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A Look Forward and Back

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

Beginning in the month of November, our liturgical year takes a pivot, from the journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, to finally some reflection on His time in Jerusalem and finally to our recognition of our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of all creation, the King of all that is.

During the past few weeks, each Sunday Gospel reading is taken from the time of Jesus on the way from Galilee, the location of His ministry, to Jerusalem where He will suffer and die for our sins. The concept of being 'on the way' is the fundamental point. While we remember this journey of the disciples with our Lord, we remind ourselves that we too are on the way. But for us it is seeking to find the way of discipleship in the world at the present moment. During the Gospel reading on the Thirtieth Sunday, we encounter the miracle of Jesus restoring the sight of the blind Bartimaeus. When he is brought to Jesus, Jesus asks him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" If we give some thought to the present situations within our own lives, we must realize that each and every time we kneel in prayer, each and every time we come to the Church, Jesus is really asking us the same question. We should certainly spend some time in reflection upon what is our answer to Jesus.

Now certainly we may bring to Jesus the concerns of our present situation, the health and needs of ourselves and the ones we love; the concerns of our everyday lives like our work and our ability to support those who depend on us. But the answer of Bartimaeus allows us to reflect that along with all this maybe we should be asking for something with a bit more humility. Bartimaeus only says to Jesus, "I want to see." While we can notice here that Barti-

maeus is asking for the restoration of his physical sight, we also notice that he also receives insight into the life and mission of Jesus. Bartimaeus does not just receive his sight and then go on his merry way. Rather the result of the miracle of our Lord is that "Immediately he regained his sight and followed Him on the way." (Mark 10:52)

Bartimaeus received a physical healing, but he was also shown the way of discipleship, and he began to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the insight that we all must pray for and seek when we gather for the worship of Almighty God and receive Jesus within Holy Communion.

It is with prayer for this sort of insight, prayer that when we gather for worship that we will see more clearly the way of discipleship within our own lives and the lives of our parishes. It is with a consideration for our own discipleship that we should then approach the Gospel readings for the end of our liturgical year. It is during this time of the Church year that we focus on the concerns of the end times, the concerns beyond our everyday living and rather to the ultimate mission of our Lord.

On the Thirty-First Sunday, the Gospel reading is taken from the time of Jesus in Jerusalem before His Passion. Here He is asked a question by a scribe, "Which commandment is the greatest?" The answer is not any particular action that we may perform within our daily living, but rather Jesus tells him, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

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Jesus points to us that the way of discipleship is not the performance of any particular action. It is rather that we focus all of our attention, all that we are: heart, soul, mind and strength on God. And the love that we are to show to God is all self-sacrificing love. It is love that is total and love that holds nothing back. When we begin to do this, it is only then that the actions of brotherly love, the good actions toward a neighbor, will flow forth.

It is the same point that is brought forth in the Gospel for the next Sunday, “the poor widow and the two copper coins.” Although many people were giving large sums of money, Jesus reminded His disciples, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contribution to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:43-44)

In pointing out that those who gave large amounts were giving out of their abundance it implies that their support of the temple, the contribution in support of the ministry of God, was given second place. These people only contributed after all their own needs and wants were filled. But this poor widow put the ministry of the Lord first and therefore, while the amount was inconsequential, the attitude was paramount.

On the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Jesus finally comes to the signs that will accompany the end times. He reminds the disciples to take a lesson from the fig tree, “As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that He is near, at the very gates.” (Mark 13:28-29) We remind ourselves that we have prayed to have real and true insight together with Bartimaeus, so now we must truly pay attention to the opportunities that are placed before us on the

way of discipleship. We know that we are offered many opportunities to be a participant in the extension of the kingdom of God upon the earth, if only we will see them, if only we are following Jesus closely.

This Gospel also reminds us that if we are close to Christ and doing the work of discipleship that He places before us, then we will have no concerns in regard to the end of the age. Jesus says, “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.” (Mark 13:32-33) If we are on the way of discipleship, we will be truly alert to the worship of God and the needs of our brothers and sisters.

At this point we come to the last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Solemnity of Christ the King. As a culmination of our reflection on the way of discipleship within our daily lives, we must acknowledge that Christ is not only the head of the Church, but He is the center of everything. We move here to John’s Gospel and the encounter of Jesus with Pilate. Here Jesus tells Pilate, and especially us, “For this I was born, and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice.” (John 18:37b)

As we spend time in worship and in the work of the Church during this end of the liturgical year, let us seek to truly see the way of discipleship within our own faith journey. Let us pray to our Lord to help us to see fully how we can follow Jesus more closely, and then because we follow Jesus, we will serve one another just as Jesus came “not to be served, but to serve.” (Mark 10:45)

It is then in serving our Lord and each other, we will come to acknowledge Jesus as Christ the King and be unafraid to face whatever comes including the final consummation of all reality, when we will meet Him face to face.



P.N.C.C. Future Direction
October 2024
The Church Expectant

Introduction

As we continue in this year of 2024, the Future Direction writings will focus some of our reflections on the various aspects of our Catholic Christianity, especially as it concerns our daily living, life of prayer and liturgical worship. We will reflect on the catechism and various spiritual and 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

Job 19:25-27 – For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Wisdom 3:1-4 – But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality.

Wisdom 4:7-9 – But the righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age.

Isaiah 25:7-8 – And He will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

2 Maccabees 12:43-44 – [Judas] also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead.

Romans 14:7-9 – We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 – Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Philippians 3:20-21 – But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be confirmed to the body of His glory, by the power that also enables Him to make all things subject to Himself.

John 6:37-40 – Jesus said: Everything that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and anyone who comes to Me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do My Own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me. And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of My Father, that all who see the Son and believe in Him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.

John 6:51 – Jesus said: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.

John 11:21-26a – Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask of Him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in Me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believe in Me will never die.’

Revelation 14:13 – And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.”

Reflection

Following the Solemnity of All Saints on November 1, where all the saints, those known and unknown are recalled and celebrated, the Church quickly turns its attention to prayer for the deceased. It begins with the Commemoration of All Souls on November 2, but it is often extended as on that day or soon after we may travel to our parish cemeteries or other places where our loved ones are buried to care for their graves and offer prayer for the repose of their souls.

This attention to those who have died and their place of burial, fits in with what we experience during this season of Fall. The days get shorter, the trees begin to lose their leaves and the weather get colder. But within this we must remind ourselves that the true place of our attention for our loved one who have died, must not finally be the cemetery, but rather our life of prayer within our church and also in our daily lives. At the Mass on All Souls Day opportunity is given to pray for t our beloved dead in a public way at Holy Mass, but this action should also remind us to continue to pray for these members of the Church that are now awaiting the resurrection.

Within the Scripture passages above, both in the Old and New Testament, we are reminded that there is a real connection between those who are alive within the Church and those who have died in faith. It is for this reason that they can be referred to as the Church Expectant.

Action Item

Read the Scriptures above several times during this coming month of November realizing that as we pray for those who have gone before us, we are also getting ourselves ready for our ultimate goal of being united with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As an action item for this time of the year when we focus our attention on the end times and those who have gone before us, make a point to have the names of your own beloved dead remembered at Holy Mass in your parishes. Now is also a good time to plan for the celebration of Holy Mass at important times in the lives of our departed loved ones, like the anniversary of their passing, or another special day like their birthday or possibly a wedding anniversary.

Also, during this season, remember those who have impacted your own life, or your faith journey, in a special way who have now died. Call each of them to mind individually. Give thanks to Almighty God that He has allowed this connection to form you and offer a prayer for the repose of their souls.

The prayer for the faithful departed is found within the PNCC Prayer Book, but it is also traditional to say the “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and “Eternal Rest” for each individual.

Prayer for the Faith Departed

Heavenly Father, Who through Your Son, Jesus Christ, regenerates and redeems all of the faithful, hear our prayer for those who have passed from this life. Grant unto the souls of Your faithful servants the remission of all their sins. May they, who have placed their hope and trust in You, obtain Your pardon and eternal rest. Reward them with the promise of their faith, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. 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



Fostering a Strong Parent-Child Relationship

Rev. Dr. Stan Jasiurkowski

Introduction

The importance of cultivating a robust and positive parent-child relationship is a universally acknowledged concept, with profound implications for child development and family dynamics. It has been extensively studied within developmental psychology and is a recurrent theme in Christian teachings. A wealth of research underscores the impact of early attachment on various aspects of psychological well-being, including self-esteem, social competence, and the ability to form healthy relationships in adulthood. Concurrently, our National Catholic teachings emphasize the integral role of love, compassion, and guidance in the parent-child relationship, mirroring the divine bond between God and humanity. This article explores the convergence between these two domains, psychological principles, and Biblical values, to offer a holistic approach to parenting. Recognizing the potential synergy between these perspectives, the objectives of this article include providing a comprehensive understanding of the significance of parent-child bonds, identifying intersections that enhance parenting practices, and offering insights that readers can implement to strengthen their own family relationships. The anticipated outcomes for readers are multifaceted; I hope they will gain practical strategies grounded in psychological evidence and P.N.C.C. theology, ultimately fostering nurturing environments conducive to positive child development and deepening familial connections.

Unconditional Love

The concept of unconditional love serves as the foundation for secure attachment, a critical aspect of child development. Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby and later expanded by Mary Ainsworth, provides a psychological framework for understanding the dynamics of long-term relationships between infants and their primary caregivers. It posits that the quality of care and responsiveness a child receives during early life significantly influences their emotional security and the nature of their future interpersonal relationships. Within this context, unconditional love is pivotal in developing a secure base from which children can explore the world, learn, and grow.

Parallel to the psychological understanding of attachment is the Biblical perspective of spiritual love, or agape, which refers to selfless, sacrificial love that is given regardless of circumstance. This form of love is considered a cornerstone of Christian parenting, where parents are encouraged to mirror the love of God for their children, offering steadfast support and acceptance. The application of agape in parenting involves patience, kindness, and a readiness to forgive, which can significantly contribute to a child's sense of security and worth.

Let me be very clear about it, unconditional love must not be mistaken with permissiveness as one of the parenting styles I discussed in one of the previous articles. Unconditional love as described above requires setting boundaries and conditions for our children. Setting conditions for character development involves establishing clear rules and expectations that are age-appropriate and aligned with our family's values. Parents can set conditions through consistent routines, anticipated behavior, chores, and academic expectations. Importantly, these conditions parents must communicate clearly and enforce consistently, but always within the context of love and support.

For example, a parent might enforce a rule that homework must be completed before playtime. When the child complies, they receive praise not only for their academic effort but also for adhering to the family's expectations. If the child struggles or fails to meet the expectation, the parent's response should still be rooted in unconditional love, offering guidance and support rather than withdrawal of affection, and setting appropriate conditions for meeting the expectations is very pedagogical.

To develop secure attachments through the lens of faith, parents can use helpful strategies that include consistent emotional availability, the establishment of routines that provide safety and predictability, and the embodiment of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in daily interactions. Parents are encouraged to engage in reflective practices that align their parenting methods with the principles of faith, ensuring that their actions and decisions are rooted in love and compassion.

The long-term benefits of integrating unconditional love with conditions for building attachment and character development are profound. Individuals raised in environments that balance these elements tend to exhibit

higher emotional intelligence, better stress management, and more adaptive social behaviors. They are often more resilient, capable of forming healthy relationships, and better equipped to face life's challenges.

Moreover, this balanced approach fosters a growth mindset. Individuals learn that while they are loved unconditionally, their actions and efforts can lead to personal improvement and success. This mindset encourages lifelong learning and personal development, as individuals understand that their worth is not contingent upon their achievements, yet they have the power to shape their own paths through effort and perseverance.

Communication

I have stressed many times on different occasions that effective communication is a critical element in the development and maintenance of a strong parent-child relationship. Psychological research has consistently demonstrated that open, honest, and empathetic communication fosters trust, mutual respect, and emotional intimacy between parents and children. In this vein, developmental theories emphasize the importance of age-appropriate dialogue and the tailoring of communication strategies to fit the child's evolving cognitive and emotional capacities. Therefore, parents must speak with their children constantly. A smartphone or a tablet will not do the job of fostering deep bonds and producing desirable developmental outcomes except entertaining your child for a while and freeing you perhaps to do the same.

Psychological Insights on Parent-Child Communication

Psychologists advocate for active listening, empathic responses, and the validation of children's feelings as key components of effective communication. Active listening involves giving full attention to the child, acknowledging their thoughts without immediate judgment or advice, and encouraging them to express themselves fully. It is through such engaged interaction that parents can truly understand their child's perspective and provide guidance that resonates with their individual needs. Additionally, this approach builds a strong trusting relationship, and your child will never hesitate to open up to you with his or her even most intimate problems as a teenager or adult.

Christian Teachings on Compassionate Dialogue

The Bible also places significant importance on the quality of communication within the family unit. Scriptures such as "everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19) highlight the value of reflective and patient dialogue. The Bible encourages parents to speak words that are "seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6), meaning that their language should be gracious and edifying, building up the child rather than causing harm by belittling, discouraging, or embarrassing. This approach aligns with the concept of speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), balancing honesty with sensitivity.

Integrating Communication Techniques with Spiritual Growth

Integrating communication techniques with spiritual growth involves creating an environment where the child feels safe to share their thoughts, questions, and concerns about faith. Parents can facilitate conversations that allow for spiritual exploration and expression, thereby nurturing the child's religious development alongside their emotional and intellectual growth. This process includes sharing Biblical stories that impart moral lessons, praying together, and engaging in faith-based activities that reinforce the messages of Scripture. It also includes taking your children to church for Sunday Mass and teaching them proper respect, getting them involved in parish Sunday school, First Holy Communion classes, and Confirmation preparations.

Real-Life Applications and Scriptural Examples

Real-life applications of these communication principles might involve regular family meetings for discussion and problem-solving, using scriptural teachings to address everyday challenges, and setting aside quality time for individual conversations with each child. Bible examples, such as the interaction between Jesus and the children (Mark 10:13-16), model the importance of listening to and valuing the perspectives of the young. Similarly, the dialogues between Solomon and his son in the Book of Proverbs provide a template for imparting wisdom and life lessons through a loving and communicative relationship.

Through the melding of psychological insights and the P.N.C.C. principles, parents can enhance their communication skills, deepening their connection with their children. By prioritizing the development of a communicative bond that is imbued with understanding, respect, and spiritual depth, parents lay the groundwork for a lifelong relationship characterized by mutual love and trust.

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Discipline with Understanding

Another aspect of shaping the character of our children is the proper use of discipline which instills values and teaches children about boundaries and the consequences of their decisions or behavior. It is not merely about correcting misbehavior; it is a complex process of guiding children towards self-discipline and responsible decision-making. An effective disciplinary approach balances firmness with love, ensuring that children feel secure and valued even as they learn from their mistakes.

Psychological Insights into the Effects of Different Disciplinary Styles

Psychological research has identified various disciplinary styles, each with differing impacts on child development. I provided a broader description of these parenting styles before; therefore, I will mention them only briefly here. Authoritative parenting, characterized by a balance of responsiveness and demandingness, is consistently linked to positive outcomes, including better social skills, higher self-esteem, and improved academic performance. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which is high in demandingness but low in responsiveness, can lead to issues such as reduced self-confidence and increased aggression. Permissive parenting, high in responsiveness but low in demandingness, may result in a lack of self-discipline and difficulties with authority. Psychology suggests that a balanced approach, which includes setting clear expectations, providing consistent consequences, and exhibiting warmth and support, is most effective in promoting positive behaviors.

Biblical Principles of Discipline, Instruction, and Correction

The Bible provides guidance on discipline that complements psychological understanding. Or perhaps, I should say vice versa – psychology complements Biblical teachings. Proverbs 22:6 says “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” This passage emphasizes the importance of instilling values and guiding the behavior of our children from an early age. Biblical discipline is not about punishment; it is an instructive process that aims to correct, teach, and develop. It involves setting boundaries, communicating expectations, and administering consequences in a way that is just and rooted in love. The ultimate goal is to help children grow in wisdom and character.

Developmentally Appropriate Disciplinary Techniques

Christian values and developmental psychology both highlight the importance of tailoring disciplinary techniques to a child's age and understanding. Effective discipline involves clear communication about rules and expectations, as well as the reasons behind them. It is crucial to model the behaviors parents wish to see in their children. Consistency in applying consequences, along with a focus on positive reinforcement for good behavior, can encourage compliance and moral development. Integrating Biblical values might include using scriptural teachings to discuss the reasons behind rules and the virtues of self-control, respect, and kindness.

The Role of Forgiveness and Restoration in Discipline, with Psychological Rationale

A unique aspect of Christian discipline is the emphasis on forgiveness and restoration. After a transgression has been addressed and consequences have been administered, it is important to reaffirm love and forgiveness, mirroring the grace that God extends to all. This approach aligns with psychological principles that recognize the importance of maintaining a positive parent-child relationship and building resilience. It also encourages children to learn from their mistakes without developing a sense of shame or inadequacy. Forgiveness does not negate the need for discipline or restitution but rather completes the cycle of correction with reconciliation, promoting emotional healing and a renewed commitment to better choices in the future.

By integrating psychological insights with biblical wisdom, parents can develop a balanced, compassionate approach to discipline. This strategy not only guides children's behavior but also nurtures their emotional and spiritual well-being, fostering a healthy and loving family environment.

Teaching Children to Pray

Teaching children to pray is a foundational aspect of Christian parenting. Biblical models, such as the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), offer a template for communicating with God in a manner that honors His sovereignty and seeks His guidance. Introducing children to prayer helps them to develop a sense of gratitude, empathy, and an understanding of a power greater than themselves. Psychologically, prayer can help children process emotions, reflect on their actions, and find comfort in difficult times. It can also enhance their sense of community and belonging as they participate in a shared spiritual experience.

Incorporating Family Devotions and Prayer into Daily Routines

Integrating family devotions and prayer into daily life can establish a rhythm of spiritual reflection that underscores the importance of faith in everyday living. Setting aside time for family Bible study, prayer, and worship creates opportunities for children to learn scripture, discuss moral and ethical questions, and express their faith in a supportive environment. These practices can become a cherished part of the family's routine, providing structure and shared experiences that reinforce values and beliefs.

Research on the Impact of Spirituality and Prayer

Spiritual practices such as prayer and reflection are not only central to Christian life but also have recognized psychological benefits. These practices contribute to personal growth, emotional resilience, and a sense of connectedness to a larger purpose. Engaging in these activities as a family can strengthen bonds, establish lasting traditions, and provide a source of comfort and guidance throughout life's challenges. Additionally, spiritual practices, including prayer and meditation, have been associated with a sense of peace, improved coping skills, and even physical health benefits. These practices can also foster a sense of hope and meaning, which are crucial for resilience in the face of adversity. Research has indicated that shared spiritual beliefs and practices can have a positive impact on family cohesion and the quality of family relationships. Spirituality and prayer can provide a common ground for family members, offering a sense of unity and purpose. Families that engage in spiritual practices together often report higher levels of satisfaction in their relationships, better communication, and a greater ability to cope with life's challenges as a unit. Additionally, these practices can instill a sense of tradition and identity, contributing to the family's collective memory and legacy. The incorporation of prayer and reflection into family life is not only beneficial for individual spiritual growth but also for enhancing family dynamics. Parents can use these practices to instill values, provide comfort, and build a strong, cohesive family foundation rooted in faith and mutual support.

Exemplifying Christian Values

The behavior of parents is a powerful influence on children, shaping their attitudes, beliefs, and actions through the process of observational learning. Parental modeling is fundamental to a child's moral development, as children tend to emulate the behaviors they witness at home. By exemplifying Christian values in their daily lives, parents can impart lessons that words alone cannot teach.

Psychological Theories on Observational Learning and Moral Development

Albert Bandura's social learning theory posits that individuals learn new behaviors by observing others, especially those they consider role models. Observational learning includes attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation, which can lead to the adoption of modeled behaviors. In terms of moral development, Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning suggest that children progress from a self-centered understanding of right and wrong to higher levels of moral thinking influenced by social interactions and ethical principles. Parents play a crucial role in this progression by providing examples of ethical conduct and guiding their children through complex moral reasoning.

Living out the Fruits of the Spirit as Parental Role Models

Galatians 5:22-23 describes the fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." These fruits serve as a guide for Christian parents striving to embody virtues that their children can observe and adopt. These attributes reflect the character of God and provide a blueprint for Christian conduct. When parents exhibit these qualities, they not only enhance their own spiritual growth but also influence their children to develop these same characteristics.

Practical Ways to Demonstrate Virtues in Parenting

Psychological research supports several practical ways in which parents can demonstrate virtues. For example, expressing gratitude and joy in everyday situations can foster a positive home environment and teach children the value of appreciating life's blessings. Exhibiting patience and self-control during stressful times provides a template for children to regulate their own emotions. Demonstrating kindness and goodness through community service or acts of charity can inspire children to contribute positively to society. Being involved in your parish life, serving on different committees, or just volunteering your time at different events inspires your children to develop their social skills and sensitivity to others' needs. Moreover, maintaining faithfulness and gen-

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tness in relationships can show children the importance of commitment and empathy. In essence, the way parents live out their faith and values can have a profound and lasting impact on their children. By being mindful of their actions and the examples they set, parents can instill virtues in their children that align with both psychological principles and our Catholic teachings, fostering moral development and a strong family foundation rooted in faith.

Encouraging Individuality and Faith Identity

Identity formation is a key developmental task during childhood and adolescence. A secure self-concept allows children to explore their interests, values, and beliefs. Psychological theories suggest that children develop their identities through experimentation and feedback from their social environment, including their family and community. The Christian perspective on individuality is beautifully illustrated in 1 Corinthians 12, which speaks of the body of Christ as a metaphor for the church community. Each member is seen as having unique gifts and a specific role that is vital to the well-being of the whole. This concept can be applied to parenting by recognizing and nurturing each child's individual talents and contributions. Parents can nurture their children's talents and faith identity by providing opportunities for them to explore their interests and use their gifts within a Christian framework. This might include involving them in church ministries, such as music, charity, or altar service, that align with their abilities and passions, thereby reinforcing their sense of purpose and belonging. This type of nurturing can help to shield your children from the school's gender indoctrination and oversexualization that contradicts age appropriateness and our P.N.C.C. moral values.

Conclusion

This article has explored the rich interplay between Christian and psychological principles in parenting, underscoring the complementary nature of these two perspectives. By integrating insights from both domains, parents can foster strong, healthy relationships with their children that holistically support their development. The long-term benefits of a strong parent-child relationship are profound, influencing not just the immediate family dynamics but also the child's overall development and faith journey. A nurturing relationship built on love, communication, and shared values lays the groundwork for children to become resilient, well-adjusted adults with a deep sense of value and accomplishment.

To parents committed to integrating their faith with sound psychological practices, know that your efforts have a lasting impact. The journey of parenting, with its highs and lows, is one of the most significant ministries you can undertake. By drawing upon the wisdom of both P.N.C.C. teachings and psychological research, you can provide your children with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges with confidence and grace. May you be encouraged by the promise that your labor is not in vain, and may your family grow stronger and more loving through each trial and triumph.

2024 Arthur W. Zabierek Scholarship

Polish National Catholic Church

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2024 Arthur W. Zabierek Scholarship. 2024 is the inaugural year of this scholarship which was endowed with the generous bequest of the late Arthur W. Zabierek. Applications for the Scholarship were sought through the pages of God's Field employing the criteria given by Mr. Zabierek.

For this first year, seven applications were received, and all were excellent candidates for the scholarship. It was a difficult decision for the Zabierek Scholarship Review committee to decide on the three scholarships to be awarded.

The scholarship awards of \$5,000.00 for 2024 were given to:

Gianna Conforti of Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA

Michael Lindenmuth of All Saints Cathedral Parish in Chicago, IL

Anna Lill of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Lilly, PA

We encourage all students to attending college, university or any secondary education to apply for this scholarship in 2025.

Canadian Diocese

75th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish

Hamilton, ON – Canada

On September 21, 2024, Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish in Hamilton, Ontario, joyfully commemorated its 75th anniversary, a momentous occasion that honored the parish's long-standing spiritual heritage and its commitment to faith, community, and cultural traditions. The celebration was marked by a solemn Holy Eucharist, which not only reflected the parish's deep religious devotion but also symbolized the strength of its faith community, built over decades of shared belief and dedication.

Fr. Andrzej, the pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, led the Eucharistic celebration with reverence and grace. He was joined by two other esteemed clergymen who traveled from neighboring cities to be part of this historic event: Fr. Zbigniew Kozar, pastor of St. John's Cathedral Parish in Toronto, and Fr. Marek Michalik, pastor of Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Parish in Montreal. Fr. Zbigniew arrived with a group of his parishioners from Toronto, underscoring the bonds of unity that extend beyond individual parishes within the Polish National Catholic Church (P.N.C.C.). Fr. Marek's presence was a further testament to the solidarity within the P.N.C.C., as congregations from across regions came together to celebrate this milestone in Hamilton.



Fr. Andrzej Jezak - Holy Trinity Parish Pastor



(Continued on Page 12.)

(75th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish - Continued from Page 11.)



Fr. Marek Michalik, Fr. Andrzej Jezak, Fr. Zbigniew Kozar

The 75th anniversary celebration was not just a reflection of the vitality of Holy Trinity Parish today; it was also a tribute to its storied past. The parish's history began in 1949, when a group of committed Polish immigrants in Hamilton, seeking to preserve their faith and cultural identity, gathered for the first Holy Eucharist under the guidance of Bishop Jan Jasinski from Buffalo. During that pivotal service, the fledgling congregation made the collective decision to dedicate their parish to the Holy Trinity, a name that would come to define their spiritual mission for decades to come. In that same moment, they elected the first Parish Committee, establishing the organizational framework that would guide the parish in its early years of growth and service.

Over the last seven and a half decades, Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish has evolved into more than just a place of worship. It has become a pillar of the Hamilton community, serving not only as a religious institution but also as a cultural and social hub for generations of Polish-Canadian families. The parish has offered support and solace to newcomers adjusting to life in Canada, provided a venue for celebrating cultural traditions, and upheld a strong commitment to charitable work. These decades of dedication were recognized and honored during the anniversary celebration, as parishioners reflected on the immense contributions Holy Trinity has made to the community, both locally and within the wider P.N.C.C. family.

The presence of parishioners from St. John's Cathedral in Toronto and Holy Cross Parish in Montreal added a special dimension of unity to the celebration, emphasizing the strong connections among P.N.C.C. congregations. This gathering of faithful from different cities underscored the shared sense of identity and purpose that transcends geographical boundaries, as the extended P.N.C.C. family came together to honor their collective history and renew their dedication to a common spiritual future.



Holy Trinity Parish 75th Anniversary - Entrance



Mr. Waldemar Rudzki - Organist

Following the Eucharistic service, prayers of thanksgiving echoed through the church, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the many blessings that have sustained the parish over the years. The day's events were infused with a sense of pride in the parish's accomplishments, from its humble beginnings to its current role as a vibrant spiritual and cultural center. Parishioners and guests alike shared in the joy of the occasion, cherishing the legacy of faith that has been passed down through generations and looking forward to the continued growth of the parish.

As the day's celebrations came to a close, the 75th anniversary stood as a testament to the enduring power of faith and community. It was a renewal of Holy Trinity's commitment to its mission—one founded on the principles of faith, fellowship, and service. With deep gratitude for the generations of parishioners who have contributed to its legacy, Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish looks ahead with hope and anticipation, ready to embrace the blessings and challenges that await in the years to come. The celebration, at its core, was a reminder of the strength that comes from unity, shared history, and a steadfast dedication to serving both God and the broader community.

The 75th anniversary of Holy Trinity Parish was not only a celebration of the past but also a beacon of hope for the future, a time to reflect on the values that have sustained the parish for decades and a call to continue living out those values for generations to come. The Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Parish in Hamilton remains a symbol of resilience, faith, and enduring community spirit.

Fr. Andrzej Jezak, Pastor, Holy Trinity P.N.C.C. Parish, Hamilton, ON.



Mrs. Magdalena Rudzki - Parish Council Chair



Parishioners and Guests

Central Diocese**Benefit Held at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish
Dupont, PA**

Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, along with the United Community Volunteers, hosted a spaghetti dinner and basket raffle for the benefit of Bob Price who is facing serious medical challenges. The dinner was held at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish (Frank Bednash Memorial Hall) on Saturday, August 10, 2024. We would like to thank all volunteers and patrons who supported the dinner and basket raffle to benefit Bob Price. This event was a huge success!

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



Some of the volunteers



A total of 61 baskets were donated for the raffle.



Almost 400 dinners were sold.



Presentation of the proceeds from the spaghetti dinner, basket raffle, 50/50 and other donations to Bob Price.

Annual Dożynki at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish

Dupont, PA

Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA, conducted its Annual Polish Harvest Festival Dożynki on Sunday, September 8, 2024. The Blessing of the Harvest Wreath opened the Festival. Everyone received a greeting by the Harvest Wreath and then they partook of a treat of bread, cheese and wine as a token of good luck.

During the festival there was live polka music, a big raffle, a basket raffle and games for children. Additionally, lots of food was available: potato pancakes, pierogi, gołąbki (stuffed cabbage), kluski (haluski), kielbasa, kielbasa w/kraut, sausage, sausage w/peppers, clam chowder, hot dogs, hot dogs w/kraut, hamburgers, french fries, cheeseburgers, funnel cakes, new this year: chicken bites and mozzarella sticks. A variety of baked goods, including paczki were also available as sweet treats. We thank all of our volunteers for their hard work and all the patrons for supporting us.

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



Dożynki Volunteers



Dożynki Wreath Ceremony



Left: Leah Nalaschi, Karissa Kazinetz, Stella Hawk, Maddie Guzman, Sadie Hayes, Layla Marks, Fr. Sr. Zbigniew Dawid, Grace Morgan, Ben Yuschovitz, Geno Marks, George Morgan, Myles Nash

Resolution

of the
14th Synod of the Central Diocese
of the
Polish National Catholic Church
October 12, 2024

WHEREAS, the bishops, clergy and representatives of the Parishes of the Central Diocese have gathered via video technology to hear the reports of the work of the Central Diocese over the past four years and set a course for the work of faith and ministry for the next four years, and;

WHEREAS, the clergy and delegates of the 14th Central Diocese Synod have sought, with prayer, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to guide us in our work now and into the bright future following Christ and united with Him, and;

WHEREAS, the clergy and delegates of the Central Diocese give thanks to Almighty God for the episcopal ministry of Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki for his twelve years of dedicated service as the Bishop Ordinary of the Central Diocese, and;

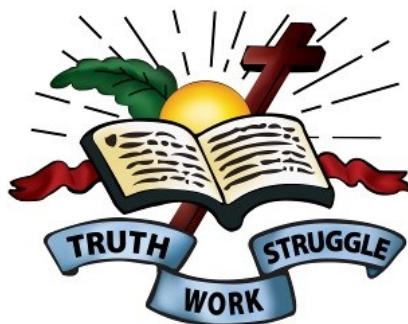
WHEREAS, the Diocesan Synod delegates pray for God's choicest blessings upon Bishop Bernard and his wife Barbara, as they seek well-earned rest and enjoyment in their retirement years, and;

WHEREAS, the Diocesan Synod has sought to find new ways to support the worship and work of the Parishes of the Central Diocese through the Enlivening Program, allowing the closure of a few parishes to give new life and sustenance to the Diocese and the evangelism and kingdom building of its parishes and communities, and;

WHEREAS, the Central Diocese seeks to care for the heritage of the past in its oversight of the cemeteries which remain throughout the Diocese, now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the clergy and parish delegates of the Central Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church will carry the programs and vision of this 14th Central Diocesan Synod back to the parishes that we may all be nurtured by our common worship, prayer and vision, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that through the worship of Almighty God and celebration and reception of the Holy Eucharist, the entire Central Diocese will be strengthened to build up our individual spiritual lives and then together sustain strong parishes which pray for one another and serve all God's people in Christian love.



Eastern Diocese**Resolution of the Eastern Diocese Synod
October 5, 2024**

The XVII Synod of the Eastern Diocese convened virtually on October 5, 2024. Hosted by the Holy Trinity Cathedral, the see of the Eastern Diocese of the PNCC, this Diocesan Synod was summoned under the authority of Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop Ordinary of the Eastern Diocese, and attended virtually by the Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the PNCC.

The Synod began with a morning prayer to the Holy Spirit, which set the tone and inspirations for the proceedings of this day. Through the various reports and deliberations, we all learned of the current status of our Diocese.

Whereas, we are thankful to Bishop Sobiechowski, our senior priests – Very Rev. Joseph Krusienski, Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak and Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, Jr. for the planning and execution of a very successful virtual Synod.

Whereas, we acknowledge the active participation of the delegates, guests, and clergy in fulfilling their discipleship role entrusted to them as members of our Holy Church and through their attendance and commitment in spreading God’s word throughout our communities, our diocese and our Church.

Whereas, we, as delegates, have reflected upon the legacy of our faith as set forth upon us by our organizer, Bishop Francis Hodur, the clergy, and organizers of the Church.

Whereas, we continue to support the endeavors of the Eastern Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Commission with the overall theme of Discipleship towards increasing the growth in our faith in Christ with monthly presentations and with renewed Spirituality among all members; in expanding community outreach programs; and enabling our responses to God’s call to Sacred Vocations and service.

Whereas, we acknowledge the work of the Eastern Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee which has recently merged with the Eastern Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Commission, and has worked for many years to increase the awareness of our church by enabling parishes to use more social media technologies, especially Facebook, in promoting Holy Mass and special services, as well as holding various events and fund-raising activities, and to encourage the expansion of community engagement efforts among our parishes in exemplifying our Christian discipleship to help those in need, those in transition, and those organizations striving to assist others. We also have strongly supported, as a Diocese, aid to the clergy of our Church.

Whereas, in 2025 the Christian Church will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the formulation of the Nicene Creed through various educational presentations on how this declaration of faith was established.

Whereas, in 2026, the Polish National Catholic Church will convene in Manchester, NH for the XXVII General Synod, as well as hosting the 2026 Youth Convo at the Berea Campus in Hebron, New Hampshire.

We, therefore, seek the grace and strength from our Lord, Jesus Christ, to embrace the work He has entrusted to our care; to be inspired to execute the proceedings of this Synod as we return to our parishes and to stay strong in our commitment and firm in our Catholic faith as members of the PNCC in spite of the everchanging and challenging chaos around us. With truth, work and struggle, we shall and will continue to succeed!

Respectfully submitted on October 5, 2024 by the Rev. Robert M. Koerber as per directed by the Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski at this XVZIIZ Eastern Diocese Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church.

Western Diocese

September Highlights at All Saints Parish Sterling Heights MI



At the conclusion of Holy Mass on September 15th, Olivia was presented with a Blessed Cross bestowed by the Altar Society and Altar Servers in recognition of her years of dedicated service as an altar server at All Saints Parish, Sterling Heights, MI. Service, commitment, and dedication are just a few of the words that describe Olivia. Olivia's unwavering dedication is deeply valued by the parish, as her leadership has made a significant impact on various initiatives, including the Christmas Child project, guiding the youth, and fostering the development of our altar servers. In addition to her numerous scholastic activities and her role as President of the All Saints

Youth Group, Olivia has also taken on a leadership role in assisting Father Jim Ploskonka with altar preparations and the practical development of altar servers.

The symbol of the cross has transcended time and culture, embodying profound spiritual and theological significance. The vertical beam represents the divine, reaching from earth to heaven, while the horizontal beam symbolizes the connection between God and humanity. This intersection signifies the pivotal moment in history when God's love and mercy met human sin and suffering, offering the promise of salvation and eternal life.

Over the centuries, the cross has been depicted in various forms, from simple wooden crosses to intricate designs adorning cathedrals and religious artifacts. Each representation stands as a visual testament to the enduring impact of Christ's sacrifice and the unwavering faith of the Catholic community.

On behalf of a grateful parish, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Olivia for her selfless service and enduring commitment. Please join us in celebrating Olivia's recognition and her service to our parish and Church community.

On September 29th, the students and teachers of All Saints Parish were commissioned for the 2024/25 school year, entrusted to be led by the Holy Spirit through inquiry, instruction, and study. This sacred commissioning serves as a reminder of the responsibility and privilege to seek wisdom and understanding, while nurturing both faith and knowledge in their academic journey. May the Spirit guide them in their pursuit of truth, fostering growth in both mind and heart.

If you are willing, my child, you can be disciplined, and if you apply yourself, you will become clever. If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you pay attention, you will become wise. Stand in the company of the elders. Who is wise? Attach yourself to such a one. Be ready to listen to every godly discourse, and let no wise proverbs escape you. If you see an intelligent person, rise early to visit him; let your footwear out his doorstep. Reflect on the statutes of the Lord and always meditate on his commandments. It is he who will give insight to your mind, and your desire for wisdom will be granted.

Sirach 6: 32-37



Resolution of the XIX Synod of the Western Diocese

October 15 and 16, 2024

Chicago, IL

The 19th Synod of the Western Diocese was held at All Saints Cathedral in Chicago, IL and began with Mass of the Holy Spirit, celebrated by Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky, concelebrated by the priests of our diocese and together with the congregation recited the Nicene Creed.

Whereas, during the Mass a tribute was made to the late Bishop Jerry Rafalko, and remembrances made of the late Bishop Stanley Bilinski, the late Bishop Jan Dawidziuk, and the late Bishop Joseph Kardas; all of whom passed away after short tenures in office. Gratitude was given for their service to our Church.

Whereas, at the conclusion of Mass, Father Greg Gronn was bestowed the Bishop Thaddeus Zielinski Adult Scouting Award, recognizing his 60 years of service in Scouting.

Whereas, the theme for the Synod was “Built on the Rock,” in which we recognize that Jesus is the Rock, and upon this Rock may we strengthen our parishes and strive for growth.

Whereas, the entire Synod was held at the Cathedral including sessions and meals, keeping the costs reasonable so that almost all parishes were represented at our Synod.

Whereas, on the cusp of the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicea where they gathered to make joint decisions for the undivided Church for the first time, we gathered in the same tradition to make joint decisions for the Church of today.

Whereas, for the first time, in following the directives of the XXVI General Synod, held in Scranton, PA in 2022, an elected representative of the Order of Deacons, and an elected representative from the community of Reserve Priests attended as voting members of the Synod.

Whereas, we turned the usual format of our diocesan synod ‘upside-down,’ our Mission and Evangelism Commission, at the beginning of proceedings, presented a seminar focused on the internal mission of parishioners and the parish, and the external mission of outreach and service of the community. The commission will expend its work to collaborate with parishes and provide guidance, support and tools to help with outreach.

Whereas, we recognize that the current locations of the parishes of our diocese may not meet the needs of all who seek communion with Christ, and we will look to build parishes in underserved areas.

Whereas, our diocesan youth were represented by a delegate who provided written and verbal reports about the needs and wants of youth in our parishes, and the Synod body recognized that the youth are not only the future, but a very important part in the life of our Church today.

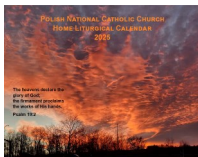
Whereas, our diocesan organizations, namely the United Youth Association, the United Circle Choirs and the Young Men’s Society of Resurrection will be called upon to help parishes add or strengthen their organizations.

Therefore be it resolved, that we the delegates of the XIX Synod of the Western Diocese will go home to our parishes pledging to continue the work that was begun, so that Built on the Rock, our parishes and diocese may grow for the Glory of God.

Resolution Committee

Zena Krulik, Liz Kaniewski, and Rev. John Cramer

P.N.C.C. Home Liturgical Calendar



The Polish National Catholic Church has full color 2025 home liturgical calendars for sale on a first-come, first-served basis. This calendar with original photographs for each month includes information concerning P.N.C.C. holy days. We urge you to order calendars for yourself or your parish as soon as possible because our supply is very limited.

The chart below can be used for calculating your costs for shipping to U.S. destinations. (For shipping outside 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.)

Quantity	Cost per Calendar	Calendar Cost Subtotal	U.S. Shipping	U.S. Total	Shipping Method
1	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$3.00	\$9.00	USPS First Class
2	\$6.00	\$12.00	\$4.50	\$16.50	USPS First Class
3	\$6.00	\$18.00	\$4.75	\$22.75	USPS Media Mail
4	\$6.00	\$24.00	\$5.50	\$29.50	USPS Media Mail
5	\$6.00	\$30.00	\$5.50	\$35.50	USPS Media Mail
6	\$6.00	\$36.00	\$5.50	\$41.50	USPS Media Mail
7	\$6.00	\$42.00	\$6.25	\$48.25	USPS Media Mail
8	\$6.00	\$48.00	\$6.25	\$54.25	USPS Media Mail
9	\$6.00	\$54.00	\$6.25	\$60.25	USPS Media Mail
10	\$6.00	\$60.00	\$7.00	\$67.00	USPS Media Mail
11	\$6.00	\$66.00	\$7.00	\$73.00	USPS Media Mail
12	\$6.00	\$72.00	\$7.00	\$79.00	USPS Media Mail
13	\$6.00	\$78.00	\$7.75	\$85.75	USPS Media Mail
14	\$6.00	\$84.00	\$7.75	\$91.75	USPS Media Mail
15	\$6.00	\$90.00	\$7.75	\$97.75	USPS Media Mail
16 - 50	\$6.00	\$96.00 - \$300.00	\$26.00	\$122.00 - \$326.00	USPS Large Flat Rate Box
51+	\$6.00	\$306.00+	*Calculated at time of shipping		UPS

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

PLEASE NOTE that an additional \$30.00 is required for ad setup for sponsor information and specific parish information regarding Sunday services, telephone numbers, name of pastor, etc.

Complete and submit an order form, along with full payment, via mail. Please make checks/money orders (in USD) payable to Polish National Catholic Church. (We accept only checks or money orders; we are unable to accept credit/debit card payments.) Phone or email orders will not be processed or shipped until this office receives both a completed order form and payment. If you pick up your order at the National Church Center, there will be no shipping charge.

SEND PAYMENT AND ORDERS TO:
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2025 P.N.C.C. Home Liturgical (Wall) Calendar Order Form

<u>Shipping Information</u>	<u># of Calendars</u>	<u>Cost of Calendars</u>	<u>\$30.00 Ad Fee</u> (if applicable)	<u>Shipping Cost</u> (if calculable)*	<u>Total Enclosed</u>
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City, State Zip Code					

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Youth M, L, XL
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Adult S-3XL
\$20 2XL \$25 3XL



HOODIE - Green

Youth M, L, XL
\$30

Adult S-3XL
\$35 2XL \$40 3XL

All proceeds will be used for future improvements to the Spojnia Farm Campus



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