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He is Risen, Indeed!

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

“On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’ Then they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles.” (Luke 24:1-10)

As we celebrate the important and joyous day of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we might be struck by the way in which our Lord chose to reveal this great mystery to His followers. On Sunday morning, the women went to anoint the body of Jesus with spices and they encountered the empty tomb. They further encountered two angels, men in dazzling clothes, who announced that Jesus had been raised, exactly as He said.

Although they were surprised that the tomb was empty and frightened at the appearance of the angels, it is with this announcement that they remember the words of our Lord and are led into the sure belief that

He has been raised from the dead. It is also then that they begin to share that message as well. The women carry the news of the Resurrection to the apostles, they also take some time to enter fully into that sure belief that Jesus has risen from the dead.

The situation is somewhat similar for each of us as well. Now most of us have been raised in families where we have heard the news of the Easter season from the time we were small children. But hearing the news and applying that good news into the difficult and challenging moments of our lives are different things. It is never enough to simply know the story of the Resurrection, we must rather enter deeply into this good news within our own lives.

It begins with our understanding of the passion and death of Jesus. During Holy Week, and even thereafter, I have spent time reading the passion. While reading I often reflect on where I would be within the story. I would like to think that I would be with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John at the foot of the cross. But I must admit that in times of trial and difficulty, I might very well be with those who were calling for Jesus’ death. At times, because of various actions, I might be one who denied Jesus as St. Peter did, or like the other apostles who simply ran away because they saw that it was going to get difficult.

The most beautiful thing about the forgiveness won for us in the Resurrection is that our Lord has taken none of this into account in extending that forgiveness. It is offered to all, even those who denied

(Continued on Page 3.)

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Inside this Issue

He is Risen, Indeed! - Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky	1
March 2024 Future Direction Message -	4
Diaconal Ordination at St. Stanislaus Cathedral	5
Annual Easter Greetings	6
Navigating Marital Conflict - Rev. Dr. Jasiurkowski	8
Reignite the Spark: Oxygen Event - Rev. Dr. Jasiurkowski	12
Scholar’s Conference 2024	13
Convo 2024	14
Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese	22
Central Diocese	23
Eastern Diocese	28
Western Diocese.....	31

(He is Risen, Indeed! - Continued from Page 1.)

Him or walked away, as long as they come to Jesus remembering the forgiveness that He offered and the good news that has been proclaimed in His rising from the dead. When the women at the tomb were given the good news of the Resurrection, "He is not here, He is risen." It is then that they remembered the words He had spoken, then they then went on to share that good news with others.

This too is an important part of the message of the Resurrection, that the good news be shared. The women had taken this news immediately back to the apostles, and we can assume that they continued to live it and share it for as long as they lived. We too are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. In the sermon of St. Peter, he speaks of this reality. "Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:13-15) These words are all the more powerful when we realize the great change that occurred between the time when Peter denied Christ and the time when he became one who testified to Christ so strongly that ultimately he went to his death crucified upside-down for love of Christ.

My brothers and sisters, I encourage you in this upcoming Easter season to realize that the good news of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a message that is intended specifically for you. It is spoken directly to you. The women at the tomb are speaking directly to you when they share the message, the apostles and other followers of Jesus are speaking

directly to you when they proclaim Christ as risen. The message is meant for you. Let us then accept it, not just in our minds but in our hearts and within our very selves. Let the message of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead begin to change everything about you. Let it bring you closer to Jesus each and every day.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has triumphed over sin and death and all things evil. But that work must still be lived out in our own lives. We must bring it to reality for ourselves, for our families, in our parishes, our communities and in our world. This is the work of Christian discipleship. Let us recite the Prayer for Divine Triumph from the PNCC Prayerbook often and then allow Christ to give us the strength to begin to accomplish the will of God in our own lives in every thought, word and deed.

Prayer for Divine Triumph

Lord, bless us with the wisdom to praise You in spirit and in truth, so that by following Your holy will, we may gain eternal salvation. May we be instruments of Your divine plan that righteousness may triumph over evil. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

To my brother Bishops, the Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, the Deacons, to all the faithful of the Polish National Catholic Church and the Nordic Catholic Church, I extend my blessings for a truly joyous Easter day and season. May the risen life of Christ enliven each and every one of us, that we may live lives of faith in the Triune God and in love for all of our brothers and sisters.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



Wesołego Alleluja! Christ is Risen!

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

Controller: Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky

Editor: Julie Orzell



P.N.C.C. Future Direction March 2024

Eastertide

Introduction

As we continue in this year of 2024, the Future Direction writings will focus some of this year's reflections on the various aspects of our Catholic Christianity, especially as it concerns our daily living 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

Mark 16:15-16 – Jesus said, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.

Romans 1:16-17 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

2 Timothy 4:1-2 – In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

Matthew 28:18-20 – And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 11:28 – Come to Me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart.

Reflection

As we pass out of the Lenten season, we might find things a bit difficult regarding our spiritual life in the season of Easter. We certainly feel the joy and elation of the Solemnity of the Resurrection, but it can be difficult to sustain it. During Lent we had a number of different devotions as well as a number of Lenten discipline practices to keep us on track as we pass through this penitential season. We can rightly begin to ask the question, what now in the Easter season.

First and foremost we must begin by realizing that there is certainly a freedom that we experience within the Easter season. Christ had gone to the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and has now risen from the dead. He has been set free from the bonds of death, and in that we are set free from the bonds of sin. Therefore, Easter is the season where we celebrate and live that freedom. It is for this reason that during the Easter season we do not fast on the normal Fridays of this time.

But we must also realize that this is the season of sharing the Good News that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. During the Sundays of the Easter season, we will encounter a number of gospel readings where the message that Jesus is risen from the dead is shared. This means that during the Easter season we need to change our focus a little, the Lenten season is one where we do the internal work of getting ourselves ready. Through penitential devotions and the Sacrament of Penance we do the hard work of internal amendment. It is then in this Easter season that we now take the message that Jesus is risen from the dead and share it with the whole world. We can share how we have been changed by coming to know Christ in His passion and in His death, but most importantly in His Resurrection.

(Continued on Page 7.)

Diaconal Ordination at St. Stanislaus Cathedral Scranton, PA



The Diaconal Ordination of Cleric Sean Dodd was held at St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr, Cathedral in Scranton, PA, on Saturday, March 9th. Holy Mass with the orders of Subdeacon and Deacon commenced at 10:00 am, followed by a luncheon in the Parish Hall.

As has been the tradition in the past this will allow the new ordinand to participate in the service of Holy Week and Easter as a Deacon.





Annual Easter Greetings



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

Bishop Paul & Karen Sobiechowski
Christ is Risen!
He is risen, indeed!

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

Leslie Rafalko
In loving memory of Rt. Rev. Jarosław (Jerry) Rafalko
Alleluja! Jesus is risen, the victory is won,
sins are forgiven. Praise God for His Son.

Rejoice! He is risen! Alleluia!
Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski
Eastern Diocese

Plymouth Seniorate Clergy
Very Rev. Lucian Urbaniak, Administrative Senior
Rev. Robert Plichta, Rev Bogusław Janiec

Remember Jesus' Sacrifice and
give thanks for blessings, love and peace.
The United Young Men's Society of Resurrection

Eastern Diocese Ladies Adoration Society
Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Diocesan Bishop
Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak, Chaplain

All Saints Cathedral Parish
Chicago, IL
He has risen!

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Manchester, NH
Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski
Christ is risen! Alleluia!

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

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

Guardian Angel Parish in Los Angeles, CA
Fr. Andrew Machowski
Christ is risen! Alleluja!

Holy Cross Church, Woodland Park, NJ
holycrosssite.org
Happy Easter! Christ is risen!

Holy Cross Parish, Hamtramck, MI
Very Rev. Jarosław Nowak, Pastor
Alleluia! Christ is alive!

Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Dupont, PA
Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid
Rejoice! Wishing you the joy of Easter.

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

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

May the Father bless us all
as we celebrate His Son's resurrection!
Resurrection Parish, Temperance, MI

St. Casimir's P.N.C.C.—Lowell, MA
Rev. Andrzej Tenus, Pastor
Easter blessings to all!

St. John the Baptist Parish - Frackville, PA
Christ is Risen!
Have a blessed Easter.

St. Joseph's Parish, Fairhope, PA
Rev. Mr. David Nichols
Alleluia! Christ is risen!

St. Joseph's of Stratford, CT
Father Tom Walsh, Pastor
Alleluia! He is risen!

St. Mary's Parish - South Bend, IN
Fr. Sr. Zawistowski, Parish Committee and Faithful
Wishing all a joyous Easter season!



Annual Easter Greetings



St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Cedar Lake, IN
 Very Rev. John P. Kowalczyk, Jr. - Pastor
 Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

St. Stephen the Martyr Parish, Reading, PA
 Very Rev. Donald E. Wunderlich
 He is risen, He is risen, indeed!

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

Easter blessings to all from
 the Parish Committee and Parishioners from
 SS Peter & Paul's Parish, McAdoo, PA

Wishing you a Happy Easter!
 Board of Directors &
 Staff of Spójnia Credit Union



(P.N.C.C. Future Direction March Message - Continued from Page 4.)

Now we do not expect that everyone will be preaching on street corners, but we can preach the good news of the risen Jesus in each and every action, word and thought that we have. If we live lives of faith, hope and love because of the Resurrection of Christ, we can share this with others and bring them to Christ as well.

Action Item

As an action item during this Easter season, spend some time in reflection as to how your life has changed for the better because of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When you have identified these ways, allow them to live even more fully in your daily life, as the life of Risen Jesus remains strong with you.

As an extension of your prayer life in Eastertide, pray the prayer entitled "Queen of Heaven (Regina Coeli). This prayer replaces the Angelus during Easter time. It is traditional to pray this at 6:00 a.m., 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. It is also the reason why bells within the Church ring at these times. At home, a good practice is to pray it upon rising, when you sit down for lunch and before going to bed. Even if you can't do that, at least pick one time a day to recite this prayer. When you pray these words, reflect upon them and especially that all of us should rejoice at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Queen of Heaven (Regina Coeli)

V. Queen of heaven rejoice, alleluia.
 R. For He Whom you merited to bear, alleluia.
 V. Has risen as He said, alleluia.
 R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.
 V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
 R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. *O God, Who by the Resurrection of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world; grant we beseech You, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

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

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

Navigating Marital Conflict: Understanding and Managing Perpetual Problems

Rev. Dr. Stan Jasiurkowski

Introduction

The sacrament and institution of marriage present a complex interplay of emotional, psychological, and practical dynamics that can either enrich or destabilize the relationship over time. Research indicates that a significant portion of marital conflict, approximately 69%, consists of perpetual problems—ongoing issues that partners grapple with throughout their union (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Psychologist Dan Wile (2015) rightly captures this phenomenon by asserting that choosing a long-term partner inevitably involves choosing a set of unsolvable problems that will persist for decades. However, I must stress that the distinguishing factor between happy and unhappy marriages lies not in the absence of such problems, but rather in how couples manage them. This article explores the characteristics of perpetual problems, the gridlocked conflict that often typifies unstable unions, and contrasts them with Biblical principles of handling problems.

Understanding Perpetual Problems

During my pastoral counseling sessions, I often address a range of conflicts that couples face, from day-to-day disputes to deeply entrenched issues known as perpetual problems. I assist couples in recognizing that such conflicts are a normal part of marriage and guide them in developing strategies to manage these problems constructively. These perpetual problems are rooted in the intrinsic differences between spouses' personalities, values, or lifestyles. Perpetual problems typically originate from the very core of each partner's being. They are not temporary or suitable for simple resolution because they reflect fundamental aspects of each individual's identity or belief system. Whether it is divergent sexual desires, different attitudes towards domestic tasks, religious beliefs, political convictions, or conflicting preferences for leisure activities, these problems can be persistent sources of tension. However, it is not the presence of these problems that determines marriage satisfaction, but how spouses approach and manage them.

I would like to share an example of how a perpetual problem can be negotiated to bring balance and mutual understanding. John and Sarah requested counseling due to ongoing disagreements about the frequency of sexual intimacy. Sarah desired more frequent sexual encounters than John, who often felt pressured and misunderstood. She stated that this was the reason she got married to have "intimate relations whenever she desired." During pastoral counseling, I helped them recognize that their sexual expectation disparity was a problem linked to their unique physiological and emotional needs. Through guided communication exercises, Sarah and John learned to express their desires and concerns without blame, fostering mutual understanding and empathy. They learned to negotiate a balance that honored both their needs while maintaining their emotional connection.

I would like to emphasize that these perpetual problems, which are deeply rooted in individual differences, require couples to engage in ongoing management rather than seek one-time solutions. Therefore, couples need to develop effective mitigation strategies to help them navigate through the complexities of their conflicts. These techniques and strategies are pivotal in guiding couples toward a more harmonious relationship, despite the presence of unsolvable problems.

Unlocking the Gridlock

Marital distress often originates from gridlocked conflict. This conflict can be described as a persistent state of unresolved arguments, which is characterized by deep-rooted positions, emotional disengagement, and persistent frustration. This type of conflict threatens the very foundation of the relationship. Over the years, I have worked with many couples unable to get out of this gridlock and considered divorcing each other; however, as a last chance, they decided to speak with a chaplain. As a pastoral counselor, you navigate a very complex terrain which requires you not only have an understanding of the dynamics at play but also the strategic application of effective intervention strategies.

In those complex situations, I draw upon different therapy theories, but I find especially Gottman's framework very effective. It allows us to recognize the hallmarks of gridlock: the sting of perceived rejection, the overpowering grip of negativity, and the chilling absence of warmth during conflict exchanges. Over time, I have learned that these superficial disagreements (sometimes very trivial, but deeply damaging) often mask deeper or very deep emotional needs that have gone unheard or unaddressed, fueling resentment and eroding marital

satisfaction over time. Couples experiencing this gridlock related to certain problems or real or perceived issues, hardly ever have a fulfilling or deeply satisfying conversation as the conflict can be triggered by literally anything. If you experience in your marriage similar situations, perhaps it is time to sit down with a good counselor to get some coaching and work hard to overcome this debilitating gridlock and improve communication and marital satisfaction.

David and Maria were a military couple and parents to two young children. They had starkly different parenting styles. David, as a former drill sergeant, had an authoritarian approach that clashed with Maria's permissive style, leading to gridlock that not only affected their relationship but also confused their children. Counseling sessions reveal that David's rigidity stemmed not only from his military training but also from a fear of disorder in their house, while Maria's laxity was a response to her strict upbringing. Through carefully crafted interventions, I could empower them to break free from this destructive cycle. By unearthing the emotional undercurrents beneath the surface, I help them move beyond blame and defensiveness. By understanding these underlying emotions, David and Maria could work toward a more balanced and unified parenting approach.

One part of this process was teaching them how to cultivate empathy and validate each other's perspectives. Building these skills became paramount, fostering a safe space for them to truly listen and acknowledge each other's perspectives and feelings. Reframing negative communication patterns into constructive dialogue equipped them with the tools to express their emotional needs effectively and navigate disagreements about raising their children productively. Addressing any imbalances in power dynamics helped also to foster a sense of fairness and respect within their relationship.

The journey towards healthier interactions is rarely linear, and individual counseling or therapy can serve as a valuable adjunct, addressing deeper personal issues that may be contributing to the gridlock and constant quarrels. By equipping couples with the necessary skills and fostering a collaborative environment, pastors or counselors can play a pivotal role in transforming gridlocked conflict into a springboard for connection, understanding, and ultimately, a more fulfilling and enduring partnership.

Helpful Strategies

I have stated many times that effective communication is the foundation of any strong marriage. Couples must work hard, when needed with the help of a priest or a counselor to develop a communication style that is open, honest, and non-judgmental. Spouses should learn to share their thoughts, feelings, and needs in a way that is clear and compassionate. Developing your active listening skills is also crucial, as they allow each partner to fully understand the other's perspective without immediately jumping to conclusions or defenses. In counseling sessions, I use a technique of role-playing exercises to help couples to practice these skills, and then provide them feedback and guidance on how to improve.

As a pastoral counselor, I empathize with each partner's narratives and their relationship story, to get a deeper understanding of the underlying issues at play. Then, at some point, I work with them to see things from the spouse's perspective. This I call empathy. Empathy is a crucial emotional skill that enables one to resonate with the feelings of another person. Within the realms of marriage, this skill takes on an even more significant role, as it allows partners to fully acknowledge and affirm each other's emotions, even amidst conflict. Many times, this is very difficult, but believe me, you can learn this skill with the help of a counselor by conducting exercises specifically tailored for you. These exercises often involve open discussions about past experiences, fears, and aspirations that are tied to the conflict. This enables partners to see beyond the surface of the disagreement and into the heart of their partner's emotional experience. Sometimes, I also might have each partner recount an instance where they felt their perspective on a recurring issue was not fully grasped. By doing this, the other partner is presented with an opportunity to practice empathy, understanding, and validating the feelings that were overlooked. This exercise is not only about sharing and listening but about creating a safe space where each spouse can explore and empathize with the emotional journey of the other. Through such guided interactions, couples can begin to build a bridge of empathy, strengthening their bond and enhancing their capacity to navigate through marital challenges with compassion and understanding.

Mastering the art of negotiation is also critical for couples seeking to resolve ongoing issues in a manner that respects the needs of both partners. Those negotiations between partners must be balanced and productive. You as a spouse cannot have any selfish agenda before or during the negotiation process. You must be focused on how to meet the needs of your partner, and this must be on both sites. With this in mind, couples need to

(Continued on Page 10.)

(Navigating Marital Conflict - Continued from Page 9.)

know that negotiation strategies often involve establishing clear boundaries, pinpointing non-negotiable elements, and identifying areas where both parties are willing to be more flexible. Each individual must recognize what concessions they are prepared to make, as well as what they hope to receive in return, fostering a realistic and constructive approach to the negotiation process.

Dealing with the same problems over and over again can overshadow the positive aspects of a relationship if they are not managed well. Therefore, couples should regularly express appreciation for each other and celebrate their relationship's successes and strengths. This can create a buffer against the stress that perpetual problems may cause. Positive reinforcement techniques, such as expressing gratitude and engaging in shared enjoyable activities, can increase overall marital satisfaction. One way to help you build this skill is to keep a gratitude journal, where you and your partner write down positive qualities you appreciate about your spouse and share these observations. You can also use the "five-to-one ratio" of positive to negative interactions. This means that for every negative comment or criticism, couples should balance it with five positive affirmations or compliments. Research has shown that this ratio can predict the success or failure of a relationship, as it helps to maintain a positive emotional climate and avoid resentment.

Another essential strategy in mitigating perpetual problems is fostering a sense of acceptance within the relationship. Acceptance does not mean partners have to like every aspect of each other's behavior; rather, it is an acknowledgment of the reality of their differences. Sometimes, I can only help couples understand that some of their conflicts may not have a resolution, but they can still have a fulfilling relationship by accepting each other's imperfections and differences. They can learn to live with it or let it go to enjoy their relationship in the long run. Nobody will die if the partner continues squeezing the toothpaste from the other side than you. You can decide to let it go instead of arguing every night about it. We can always learn to recognize and accept what we cannot change, focusing instead on what we can influence positively within their relationship.

Couples often benefit from establishing a shared vision for their relationship, which can serve as a guiding principle when navigating perpetual problems. This shared vision should encompass the values, goals, and dreams that both partners hold for their lives together. I always ask couples to tell how they envision themselves in 5, 10, 20, or 30 years. I want to see if they still have dreams and plans for their future together. If they don't, it means that their relationship is in deeper trouble. At that point, I can assist them in articulating this vision and using it as a touchstone to remind them of the bigger picture when they feel bogged down by ongoing issues. Couples can also create a joint statement or visual representation of their shared goals and values, providing a sense of unity and purpose for their future together.

Additionally, perpetual problems can sometimes be magnified by personal insecurities or unresolved issues. Insecure emotional partners often struggle with low self-esteem, trust issues, and fear of abandonment, which can create or exacerbate relationship problems in various ways. Below are some examples of how an emotionally insecure partner might contribute to relationship difficulties, followed by an example of how a counseling session might address these issues.

An insecure partner may often feel jealous or suspicious, which can lead to constant questioning, monitoring, and controlling behaviors. This can make their partner feel mistrusted, smothered, or unjustly accused. Insecure spouses may also require frequent reassurance about their partner's feelings for them, which can become exhausting. The partner might feel overwhelmed by the constant need to appease the insecurities. Additionally, they may interpret neutral or ambiguous situations as signs of impending rejection or abandonment, causing them to overreact or jump to conclusions. I have seen countless times insecure partners having trouble respecting their partner's need for space or personal boundaries. This usually leads to feelings of suffocation or loss of individuality in the relationship. They might also engage in passive-aggressive behavior or avoidance of important conversations. Some may overreact to minor issues or disagreements, turning small problems into larger conflicts due to their heightened emotional state.

Jordan was an outstanding soldier. She came to my office and asked if she could bring her husband Alex for counseling. The next day when we met, Alex said Jordan came back home from work after 7 PM, without any message to explain why. Jordan's perspective was that when she finally, stepped inside the house, being exhausted, her face softened upon seeing Alex. But before any words of explanation could leave her lips, Alex's insecurity had already taken the driver's seat. He angrily said, "Where were you? Why didn't you call?" Jordan replied, "I'm so sorry, my phone died, and we were on lockdown because one private misplaced his sensitive

item and the whole company was searching for it." At this point, Jordan reached out to Alex with a little smile, attempting to bridge the emotional gap with a touch. But Alex recoiled, the touch feeling like a betrayal. He said, "Do you expect me to believe that? Every time you're late, I can't help but think you're with someone else!" Jordan looked frustrated and hurt. She replied, "Alex, I love you. Why can't you trust me?"

Alex's insecurities had cast long shadows over their relationship, turning simple misunderstandings into emotional battlegrounds. And yet, amidst the doubts and fears, there was a glimmer of hope — a recognition that these shadows could only be dispelled by facing them together, with open hearts and a willingness to heal.

Biblical and Theological Framework

The Bible offers an outstanding theological framework for navigating these relational challenges, guiding couples towards not just resolution, but towards a deeper understanding of themselves and each other. Proverbs 3:5-6 serves as a reminder: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." In the struggles of conflict, our limited perspectives often cloud judgment. Therefore, we need to take a pause and surrender to God, seeking not simply solutions, but wisdom – a wisdom found in fervent prayer and deep meditation on scripture. These practices become the compass, guiding us through the emotional fog, and illuminating a path towards understanding and reconciliation.

James 1:19-20 adds another layer, teaching us to "be quick to listen, slow to speak." This verse transcends mere conflict resolution; it aims at the heart of authentic connection. Active listening, as we have discussed before, is a cornerstone of Christian discipleship and becomes an act of love. By silencing our own voices and truly seeking to understand our spouse's perspective, we cultivate empathy and compassion – the very elements that deescalate any conflict. This active listening is not just a technique, but a reflection of love, patiently seeking understanding even amidst differing viewpoints.

Keep in mind that your journey does not end with understanding your spouse. Forgiveness, the foundation of Christian faith, emerges as the necessary antidote to resentment. Ephesians 4:32 explains to us: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you." Forgiveness, a divine gift freely bestowed upon us, becomes the catalyst for our own transformation. By choosing to forgive, we break the cycle of hurt and pave the way for healing and restoration. But the act of forgiveness is not a passive surrender. It is a radical act of love, mirroring the sacrificial and transformative grace offered by Christ Himself.

Finally, communication, the lifeblood of relationships, takes center stage. I cannot stress enough the importance of the Proverbs 15:1 reminder: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." During conflict, communication cannot be used as a weapon helping to win the battle, but as a bridge built with respect and kindness to connect two different points. This gentle communication, rooted in love and understanding, echoes the words of Ephesians 4:25: "Speak the truth to each other, as those belonging to one another." Honesty, even amidst the storm, builds trust, the foundation upon which a healthy and thriving relationship stands.

Conclusion

Perpetual conflicts can lead to significant distress in marriages, but with the right strategies and guidance from a pastor or a counselor, couples can learn to overcome these challenges. Navigating through conflict is much easier when we illuminate our path by presenting the above theological principles. They will allow you not only to find better solutions, but to emerge stronger, and your bond will be reinforced by understanding, forgiveness, and love. This journey, ultimately, is a testament to the transformative power of God's grace, working within and through us, guiding us toward a love that transcends conflict and finds its truest expression in forgiveness and understanding.

References

- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1999). *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. Crown Publishing Group.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: And How You Can Make Yours Last*. Simon & Schuster.
- Wile, D. B. (2015). *After the Honeymoon: How Conflict Can Improve Your Relationship (Revised Edition)*. Collaborative Couple Therapy Books

Reignite the Spark: Oxygen Event Helps Couples Breathe New Life into Love

Rev. Dr. Stan Jasiurkowski

Military life can be challenging for families, especially when they face frequent deployments, separations, and transitions. To help them strengthen their relationships and resilience, a military family retreat was held from February 23 to 25, 2024, at the Ocean Creek Resort in Myrtle Beach, SC. The retreat was based on the Oxygen curriculum, a world-class program developed by Stronger Families, a non-profit organization that supports military families. The retreat was attended by families from various units from Fort Liberty, NC, including the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), Womack Army Medical Center (WAMC), 44th Medical Brigade, and DEN-TAC. The retreat was conducted by CH (LTC) Stan Jasiurkowski from WAMC and CH (CPT) Monserrate Vergara Soto from SRU, who provided pastoral care and guidance to the couples throughout the retreat.

One of the highlights of the retreat was the Oxygen seminar, which included eight sessions on topics such as communication, differences, resolving conflict, intimacy, love styles, forgiveness, and more. The seminar was led by master-level trainers who guided the couples through engaging discussions, exercises, and videos. The couples learned how to identify their personality types, love languages, and conflict styles, and how to use them to improve their relationships. They also learned how to express their needs, feelings, and expectations, and how to listen and respond with empathy and respect. The seminar helped the couples gain new insights, tools, and strategies to enhance their connection and satisfaction.

Another key component of the retreat was the Taste of Oxygen workshops, which offered the couples a chance to practice and apply what they learned in the seminar. The workshops focused on four areas: communication, intimacy, conflict resolution, and love styles. The couples were engaged in fun and interactive activities, such as role-playing, quizzes, and challenges, that helped them deepen their understanding of each other and their relationship. The workshops also provided the couples with practical tips and resources they can use daily.

The retreat also included the Couple Checkup, a professional assessment that measures a relationship's strengths and growth areas. The couples completed the online questionnaire before the retreat and received a personalized report and a workbook that they could use to continue working on their relationships at home. The Couple Checkup helped the couples identify their areas of agreement and disagreement and provided them with feedback and suggestions on how to improve their relationship quality. According to the Couple Checkup, the couples showed significant improvement in their relationship quality after the retreat. They scored higher on areas such as communication, conflict resolution, intimacy, and overall satisfaction.

The retreat was a success, as evidenced by the positive feedback from the participants, who reported that they enjoyed the retreat and learned a lot from it. They also expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to spend quality time with their spouse and to bond with other military couples who shared similar experiences and challenges. The retreat was a valuable experience that helped the couples build stronger and ready families.

The success of the "Building Strong and Ready Teams" retreat at Ocean Creek Resort signals a promising path forward for military family support programs. By addressing the unique needs of these families through targeted curricula like Oxygen, the military community can continue to build resilience and readiness from the inside out. As we move forward, the lessons learned and connections made during this retreat will undoubtedly serve as a foundation for future initiatives aimed at supporting our military families.

In conclusion, the Building Strong and Ready Teams training based on the Oxygen curriculum represents a significant step forward in supporting military families. The positive impact of this retreat underscores the importance of addressing the spiritual, psychological, and emotional well-being of both service members and spouses.

(Continued on bottom of Page 25.)

Scholars' Conference 2024
The Polish National Catholic Church
History and Archives Commission
April 19, 2024

From Church Riot to Sit-Down Strike: Polish Catholics and Collective action in South Bend, 1885-1940

Gavin Moulton, PhD candidate | History: University of Notre Dame

One P.N.C.C. Women's Personal Memoir

Theodore Zawistowski

Easter Bonnet Rebellion

Kenneth Bracker

Social Justice in the Polish National Catholic Church

Rev. James Konicki

Panel of Thoughts (Topical Issues for Future Consideration)

The Nordic Catholic Church in Germany

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky Ph.D.

Faith Development

Rev. Jim Ploskonka Ph.D.

A Retrospective View of the Innovations in Organization, Liturgy, Theology, and Culture of the Polish National Catholic Church, 125 Years, A Round Table Discussion

Rev. Jim Ploskonka, Ph.D.

One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic... Intellectual?

Rev. John A. Cramer, M.Div.

Member of P.N.C.C. History and Archives Committee

The Polish National Catholic Church has a vast tradition dating back to 1895, with the founding of All Saints Parish in Chicago, IL, followed two years later with St. Stanislaus in Scranton, PA led by Bishop Francis Hodur. This tradition is not only limited to the ideas of freedom of worship, freedom of culture and heritage, and freedom of property ownership and parochial autonomy. All of these have, as their undercurrent, freedom of thought and expression.

Within this tradition, the Polish National Catholic Church has historically hosted annual symposiums for academic presentations of papers related to topics related to the Polish National Catholic Church and Polonia in the United States. Leading up to 2023, these were on hiatus for a couple of decades, however 2023 saw a renaissance of this tradition in the post-COVID regeneration of our Church with the 2023 Scholars' Conference.

This year, the History and Archives Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church will once again host a symposium we are calling the PNCC Scholars' Conference. This year it will be taking place April 19, 2024, in Scranton, PA. We would like to have as many as possible attend the presentations, which will include a presentation by a Mr. Gavin Moulton, a PhD in History at the University of Notre Dame about the events leading to the famous Bloody Sunday incident that preceded the founding of St. Mary's PNCC in South Bend, IN. There will also be a presentation regarding the Nordic Catholic Church, a member of the Union of Scranton. Additionally, there will be a panel discussion regarding the Liturgical advancements of the Polish National Catholic Church over the last 125 years, along with other very interesting presentations.

Not going to be in Northeast Pennsylvania in mid-April? No problem! We will have an option for participation via Zoom! You can attend no matter where you reside, from Fall River, MA to Davie, FL to Los Angeles, CA or anywhere in between!

To register for the Scholars' Conference, please contact secretarytopb@pncc.org or call at 570-346- 9131.

Don't miss out on this wonderful experience! You won't regret it, and you just might learn something new about Polonia and the history of the Polish National Catholic Church!



Dear Parishes of the PNCC,

March 14, 2024

We are thrilled to share with you the exciting news of Convo 2024! With great joy and anticipation, we announce the upcoming gathering, meticulously organized by the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese under the guidance of Bishop John Mack.

Convo 2024 will take place from July 22 to July 26 at Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA. The theme of our Convo is inspired by the words of St. Paul: "Running the Race." As the world converges in Paris for the Olympic Games this summer, we find it fitting to shift our focus to the ultimate competition — the race of faith, with the eternal prize of life in Christ Jesus.

Enclosed with this letter is the registration packet for your convenience. We kindly request that you duplicate the packet as needed for each participant. It's important to note that all attendees aged 18 and above must undergo a background check, as has been customary for previous Convos and Church youth events. This requirement applies to all participants 18 years old and older.

Please pay close attention to the registration deadline and the designated address for submitting registrations.

We eagerly anticipate gathering with you this summer at Mercyhurst as we embark on our journey of faith together.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Clare Lill

Clare Lill, Co-Chair

Devin Junko

Devin Junko, Co-Chair

Katherine Drezewski

Katherine Drezewski, Co-Chair

716 685-5768

admin@holymotheroftherosary.org

www.convo2024.com

The Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese of the
Polish National Catholic Church Presents...



Open to all Youth (Ages 12– 20) & Adults of the Church & Guests!

All registrations must be submitted no later than July 1, 2024

Registration Fee:
\$400.00 per participant before June 15
\$ 425.00 per participant after June 15

Please send all registrations with payment to:
CONVO 2024
6298 BROADWAY
LANCASTER, NY. 14086

Please make all checks payable to: CONVO 2024

Please duplicate this packet as needed

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): _____
 Diocese: _____
 Parish: _____ City/State: _____
 Chaperone's Name: _____ Parish: _____
 Room Buddy (List 1 Person): _____ Parish: _____

Emergency Contact Information: (Someone not attending Convo)

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 Other _____

Health Information: (If additional space is needed, please attach a separate sheet. Please provide a front and back copy of your insurance card)

Participant's Doctor: _____ Phone: () _____
 Insurance Co. Name: _____
 ID number: _____ Group number: _____ Policy Holder's name: _____

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

Participant's special dietary needs: _____

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

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

General Information: *(Please ✓ as required)*

- T-Shirt Size: *(Adult Sizes)* Small Medium Large X-Large XX-Large XXX-Large
- Waldameer Park and Water World: We will be having an excursion to Waldameer Park and Water World during Convo 2024. Those who wish to spend time in Water World are reminded to bring their swimwear.
- For Mass and Prayer Services: Would you be willing to serve as:
 - acolyte choir member lector musician* usher
 - *If you checked “musician”, which instrument do you play? _____

CONVO 2024 RULES AND REGULATIONS

FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS, GUESTS, CLERGY AND CHAPERONES:

This list is for everyone in attendance and is intended to allow you to have an enjoyable and safe experience at Convo 2024 at Mercyhurst University

We encourage you to...

- ✓ have an awesome time at Convo 2024
- ✓ be aware that you are responsible for your own conduct at all times
- ✓ attend all sessions, activities, Mass and Prayer Services
- ✓ dress appropriately at all times, wearing modest non-revealing clothes; this includes bathing suits.
- ✓ be sure to limit all social activity to public areas only
- ✓ use recreation equipment and facilities in a proper and safe manner, and return all recreation equipment that was used.
- ✓ respect your fellow neighbors at night and be considerate of their needs, especially those younger participants
- ✓ stay on the property of Mercyhurst University at all times
- ✓ act in a respectful and mature manner at Waldameer and Water World
- ✓ follow all rules and regulations of Convo 2024 and Mercyhurst University

We discourage the following...

- ✓ use of electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, etc.) is not permitted during Holy Mass, Prayer Services, sessions or activities; if such devices are not left at home, they should be locked in your car or in the secured in your room during these activities. (Further explanation will be given during the opening session.)
- ✓ socializing in dorm rooms with members of the opposite sex.
- ✓ inappropriate dress (no lewd or profane t-shirts, clothing that is too small, too tight, etc.).
- ✓ use of foul or abusive language, which will not be tolerated.
- ✓ loud noises after 10:30 p.m.
- ✓ use of alcohol, illegal drugs, fireworks or firearms, which are strictly prohibited for all participants
- ✓ use of tobacco, unless of legal age and only then in designated areas only
- ✓ the rearrangement of beds or other furnishings
- ✓ leaving Mercyhurst University under any circumstances

** Violation of these rules and regulations may result in your being asked to leave Convo 2024 at your own expense*

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*

Polish National Catholic Church National Youth Convocation 2024 WAIVER:

I, _____, am either an emancipated adult or the parent or guardian of a minor child who will be participating in the Convo 2024 OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH I am fully aware that my own/my child's participation in The Convo 2024 is totally voluntary. In consideration of Convo 2024 agreement to permit me/my child to participate in Convo 2024, 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 Convo 2024 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 prop Convo 2024 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 Convo 2024
2. Agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Convo 2024 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 Convo 2024 including my/his/her travel to or from Convo 2024

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 Convo 2024. I have knowingly and voluntarily decided to assume the risks of these inherent dangers in consideration of Convo 2024 permission to allow me/my minor child to participate in Convo 2024.
2. My and, if applicable, my child's personal property is at my risk entirely;
3. Convo 2024 reserves the right to decline to accept or retain me/my child in Convo 2024 at any time should my/his/her actions or general behavior impede the operation of Convo 2024 or the rights or welfare of any person. I understand that I/my child may be required to leave Convo 2024 in the sole discretion of Convo 2024 agents and representatives. In such an event, no refund will be made for any unused portion of Convo 2024.

I represent and warrant that I am/my child is covered throughout Convo 2024 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 HEALTHINFORMATION above to the best of my ability and, by its completion, I hereby release and discharge Convo 2024 of all responsibility and liability for any injuries, illnesses, medical bills, charges or similar expense/he/she may incur while participating in Convo 2022. By completing the form, I hereby authorize Convo 2024 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 Convo 2024 to release medical information about me/my child to any person or entity to whom Convo 2024 refers me/my child for medical treatment.

I agree that this Agreement is to be construed pursuant to the laws of the State of New York 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 an Erie County court in the state of New York court.

I hereby grant to Convo 2024 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 Convo 2024 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: _____ Name of Participant: _____ Date: _____

POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
CONVO 2024
Running the Race

CONVO 2024
REQUIRED BACKGROUND CHECK FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AGE 18 AND OVER

As required by Pennsylvania law and to ensure the best possible environment for our youth all AGE 18 AND OVER associated with Convo 2024 are asked to submit to Criminal background checks as well as Child Abuse Clearances. These checks are being done by the company "Trusted Employees" through our insurance company Church Mutual.

All individuals age 18 and over are asked to submit the following information as required by "Trusted Employees"

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

I agree to submit to a background check as outlined above for Convo 2024. I understand that this is required for my participation in Convo 2024. This above information I submit for this background check will be kept in strictest confidence. No additional cost is passed on for this back ground check. Also, it should be noted that background checks have been used at previous youth Convocations as well as our Church's annual Kurs program.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Required for All CONVO 2024 Participants Age 18 and Over

AFFIDAVIT

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

COUNTY OF ERIE

_____ swears and affirms as follows:
(Print Name)

- 1) I wish to serve as an unpaid volunteer for Convocation 2024 (CONVO) of the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC).
- 2) I am submitting this Affidavit to the PNCC in accordance with the provisions of Section 6344.2(B.1) of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, 23 Pa.C.S.A. Section 6301 et seq.
- 3) I understand that the PNCC will be relying on my statements in this Affidavit for the purpose of determining whether I may serve as an unpaid volunteer for CONVO.
- 4) I am not disqualified from service as a volunteer pursuant to Section 6344(C) of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law, in that:
 - a) I have never been convicted of any of the following criminal offenses under the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa.C.S.A. Section 101 et seq.:
 - i) Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide);
 - ii) Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault);
 - iii) Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking);
 - iv) Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping);
 - v) Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint);
 - vi) Section 3121 (relating to rape);
 - vii) Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault);
 - viii) Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse);
 - ix) Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault);
 - x) Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault);
 - xi) Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault);
 - xii) Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure);
 - xiii) Section 4302 (relating to incest);
 - xiv) Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child);
 - xv) Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children);
 - xvi) Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children);
 - xvii) A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses);
 - xviii) Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances);
 - xix) Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors);
 - xx) Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children); or
 - xxi) the attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing criminal offenses.
 - b) I have never been convicted of a criminal offense similar in nature to the criminal offenses listed in A. above under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of Pennsylvania.
 - c) I have not been convicted of a felony offense under the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, 35 P.S. Section 780-101 et seq., during the entirety of the five-year period immediately preceding today's date.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Convo 2024 Directory Information Sheet



Convo 2024 will create a directory of contact information for those who wish to share their contact information. The directory that is created will only be shared with participants of Convo 2024.

Please fill out the form below only if you wish to participate in the directory that will be created.

Personal Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Home or Cell

Parish: _____

Email: _____

Social Media Platform Contact Information:

Instagram:

Facebook:

X:

Snapchat:

Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese**Easter Message from the Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese, P.N.C.C.****Rt. Rev. John Mack****“Once Upon A Tree”**

Every so often in our spiritual journey, we come upon an occurrence that has a profound effect on our lives and the lives of those around us. For me, the cantata, “Once Upon A Tree,” written by Pepper Choplin provided that moment. A thank-you plaque still sits atop the hutch of my desk in my office, given to me by the choir. It seemed that we presented the cantata eons ago. The performance date was March 28, 2004 (to be exact) when about 30 singers performed it in the sanctuary of Holy Trinity Parish in Washington, PA. First of all, I can't believe it was “that long” ago. I remember that we also performed it for the youth at the National Youth Convocation that we hosted that summer. On a recent drive to a meeting in Scranton, I dug out the CD and played it on my journey. The memories flooded back and it seemed like only yesterday. I share with you some of the text from the cantata. The narration is written from the perspective of St. Luke, as he relays his faith journey with Jesus.

Pepper Choplin begins his *forward* by saying: “Nothing we can say *about* this story of Christ can add to it or make it more meaningful. All we can do is simply tell it as clearly as we can and get out of the way. It stands alone; its power is intrinsic. When people truly hear and experience the story, they are inevitably changed.” He continues: “The story takes us to the depths of human suffering and lifts us to the ultimate victory over death. If the biblical account of Jesus' death and resurrection was simply a work of literature, its dramatic power could stand beside the greatest of Shakespearean plays. But to those who would believe, it transcends literature and defines the meaning of life itself and leads the way to eternal life.”

The opening selection says, “Once upon a tree, a good man died, and though He did no crime, He was crucified. If the story ended there, I would have no song to share, but my heart will ever sing the story. Once upon a tree, so the story goes, and all its mystery surely no one knows. Could the Father's will be done through the suffering of His Son? And there comes the answer, once upon a tree.” Some might take offense in the use of the words, *a good man died* and if *the story* ended there. For believers, Christ was more than a good man and the story is not just a book at the library, but the Gospel of our Almighty God!. Yet, not everyone believes that Jesus was the Son of God. (Surprisingly, even some Christians!) Not everyone believes that the Bible is the revealed Word of God. It is our task to tell them! But we must believe it and live it out in our lives first and foremost! It is the great commission of all believers to bring the grace, power, richness and treasure that is found in believing in God to the world of unbelief!

Luke asks at the beginning of the Cantata, “What is worth giving your life to? Have you ever asked that question? I discovered a story so compelling, that giving my life to tell it was the only way I finally found my life. Really I had no choice. God called me to do this. I've spent my life recording the testimonies of those who were forever changed by their encounters with Jesus. The work has already changed me profoundly.” We must ask ourselves this Easter and every day of our lives this question: Has being a Christian all these years (you fill in the number of years) changed my life profoundly? If not, we can't say that Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit haven't tried to change us – it's just that we haven't been cooperative!

Luke ends his dialogue before the final selection “The Song Lives On, Hallelujah!” with these words that speak of Christ's Resurrection: “I could not sleep in peace if the story ended at the tomb. I would not give my life to its telling. But tonight, I rest in the assurance that tomorrow belongs to the Lord. I rejoice in the glorious things I have yet to tell: the miracle of an empty tomb; the wonder of Jesus' resurrection and His

(Continued on bottom of Page 32.)

Central Diocese**Easter Message from the Administrator of the Central Diocese, P.N.C.C.****Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki**

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in the name of our victorious and risen savior Jesus Christ do I greet you through this message in God's Field.

Can we consider this teaching from St. Paul to the people of the Colossian church as we celebrate the great and central festival of the Church liturgical year, Easter: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." "When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with Him in glory."

This is, indeed, a great and glorious moment for celebration, Easter is. However, Easter is glorious not because of the budding and promising beauty of spring nor because Lent has (finally?) passed, but because the tomb of Jesus is empty.

Easter is truly glorious because He has been raised and gone ahead of us. Christ triumphantly now reigns in glory, a glory that He promises, each and every one of us. This promise of our sharing in that glorious state of being called heaven, will sustain us in this transient, impermanent and passing world.

I hope our celebration of Easter this year will manifest itself in such a manner that our faith in the resurrection of Jesus will infuse every aspect of life. In that way we, too, will be among the myriad of witnesses who will proclaim loudly and boldly in word and in deed: He has been raised! For this is the day the Lord has made!

The inspired works of the great artists and saints over the centuries flow from the resurrection. Without the resurrection, nothing in our religion makes sense. So important, dear people, is the resurrection to our system of belief, to the purpose of our lives that without the resurrection, none of it makes a bit of sense. This perspective has inspired some of the church's great witnesses over the millennia. So, then, let's ask ourselves now: What does the resurrection inspire in us?

I pray we allow the resurrection of our Lord to inspire us to bring about change. Let the resurrection change us. Let the resurrection make a difference in each of our lives or run the risk of the resurrection making no sense at all. Our witness to the resurrection as Christians is a gift we can give to the world.

The resurrection gives us more reason to return next Sunday to worship again and keep holy the Christian sabbath and to reclaim Sunday as a day that belongs to the risen Christ. After all, every Sunday is an Easter day, and the church calls us to come and receive the Lord and the Eucharist every Sunday.

With all this in mind, think, then, of the resurrection as an invitation, because one day our own tombs will be empty.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

Bishop Bernard



February at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish

Dupont, PA

We began February by hosting the Meals on Wheels of Greater Pittston Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Saturday, February 3. About 80 people attended.



Appreciation Dinner to Honor the Organizers of the Meals on Wheels Program



Attendees of the "Meals on Wheels" Appreciation Dinner

Scout Sunday was celebrated on February 4. Leaders and scouts recited The Scout Law and Prayer of Intercessions.



Scout Sunday

The annual meeting and dinner of the Parish's Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament was held on Wednesday, February 7. Another great evening of fellowship, games, fun and food was held in our parish hall on Saturday, February 10.



Parish SAMBS Annual Meeting

Three (3) mat making events for the homeless took place this month on Wednesdays in our Parish Hall.

We observed Ash Wednesday with two Masses. Stations of the Cross are held on Wednesdays throughout Lent.

Men's Organization (Y.M.S. of R.) Branch #2 held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 14.



Parish Y.M.S. of R. Annual Meeting

Holy Mother of Sorrow's Parish Lenten Fish Fry Dinner was held on Friday, February 16.

The parish's monthly food distribution was on Thursday, February 22 in our Parish Hall.

The Annual Parish Meeting of Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish was held on Sunday, February 25.



Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish Committee, Tribunal and Auditors

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



(Reignite the Spark - Continued from Page 12.)

The retreat has not only provided immediate benefits to the participants but also serves as a model for future endeavors in military family support. The comprehensive approach, combining education with relaxation and community building, offers a blueprint that can be replicated and adapted across different communities, including our P.N.C.C. parishes. It highlights the necessity of going beyond traditional support mechanisms to address the complex web of challenges faced by families.

The military operates on the strength of its units, and this extends to the family units that form its foundation. The Building Strong and Ready Teams retreat has illuminated the profound impact of investing in the health and cohesion of these family units. By strengthening the bonds within military families, the retreat contributes to a more resilient and capable military force. The skills and experiences gained through the Oxygen curriculum ensure that military families are not just surviving but thriving, even in the face of adversity.

Lois McHugh Named Distinguished Woman of the Year

By Tony Callaio For Sunday Dispatch - February 24, 2024



Brandi Bartush, GPCC administrator, Lois McHugh, GPCC Women's Network 2024 Distinguished Woman of the Year; Michelle Mikitish, GPCC president

PITTSTON – Lois McHugh, a strong believer in community volunteerism, has been chosen the Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce (GPCC) Women's Network's 2024 Distinguished Woman of the Year.

McHugh will be honored at the Women's Network St. Patrick's Day Dinner at Fox Hill Country Club, on Thursday, March 7, at 6 p.m.

The award is given each year to a woman who has left a lasting impact on the Greater Pittston Community. The organization recognizes the contribution women make to communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public and private sector services.

"I was overwhelmed; I was surprised," McHugh said, on being notified of the honor. "I did not expect it, not at all, but I'm very happy."

McHugh exemplifies the qualities addressed by the Women's Network with her service and dedication to Greater Pittston Meals on Wheels where she's been volunteering since 1991.

"We owe a lot of respect for those who kind of put their head down and do what they are passionate about and do what they need to do and do it well," Michelle Mikitish, GPCC president said. "These people do what they do and make an impact without even realizing they are making an impact. That's what we look for in our Distinguished Women and that's why we chose Lois."

A native and resident of Hughestown, McHugh has been working in the public sector for many years after graduating from Wilkes College, did a stint in the banking industry and then many years working for a few law firms.

"My first experience with Meals on Wheels was in 1991; my neighbor Jessie Martin, was one of the original founders and served as treasurer, she injured her wrist and couldn't write checks, so I would help her write checks," McHugh recalled on her initiation to Meals on Wheels. "In 1995, she (Jessie) got ill and could not do it and I just went down and introduced myself to the board of Meals on Wheels and told them I would help them until they figured things out until you know where you are going and I've been there ever since."

Over the years, McHugh has been secretary/treasurer, vice president, president, coordinator of volunteers, and finally board member where she sits currently.

McHugh said she's seen Meals on Wheels grow tremendously since 1991 when they served 30 people to 98 a day currently.

She added with the advance of a modern commercial kitchen, warehouse, food prep area, and the addition of Dante LaFratte serving quality restaurant-type meals.

"Dante said he won't serve anything at Meals on Wheels that he won't serve to his own mother," McHugh added.

At this time, McHugh said there are approximately 15 to 20 drivers servicing those 98 people in need.

Meals are delivered on Mondays with two meals and Wednesday with three meals.

"We haven't raised our rates of \$5 a day and with that you get a hot meal, sandwich, desert, fruit and a snack," McHugh said. "We don't look for financial proof of need for a meal just based on need and honesty."

McHugh's volunteerism doesn't stop with Meals on Wheels.

"In 2021, I got the AMVETS Silver Bayonet Award, the highest award given to a civilian for what I do for AMVETS and the community and Meals," McHugh said. "I'm also the treasurer at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Dupont, I'm also a lector at the parish and I was a delegate to the National and Diocesan Synods of the Polish National Catholic Church; we (Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish volunteers) do a First Responder Dinner, and I'm involved in a mat ministry where we make mats out of plastic bags and cut them and crochet them into mats for the homeless."

McHugh enjoys spending as much of her time with her daughter April (Frank) Azaravich, VA, and her three children and son David McHugh, Hughestown.

As for McHugh, she has no interest in slowing down at the age of 71.

"I'm in this for the long haul," McHugh said on her time at Meals on Wheels. "But in my spare time I like to crochet and I like to read, walk and travel."

**Wesołego Alleluja!
Alleluja,
Zmartwychwstał Pan
Prawdziwie!**

**¡Feliz Aleluya!
¡Aleluya, el Señor ha
resucitado
verdaderamente!**



Eastern Diocese

Easter Message from the Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, P.N.C.C.

Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski

The Call to a Resurrected Lifestyle

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live..." (John 11:25)

Christians join together at Easter to celebrate our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We celebrate the promise that, because Jesus lives we too shall live. Death has no power over us. The liturgical rites of the Church reflect this faith, as do the ethnic customs of our various nationalities. Sharing the Easter egg symbolizes this shared faith.

Easter is a wonderful, joyous occasion. But is what we do, as redeemed believers, enough. Is the traditional celebration of Easter all there is, or does Jesus and His Bride, the Church, call us to something more? Consider the words of the great apostle, Saint Paul:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)

Belief in Christ's Resurrection and hope in our own requires a "renewal of our mind." We are to think about life differently and reflect that new thinking in our lives. We are to live as Jesus did. We become the testament of our faith to the world. Saint Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20)

In this one verse from the Letter to the Galatians we find the full expression of how true Christians, true disciples of Christ, should celebrate Easter through the entire length of their mortal lives.

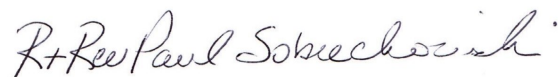
So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

Together with all the clergy and faithful of the Eastern Diocese, I wish to everyone who reads this message an Easter of hope.

Chrystus zmartwychwstał! Prawdziwie zmartwychwstał !

¡El Señor ha resucitado! ¡ ¡Él ha resucitado!

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!



Bishop Ordinary - Eastern Diocese

Polish National Catholic Church

Northeast Seniorate of the Eastern Diocese Lenten Retreats

The first Northeast Seniorate Lenten Retreat this year was held on February 17th at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manchester, NH. It was a blessed time in Holy Mass, prayer, reflection, meditation and fellowship. Thanks to Bishop Paul Sobiechowski and the Cathedral for their warm hospitality; to Bishop for leading mid day prayer and giving us his Apostolic Blessing; to Fr. Andrzej Tenus for a beautiful homily and leading the way of the cross to Kathy Nemkovich and Karen Sobiechowski for their inspirational Lenten reflections.



The second Northeast Seniorate Lenten Retreat was held on, February 24th at Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, MA. Thanks to our presenters Fr. Henryk Wos, Kathy Nemkovich and Fr. Rob Nemkovich. We began with Holy Mass, had 3 Lenten Reflections, Read the Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, prayed the Litany of the Passion and Walked the Way of the Cross. A blessed time in prayer, worship, reflection, meditation and friendship united in our Lord.



Holy Trinity Cathedral extends a helping hand – accepting donations for ‘Blessing Bags’ Manchesterinklink.com



MANCHESTER, NH – Members of Holy Trinity Cathedral Polish National Catholic Church recently participated in the annual Souper Bowl of Caring, collecting soup and other non-perishable food, for a grand total of 464 items in all. These donations benefit clients of the [Families in Transition Food Pantry](#) in Manchester, NH.

The Cathedral outreach team organizes monthly projects to benefit needy people in Manchester. From now until the end of March, we are collecting items for Blessing Bags: small-size personal care and hygiene items, soap, washcloths, and non-perishable snacks. We welcome parishioners and friends to join us in helping those in need in our neighborhood.

Blessed Trinity Parish in the Local Community

Fall River, MA

The Fall River Cub Scout Pack 15 and Boy Scout Troop 15 were present at Mass at Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, MA, on February 11th, Scout Sunday. The MA State Representative Alan Silvia presented a Citation on Scout Sunday from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Thanks to all who donated to the parish's Souper Bowl Drive to help others! Items were delivered to [Citizens for Citizens, Inc. Food Pantry](#) in Fall River on Feb 12.



Western Diocese**Easter Message from the Administrator of the Western Diocese****Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski**

Go quickly and tell His disciples, “He has been raised from the dead.” Matthew 28:7a

Many of us have experienced the darkness of a storm, and then how glad a feeling when good weather beams. Many have also known the lowliness of illness and the rejoicing when good health returns. In the same way the Apostles were in the depths of despair during the terrible night of trial and the terrifying moments of the death of the Lord Jesus. Yet they became glad and rejoiced when the morning of the Resurrection dawned. That Easter morning brought new life with victory over death, evil, and sin. Rebirth! The resurrected Lord is the symbol, sign, and image of the victorious human being who is reborn. This renewed spirit can lead to an improvement of the human condition and a step toward immortality.

How great is the dignity that God gives!

May the dawn of Easter bring us Hope and Joy!

Call to the Synod

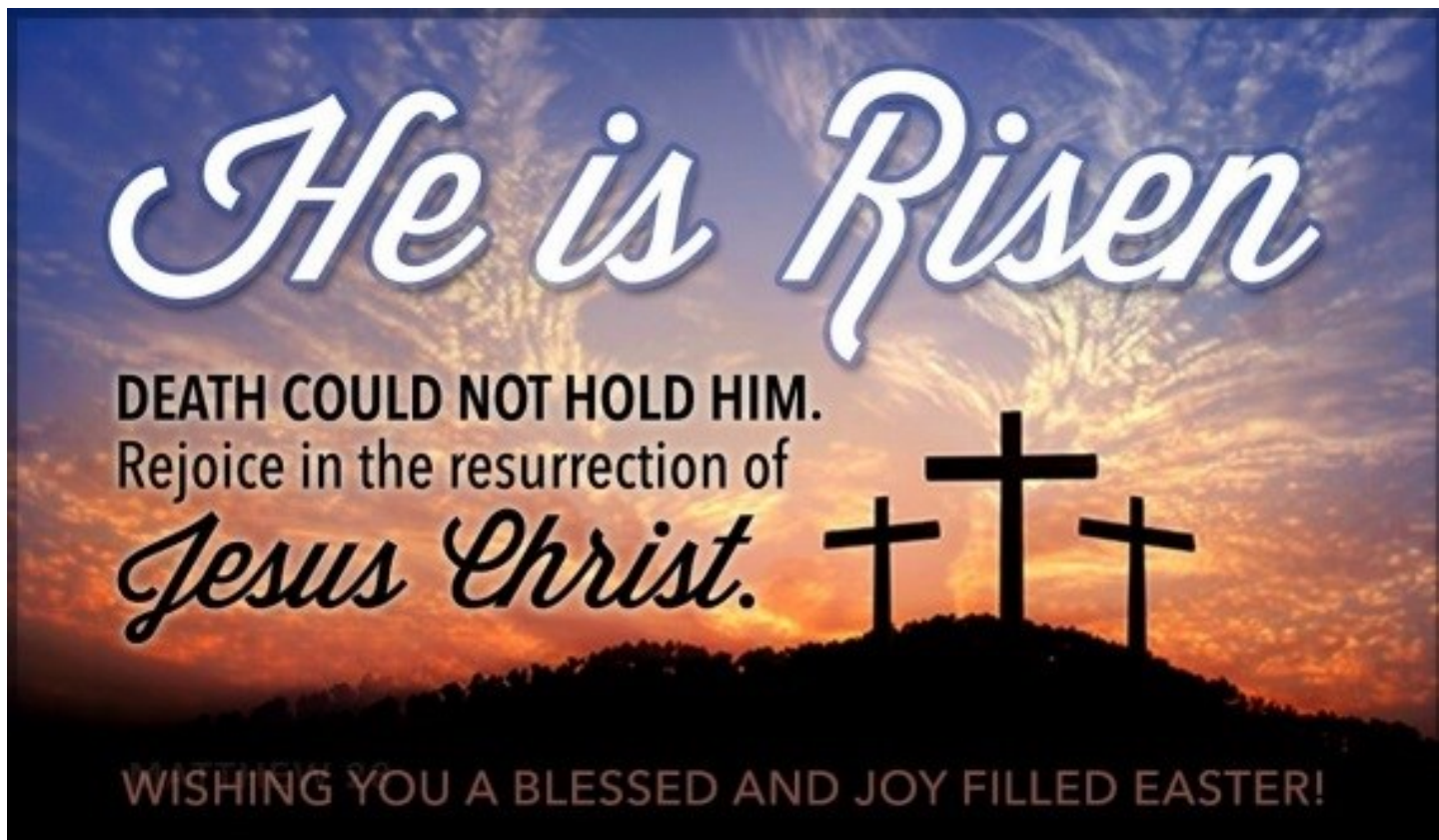
Adhering to the Constitution, By Laws and Code of Faith of the Polish National Catholic Church Article 7, Part C, Section 1, I hereby call the 19th Synod of the Western Diocese to take place October 15-16, 2024, hosted by All Saints Cathedral in Chicago, IL. The opening Mass will be on October 15 at 4PM. Registration materials and more information will be distributed soon.

The theme for our Synod is Built on the Rock. The pre-Synod committee has been working diligently to prepare for this Synod with the goals of being efficient and affordable so that all parishes will be able to send their allotted delegates to attend.

If you have an interest in serving on any of our diocesan commissions, please submit your inquiries to the Cathedral office.

May our Synod equip and inspire us to better serve God and His people!

Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Administrator
Western Diocese, P.N.C.C.



(Easter Message from the Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese- Continued from Page 22.)

appearance to people on earth. Then, there are the glorious eyewitness accounts of Christ ascending into heaven right before their eyes. Now, I travel with the apostle Paul and see mighty wonders with my own eyes. There is so much more to be written as I continue to record the Acts of the Apostles. Each day is an adventure as we take the story of Christ to the ends of the earth. I have been faithful in recording all of these things and now place them in your hands. What will you do with this story?" Christ poses this question to each and every believer. What will *I do* with the story?" Will I truly take it to heart as I come to church on Easter singing joyful "alleluias?" Will the story change my way of thinking; will it re-order my life and priorities; will it keep me faithful to Christ all the way to next Easter? Or -- will I just get excited for a few hours, finish off my Easter chocolate basket and food and then return to "normal life" by the end of Easter bright week. I hope it is the former and not the latter that will prevail upon your life.

I leave you with the words to the "resurrection piece" that closes the Cantata. The Song lives on within my heart, as earth and heaven sing their part, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The song live on through all our lives, and opens gates of paradise, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Though Christ would die in shame, all heaven sings His Name, For God transformed His shame to glory. Though on the cross He died, Christ conquered death to rise, And lives in our hearts as we sing the story. The song lives on as we rejoice in Christ, the life of all our joys Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

May Your Easter be filled with profound and lasting joy and glorious life in the Risen Lord!