on December 7, 2023. Born in Winnipeg on December 8, 1949, he was the son of the late Peter Nicholas Kay and the late Helen Joan (Gutray) Kay.

After completing his studies at Savonarola Theological Seminary in Scranton PA, Fr. Bob was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on March 13, 1974 by Bishop Joseph Nieminski at St. John's Cathedral in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He served as pastor at St. Stephen's Parish in Oakville, Ontario.

In Ontario, Fr. Bob met the love of his life and wife, the late Eva Barbara (Lyjak) Kay. To better support his young family, Fr. Kay took a leave of absence from the priesthood and began a career as a letter carrier with Canada Post. When he retired from that career, he once again became a reserve priest in Winnipeg, Manitoba and ultimately, following the passing of Fr. Tadeusz Czelen, the full-time pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Winnipeg, MB. He was a thoughtful, kind and generous man who would give the shirt off his back to those in need. He will be sorely missed by his family and the parishioners of St. Mary's Parish.

Fr. Bob is survived by his two daughters, Nicole Whiteway, her husband James and their two children, Willow and Evan; Justine Kay; His sister, Joanne Kresky, her husband Richard and their daughters, Lisa Kresky-Griffin and her husband Jeff; Michelle (Patty) Kresky and their son Ethan.

The Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's Parish in Winnipeg, MB by the Prime Bishop, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky at 2:00 p.m. with a reception to follow in the parish hall.

Donations in memory of Rev. Robert N. Kay can be made to St. Mary's Parish, 365 Burrows Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2W 1Z9.

Central Diocese**Happenings at Blessed Virgin Mary of Częstochowa Parish, Latham, NY
and Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Schenectady, NY**

The New Year is off to a running start at Blessed Virgin Mary of Częstochowa Parish in Latham, NY! On January 18, the Annual Congregational Meeting ushered in the newly elected Parish Committee and a review of the extraordinary year that just passed. Fr. Mark Gnidzinski, our pastor, noted that we introduced 8 new parishioners in 2023 and we are happy to welcome them to our parish family. We are recovering from the devastating fire that we experienced last May and are grateful for the support that we've received



2024 Annual Congregational Meeting

On December 3, Holy Name of Jesus Parish in neighboring Schenectady, NY, held a dedication of their newly installed organ and a concert, with proceeds donated to our Fire Fund. Prime Bishop Mikovsky blessed the organ and he and his wife, Carol, graced attendees with his presence. Following the concert, Fr. Konicki, Holy Name of Jesus Parish pastor, along with his parishioners, hosted a delicious reception in their Fellowship Hall.



Prime Bishop Mikovsky blesses the organ at Holy Name of Jesus Parish.

As Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent approaches, Blessed Virgin Mary of Częstochowa Parish SOCL will begin their annual food drive for families in the local area. Parishioners have been asked to donate specific food items each week and the children will keep inventory and distribute the donations at the end of Lent.

Every Wednesday during Lent the parish will have Bitter Lamentations; Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday evening.

After months of planning and testing, BVMC Parish launched its new website, bvmc.org, in December! The parish has also increased its presence on social media and it looks forward to reaching more and more people in our community who are looking for a faith home.

At the end of Holy Mass on January 28, Music Scholarship Sunday, Fr. Mark and Regina Pollack presented Music Scholarship Awards. Parker Fitzgerald and Everett Hoefer received Jr. Incentive Awards and Mikaela Hoefer received the Cynthia Shumlas and Bp. Bonczak Awards. The winners of the 2023 awards were announced at the NUC Convention in Dupont, PA, last August. Congratulations to all musicians in the P.N.C.C. and thank you to all who support the National United Choirs!

Submitted by Regina Pollack



Presentation of NUC Music Scholarship Awards



January at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish

Dupont, PA

Regardless of the cold weather and snow, we continued many community outreaches and events in January.

We concluded the United Y.M.S. of R. Winter Clothing Drive. Parishioners and friends organized and packed clothing donations in our Parish Hall and everything was delivered to people in need in nearby Wilkes-Barre, PA.

The parish Blanket/Mat Ministry, continued after the Christmas break, making mats for the homeless in the Wyoming Valley.



Parish Blanket Ministry Makes Mats

Our volunteers helped with the January Food Distribution in our Parish Hall.



Fr. Sr. Dawid with Some of the Collected Clothes



Volunteers Packing Clothes for the Clothing Drive



Two Groups of Our Food Distribution Volunteers

On a cold Saturday in late January our parishioners gathered for an evening of games, food, fun and fellowship.



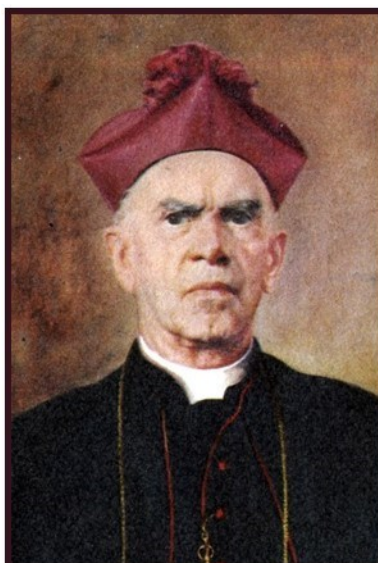
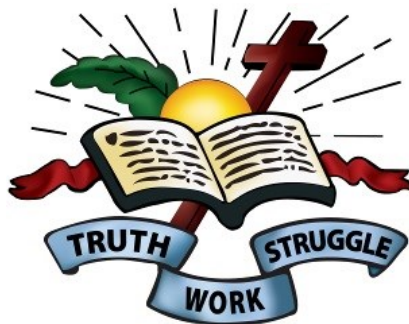
Parishioners Enjoy Game Night

On the last Sunday of January we celebrated Music Scholarship Sunday and acknowledged our parish Music Ministry.



Acknowledging Our Parish Music Ministry

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



In Honor of Bishop Franciszek Hodur
From "Ode To Great Men and Great Things in Poetry and Prose"
Rev. Walter A. Hyszko

His Voice Shall Never Cease
(On the 10th Anniversary of Bishop Hodur's Death)

Each year, his voice louder, more strong,
Thunders the words of our Church Song –
"So many years, O Lord, we did faithfully serve."
He pleads Grace for those who believed ... blessings deserve.
Since his passing, now will come the hardest trial –
He asks to forgive the selfish, those who defile
Their sacred oath to give their best
To the Church – often – fail the test.
Many voices, to his memory will be raised –
Prime Bishop Hodur, in high glory, shall be praised ...
They'll all praise his great deeds, the best he gave to the Lord ...
Yet, some will forget the true meaning of his word.
"Dear bishop – what your last breath whispered to be done ...
Of the vict'ry you sought on earth – is not yet won;
Thy faithful – giving their best, with tears in their eyes
Pray, that all who vowed – uplift their hearts to the skies.

† sp. Rev. Everett Spees

Rev. Everett K. Spees, Jr, MD, PhD, DD, passed away on January 11, 2024 at the age of 90 in Martha's Vineyard Hospital after living with multiple myeloma for 7 years.

Rev. Dr. Spees was born into a military family in Chanute Field, IL on July 5, 1933, the second child of Everett K. Spees Sr. and Maude Rexroat Spees, and grew up in Denver, CO. He attended the University of Colorado at Boulder, and after achieving a medical degree at the age of 19 from the University of Tennessee, Everett began his career in the Army Medical Corps. He spent 20 years in the Army, attaining the rank of Colonel. He continued his medical work at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, focusing on the then-new field of transplant surgery. Later, he moved to Denver to work at University Hospital, where he helped found the kidney transplant program, and then at Presbyterian St. Luke's. He was a founder of the Colorado transplant registry, which facilitated matching lifesaving organs with recipients, and contributed to the national system we have today. After his initial retirement from medical practice, he was called back to the Army multiple times for further surgical work, where he relished his chance to return to wearing the uniform, sharing his experience, and learning from younger colleagues, as well as transforming the lives of his patients.

A lifelong autodidact who genuinely enjoyed work, he was always learning new things and applying new skills. He studied to become a permanent deacon through the Diaconate Program of the Central Diocese while obtaining a Doctor of Divinity degree. He served as a deacon at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Denver, CO. After further study, he was later ordained to the priesthood on November 18, 1995 by Bishop Anthony Rysz at St. Stanislaus Cathedral in Scranton, PA. In this capacity at St. Luke's Mission in Boulder, CO, he held services, comforted patients with last rites, and provided counseling and storytelling to vulnerable children and teenagers. In the last 10 years of his life, he and his wife, Ann Boyer, moved to Chilmark, MA full time. He became a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society and worked intermittently as an ER physician at Martha's Vineyard Hospital.

Everett was a kind, good-natured and gentle man, with a tremendous intellectual capacity, a wealth of knowledge on numerous subjects and a caring soul. He was a beloved father, grandfather, colleague, and friend to so many people.

Everett is survived by his children, Sally Langlois, Everett III, Robert, and Ben, his brother, Bill, his step-daughter, Lee Scriggins, and his grandchildren, Lucy and D Scriggins, and Natasha Scriggins Punj. He was preceded in death by his wife, Ann Boyer, and stepson, Tom Scriggins.

A burial service was held on Tuesday January 16, 2024 at Abel Hill Cemetery in Chilmark, MA. The family requests donations to The Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.



Eastern Diocese**Rev. Adam Piekarczywski Earns Ph. D.****St. John's Parish, Manchester, CT**

Congratulations to Rev. Adam Piekarczywski, pastor of St. John's Parish in Manchester, CT, on the achievement of concluding his doctoral studies and earning a Ph.D. in Clinical Pastoral Counseling in January 2024. Father Adam came to the United States in 2018 and became an administrator of St. John the Baptist Parish in Manchester, CT, and was eventually appointed pastor of this church in 2020.

In addition to his duties as a clergy of the P.N.C.C., Fr. Adam works as a professor of psychology at the CT State Community College and Southern New Hampshire University. He also collaborates with the University of Texas as an Instructional designer in developing new courses in Neuropsychology.

Rev. Dr. Adam Piekarczywski was born in 1983 in Szczecin, Poland. He studied philosophy at the Salesian Seminary in central Poland from 2002 to 2005. In 2007 Rev. Piekarczywski was sent to Jerusalem (Israel) to study theology at Studium Theologicum Salesianum Ratisbonne. He was ordained deacon in the Basilica of Gethsemani in 2010 by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. During his studies in Israel, Fr. Adam earned an official license as a guide to the Holy Land, and until now, he has been a guide to several pilgrimage groups visiting Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan. In 2011, Fr. Adam concluded his studies with a Master's Degree in Theology. On June 25, 2011, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in his hometown (Szczecin) in Poland by the diocesan bishop Andrzej Dziega.

After his ordination, Rev. Piekarczywski worked for two years as an assistant priest in a parish of Pila in central Poland where he was responsible for the youth center and pastoral youth ministry. In 2013, he was sent to Rome (Italy) to study psychology at the Salesian Pontifical University. In 2017, Fr. Adam concluded his studies with a Master's Degree in Developmental and Educational Psychology. In June 2017, he returned to Poland to work as a psychologist in two public schools in the northern part of the country.

In July 2018, Rev. Piekarczywski came to the United States and began his studies at the Savonarola Theological Seminary of the Polish National Catholic Church, in Scranton, PA, in preparation for his pastoral work within the P.N.C.C. Officially, on September 1, 2018, he was assigned as an administrator of St. John the Baptist Parish in Manchester, CT, and eventually as a pastor of the same church on March 23, 2020.

Blessed Trinity Parish Happenings

Fall River, MA

Sunday, January 21st was a blessed discipleship morning as Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, MA, concluded its annual Sock Drive donating hundreds of pairs of socks to MA State Representative Alan Silvia's Warm Feet Program. Thanks to everyone who participated in this annual parish event.



On Sunday, January 28th, it was an eventful morning at Blessed Trinity Parish installing Hannah and Zack as Altar Servers. There was a great crowd for the Pancake Breakfast, which provided breakfast to the Fall River Fire Department firefighters at the Niagara Fire Station. Fr. Rob also blessed new clackers, made for the parish by Ryan. Thanks to all who made all this happen!



Western Diocese**St. Mary's Parish Clothing and Sock Drive****Parma, OH**

On Monday, January 15th the men of Y. M. S of R. Branch #29 and volunteers from St. Mary's Parish, Parma, OH, came together in the Fellowship Hall to deconstruct, collate, count, and package all of the clothing collected for the annual clothing drive throughout the winter months.

The National Y. M. S. of R. has led the call for parishes to have a used clothing drive for nearly a decade, and our parishioners, visitors, and hall-rental attendees have been supporting this annual drive tremendously.

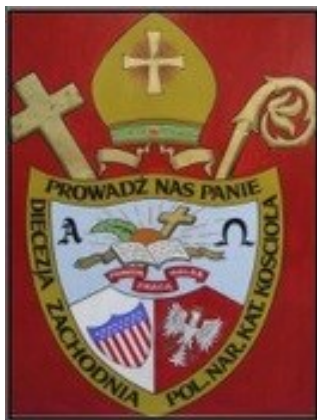
Our bin fills and overflows usually by the middle of Advent, with creativity taking the stage to keep the rising pile of clothing stable.

After two hours of hard work on Monday morning, a total of 1,799 individual items were packaged, totaling 12,428 "points" on the Y.M.S. of R. tally challenge. The packaged clothing was transferred to the garage and was subsequently picked up and donated to the "Rise in Love" Foundation, whose Mission is "A center for all in need to provide immediate resources for individuals and families, as well as assisting in developing the capability to help them rise above their suffering."

The Mission Team's collection from the Sock Tree was set aside for the Foundation as well: 100 pairs of new socks, along with a total collected of 50 new hats and mittens/gloves.

A pizza luncheon was enjoyed by all before heading home for the afternoon.





Appointment

Dear Clergy, Lay Leaders and Faithful of the Western Diocese,

Rev. Father Gregory Gronn has been appointed as Chairman of the Western Diocese Scouting Commission effective February 17, 2024.

I look forward to the work that will be forthcoming to raise awareness of Scouting in our Diocese.

If you have any Scout troops, need support, or would like to form one, please feel free to contact Father Greg.

His contact information is as follows:

Email - billsfn@sbcglobal.net

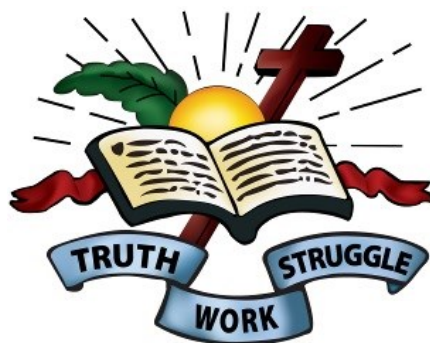
Cell - (440) 865-6419

Thank you for your cooperation and your efforts to support Scouting!

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Diocesan Administrator





NOTICE TO PARISHES

If your parish is in need of financial assistance and you seek to request Clergy Aid from the Polish National Catholic Church, you must follow the procedures as outlined by the XIX General Synod.

All individual parish requests must be sent through the proper Diocesan Bishop as soon as possible before March 15, 2024, along with all of the required supporting financial documentation.

The Diocesan Bishops must forward all parish requests to the Office of the Prime Bishop no later than March 21, 2024.

(PLEASE NOTE: Only Canadian Diocese submissions can be sent to the Office of the Prime Bishop as he serves as acting Diocesan Bishop for this diocese.

Requests sent by other diocesan parishes directly to the Office of the Prime Bishop and not through the proper Diocesan Bishop will be returned to the parish. This may result in delayed paperwork and missed deadline submission.)

Prayer for the Unity of the Church

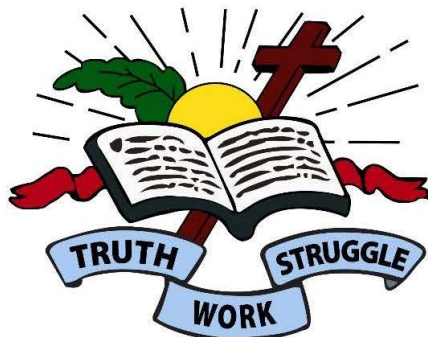
(From A Book of Devotions and Prayers Polish National Catholic Church)

O Lord Jesus Christ, before Your passion and death You prayed to Your Father for the Apostles “so that they may be one, even as We are one ... so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.” Reveal to the members of Your Church the peace, love and unity that comes through living in accordance with Your Word. Good Shepherd, lead us and make us one flock, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMISSION
OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

STIPEND APPLICATION



Undergraduate Stipend Program
available to qualified P.N.C.C. members
who are enrolled in a college or university.

The applicant:

- Must be an active member of a P.N.C.C. Parish.
- Must be an undergraduate student currently attending a college or university.
- Must complete and sign the application form.
- Must include both the Fall and Spring Semester Tuition Bills; an unofficial transcript from the college or university and/or schedule of classes specifying the number of credits taken or completed for the fall and spring semester for that academic year.
- Must include a letter from the pastor of the P.N.C.C. Parish you are currently a member of stating your involvement within that Parish.
- Must include a list of the P.N.C.C. activities you participate in currently or in the past. Please use additional sheets if needed.
- Applications must be submitted to:
Education and Youth Commission
National Church Center
1006 Pittston Ave
Scranton, PA 18505
- All applications must be postmarked by **May 15th of the Current Year** to be eligible for the stipend award.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMISSION STIPEND APPLICATION OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. Applicants Name: _____

Last
First
Middle
2. Applicants Home Address: _____

3. Contact Information: Home phone #: _____
 Cell phone #: _____
 Email: _____
4. Date of Birth: _____
5. P.N.C.C. Parish Name/Address: _____

6. College/University Name: _____
 City & State: _____
7. Current Class Status: _____ Freshman _____ Sophomore
 _____ Junior _____ Senior
8. Fall Semester Credits _____ Spring Semester Credits _____
9. Applicants Field of Study: _____
10. Attach a copy of the fall and spring tuition statements/unofficial transcript and/or schedule of classes including the credits taken for both fall and spring semester.
11. Please attach a letter from your Pastor and a list P.N.C.C. Activities current and past.

Applicant's Signature

Date

2024 Home Liturgical (Wall) Calendar Order Form

The Polish National Catholic Church still has 2024 home liturgical calendars in stock for sale. This calendar with original photographs for each month includes information concerning P.N.C.C. holy days.

Calendar prices have remained the same as last year's; however, shipping costs have increased. The chart below can be used for calculating your costs for shipping to U.S. destinations. (For shipping outside of the U.S., please email the number of calendars you are requesting to secretarytopb@pncc.org and an email with shipping costs for your order will be sent to you.)

Please **COMPLETE THE ORDER FORM (INCLUDING NAME AND SHIPPING ADDRESS)**, below, and mail it with your payment to: **P.N.C.C. Center, Attention: Julie Orzell, 1006 Pittston Avenue, Scranton, PA.** Order forms submitted without name and shipping address information are not guaranteed to be shipped.

Thank you for your continued support of this Church-wide endeavor. If you pick up your order at the National Church Center, there will be no shipping charge.

Quantity	Cost per Calendar	Calendar Cost Subtotal	U.S. Shipping	U.S. Total	Shipping Method
1	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$2.55	\$8.05	USPS First Class
2	\$5.50	\$11.00	\$3.75	\$14.75	USPS First Class
3	\$5.50	\$16.50	\$4.70	\$21.20	USPS Media Mail
4	\$5.50	\$22.00	\$4.70	\$26.70	USPS Media Mail
5	\$5.50	\$27.50	\$4.70	\$31.75	USPS Media Mail
6	\$5.50	\$33.00	\$5.45	\$32.20	USPS Media Mail
7	\$5.50	\$38.50	\$5.45	\$43.95	USPS Media Mail
8	\$5.50	\$44.00	\$5.45	\$49.45	USPS Media Mail
9	\$5.50	\$49.50	\$6.17	\$55.67	USPS Media Mail
10	\$5.50	\$55.00	\$6.17	\$61.17	USPS Media Mail
11	\$5.50	\$60.50	\$6.17	\$66.67	USPS Media Mail
12	\$5.50	\$66.00	\$6.17	\$72.17	USPS Media Mail
13	\$5.50	\$71.50	\$6.92	\$78.42	USPS Media Mail
14	\$5.50	\$77.00	\$6.92	\$83.92	USPS Media Mail
15	\$5.50	\$82.50	\$6.92	\$89.42	USPS Media Mail
16 - 50	\$5.50	\$88.00 - \$275.00	\$22.80	\$110.80 - \$297.80	USPS Large Flat Rate Box
51+	\$5.50	\$280.50	*Calculated at time of shipping		UPS

*An invoice for shipping costs will be included in your shipment.

Only paid calendar orders will be shipped.

If you have a sponsor paying for your calendars, please inform them that they must pay for the cost of the calendars prior to them being shipped out.

We will send invoices only for extra cost of shipping)

(You will be invoiced for shipping costs if they must be calculated at the time of packing.)

2023 P.N.C.C. Calendar Order Form

<u>Shipping Information</u>	<u># of Calendars</u>	<u>Cost of Calendars</u>	<u>Ad Fee</u> (if applicable)	<u>Shipping Cost</u> (if calculable)*	<u>Total Enclosed</u>
Name					
Address					
City, State Zip Code					

***PLEASE NOTE:** We cannot predetermine the cost of shipping on orders of 51 or more calendars because this cost is calculated by weight and geographic location of recipient. You will be invoiced for this cost in your shipment.

Prayer for Bishop Francis Hodur
from the Mass for Departed Bishops (2006 P.N.C.C. Missal):



Most Rev. Franciszek Hodur
Organizer and First Prime Bishop
of the
Polish National Catholic Church

Born: Sunday, April 1, 1866

Died: Monday, February 16, 1953

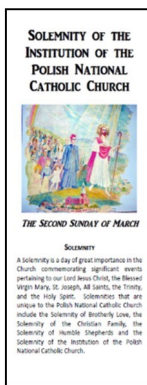
Let us pray.

O Lord, Jesus Christ, Who did assure Your holy Apostles that the highest reward awaits those who strive zealously for the continuance of the Kingdom of God on earth, receive into Your glory the soul our Your servant, Francis Hodur, Bishop of Your Holy Church.

Have compassion on him as You had compassion on the erring Apostles. Mindful of his desire to bring souls to You, reward him with eternal happiness. For You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Solemnity of the Institution of the Polish National Catholic Church

The Solemnity of the Institution of the Polish National Catholic Church will be celebrated throughout the Polish National Catholic Church this year on Sunday, March 10, 2024. In celebration of this Solemnity, the P.N.C.C. is again offering to the parishes a full color brochure describing the Solemnity of the Institution and sharing some information on this unique feast of the Polish National Catholic Church. This is a perfect point of information to include in welcome packets or to have in bulletin racks.



25 brochures: \$8.50

50 brochures: \$15.00

75 brochures: \$21.50

100 brochures: \$27.50

(All prices include shipping costs.)

Checks, payable to P.N.C.C. Book Department, should be sent to:

P.N.C.C. Book Department
National Church Center
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

