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The Glory of God

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

As we find ourselves working through the weeks of the Easter season following the joyous Sunday of the Resurrection, we begin to change our focus a bit during our Sunday readings. Early on following Easter Sunday we are focused on the empty tomb and the first appearances of Jesus after the resurrection. On Easter Sunday we encounter the empty tomb. The women go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus and find the stone rolled away. An angel tells them that Jesus has been raised. Then on the second Sunday, we have Jesus appearing to the gathered apostles on the evening of that same day of the resurrection, as well as one week later when Thomas is there with them. But beginning with the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday, and continuing for the rest of Eastertide, we begin to reflect on the meaning of the Lord's resurrection for us and the Church. In order to do this, we begin to reflect back on the earlier sayings of our Lord and applying the knowledge of the resurrection to them. In fact, we acknowledge that this is exactly what is occurring in the entirety of Scripture, since all of the Gospels were written in light of the resurrection of our Lord that was accomplished at Easter.

On the fifth Sunday of Easter this year, we read a portion of what is known as the Book of Glory, from the Gospel of John. This is the significant portion of John's Gospel that takes place at the Last Supper, while Jesus is teaching His disciples.

In the Gospel we read: "When he [Judas] had left, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and

God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and He will glorify Him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for Me, and as I told the Jews, "Where I go you cannot come," so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.'" (John 13:31-35)

The word 'glory' or 'glorify' here is one that can be a bit confusing for us. We tend to think that when glory is used, it is for something that is beautiful or highly admired. When we hear the word 'glory' our first thoughts do not immediately go to the cross. But John is using it in a bit of a different way. He is taking here the Old Testament concept and applying it to the ministry, the person and actions of Jesus, especially His offering of Himself on the cross. Within the Old Testament, the phrase, 'the glory of the Lord' was used to show a manifestation of the divine presence within the world. It signified a revelation of God's power shown to humans.

Within the Gospel of John, this discussion of glory comes immediately following Jesus getting down on His hands and knees to wash the feet of the disciples. In performing this action Jesus takes the most lowly of positions in order to do an act of love to His disciples. He reminds them afterward that "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (John 13:15)

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As we examine this action of our Lord, especially after considering His death upon the cross and His resurrection, we see within it that Jesus takes the lowliest of positions within His culture, to express the reality of God taking upon Himself the lowliness of human nature, and then laying down this life for our salvation. Not only is the foot washing to be the model for us to follow, but more importantly we are to follow the model of laying down our lives for one another. We are called into a life of all self-sacrificing love and service. This is the love that we are called upon to express.

It is within this laying down of Jesus' life that we experience the glory of the Lord. It is the revelation of exactly how much God loves His people. This is why we can say that the crucifixion of Jesus is an expression of the glory of the Lord. It is a revelation of God's power in the world. It may have seemed like weakness, but in fact it was the very power of God conquering sin and death. And then, through the resurrection of Christ, God extends to us everlasting life when we join our lives to Christ's Own life.

It is for this reason that Jesus says within the reading above that, "I give you a new commandment, love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (John 13:34) This commandment is not new in time. This is not a different commandment. Saying that we should love is not a new understanding from God. Rather, the commandment is new in intensity. We should not only love, but we should do it in the way that Jesus has. We should take the self-offering position of service to help our brothers and sisters. We should give all that we are able to help and serve others. We should unite our own giving to that of Jesus. If we join our lives of love and service to that of Jesus, then as we reflect during this Easter season, we will be joined to the resurrection life of Jesus as well.

Within the second reading for the same Fifth Sunday of Easter, we read in the Book of Revelation, John proclaiming, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth ...

I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem. ... Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race." (Revelation 21:1a, 2a, 3a) We see here that something new is being inaugurated. While the Book of Revelation is often looked at as describing those things that will happen at some future time at the end of the world, we can also see that what is described there is also beginning to happen in our own time. It is sometimes described as "already, but not yet." It is something that has certainly begun, but is not yet fully accomplished.

Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, all things have been joyously transformed. We, as a part of the Church today, fully participate in this transformation. But as above it is something that is "already, but not yet." Christ is risen from the dead as the firstfruits. We in the Church today are participants in this renewal of all creation as we wait for the full consummation of this renewal. St. Paul confesses concerning Jesus in his First Letter to the Corinthians: "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep ... Christ the firstfruits; then, at His coming, those who belong to Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23)

This reality is the cause and result of our Easter joy. Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead to new life. He has won the forgiveness of sin by His death upon the cross and then conquered death by being raised to life again in the glory of the Father.

In our worship in the Easter season and in our Easter joy we confess that Jesus Christ is "the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He Himself might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things for Him, making peace by the blood of His cross. (Colossians 1:18-20)

Let our Easter joy, our Easter worship, our singing of alleluia during this time, show forth that the renewal and transformation of all things in Christ is brought lived strongly in how we love each other and offer our service to God and neighbor.



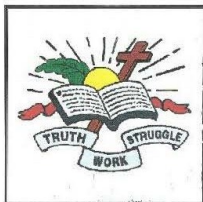
Mission & Evangelism Commission of the P.N.C.C. Meeting Scranton, PA

The Mission & Evangelism Commission of the P.N.C.C. are meeting at the National Church Center of the P.N.C.C. in Scranton, PA, on Monday, March 31 - Wednesday, April 2, 2025.

Pictured are Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Karen Sobiechowski, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Rt. Rev. John Mack, Very Rev. Jaroslaw Nowak and Rev. Robert Koerber.



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National Liturgical Commission of the P.N.C.C. Meets Scranton, PA

The National Liturgical Commission of the P.N.C.C. are meeting at the National Church Center in Scranton, PA on Tuesday, April 8 and Wednesday, April 9, 2025.

Members present at the meeting in Scranton are:

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr., Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki, Very Rev. John P. Kowalczyk, Jr., and Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski.

Members present at the meeting via Zoom are:

Rev. Henryk Wos, Rev. Carmen Bolock, Rev. Dr. Scott J. Lill, Rev. Jason Soltysiak, and Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski.



History & Archives Commission of the P.N.C.C. Scholars' Conference

On Saturday, April 26, 2025, the P.N.C.C. Scholars' Conference was held via Zoom Workplace. This year's conference featured a distinguished group of presenters from Warsaw, Poland; Rome, Italy, Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Their topics reflected a broad range of theological, historical, and pastoral insights, and are outlined below.

Christ and the Coal Mine: Francis Hodur and the Labor Movement, 1897-1905 Gavin Moulton

The establishment of the Polish National Catholic Church and Lattimer Massacre are pivotal events in American labor and religious history. Both occurred mere months from each other within the coal region of north-eastern Pennsylvania. This presentation seeks to understand the interconnected roots of labor issues and the establishment of the Polish National Catholic Church through analysis of Francis Hodur's writings and cartoons, as well as by revisiting the initial events that led dissatisfied parishioners in Scranton to establish St. Stanislaus Church. This paper directly builds on feedback received at last year's History and Scholars' Conference and is based on research at the Polish National Catholic Church Archives in Fall 2024. As very few archival documents from the earliest years of the church survive, the visual sources in *Straż* constitute one of the most important, yet least utilized sources for understanding Hodur and the independent movement.

History of a Canadian Parish Father Ted Zawistowski

The first two Polish National Catholic churches in Canada were also among the earliest in the P.N.C.C. as a whole. St. Mary's P.N.C.C. is still active in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and St. Ludwiga's P.N.C.C. parish cemetery in remote Stony Hill, Manitoba, is still being used. That cemetery has been declared a Canadian Historical Site. Their histories include the rather unusual life and work of Rev. Pawel Markiewicz.

"Struggles and Service: The Polish National Catholic Church in Poland and the Ministry of Bishop Józef Padewski (1930–1951)" Father Damian Heratym

Kościół Polskokatolicki (do 1951r., PNKK w Polsce) zorganizowany przez bp. F. Hodura w Stanach Zjednoczonych i przeniesiony na tereny Polski od 1918 roku. Celem tekstu jest przedstawienie jak wyglądał Kościół oraz praca bp. Padewskiego podczas tych dwu dekad. Główne poruszane tematy to: Trudna sytuacja PNKK w Polsce na początku lat 30. XX wieku.

Misja ks. Józefa Padewskiego. Próby stabilizacji i legalizacji za czasów administracji ks. Padewskiego (1933 - 1936). Posługa Biskupia Józefa Padewskiego. Okres powojenny i powrót bp. Padewskiego do Polski.

Polish Catholic Church (until 1951, P.N.C.C. in Poland) organized by Bishop F. Hodur in the USA, and then, since 1918 transformed to Poland. The aim of the text is to present the situation of the Church and Bishop Padewski's service for two decades. The main topics are: The difficult situation of the P.N.C.C. in Poland in the early 1930s. The mission of Father Józef Padewski. Attempts at stabilization and legalization during the administration of Father Padewski (1933-1936). The ministry of Bishop Józef Padewski. The post-war period and Bishop Padewski's return to Poland.

The 1700th Anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea: Reflections from the 2025 Union of Scranton Theological Conference, Mainz, GE Most Reverend Mikovsky Ph.D. and Very Reverend Robert M. Nemkovich Jr

An overview of the 2025 Union of Scranton Theological Conference, held in Mainz, Germany, marked the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.). The gathering explored the Council's enduring theological, liturgical, and ecumenical significance through a series of scholarly presentations and worship services.

A historical overview of the Council highlighted its role in establishing foundational Christian doctrines, particularly the divinity of Christ and the formulation of the Nicene Creed. Another presentation examined how Nicaea's theological clarity continues to shape contemporary expressions of faith and understanding in the Church. A liturgical perspective was offered in a talk on how the Council's teachings influenced Eucharistic worship and the structure of Christian prayer. Finally, a forward-looking discussion reflected Nicaea's continuing call to ecumenical unity and cooperation among churches today.

The conference also featured Holy Masses in two historic settings, including a 10th-century cathedral and a medieval chapel, incorporating traditional Candlemas rites and the blessing of throats on the eve of the Feast of St. Blaise. Together, the presentations and liturgies affirmed Nicaea's enduring legacy and challenged participants to carry its vision of faith, truth, and unity into the contemporary world.

A Retrospective View of the Innovations in Organization, Liturgy, Theology and Culture of the Polish National Catholic Church 125 Years, A Round Table Discussion Moderator - Rev. Jim Ploskonka, Ph.D.

This round table session offers a reflective exploration of the Polish National Catholic Church's 125-year journey, focusing on the significant innovations that have shaped its identity. Panelists will examine developments in ecclesial organization, liturgical expression, theological thought, and cultural engagement. The discussion will highlight how these areas have evolved in response to historical contexts and contemporary challenges, providing insight into the Church's enduring mission and relevance. Attendees are invited to join in a dialogue that honors the past while envisioning the future.



Union of Scranton Bishops' Meeting

Chicago, IL

On Monday, April 28th, the Union of Scranton Bishops' Meeting is was held at All Saints Cathedral, P.N.C.C., in Chicago, IL.

All members present at the meeting are pictured below.

Seated: Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, P.N.C.C.; Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the P.N.C.C., Bishop of the Canadian & Central Dioceses, P.N.C.C.; Rt. Rev. John Mack, Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese, P.N.C.C.

Standing: Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Administrator of the Western Diocese, P.N.C.C.; Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr., Ecumenical Officer of the P.N.C.C.

Joining the meeting via Zoom is Most Rev. Ottar Mikael Myrseth, Bishop of the Nordic Catholic Church in Scandinavia, Germany, Hungary and Romania



Supreme Council Meets

Chicago, IL

The Supreme Council of the Polish National Catholic Church conducted its annual meeting at All Saints Cathedral in Chicago, IL, on Tuesday, April 29th and Wednesday, April 30th.

Pictured below are the Supreme Council Members who attended the meeting in person in Chicago, IL.

Front, L to R: Rt. Rev. John Mack, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky and Rt Rev. Paul Sobiechowski.

Middle, L to R: Diane Cheek, Kathryn Nemkovich.

Back, L to R: Cathy Bilinski, Raymond Pieczarka, Laurel Curylo, Michael Mietlicki, Very Rev. Jaroslaw Nowak, Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Very Rev. Marian Pociecha, Bruce Kaniewski, Very Rev. Robert Nemkovich, Paul Gorgol



P.N.C.C. Future Direction

May 2025

Nicea at 1700

Introduction

In this year of 2025, we will spend some time considering the treasures that were left to the Church at the Council of Nicea in the year 325 AD. This year we honor 1700 years since the time of this important Ecumenical Council of the Church. We will examine, not only the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, but also other aspects of this Council that are important to us in the Polish National Catholic Church today. We will see within this tradition the conciliar aspects of the governance of the church and also the canonical aspects concerning how the church operates in the present day.

This month we focus on the last part of the Creed that deals with our understanding of the Church and foundations of the Church's faith.

Nicene Creed

I believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary AND BECAME MAN. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life Who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. **I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Scripture

I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

Matthew 28:19-20 – 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.

Mark 16:15 – And [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”

1 Peter 2:5 – Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samarian, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 2:42 – They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Ephesians 5:27 – So as to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

Romans 12:5 – So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 22:16 – And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on His name.

1 Corinthians 12:13 – For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Colossians 2:12-13 – When you were buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the power of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with Him, when He forgave us all our trespasses.

Ephesians 4:5 – One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

I look for the resurrection of the dead,

John 11:24-25 – 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.”

Romans 6:4-5 – Therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For as we have united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – For the Lord Himself, with the cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

And the life of the world to come.

Mark 10:29-30 – Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.

2 Peter 3:13 – But, in accordance with His promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Revelation 21:1 – Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away, and the sea was no more.

Reflection

In this last portion of the Creed, we confess our belief in the Church and in the reality that we live today as members of God’s Holy Church. We begin the Creed by acknowledging our belief in Almighty God, the One in Three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We have taken a look, over the past few months, about what we confess concerning our belief in God and especially, as Catholic Christians, what was accomplished by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by taking our human nature, giving us a way to live through His Word and example, dying on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and rising to life again to give to us eternal life. In this portion of the Creed, we confess that this ministry of and encounter with the Lord continues to take place for us through the divine reality of the Church.

We confess the Church through its four marks: One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic. We confess the Church as One because of the unity that we all share in Christ Jesus. Through our faith, our worship and especially through the reception of Holy Communion we are all joined to Christ. Therefore, the Church is one and we are one, because there is one Christ and each of us, through this communion and worship participate in the one Body. In fact, we pray this, from the words of St. Paul, each time we celebrate Mass, “because there is one Bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one Bread.”

The Church is Holy because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is holy. The Church is the body of Christ, and it is set aside from the world to accomplish His work in the world, the work of building the Kingdom of God. The Church is Catholic in the sense that it contains and expresses the fulness or wholeness of what is necessary for salvation, and this fullness or totality is present everywhere the Church gathers. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has given everything necessary for our salvation to the Church.

Lastly the Church is Apostolic in that it confesses what has been handed down from our Lord, to the Apostles, now down to the present day. In the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:42) we see that the members of the Church were devoted to the Apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (the Eucharist) and to the prayers (worship). We still do all of this within the Church at the present time.

Following this confession concerning the Church, its four marks, and how that is expressed in the world today we then confess what this reality means for us in the present. We confess one baptism through which individuals are joined to the life of Christ and enter into the Church. In the Letter to the Colossians, St. Paul reminds us that in baptism we were buried together with Christ, to extend this confession, it is through our baptism that we went to the cross with Jesus and our sins are forgiven there.

Then follows immediately that we confess the goal to which we are called, looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the new life in the world to come. Especially during this Eastertide we celebrate the reality that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and now lives in glory. And we confess this with great joy because we know that we too will be joined together with Him in the resurrection of the flesh and life everlasting.

(Continued on bottom Page 31.)

Formation of Studies: The Ultimate Experiential Learning Provided

By Reverend Dr. Jim Ploskonka

In the tradition of the Polish National Catholic Church (P.N.C.C.), the sacred vocation of ordained ministry is not bestowed upon the already perfect, but upon those willing to be shaped by the grace of God through the crucible of formation. As the Church itself is not a sanctuary for saints but a hospital for sinners, so too must the seminary be understood—not as a reward for holiness, but as a school for transformation. It is in this light that we must view our seminaries and diaconate programs: as essential centers of discernment, development, and dedication.

1. The Seminary as a Sacred Place of Formation

The seminary, much like the Church it serves, is fundamentally a *locus formationis*—a place where the call to ministry is not merely confirmed but cultivated. It is not a theological ivory tower nor a monastic escape, but rather a spiritual workshop in which the intellect, character, and calling of the future clergy are forged. Saint Paul's confession in *Philippians 3:12* is instructive: "Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (NRSV). Formation, therefore, presumes a process, not perfection.

Within the P.N.C.C., we uphold that seminarian training is not a rite of passage reserved for the spiritual elite. Rather, it is the very process through which the called are conformed more perfectly to the image of Christ the High Priest. This understanding frames the seminary not as a gate but as a journey—an ongoing response to the call that is simultaneously divine and ecclesial.

2. The Stages of Seminary Formation: From Admission to Ordination

The formation journey in our Church's seminary and diaconate programs is structured into several key stages. Each stage is designed to accompany the candidate in deepening their awareness of their vocation, refining their knowledge of the Church's faith, and maturing their pastoral competence.

a. Admission Stage

Discernment begins with an initial interview, pastoral recommendation, and psychological assessment. These tools are not used to disqualify but to ensure readiness for the rigors of formation. Academic qualifications are evaluated not as the final word but as a beginning point in a journey of lifelong learning.

b. Orientation Stage

Candidates are introduced to the *Regula Vitae*—the Rule of Life—which balances worship, discipline, and study. Early self-assessment activities are employed to help clarify motivation and expectations.

c. Doctrinal and Biblical Studies

Here, seminarians engage deeply with Sacred Scripture, historical theology, and systematic doctrine. Courses in Old and New Testament surveys, Church history, and ecclesiology lay the intellectual foundation for future preaching and teaching.

d. Ministerial and Liturgical Training

As a sacramental church, the P.N.C.C. places strong emphasis on liturgical formation. Courses in homiletics, sacramental theology, and pastoral administration are central. Candidates must become competent not only in theory but also in pastoral execution.

e. Spiritual and Character Formation

Formation without prayer is a contradiction in terms. Daily prayer, communal worship, spiritual direction, and guided retreats are integral to shaping the internal life of the candidate.

f. Supervised Ministry and Internship

Practical training takes place through parish placements, evangelization efforts, and mission exposure. This immersive learning allows students to integrate theory with the lived experience of the Church.

g. Final Assessment and Ordination

Formation concludes with comprehensive examinations, an evaluative process led by both faculty and the diocesan bishop and culminates in the ordination retreat and sacramental rite of ordination.

3. Biblical Precedents for Gradual Vocational Clarity

Scripture is replete with stories of vocations that were neither immediate nor pristine. The prophet Samuel, in *1 Samuel 3*, required guidance from Eli to understand the voice of God. Paul, once a zealous persecutor, encountered Christ in a moment of disruption (*Acts 9*). Timothy was reminded by Paul to “rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (*2 Timothy 1:6*), suggesting that vocation must be nurtured continually.

These examples remind us that calling unfolds over time and often within the context of community. They echo the ethos of the P.N.C.C.’s seminary, where vocations are not presumed to be complete but are treated as sacred potentials to be drawn forth through grace.

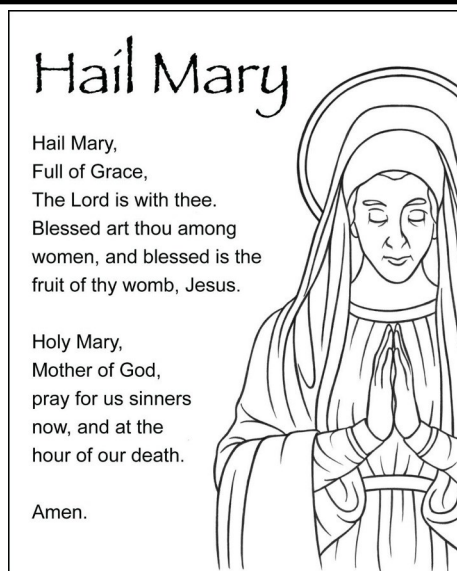
4. Seminary is for Correction, Not Condemnation

Christian formation includes failure. To err is not to be dismissed but to be restored. Christ’s response to Peter—who denied Him three times—was not expulsion but reinstatement. “And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (*Luke 22:32*). The seminary must mirror this same pastoral charity: correction must be measured, redemptive, and constructive. Dismissal is warranted only in cases of unrepentant and grave misconduct.

5. Rethinking the Expectation of Perfection

The Church must reflect critically: Are all currently ordained clergy paragons of virtue and clarity in their calling? The honest answer reveals why expecting perfection from seminarians before formation is theologically untenable. *Romans 5:8* affirms, “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” If grace was available to us at our worst, how much more should the Church extend that grace to those seeking to serve?

The P.N.C.C.’s seminary and diaconate programs are among its most sacred investments—not merely in individuals, but in the future of the Church itself. These institutions do not demand sanctity as a prerequisite; they exist to nurture it. Formation is not the reward of the holy, but the refining fire of the called. It is the Church’s privileged work to accompany the called as they grow in faith, fidelity, and the fullness of their vocation. The seminary is not where saints are found; it is where saints begin.





Devotion to our Blessed Mother

Rev. Jim Konicki, National Vocations Director

We offer you the Savonarola Theological Seminary Newsletter for May 2025 focused on devotion to our Blessed Mother.

Mary has been called the Mother of Vocations. As the Mother of the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, Who calls others to share in His priesthood (“Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22)), she as with all things supports and focuses us on His call. As Jesus invites men to follow in His footsteps, Mary intercedes for all those men called to that ministry.

Mary is also the Mother of Vocations because of her practical example of faithfulness and service. As she walked with and prayed for the early Church, so her intercession is there for us today. As she prayed for the ministry of the Apostles, she prays for today’s ministers of the gospel. As she served the Church, so she calls men to service in her model.

As those in formation learn, developing a relationship with our Blessed Mother bears great abundance in their own ministry. As Mary leads others to Christ (To Jesus through Mary), so are we led in a closer walk with Him through her.

We have established a prayer line for the seminary. Send your prayer requests by E- mail to prayer@savonarola.net.

We also established a Seminary website at <https://www.savonarola.net>, and a Seminary Instagram channel at <https://www.instagram.com/savonarola1914/>. Check them out.

If you can, please provide support to the Seminary Fund. Faithful P.N.C.C. member’s support is vital to keeping the lights on and the seminarians’ educational needs met. Donations can be sent to The Savonarola Theological Seminary Fund, c/o The Office of the Prime Bishop, 1006 Pittston Ave., Scranton, PA 18505-4109. God bless your generosity!

The Intercession of the Saints and the Role of the Mother of God

Rev. Mr. Sean Dodd

“So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness.” — James 5:16, NET

The intercession of the saints is a well-known and widely accepted practice within the Apostolic Churches, including both Eastern and Western traditions. Its roots extend not only to the time of the Apostles but even further into the Old Testament. For example, in 2 Maccabees 15:14–16, the prophet Jeremiah—long since deceased—is portrayed as praying for the Jewish people:

“This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God.” — 2 Maccabees 15:14, RSVCE

This passage affirms the principle that the righteous, even after death, intercede for the living. This harmonizes with the teaching in James 5:16, which emphasizes the effectiveness of a righteous person's prayer.

It is a natural and scriptural instinct to ask those who walk closely with the Lord to pray for us. We do this with our friends and family on earth—especially those we sense are spiritually mature. This same instinct leads many Christians to seek the prayers of the saints in heaven. It is an expression of the love we are commanded to have for one another and a way of bearing one another’s burdens (cf. Galatians 6:2).

This applies in a unique way to the Mother of God. She holds a singular place in salvation history due to her closeness to Christ and her exemplary righteousness. While her relative, Zechariah, is rendered mute for doubting the angelic message (cf. Luke 1:20), Mary receives the message with faith and humility:

“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” — Luke 1:38, ESV

The angel Gabriel addresses her as “full of grace” (Luke 1:28), a title that speaks to her sanctity and divine favor. At the wedding in Cana, she intercedes for the couple, and Jesus performs His first miracle at her request (cf. John 2:1–11). While Christ did not “change His mind,” this moment reveals the spiritual principle of intercession: that He desires to involve others in His saving work, and that His mother, in particular, plays a vital role in this.

Mary’s intercession points us not away from Christ, but directly to Him. Just as James 5:16 calls us to seek the prayers of the righteous for healing, I personally turn to the Mother of God in my own life—not because I think she makes God “hear me better,” but because she is righteous and lives in the presence of God. If the prayers of the righteous are powerful, how much more so are the prayers of the one whom Scripture calls “blessed among women” (Luke 1:42)?

God, in His providence, allows and encourages this kind of intercessory relationship. It fosters the spiritual communion of the Church—the Body of Christ—across time and space, between heaven and earth. We are not isolated individuals in our faith, but members of one another (Romans 12:5).

In this way, the ultimate role of the Mother of God is to direct us to her Son. When we honor her for her faith and virtue, we are truly praising God for the grace He has worked in her.

When we thank her for her prayers, we do so as we would thank an earthly mother who prayed for us—knowing fully that all good things come from the Lord, but also that He delights to work through those He loves.

Mary and Her Place in My Faith Life

Cleric David Dudzinski

Greetings my siblings in Christ! For this reflection I will be talking about the importance of Mary in my Faith Life.

Marian devotion has always been integral to how I see and live out my faith journey. Having been raised Roman Catholic, and spending time in Lutheranism and Episcopalianism, I feel like I've seen not only the benefit, but the necessity of having an appropriate relationship with the Mother of our Lord. Basically, my journey has taught me a “Goldilocks and the 3 Bears” approach to how I came to view Mary. In Rome, I saw too much Mary- with the view of her as someone who calms Jesus’s anger at us as sinners. In Lutheranism, I experienced too little, as Luther thought such attachment and relationship was idolatry. In Episcopalianism, well I didn't experience too much change, as Episcopalians aren't one to rock the boat.

It was only once I became a member of the P.N.C.C. that I experienced a more orthodox view of how we should approach Mary. I believe that in the P.N.C.C. we take the optimal path- of course she is the unspoiled, and spotless mother of Jesus, and that prayers to her are perfectly normal! If you wanted to learn about your best friend, wouldn't you want to learn about his mom? Wouldn't you talk to her as well?

All this is to say, Marian devotions are a strong part of my life and always have been. Being Polish, I travel with an icon of the Matka Boska Częstochowa, I keep my rosary beads with me, most of the time, Every morning I pray my Scapular and the Hail Mary is never far from my thoughts. There is so much Marian tradition alive and well in our church and I believe we all benefit from it.

What Role Does the Blessed Virgin Mary Play in My Faith-Life?

Cleric R. Todd Godwin

I didn’t grow up with the Rosary; and I didn’t grow up with any special importance give to the Mother of God. While I never had any of the Protestant antipathy to her, I have had to find my way into this

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aspect of the Church's piety. I've also responded to angry Protestants spouting off against Marian piety on social media (not something I am really proud of having wasted time on), but here is what I usually say, and where my thinking on the topic centers.

In the fifth century a Bishop named Nestorius, condemned as a heretic for several reasons, tried to say that the title "Bearer of God" (Theotokos) was overly reverential towards the Blessed Virgin, and since, according to him, she bore only Christ (and not God) we should use the term "Bearer of Christ" (Christotokos) instead. Nestorius' idea was condemned by the Church because, as it pointed out, if we say the Blessed Virgin only bore the human part of Jesus and not the divine part, we are separating Jesus to the point that we jeopardize His ability to rescue and redeem our humanity by His divinity. I find myself not only reminding angry and confused Protestants of this, but also Mary, and all the saints, all point back to Jesus. The whole communion of saints begins with Mary and because of her bodily connection to Jesus' doubly human and divine nature.

I also remind these people that in all the apostolic Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) we see in our churches, on both sides of the altar, an image of Jesus on the right, and an image of Mary with Christ as a child on the left. This is an ancient and universal practice within the Church reminding us that our faith is a faith embodied in Jesus' own "enfleshing," and that not only do we not have the Church without it, we classically do not see images of the Blessed Virgin without the Christ child. The Roman Church would later break away from this however, something I am not in favor of.

So, where is the Blessed Virgin present in my Christian piety? My only response can be that there is nowhere that she isn't present.

Our Mother, Holy Mary

Cleric Jonathan Johnson

Hail Blessed Mary, Virgin Most Holy. In admiration, we come before thee.
Mother Most Gracious, willing to help us. Pray for us, Mary, Mother of Jesus

Zdrowaś Maryjo is probably one of our most beloved hymns, at least it's pretty popular in my parish. There are many different translations of it, but my understanding is the actual translation of "Zdrowaś Maryjo Bogarodzico" would be, "Hail Mary, Mother of God." A bit different than we translate.

So, who is this Blessed Mary, why do we, "hail" her, and why do we call her Mother of God? What role does Mary play in our lives as Polish National Catholics? What example does she give us?

We see very little about the Blessed Virgin Mary from Scripture or our catechism. Our catechism names her as the mother of our Lord and calls her, "Holy Mary." By this, we can know that she is not only the mother of Jesus, but she is also holy. Someone who is holy requires our deep respect.

At Holy Mass, in the Confiteor, we confess our sins, "in the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints..." and ask, "the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints" to pray for us. By this we can know that Mary is in the presence of God in heaven and with the saints, and because of this, we should ask her to intercede for us.

The Nicene Creed that we profess, acknowledges Mary has an important role in our salvation, as our Lord, was, "born of the Virgin Mary." By this, we can know that Mary is the Mother of God, as Jesus IS God, the Second person of the Blessed Trinity. She is also called, the Theotokos, which is Greek for, "God bearer".

Scripture tells us a few stories about her, a few I'll mention, such as the great story of her "fiat;" her "yes" to God when the angel appeared to her at the Annunciation. "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*" (Luke 1:38) By this, we can know that Mary is our example, and like her, we should also say, "yes," to God and to His will for our lives and to the vocations he calls us to.

We read of her interaction with Elizabeth at the Visitation. Here, Mary exclaims in, what we call, her "Magnificat," "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*" (Luke 1:46-47)

By this, we can know that our own lives should also, “rejoice” and “magnify” Christ.

We read about her when our Lord went missing and was found in the temple. “*Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.*” (Luke 2:48) Here we can know that Mary is a mother who cares for her Son, and as she is also our mother, we are also her children who she cares for. She is, “willing to help us,” with her intercession for us.

We read of her asking our Lord for his first miracle at the wedding at Cana. “*Do whatever he tells you.*” (John 2:2) Through this, we know that Mary will lead us to Jesus. A loving Mary will remind us, “do whatever he tells you.”

At the foot of the cross, we know Mary was there. We heard this in the reading of the Passion on Good Friday. “*But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!”* (John 19:25-27) Through this, we know that Jesus gave Mary not only to the Apostle John, but also to us. “Behold your mother!” We should not neglect our natural or our spiritual mother.

My dear friends, I encourage you to get to know your Mother Mary better. During this month of May, one of the months of the year that our church dedicates to Our Blessed Mother, take advantage of the devotions in your parish and make a point to add some devotion to our heavenly mother to your daily routine. God makes time for you, you can make a little time for him.

There are many beautiful prayers and devotions to the Blessed Mother. Take a look in our prayer book, and besides the Hail Mary, you’ll find a few beautiful prayers. My favorite Marian devotion is reciting the Rosary daily, even if sometimes it means I fall to sleep at night praying it. The Rosary is such a beautiful way to both ask for Mary’s intercession and also meditate on the Lives of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary. In May in our parish, we usually say the Rosary before Mass and recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary after Holy Mass. Perhaps in your parish you have a special May Devotions service? There is also a beautiful sung version of the Litany that is often used for these services. The Litany contains many beautiful titles we give Mary. Take some time to ponder these beautiful titles of Mary. May God bless you in your efforts to be closer to Him and take advantage of His and our loving mother Mary to do so.

My Devotions to the Holy Family

Cleric Joel Smith

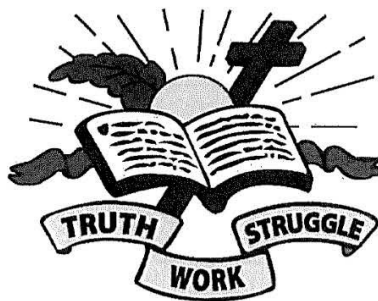
My spiritual journey finds comfort and strength in the gentle embrace of divine grace, especially through the intercession of Holy Mary and St. Joseph, my cherished patron saint.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy has become a meaningful way to pray, connecting my deepest hopes and vulnerabilities to the merciful heart of Christ. When I say the words, “For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world,” I feel the comforting presence of Mary around me, her compassionate gaze bringing me hope. She is a beacon of unconditional love, helping me navigate life’s challenges with her immaculate heart.

St. Joseph, my patron saint, stands next to Mary as a source of strength and quiet devotion. He embodies the virtues of protection, humility, and unwavering faith. Together, they create a powerful spiritual partnership in my prayer life, connecting my everyday struggles with heavenly support. When I pray, I picture Joseph’s protective hands joined with Mary’s nurturing embrace, forming a sacred space filled with divine protection and guidance. Their united intercession reminds me of God’s endless mercy, love, and the wonderful mystery of divine companionship throughout my spiritual journey.



Application for the Arthur W. Zabierek Scholarship



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

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

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

1. Applicants Name: _____
Last First Middle

2. Applicant's Home Address: _____

3. Contact Information: Home Phone #: _____
Cell Phone #: _____
Email: _____

4. Date of Birth: _____

5. Parish Name/Address: _____

6. Pastor's Name: _____

Please submit a letter of acknowledgement from your Pastor.

7. Name and Address of School you will be attending in the Fall:

8. In the Fall I will be a:

___Freshman ___Sophomore ___Junior ___Senior ___Grad Student

9. Cumulative Grade Point Average: _____

Please submit your most recent OFFICIAL transcript.

10. Field of Study: Major: _____

Minor: _____

[illegible][illegible]

Cathy's Critter Café: Finding God in Nature

Catherine Andersen - All Saints Cathedral Parish, Chicago

I have always been able to feel God's presence in nature. In all of His creation and in all of His creatures. In all of the stars and in all four seasons of the weather. In the majestic mountain ranges and in the vast oceans and serene streams. Wherever there is life, there is God. I enjoy sitting in nature and with nature -- thus, with God. My backyard is like my sanctuary if you will. There's nothing special or unusual about the yard, nothing fancy either. Quite the opposite actually in that it's all natural -- untreated grass, untreated weeds and other foliage, some dead tree branches scattered here and there in their original resting places, oh and yes, an inordinate number of wild critters. And here is how this story evolves. A couple friends at All Saints Cathedral Parish in Chicago asked me to write an article after hearing about "my" critters and the various antics and funny experiences I've shared with them over the past few years about the critters. Their promptings began in October 2024. Of course, everything takes time. Every time I thought about writing this article something else came up -- attending another church meeting, working on another set of minutes, preparing an agenda for an upcoming meeting, or really just being too tired. You get the idea. But perhaps I kept pushing this off until I could really sit down and write the article the way I wanted to, or rather, needed to. Please bear with me as I explain.

As we all know, around March 2020, Covid hit the world hard. Some of our lives were turned upside down while others weren't affected much at all. My life changed in that after having worked in an office environment for almost 39 years, I now began working remotely at home from my kitchen table. As the old saying goes -- it was just me, myself and I. It was not natural to sit and work alone isolated from human interaction. Sure, I had meetings via zoom and Teams messaging, and sent emails to co-workers and vendors, but there were numerous days that went by when I spoke to no one except my brother when he returned home from work late at night. Those conversations, however, were brief as both of us were tired by that time. So to change up my environment a bit, I would go outside as my workload allowed to take in some fresh air and sunlight. I even started walking down to the end of our long driveway just to get the mail when it was delivered (previously, my brother's chore). It was comical at first because when I heard the mail truck coming around the corner of our block, I would rush outside to talk to our delivery person just to have some human interaction. Then I noticed that several neighbors were doing the same. We would nod and wave to each other from a distance with our masks on. Wednesdays were really busy -- that's when I got to talk to the man who picks up our garbage and recycling. It was the same man that did both but I went outside twice, each time he came by, just to talk to him and learn more about him. Five years later, Oscar still picks up our garbage and recycling! He's a very nice man with a family and a very strong faith. If I had a chance to get out at lunch and get a treat at Starbucks or Dunkin', you really didn't want to be behind me in the drive thru line -- I was most likely engaged in a conversation with the employee just to have some human contact. Sometimes, I felt so bad in delaying the person behind me that I'd pay for their beverage! Again, you get the idea.

I continued to work from home and then one day was told by my employer that this was going to be a "permanent" situation. That hit me like a ton of bricks! I quickly realized that the novelty of working from home was wearing off and it had accelerated with the news that this was going to be permanent. It had been about six weeks since I had started working remotely -- I know this because I had a calendar and marked off each day as it went by hoping to return to the office at some point to see my co-workers and resume normal life again. With the news of working remotely permanently, I knew I needed to take action to keep my sanity. As time allowed, I would go outside and walk up and down the driveway several times a day to get a few steps in and stretch my legs. As the weather allowed, I began eating my lunch outside, in my sanctuary if you will. When I sat in the backyard eating lunch and soaking up the sun and fresh air, I realized this was going to work, everything would be ok. (By the way, if the weather was inclement, I would set the kitchen table with a nice place setting and eat lunch on an actual plate using silverware versus eating out of a can or container using plasticware which I had gotten into the bad habit of doing.)

I found solace as I watched a few birds fly around and a couple squirrels forage for food. I started putting bird seed out, and then a little more bird seed. More and more birds (mostly sparrows) came to eat throughout the day. Then I added a few black sunflower seeds and quickly learned that the squirrels loved them. The more I went outside, the more I was able to recognize the "regulars" as far as the squirrels and bunnies went. As the months went by, my visitors increased in numbers. Word spreads quickly when there's a food source in town!

In addition to the sparrows that had always come by, now there were blue jays, cardinals and woodpeckers as well. The number of bunnies and squirrels also increased. I noticed a few chipmunks racing around the yard too. Oh, and there was George, our groundhog who stuck around for two years – I just loved when he came out to visit with me! I listened for the bunnies rustling under the bushes and the squirrels climbing in the trees as I ate lunch. As I became more familiar with all the critters, they became more familiar with me. I began talking to them, in short sentences at first as English is their second language, and they responded with a tweet (blue jays), chirp (chipmunks), flicker of their tail (squirrels) or twitch of their ears (bunnies). The blue jays and woodpeckers quickly learned that they could come close to the house and if they saw me outside or if the back door was open, they tweeted to me and I would offer them some plain almonds. I'd toss them out on the 6' x 9' indoor/outdoor piece of carpeting we bought for the critters one Christmas, which is now referred to as the feeding mat or flying carpet. While on lunch, I would call out for Jay 1, Jay 2, Jay 3, etc. and on some days there were 10 to 14 blue jays that stopped by to grab a bite to eat. The squirrels and bunnies started coming closer and closer as we became more comfortable co-existing with each other. They recognized me and didn't run away from me as they should, but rather they ran towards me knowing I would not hurt them. Working from home wasn't so bad anymore. I even missed my little friends when I had to leave the house for any reason. In essence, they'd become like my outdoor pets.

At night, there would be raccoons and opossums that visited the yard along with the bunnies. One story I must include here is when I woke up one Spring morning and saw a raccoon outside our back door – it was already light out and she should have been back to her den already. Well, it turns out that she had five little babies hiding in the bush and as she went to get a drink of water from our ground level birdbath, the babies came out one by one. They all washed up a bit in the birdbath. It was the cutest thing. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was occurring as if in slow motion. Thankfully, I was able to get my cell phone turned on and took a couple pictures and a short video. I stood there in awe! God had blessed my morning with this beautiful scene right here in my own backyard, less than 15 feet from our back door! I started crying as the little babies played in the water and eventually followed mama home. It was just a beautiful sight!

Seasons came and went. Very often I find myself researching some topic about the animals that visit. I learned how to identify the various tweets or chirps among the birds and the various screeches and noises that the squirrels and chipmunks make – it helps to be blessed with supersonic hearing, as my brother would say I have. I've learned about their feeding habits, nesting requirements and mating rituals. I learned about the inter-species communications and the relationships among all the animals and how they communicate with each other regarding predatory dangers. As I learned more and more, I was just in awe as to how God created such beautiful creatures and how blessed I was to have them in the backyard with me.

As I got to recognize and know the bunnies better, there were a few that received names – Grandma Bunny, Mama Bunny, Baby Bunny and Newborn Bunny. Newborn Bunny had a diamond-shaped patch of white fur on her head between her ears. She had two babies in one litter and each of them had the same diamond-shaped patch of white fur on their heads in the exact same spot! I laugh because when I first started working remotely, I thought boy, our bunny sure does eat a lot of food. Little did I know that there were multiple bunnies in the yard! One would come and go, and then another would appear. It wasn't until I learned their fur patterns (which changes due to seasonal molting) and watched them with binoculars that I really saw the difference from one to the other. Then, one day, suddenly there was one bunny, then another, then another, then another as if they were multiplying right in front of my eyes. We ended up having seven bunnies in the yard that evening all at one time! It was just beautiful. Well, as it turned out, that season, we had a total of 14 bunnies. Here I must mention the “newborn” bunnies. It really is so precious to see a “newborn” bunny come out of their nest into the world – of course, I don't mean that they were just born, I mean newborn in the sense that they are weaned and just old enough to survive on their own and they leave the nest (after about three weeks). Mama bunny still watches them, but they learn to forage and be on their own in no time. It's the cutest thing to see how they navigate the yard – first, just a few steps, and then a few more. Oops, watch out for those back legs! Sometimes, they jump when they mean to run and sometimes they run when they mean to jump. Still learning the strength of their little back legs, they keep practicing. One time, I saw one little one topple over on his or her side while learning how to run. I gasped. He or she didn't get hurt. It just got back up and tried again as I took a deep breath. Once they are pretty good at running and can control those back legs correctly, then they go on their timed races. That's when they race back and forth and back and forth from Point A to Point B. They do this several times in a row as they are learning how long it takes to get from one bush to another, or

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from a bush to the garden, etc. – wherever they can take cover from a predator. Again, these things are just so cute to watch and yes, they do grow up quickly! It's just amazing how they are so small one day and several days later, they've gotten quite a bit bigger, and I have had the privilege of watching them grow up! So blessed! Early evening is the best time to watch the bunnies really relax and run around and play. What a joy this is for me! They feel safe in our yard with plenty of places to hide as they play hide and seek and chase each other around the yard. Before I know it, time has gone by and they are old enough to play “hippity hop” – yes, that's what we call their mating ritual. Racing around the yard, back and forth, around the trees, back and forth again, weaving in and around and over things, and then finally nuzzling and well, you know, nature happens. It's really a beautiful thing to witness! Again, I am in awe of how God created these beautiful animals and has given them the knowledge of how to survive and manage in the wild.

Now as to my squirrels – yes, there's a lot of them. At times, I have had up to 28 in the yard at once. It started out with a couple at a time, but then word spreads. As new little ones are born, the siblings travel together to come and eat – safety in numbers as the saying goes. They are always so full of energy. I love when they come running across the yard or the driveway in the morning to the feeding mat. They are filled with excitement and anticipation as they greet a new day and race to the nut pile for breakfast or to the water containers for clean water to drink. They chase each other around a little and then have another nut or two to eat and then take another one to bury for later. Throughout the day, they come and go as they please – grabbing another nut, chasing each other up and down trees and up and over things, and even just playing with a small twig fallen from a tree. I'll admit that we do have a play area for them – it's where we set up two old sawhorses with a ramp so they can run up and down it. They also have a climbing rope dangling down from our clothesline pole. They also enjoy our grandfather's rickety wooden ladder as they run up and down it or just enjoy chewing the old wood. They also love to “bungy” from low hanging flexible tree branches down towards the ground and then jump off and run back up the tree and do it again and again and again. Yes, these are the low branches we have purposely not trimmed so they could play on them. To watch them roll around with a short branch is the cutest thing too. The females keep busy all day – nursing and taking care of babies, foraging, building or repairing nests, etc. The males keep busy all day too – well, that is, mostly chasing each other, climbing anything they can, and yes, getting into trouble like climbing up the backdoor screen door or the kitchen windows onto the roof. The cutest noises are those from the baby squirrels who are about 10 weeks old and are being weaned from their nursing mama. She brings them down the tree very early in the morning and as she comes to the feeding area to eat and to show the kids where the food is, they cry to her and chase her all over the yard trying to nurse. She tries to hide and it's the cutest thing to watch them search for her all over and then to finally find her as she leads them back up to the nest. Over several days, she teaches them different routes up and down the trees, to the garage, to another tree and up the telephone pole and across the telephone and utility wires. It's like a parade! That's how they learn though – by following mama's lead. They also learn from mama and the other squirrels how to drink water from the birdbath or plastic containers that I have out for them. They still drink from puddles on the drive or standing water on various surfaces after it rains, but they quickly learn that clean water is in the containers and tastes much better. At first, they back away because of the ripples they create by drinking and by their reflection in the water. After a few times though, they get used to it. Some things they just instinctively know but when they learn things from mama, it's a beautiful thing which I absolutely love to watch! By the way, nest building is also taught from mama to her little ones.

God has truly blessed me with all the critters He has sent my way. They bring me so much joy throughout the day as I work from home (and yes, I do get my work done!). With joy sometimes comes sorrow, however. I love these little animals and I look out for them. When I recognize the squirrels' screech for a ground predator, I go outside and quickly survey the property looking for a cat, fox or coyote. If I hear the squirrels' screech for an aerial predator or the blue jays screeching, I go outside looking for the hawks or the owl up in the trees. These predators are beautiful creatures which only God could have created but I do encourage them to leave as soon as possible and empty-handed!

Then I have those squirrels that I name for one reason or another. There was Rusty Boy, Rusty Girl, Rusty Baby, Noggin, Happy and his three siblings, Miracle Baby, Crooked Neck #1, Dart Guy and Crooked Neck #2. I say was because I've lost all of these little squirrels. While each one of them filled my life with so much joy, each one of them has also taken a piece of my heart upon their passing and left me with a void in my life. I was so, so blessed to have gotten to know each one in a special way but it pains me to even write about them.

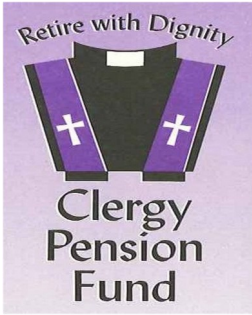
Then, there was Short Tail. She was special. So very special. The cutest little squirrel and my friend for four years. She would come by four times a day. She would peek around the corner of the garage and if the coast was clear, she'd run right up to me for a nut. She knew she didn't have to forage if I was around. I would sometimes put nuts on the ledge by our back door – she'd jump up and eat them on the ledge or on the wooden chair she shared with my brother, or she'd take them home with her. We would often have lunch together – either around 1130am or 2pm, depending on her schedule, not mine. We didn't talk much while eating – didn't need to -- we just enjoyed each other's company. She was a mama – having had six babies in Spring 2023 and four more from her late 2023 litter. All spittin' images of her, sharing her distinct facial features. You couldn't miss her – she escaped a predator after her Spring 2023 litter was born but lost half her tail in the process. By the time she had her late 2023 litter, the tip of her tail had turned white (maybe stress from all those babies, I don't know). I could see her down the block with that white tip! Just the cutest! I was so happy to see her nursing in early 2024 and couldn't wait until she brought her Spring litter over. As the weather got warmer and warmer, I was filled with excitement and anticipation of being a squirrel grandma again. Unfortunately, Short Tail never had the chance to bring me her litter as she crossed the rainbow bridge on April 11, 2024 -- struck by a car right in front of our house. Her little body was still warm when I picked her up. I was just devastated, still am -- she took a huge piece of my heart and I love her dearly! She was a good mama and my sweet little angel. On her passing, I literally prayed to God that He would watch over her little ones and let them survive. Seven days after her passing, I was out on the driveway getting some fresh air and still processing Short Tail's death when two of her kids born in 2023 came around the corner of the garage. They briefly stopped and looked at me as Short Tail had done so many times before. As they came around the corner, they were followed by four of the cutest, smallest little squirrels that I had ever seen – all spittin' images of Short Tail. My prayers had been answered and I prayed out loud, "Thank you, God!" and started crying. The little ones were so young – all they could eat on their first couple visits were plain almonds and unsalted, roasted peanuts. They could not even crack the hazelnuts, walnuts or pecans that their older siblings showed them. (This did bring a little chuckle to me at the time.) They grew quickly and are now regulars here every day along with numerous other squirrels including Rusty Girl #2, Baby Short Tail, Frank (who has his own escape story of survival), and Dirty Boy and Dirty Girl (the last two have dark facial and tummy fur). I'm hoping to see Spring 2024 litters from Rusty, Baby Short Tail and Dirty Girl very soon!

So why do I share all of this with you? Because these animals mean the world to me. They bring me so much joy as I can share my time and a few nuts, seeds and water with them. My heart breaks each time I lose a little one because little lives do matter. I share because it is supposed to be healing – as I finish this article, it will be Short Tail's one year death anniversary. It's been one of my most difficult years, ever. I share because my friends have asked me to – and a big thank you to all who bring me clear plastic containers, nuts and those reflective pie tins to ward off the hawks! God created all these animals, and He has blessed me with their presence and the ability to show them love, understand them and to co-exist with them. They bring me so much joy with their silly antics – do contact me if you want details, I have so much more to share!

I also share because I believe we all need to pay more attention to nature – to the world around us that God has created. In the crazy society we all live in these days, everyone should just go outside and take a few minutes and slow down, to be in nature and with nature. Take in the rising sun. Breathe in the fresh air. Listen to the birds sing their songs. Watch the setting sun and the rising moon. Study the clouds. Look up at the stars. Smell the rain coming. Listen to the thunder and lightning. Admire the rainbow. Watch the grass grow and the new life sprouting from the ground in your flower beds or vegetable gardens. Notice when the flowers bloom or blossom during the day and then close at night (known as nyctinasty). Try to follow a butterfly as it flutters all around you. Walk slowly among the fallen leaves. Shiver in the winter cold. Watch the snowflakes gently fall from the sky or even catch one on your tongue. Here, in God's world, you can experience God. You will feel His love and presence in nature and in the wonderful world He has created. You will feel alive. Your life will change.

You may even learn a few things too as I did:

Planning is key to survival Don't put all your nuts in one place Be smart and trust your gut Adapt to life's challenges Persevere Just jump, take the leap, go for it Take care of family Be curious Look for opportunities Drink water daily	Play and relax Step outside of your comfort zone – go out on a limb Be cautious and aware of your surroundings Trust in God – He will provide Don't argue Go to bed early and get up before sunrise If you see something, say something Look both ways, at least twice, before crossing the street
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Honor a Father on Father's Day

We pray for all fathers, both lay and clergy, past and present, to express our gratitude, remembrance and love for all they have done for our families and for our Church.

For continued support of our Clergy Pension Fund and to acknowledge ALL FATHERS, we will publish in the June issue of God's Field — Rola Boża your name and the name of the father you wish to acknowledge or remember.

For each acknowledgement or remembrance, we are requesting a minimum donation of \$25.00, payable to the Clergy Pension Fund P.N.C.C.

We feel that this will have a two-fold affect, by acknowledging or remembering OUR FATHERS, LAY OR CLERGY, for all they have done for us and also to bolster our Clergy Pension Fund in order to show our continued support for our Clergy, our Church Fathers, who make so many sacrifices each day in service to our Church.

All donations received go toward the Clergy Pension Fund of the Polish National Catholic Church.

Please cut out & complete the form, below, and submit it prior to June 1, 2025, along with your minimum donation of **\$25.00** per name, to the

**Clergy Pension Fund
1006 Pittston Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505**

Please make checks payable to the "Clergy Pension Fund P.N.C.C."

Thank you for your support.

P.N.C.C. Clergy Pension Fund Committee

..... CUT HERE

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

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

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

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

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

Remembered by: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Central Diocese**Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish****Dupont, PA**

Palm Sunday was celebrated with Procession and Mass at Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish in Dupont, PA, on April 13, 2025. A Breakfast with the Bunny followed in the Parish Hall.



Easter Sunday was celebrated with the solemn procession and Mass at 7 am at Holy Mother of Sorrows. High Mass was offered at 10 am. We would like to thank YMS of R members for carrying the symbols of Resurrection and flags during the procession, choir for providing music and all those who decorated our church for Holy Week and Easter.



Eastern Diocese**Eastern Diocese Chrism Mass
Divine Providence Parish, Norwich, CT**

The Eastern Diocese Chrism Mass was held at Divine Providence Parish in Norwich, CT, on Holy Tuesday, April 15th. During this Sacred Liturgy of the Church Holy Oils are blessed. These sacred oils are used in administration of the sacraments instituted by Christ for our sanctification and salvation.



Blessed Trinity Parish Celebrates 20 Years at “New” Church Facility

Fall River, MA

During the week of April 27th, Blessed Trinity Parish members celebrated 20 years in the “new” Blessed Trinity Church facility that is no longer new but used almost daily for the glory of God and betterment of the greater Fall River community in many ways

Pastor, Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich, Jr., was blessed to celebrate God’s Divine Providence over the parish as they continue to live and spread His Gospel of Mercy and Salvation. P

Pictured are some of the Building and Fundraising Committee members from 2 decades ago.



In 2005, Fr. Rob blesses the cross, processes with the blessed cross, and then helps to place the cross atop the church’s steeple.

Western Diocese

Western Diocese NE Seniorate Retreat

Temperance, MI

Resurrection P.N.C. Parish in Temperance, MI served as the host site for the annual Seniorate Lenten Retreat, "Triduum Retreat" beginning at 10am on Saturday, March 22, 2025.

A breakfast of coffee, juice, bagels, muffins, fruit, donuts, and more welcomed the more than three dozen retreat attendees from Ohio and Michigan. At 10:30am, the bell rang, which signified the faithful to enter the church for a welcome by Administrative Senior of the Northeast Seniorate, Very Rev. Jaroslaw Nowak. Father Senior Nowak (Pastor- Holy Cross in Hamtramck, MI & Administrator- Resurrection P.N.C.C. in Temperance, MI) informed everyone of the scope of the retreat, the layout of the church and hall, and everything else we needed. He then launched into the opening session on the Triduum, Holy Thursday. He spent a bit of time speaking on the scope the Lenten Season and then hitting the main topics of the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. He detailed changes in the church's history regarding the use and (re) implementation of the "Mandatum," or the washing of feet. He also made sure to detail the nuances that are unique to the Holy Thursday Liturgy: reception of Holy Oils, silencing of bells after the Gloria, procession to the altar of repose, consecrating extra hosts for the next day.

After a short break, Rev. Jim Ploskonka (Visiting priest- All Saints in Sterling Hts, MI) began a session on Good Friday. Father Jim detailed specifically what was going on in the life of Christ in the events of Good Friday noted in Scripture as well as how we chronicle those events in our liturgy. From the adoration of the cross to the Passion according to the Apostle John to the liturgy of the pre-sanctified, Fr. Jim detailed all of these, culminating with the saving Blood of Christ shed for us in His death. He then spoke of "one of our own" who shed his blood for his love of Christ, the Rt. Rev. Joseph Padewski, martyr of the Polish National Catholic Church. Fr. Jim showed the group present a portion of a project play he has been working on that recounts portions of the life of the martyred bishop.

After another break, Rev. Jason Soltysiak led our final session on Holy Saturday. Fr. Jason first focused on the theme of "waiting" that is present on this day Jesus reposed in the grave and on the idea that is evident in the Apostle's Creed of Jesus' "descent to the dead" and what it means to the Church's history. The second theme was "newness" and how the liturgy of Holy Saturday creates and embraces the newness of fire, light, candle, water, oil, baptisms, and renewal of baptismal vows. Each presenter had a Power- Point presentation to aid his words, with a set-up made possible by the famous "LC Productions." After the setup was removed, Rev. Greg Gronn (Retired), offered a Lenten themed penitential service, assigning the "penitential psalms" as a penance.

A lunch followed, prepared by the faithful of Resurrection P.N.C.C. and after hearty goodbyes, a prayerful time together concluded. Thank you to the host parish for all they offered the faithful of our Western Diocese's Northeast Seniorate.

Rev. Jason Soltysiak



Chrism Mass Celebrated at St. Mary's Parish

Parma, OH

On Tuesday, April 15, 2025, during the sacred days of Holy Week, clergy and lay from across the Western Diocese gathered with the faithful at St. Mary's Polish National Catholic Church in Cleveland, Ohio, for the annual Chrism Mass. Presiding over this solemn liturgy was Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky, joined by the Very Reverend Charles Zawistowski and other diocesan clergy.

The Chrism Mass is one of the most significant liturgies in the Church's calendar, traditionally celebrated during Holy Week. It highlights the unity of the priesthood and the deep connection between the clergy and their bishop. During the Mass, the bishop blesses the three holy oils that will be used throughout the year in the administration of the sacraments: the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and the Sacred Chrism.

Sacred Chrism—fragrant and consecrated with a solemn prayer—holds particular importance, as it is used in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. The oils, freshly blessed, are then distributed to each parish for their liturgical use.

This evening was one of reverence, thanksgiving, and spiritual renewal. It reminded all in attendance of the sacred call to service and the anointing that marks the life of every believer in Christ.



(May 2025 Future Direction Message - Continued from Page 11.)

Action Item

As an action item, pray the Nicene Creed during Holy Mass with some intention. Realize that as we confess the reality of the Church in the world today, we are living this reality within our religious life and worship life in the here and now. Realize that at the present time you are a vital part of the work of the Church in the world around you. You are fully a part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. You are forgiven your sins because of your baptism which allows you to fully participate in the sacramental life of the Church. You are looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, not as an abstract idea, but rather as a reality in which you will fully participate.

Know that when you confess your belief in the Church, it is not the building in which you worship, or only an organization to which you belong, but rather the reality of which you are an integral part. The Church is the Body of Christ and Kingdom of God which is being expressed in your worship of God, your life of faith and your good works in the world.

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



Hail, Blessed Mary

Hail, Blessed Mary, Virgin most holy.
 We come before you, imploring lowly,
 Your gentle favor to help us wholly,
 Pray for us, Mary, Mother of Jesus.

How like the lily among the flowers,
 How like the daystar among the hours,
 You are the purest among the powers.
 Pray for us, Mary, Mother of Jesus.

(Western Diocese - Continued from Page 31.)

St. Mary's Parish (Parma, OH) Mission Team Monthly Workshop

On Tuesday, March 4th, the Mission Team and friends came together for their monthly workshop, with the focus for March being the creation of blankets to be blessed and distributed. A wonderful group prayerfully came together to enjoy some coffee, breakfast, and fellowship in creating these blankets for the use of our parish and beyond. Keep up the wonderful and Christ-like work!.

Rev. Jason Soltysiak

