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Remember Your Creator

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

On the last Sunday of August each year the Polish National Catholic Church celebrates Youth Sunday. This commemoration was instituted at the XVI General Synod held in Scranton, PA in October of 1982. The synodal action states: “That the last Sunday in August be set aside for the youth of our Church and that a collection be taken for that purpose.” This commemoration is to be kept with special prayers for the young members of our congregations. The funds that are collected also go to fund the youth programs of the Church, especially the printing of educational and catechetical materials and support for the Youth Convocations.

The prayer given for that day within the liturgy is:

Almighty and Eternal God, keep in Your tender care the youth of Your Holy Church, that they may understand those things which are in harmony with Your holy will. Create in them a spirit of true happiness in Your service, that they may be true followers of Your Holy Word, now and in the days to come. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

This is also the time of year when our young parishioners will be going back to school, or going off to college, and also our catechetical preparations also begin again. In this spirit we must also remind ourselves that the parishioners of each parish are responsible for these young members to help them and

guide them in the ways of Christian life and faith.

We certainly live in a time when most people tend to shy away from getting involved in the lives of others around us. But, as Catholic Christians, we know that this cannot be the case. Because we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, we are therefore responsible for one another. This is driven home in the parable of the Good Samaritan and comes down to us in the Two Commandments of Love: 1) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and 2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself. These Commandments are really not to be thought of as two separate items, but rather as commandments which flow from each other.

As we are focusing during this time of the year when the young are going off to school, we realize the challenges that they will sometimes face. They will encounter new environments; they will have to deal with different individuals. We especially know that within our present culture, they will face opposition to our Christian teachings and our family values. So, what must we do about this situation? We are called to be encouraging examples to all who surround us, especially the young members of our congregations. And we also strive to encourage these young members to help model these points of faith and Christian life to each other.

In St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy, he writes to encourage a young man in his vocation as a Christian leader who was Paul's delegate in the Church in Ephesus. St. Paul reminds him, “Let no one despise

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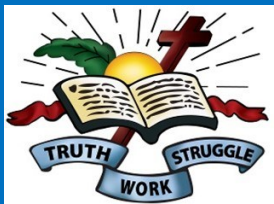
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your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:12-16)

And if we are striving to encourage the young members to do this one for another, then we also need to make sure that we are following such measures ourselves. St. Paul said this as well in the First Letter to the Corinthians: “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Timothy 10:31-11:1) We are to invite others, especially the young, to join us in being good examples “in love, in faith and in purity.”

We are mindful here that St. Paul says that in all things he is striving to follow Christ, and he encourages others to come along with him as he does so. How important for us to model this within the church today, not only for the young, but in fact for all. If we want others to take prayer and worship at Holy Mass seriously within their daily lives then we, too, must be people who are serious about our life of prayer and worship. If we expect others to delve into the words of Scripture, then we must read the Bible ourselves and share what we have encountered there with them. If we want others to hold dear the community of faith to which we belong, then we truly need to be active and loving members of it. It is not enough to have our names on a parish role and lament that others are not found there. We much rather be praying, worshiping, active members of Christ’s Church and invite others to join us. And then

through this activity, we begin to mold our lives into the pattern of Christ, allowing our own selfish ways to decrease and the life of Christ to increase within us.

Jesus Himself reminded the disciples this when they were questioning and arguing about their own selfish interests and which one of them was the greatest. “[Jesus] sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” The He took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in My name welcomes Me, and whoever welcomes Me welcomes not Me but the One Who sent Me.” (Mark 9:35-37)

The importance here is that in the moment, this child could offer them nothing in return, it was rather that they recognize that this child is precious in God’s eyes and therefore is to be loved, welcomed, served and guided. Christian history tells us that this small child grew up to be St. Ignatius of Antioch, one of the three important Apostolic Fathers along with St. Clement of Rome and St. Polycarp. While we may be unsure of this story, it certainly reminds us that our small actions can have great effects within the Church. Again, St. Paul reminds us to always put God first and foremost, “What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” (1 Corinthians 3:5-6)

So let us, in this time of Youth Sunday, pray publicly for the young members of the Church, encourage and help them by modeling prayer, worship and active service within the parish. Help to guide them as School of Christian Living teachers and helpers in Catechetical studies. Realize that we are called to different roles of planting or nurturing the faith in others, but it will always be God Who gives the growth. Let your example, prayer and work guide, not only the young, but all people, to come to Christ within His Holy Church.



P.N.C.C. Future Direction August 2025 Nicea at 1700

Introduction

In this year of 2025, we spend some time considering the treasures that were left to the Church at the Council of Nicaea 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 a decision by the Nicene Council on the date for the celebration of Easter.

Scripture

Exodus 12:1-2,6 – The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. You shall keep [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight.

Leviticus 23:3 – Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation.

Leviticus 23:5-6 – In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a Passover offering to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to the Lord.

Luke 22:14-15 – When the hour came, [Jesus] took His place at table, and the apostles with Him. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

John 13:1 – Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

1 Corinthians 5:7b-8 – For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Colossians 2:16-17 – Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Reflection

We are all certainly aware that the most important feast or celebration within the Church is the Solemnity of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the day on which our Lord rose triumphantly from the dead and conquered sin and death. I am sure that we are also aware that this celebration of the Church fits into the narrative of the Exodus and the Passover which were celebrated by the Jews. The narrative of the Exodus and Passover are foundational to the Jews and the Gospels tell us in many places that the ultimate celebrations of our Christian faith, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection all took place in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover.

But one question that concerned the early church was, when exactly should this celebration be commemorated? There were several considerations. Very early on the Church began to focus on Sunday as its day of worship. This was a shift from the Jewish sabbath. Sunday was the day of the Resurrection and it was also the day following the day of rest when creation was completed. In this way Sunday was looked on as the day of re-creation, when sin and death was conquered and new life given.

Along with this, as mentioned above, we know that the Crucifixion of Jesus and His Resurrection took place during the time of the Passover, and this day is a complicated one to decide. The result of this was that some

Christian Churches celebrated the Resurrection on a Sunday near the time of Passover, others celebrated it on whatever day of the week Passover occurred.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar one and not a solar one, although there are some solar considerations. The Hebrew year has 12 months, each having 29 or 30 days, the time between new moon phases. Of course, there is a problem here because 12 months adds up to 354 days, which is well short of the 365 days in a solar year. To compensate for this an extra month was added in leap years. Since these festivals also had implications for the harvest, these leap months needed to be added to keep the festivals in the same season. In particular here the Passover was always to occur after the Spring equinox.

The problem arose because this added month was determined by observation, and even sometime different authorities did not agree in what years the leap month should be added. (At present this is not the case since leap months are added in years, 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 of the 19 year Metonic cycle.) As there began to be animosity between the Jewish and Christian authorities, the Church also found it difficult to have to wait for the Jewish authorities to set the date of Passover, before they could decide on the date for the Resurrection.

It was with the Council of Nicaea, when the Church was recognized within the Empire, that it was decided that it would be desirable for the Church to have one consistent day on which the celebration would occur. The Council Fathers decided that the celebration of the Resurrection would always occur on a Sunday, thereby settling one difference. It would also begin to make its own calculations regarding the date, looking to the lunar calendar, thereby keeping the connection to Passover.

Although the exact formula was not given at Nicaea, it is what would eventually lead to the formula that is used at present. The date of Easter is given as the Sunday following the full moon (14 days after the new moon) following the Spring equinox. Easter Sunday can be any day between March 22 and April 25.

In the many years that followed there were other considerations that needed to be taken into account. As Christianity spread, it was not always the case that the Spring equinox occurred on the same day all around the world. To solve this the Spring equinox was set to be March 21. A further complication would eventually occur when it was realized that the Julian calendar was shifting by having 3 too many leap years in a 400-year span. This is the difference between the Gregorian and the Julian calendars.

Even with all of this, the calculation of the date of Easter keeps us tied to our Jewish roots and the celebration of Passover while still acknowledging the Christian aspect of the new life that is commemorated within the Sunday celebration.

Action Item

Although we are still a long way off from Easter in 2026, take some time to realize that a significant portion of the liturgical year, from the Sundays of the Pre-Lenten season beginning in February, to the Lenten period, to the celebration of Easter and the following Sundays of the Easter season, to the Post-Easter Solemnities of Pentecost, Holy Trinity, Corpus Christi and Word of God are all attached to this calculation of the date of the Resurrection. In total this is 20 weeks out of the 52 weeks of the year.

Realize too that in doing a calculation such as this it shows that the liturgical cycle of the Church is tied to the lived experience of God's people. It is tied to the change of seasons and our daily life. It also allows us to keep our connection to the Passover narrative.

Give thanks to Almighty God that He allows us to celebrate each year the Resurrection of Christ and His triumph over sin and death. Give thanks that every part of our daily living, the days, the weeks, the months and the seasons, all fit together to determine this celebration.

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

What are Your Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts and Are You Using Them to Serve God and His Church? To Glorify God and To Serve Others?

by Cathy Andersen, All Saints Cathedral, Chicago, IL

I presented the following on May 31, 2025 at the 24th Annual Mission & Evangelism Workshop held in Denver, Colorado.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24)

Praise be the Lord Jesus Christ! Now and forever. Amen!

Our topic today is “What are Your Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts and are You Using Them to Serve God and His Church? To Glorify God and to Serve Others?”

When I was called to present on this topic, it was suggested that I talk about my own spiritual gifts, but I found these questions to be ones of introspection for I could not readily identify my spiritual gifts. So no surprise, the Spirit led me to the theme of this workshop which is One in Christ -- which can also mean “being in relationship with God”. I then thought about my own faith, and the strength of it, as faith is the foundation for receiving and using one’s spiritual gifts. Then I sat back, and I thought about you and your faith. As recipients of this message, would you be able to answer these questions easily? So as is often the case with me, I ended up asking myself even more questions. I quickly realized, however, that the questions that came to mind at this time were identical to those which I had already asked myself, and had prayed on, during various seasons of my life and spiritual journey. But I went ahead and asked them anyway, and that’s how this presentation eventually developed. So in a moment, I’ll share those additional questions with you and ask that you answer them honestly to yourself with little thought.

In *this* season of your life, do you dislike change? Have a static or stagnant faith? Need to be in constant control? Depend solely on yourself? Have a mindset of limitations or negativity? Feel “comfortable” or “complacent” about your faith? Perhaps you feel lackadaisical or lukewarm about your faith. Need to plan every single detail of your daily life? Do the same things day after day, month after month, year after year? Or for us more mature folks, perhaps even decade after decade?? I’m not knocking healthy routines or good habits, but we need to be *certain* that we are *growing in our faith daily*.

If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may need to *rekindle* or *reignite* the Holy Spirit within you! You need to allow the Holy Spirit to *convict* your heart. You need to start *believing* and *expecting* that *anything* is possible with God’s help. You may need to change a bit or get a new perspective – become a *transformed* person with a *receptive* heart, mind and soul. Develop a *dynamic, growing* faith which is *living* and *changing* and *maturing* at all times. This allows you to *encounter* and *experience* God in your daily life. One does this by (i) surrendering to God completely – to His will, not yours; to His timing, not yours; (ii) praying boldly and courageously; (iii) fasting, yet nourishing one’s soul; (iv) being still; (v) trusting God radically; (vi) receiving the sacraments; (vii) immersing oneself in the Word of God; and (viii) cultivating and nurturing an attitude of gratitude.

In practice, we can do the following:

- Embrace change	- Be decisive
- Become adaptable	- Accept help from others
- Think outside the box	- Be engaged in the present
- Take the leap	- Become empowered
- Go out on a limb	- Be vigorous and vigilant
- Relinquish control	- Become a continuous learner
- Be curious	- Be a person of encouragement to others

We should learn to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go all in - Flip the switch - Become energized - Try new things - Test new ways - Become equipped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be watchful and ready - Be authentic and genuine - Get your praise on - Seek out opportunities - Get excited and enthusiastic about your faith - Change your environment if needed
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Perhaps above all, however,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't worry, be happy - Remember to laugh and play - Say YES - Remember to stop and smell the roses - Develop a zest for life - Reject rejection - Channel your strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swim against the current if need be - Exercise daily by walking with the Lord - Seek God's presence all around you and look for His miracles - Be aware of and thankful for your abundant blessings - Be victorious in the Holy Spirit - Practice Heaven Here on Earth
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You see, now with an *open* heart, mind and soul, you will begin to *recognize* your natural talents and spiritual gifts enabling you to *glorify God* and *serve others!* You will be more receptive to receiving the spiritual *gifts* of the Holy Spirit which are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, Godliness and fear of the Lord. You may also be filled with the *fruits* of the Holy Spirit which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

What are natural talents and spiritual gifts? Natural talents come to us through genetics or from training. We can develop our natural talents with hard work and perseverance and, yes, a lot of practice. We do this so we can achieve the *expected* results. Spiritual gifts are the result of the power of the Holy Spirit working through you through the grace of God. These gifts are not natural talents or skills but rather supernatural endowments provided by God's grace. Spiritual gifts cannot be earned or pursued. As we receive and recognize our spiritual gifts, we learn to *expect the unexpected*. Spiritual gifts are special abilities, talents or capacities given to us by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of serving God and others. For as we mature in our intimacy and relationship with God, our spiritual gifts are increased. Spiritual gifts are *entrusted* to us by God and *delivered* into our *hearts, minds and hands* for *helping* in the *ministry* and *building* of *His Kingdome right here on Earth*.

As you may know, there are references to spiritual gifts found throughout Scripture. We read in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of *wisdom* through the Spirit, and to another the word of *knowledge* according to the same Spirit; to another *faith* by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of *healing* by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of *miracles*, and to another *prophecy*, and to another the *distinguishing of spirits*, to another various kinds of *tongues*, and to another the *interpretation of tongues*. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

In Romans 12:4-8, we read, "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are *one body in Christ*, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if *prophecy*, according to the proportion of his *faith*; if service, in his *servicing*; or he who teaches, in his *teaching*; or he who exhorts, in his *exhortation*; he who *gives*, with liberality; he who *leads*, with diligence; he who shows *mercy*, with cheerfulness."

Further, Ephesians 4:10-12 states, "He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some as *apostles*, and some as *prophets*, and some as *evangelists*, and some as *pastors* and *teachers*, for the *equipping* of the saints for the work of service, to the *building up* of the *one body of Christ*."

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(What are Your Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts and Are You Using Them to Serve God and His Church? - Continued from Page 7.)

We know we are to love God and our neighbors for in Mark 12:30-31, we read, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength ... Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” These verses outline the *principles of love and service* which are *essential* for using our spiritual gifts *effectively*.

The Parable of the Talents is found in Matthew 25:14-30. This is the parable in which servants are entrusted with their master's money (representing abilities or resources). Two servants diligently invest their talents and gain more. The third servant buries his talent. Upon the master's return, the first two servants are rewarded for their faithfulness, while the third servant is condemned for his inaction. This parable emphasizes the importance that *each person is accountable for using our God-given gifts and resources wisely, productively and faithfully in service to God and others*.

What are *your* natural talents and spiritual gifts? To discern and recognize your natural talents and spiritual gifts, you will need to pray fervently, and then pray some more, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Afterwards, you may seek input from your priest, a loved one, trusted friend or mentor.

There are numerous gifts – some of which were identified in the Scripture readings above. In Appendix A, at the end of this article, there is a more detailed explanation of all the gifts listed below which may help you in discerning your own gifts:

- Administration	- Giving	- Pastor/Shepherd
- Apostleship	- Healing	- Prophecy
- Artistic Expression	- Helping	- Serving
- Craftsmanship	- Hospitality	- Teaching
- Discernment	- Intercession	- Speaking in Tongues
- Evangelism	- Knowledge	- Interpretation of Tongues
- Exhortation/Encouragement	- Leadership	- Wisdom
- Faith	- Mercy	
	- Miracles	

We are called to use the spiritual gifts that God gives us. Each and every one of us had different gifts which ensures a variety of abilities within the Church. Each and every one of us in *integral* to the *Body of Christ!* We are *One in Christ!*

Ask yourself, in your parish or community, are you or could you become an altar server, deacon, pastor or shepherd, greeter, lector, SOCL teacher, choir member, an event coordinator or helper, an administrative volunteer, artist or signage designer, facilities manager, a chair or member of a committee, commission or organization, or yes, even a baker or cook. The opportunities for service go on and on.

So my Brothers and Sisters, in closing, we are all *Ambassadors* for Jesus Christ. We are *His Joyful Disciples*. We are *His hands and His feet in today's world*. It is our responsibility to learn what our talents and spiritual gifts are – so please open the doors of your individual heart, mind and soul to *God's unconditional love, His abundant generosity and His omnipotent power* so you can recognize and use your natural talents and spiritual gifts wisely, productively and faithfully in *service to God and His Church – to Glorify God and to Serve Others!*

Appendix A

Administration

[The divine strength or ability](#) to organize, direct and implement multiple tasks, plans and groups of people in various ministries of the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:8

Apostleship

The divine strength or ability to pioneer new churches and ministries through planting, overseeing and training.

Acts 15:22-35; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:11-14

Artistic Expression

The divine strength or ability to communicate God's message through the fine arts, including drama, writing, music and drawing. Through their wonderful, God-given creativity, these people use their gifts to draw us in so that we might focus on God, on the Lord's beauty, His glory, and on His messages to us. Their creative artistic expressions produce a spiritual response in us resulting in praise or worship. One might use this gift by glorifying God in writing a letter or note of encouragement to someone, taking a beautiful photograph, writing or singing an uplifting song or story, playing an instrument, or drawing or painting of God's beautiful world around us.

Psalm 149: 1, 3; Exodus 31:1-11, 35:30-35

Craftsmanship

The divine strength or ability to plan, build, and work with your hands in construction environments to accomplish multiple ministry applications.

Exodus 31:3-11; 2 Chronicles 34:9-13

Discernment

The divine strength or ability to spiritually recognize and identify falsehood, and to distinguish between right and wrong motives and different forces (whether God, evil, the world or the flesh) which are at work in situations.

1 Corinthians 12:10

Evangelism

The divine strength or ability to clearly and effectively communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ with non-Christians and to encourage them to accept Him as their Savior.

Acts 8:5-6, 8:26-40, 14:21, 21:8; Ephesians 4:11-14; Matthew 28:18-20

Exhortation/Encouragement

The divine strength or ability to inspire, motivate, strengthen, comfort or urge others to action through the written or spoken words of encouragement or conviction and Biblical truth. One with this gift can uplift and motivate others who are wavering in their faith as well as challenge them to foster spiritual growth, maturity and action.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25

Faith

The divine strength or ability to believe in God for unseen supernatural results in every arena of life. It is an unwavering belief in God and His promises, often manifested in boldness, certainty, trust and confidence. One with this gift is not surprised when God answers a prayer or performs a miracle.

Romans 4:18-21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 11

Giving

The divine strength or ability to freely, sincerely and generously share resources, (whether time, talents or treasures) for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth by glorifying God and serving others.

Mark 12:41-44; Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; Philippians 4:10-18

Healing

The divine strength or ability to act as an intermediary in faith, prayer, and by laying on of hands for the healing of physical, mental and spiritual sickness or injury.

Acts 3:1-10, 9:32-35, 28:7-10; 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28; James 5:13-16

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(What are Your Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts and Are You Using Them to Serve God and His Church? - Continued from Page 9.)

Helping

The divine strength or ability to work in a supportive role for the accomplishment of tasks in Christian ministry with the ability to often see the need before others do.

Mark 15:40-41; Acts 9:36; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Hospitality

The divine strength or ability to create warm, welcoming environments and attitude towards guests or strangers.

Acts 16:14-15; Romans 12:13, 16:23; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9; Luke 14:12-14

Intercession

The divine strength or ability to stand in the gap in prayer for someone, something, or someplace, believing for profound results.

Colossians 1:9-12, 4:12-13; James 5:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 6:18

Knowledge

The divine strength or ability to understand the spiritual truth in the Scriptures and to retain it and then communicate it effectively at the appropriate time. This gift allows the believer to relate the Scriptures to all aspects of life in the world, and they can see how it connects to every situation and circumstance and how it is to inform every decision a Christian makes.

1 Corinthians 12:8; Colossians 2:2-3

Leadership

The divine strength or ability to influence people at their level while directing and focusing them on the big picture, vision, or idea and leading them into a deeper relationship with God and each other.

Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Mercy

The divine strength or ability to feel empathy and to care for those who are struggling or hurting in any way.

Matthew 9:35-36; Romans 12:8; Luke 10:25-37; Galatians 6:2; James 2:15-16

Miracles

The divine strength or ability to alter the natural outcomes of life in a supernatural way through prayer, faith, and divine direction.

Acts 9:36-42, 19:10-12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28

Pastor/Shepherd

The divine strength or ability to teach, guide, protect, nurture and lead the congregation in the Great Commission. A pastor is called to care for the spiritual well-being of the congregation and he loves and lives out the Gospel of Jesus Christ putting it at the center of his life and ministry.

John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28

Prophecy

The divine strength or ability to communicate God's teachings, either by speaking God's Word directly or by interpreting events, that calls people to a right relationship with God. One who has this gift is sensitive to both the prompting of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the church. He or she should be humble and continuously studying the Word of God.

Acts 2:37-40, 1 Corinthians 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Revelations 19:10

Serving

The divine strength or ability to do small or great tasks with compassion, selflessness and humility in working for the overall good of the body of Christ. The gift of serving allows the church to become energized allowing it to see beyond its own needs and to reach out into the community. Those who have the gift of serving are committed to the spread of the Gospel and serving in practical ways that benefit others.

Romans 12:7; Galatians 6:2 and 6:10; Titus 3:14; 1 Peter 4:10-11

Teaching

The divine strength or ability to study and learn from the Scriptures and communicate God's truth in a clear and engaging way, primarily to impart knowledge and understanding and depth to other Christians.

Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14

Tongues (and Interpretation of)

The divine strength or ability to pray in a heavenly language to encourage your spirit and to commune with God. The gift of tongues is often accompanied by interpretation and should be used appropriately.

Acts 2:1-13; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:1-14

Wisdom

The divine strength or ability to understand and to bring clarity to situations and circumstances often through applying the truths of Scripture in a practical way and in accordance with God's will. This gift should invoke a response of holiness and worship lived out in the world and amongst God's people as the gift allows for a deep understanding of the holiness of God and the lack of holiness in one's own heart. They can then recognize this in others and have the compassion and boldness to share that truth with them.

1 Corinthians 2:12:8; Proverbs 2:6-9



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A Joyful Noise: The 37th General Convention and Workshop of the National United Choirs

By Rev. Jim Ploskonka

McKeesport, Pennsylvania — The walls of Holy Family Parish resonated with the sound of sacred music, heartfelt fellowship, and a profound sense of joy as the National United Choirs (NUC) of the Polish National Catholic Church gathered for its 37th General Convention and Workshop July 30 – August 1, 2025. Hosted with generosity and hospitality by the faithful community of Holy Family Parish in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, this year's convention was a celebration of unity, spiritual renewal, and musical excellence.

The day began with reverence and formality - an opening prayer, followed by the national anthems of the United States and Poland—reminding all in attendance of our dual devotion to faith and heritage. The Mandate Report was presented by Fr. Dr. Jim Ploskonka and Susan Baldan, and the Delegates' Oath was administered by the Most Reverend Anthony Mikovsky, affirming the purpose and mission of the organization.

With deep gratitude, the NUC recognized several meaningful developments: the continued expansion of musical scholarship programs, progress on new liturgical materials, and plans to support seminarians with needed instruments. A particular note of thanksgiving was extended for the generous bequest by the sister of Ray Makowski, which will fund the commissioning of a new sacred musical composition. It was reported that as of 2024 there have been 1,145 scholarships awarded with a cumulative total of \$358,085.00.



The business session also included the election of officers for the coming term. Lydia Hohn was re-elected President, bringing her customary grace and energy to the role, with Karen Chadwick as Vice President, Liz Kaniewski as Treasurer, Susan Baldan as Financial Secretary, and Abigail Hohn as Secretary. The Music Commission, chaired by Dr. Neil Stahurski, includes Bishop John Mack, Karen Sobiechowski, Wendy Blotzer, Fr. Dr. Jim Ploskonka (secretary), and Dave Condeluci - ensuring that the future of sacred music in our Church rests in capable and visionary hands. Cathy Bilinski continues to be appointed as chair of the Music Scholarship Program.

The highlight of the workshop was a powerful and beautifully executed choral concert, <https://youtu.be/iHN4kqI9ZjI>. Conducted by a team of outstanding leaders - Dr. Neil Stahurski, Wendy Blotzer (also the event's coordinator), Barbara Nowicki, and Carol Davelli - the choir presented an inspired selection of music that deeply moved the audience.



Featured pieces included:

- *Where Are the Shepherds Now?*
- *We Gather Together*
- *The Good Shepherd Has Arisen*
- *Shine, Jesus, Shine*
- *Our Lord Reigns*
- *Look at the World*
- *Kneel With the Shepherds*
- *Just As I Am, I Come Broken*
- *An Invitation for Advent*
- *An Antiphonal Noel*
- *Family of Love*

Each composition, drawn from a variety of sacred traditions and styles, was chosen to uplift and to glorify God through voice and harmony. The audience responded with a standing ovation, joyful tears, and quiet awe.

One of the most moving moments of the day was the recognition of Bishop John Mack for his many years of service as Chaplain of the National United Choirs. With his wife, Sherry, by his side, Bishop Mack was honored with words of heartfelt gratitude by NUC President Lydia Hohn. To commemorate his legacy, Lydia conducted the choir in a deeply touching performance of *In Thy Protection*, a fitting tribute to a shepherd who has faithfully guided and inspired generations of Church musicians.

Behind the scenes, the essential and tireless work of Cleric Jon Johnson as NUC Librarian was acknowledged. His comprehensive report included updates on the distribution of *The Supplement*, hymnal inventory, and the Musician's Manual, as well as new ideas to expand engagement through social media and parish participation.

As the Convention ended with remarks from the Prime Bishop and affirmations from the floor, it became abundantly clear: this was far more than an administrative gathering. It was a living witness to the strength of our musical ministry, the vibrancy of our faith, and the shared joy of praising God together.

We thank all who participated, led, and served at this year's Convention and extend a warm invitation to all parishes: Come, raise your voice, join the fellowship, and make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

Resolution to the 37th 1 General Convention of the National United Choirs

On July 30 through August 1, 2025, the National United Choirs of the Polish National Catholic Church gathered at the Holy Family Parish in McKeesport, PA for the 37th 3 General Convention, "Sing and Make Music from your Heart to the Lord." With gratitude, we express our appreciation to Rev. Dr. Mariusz Mularczyk, the Workshop Committee, and the Holy Family Parish for their hospitality, and to the delegates and participants from the Western, Central, Eastern and Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese.

WHEREAS the Convention and Workshop began with Holy Mass and partaking of the Holy Eucharist celebrated by the Most Reverend Anthony Mikovsky, concelebrated by Rt. Rev. John Mack, Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, Rev. Dr. Mariusz Mularczyk and Rev. Bruce Sleczkowski; and

WHEREAS Rt. Rev. (Bp) John Mack during his homily at the Opening Mass of the NUC Convention/Workshop, cited words from the processional hymn, "Celebrate," reminding participants that our heritage provides a firm foundation to "celebrate the challenges yet to come"; and

WHEREAS Bp. John Mack dedicated his life to serve the Lord, the Church, and the faithful; and was appointed by +Prime Bishop John Swantek as Chaplain of the National United Choirs NUC Convention in Manchester, NH in 1989; and

WHEREAS Bp. Mack has inspired and encouraged the National United Choirs, musicians and future musicians within the P.N.C.C. by his pastoral and episcopal leadership and by his enthusiastic example to offer their voices and instruments in praise to God; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Body shall honor the example set by Bishop Mack with a renewed commitment to Christ and our Polish National Catholic Church by our expression through music.

Central Diocese

St. Stanislaus Cathedral Parish Happenings Scranton, PA

The annual St. Stanislaus Parish Picnic was held on the second Sunday of the month, July 13. This is a long standing tradition started by Bishop Hodur. The day started with Mass at the Grotto of Christ Benign, and followed with a lovely picnic lunch catered by The Colonnade. It was a beautiful day of food, fun, family, and fellowship!



Celebrating Mass at the Grotto



Participating in Mass



Enjoying the Picnic Lunch

St. Stanislaus Cathedral Parish held their annual Giant Flea Market for the community on July 25 and 26. It is one of the largest fundraisers for the church and is only possible because of the dedication of our volunteers.



Polish Food Preppers: Front: Henrietta Ostroski, Barbara Kalteski; Background left to right: Joann Valvano, Bernie Kalteski, Janet Meleski, LuAnn Kaszuba and Tera Jean Notari



Flea Market Volunteers Celebrating Dave Seliga's Birthday: Florence Sadauskas, Paula Mays, Dave Seliga, LuAnn Becker, Jay Seliga

A Blessed Occasion: Reverend Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky Administers the Sacrament of Confirmation

Guardian Angel Parish, Los Angeles, CA

Our parish was deeply honored to welcome Reverend Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky as he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to our young candidates. This sacred occasion was a moment of profound grace, not only for the students receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit but also for our entire parish community.

The Sacrament of Confirmation marks a pivotal step in the faith journey of our young members, strengthening them with the Holy Spirit and deepening their commitment to a life of discipleship. It is a testament to their growth in faith, guided by their families, sponsors, and the loving support of our parish.

Bishop Anthony's presence and words of wisdom reminded us of the importance of fostering a strong, faith-filled community. His encouragement to the newly confirmed to live out their faith with courage and love resonated with all who were present.

This celebration was a beautiful reflection of the unity and strength of our parish family. We are grateful for Prime Bishop Anthony's visit and for the opportunity to witness the next generation embrace their faith with open hearts. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide and inspire them as they embark on this new chapter of their spiritual journey.

Submitted by Esperanza Rodas - Chair Person



Guardian Angel Parish, P.N.C.C. 2025 Confirmation Class

News from Guardian Angel Parish Los Angeles, CA

Time flies fast and we are in the middle of the year of 2025. Looking back, we are grateful to God for all the graces we received so far this year. The most important event was on March 23, 2025: the visit of our Prime Bishop Anthony in our Parish and administering the Sacrament of Confirmation for our students. We are happy and grateful to Prime Bishop Anthony's for his sacrifice to travel to Los Angeles, for his prayers, blessings and guidance. We keep Prime Bishop Anthony and our Polish National Catholic Church in our prayers always.

The 1st Communion for our Students was another joyful Day in our Parish. On May 4, 2025 twelve of our students received Jesus Christ in Communion for the first time. We want to congratulate our students and their parents. Also, we are thankful for their cooperation during these two years of preparation for this Sacrament. We hope that the Students and their Parents will continue their religious education in our Church. May God bless you all.



Guardian Angel Parish, P.N.C.C. 2025 Confirmation Class



Another important event this year was on March 2, 2025: Lenten Retreat. The topic of our Lenten Retreat was Jesus's "Message from the Cross". We had a good time and a group of more than 50 parishioners reflected and meditated on the words of Jesus from the Cross; Holy Mass and lunch followed. We are very grateful to the Enlivening Committee who approved and sponsored the free lunch for all participants. After lunch we went to the Crucifixion Hall in Glendale (20 minutes of driving) to see "The Crucifixion". This Huge painting (195 feet long and 45 feet high) called "The Crucifixion" was painted by Jan Styka, a polish artist. It is the largest religious painting ever painted. It's so large it has its own auditorium style of 900 seating. Styka's panoramic crucifixion depicts the distressing moment just before Christ's martyrdom, it is a very powerful image. Jesus is standing on the mount of Golgotha, facing the cross where he will die for the sins of humanity. The presentation of "The Crucifixion" and later presentation of "The Resurrection" was given exclusively for our Parish.



2025 Lenten Retreat

When visiting Los Angeles, we invite you to stop in our parish and strongly recommend seeing "The Crucifixion" in the Forest Loan in Glendale

Submitted by Esperanza Rodas - Chair Person



Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish Weekend in Waymart

Parishioners and friends of Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Dupont, PA, spent a weekend at Bp. Hodur Retreat & Recreation Center (Spójnia Farm) in Waymart, PA on August 1-3, 2025. This parish weekend served as a spiritual, recreational, fraternal activity and fellowship for the congregation.

Everyone enjoyed the beautiful weather, scenery and serenity of the center. Participants went hiking, golfing, swimming, played games or just relaxed. The highlight of the weekend was the celebration of the Holy Mass on Saturday, followed by a family-style dinner in the pavilion.

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid



Holy Mass at Waymart Celebrated by Fr. Sr. Zbigniew Dawid



Group picture after Mass



Mass Participants



At the Family -style Dinner



Relaxing at the Swimming Pool

Western Diocese

God's Kingdom Builders: Faith, Fun, and Fellowship at 2025 Western Diocese youth Gathering By Reverend Jim Ploskonka

What happens when you mix canoes and kayaks, s'mores and Spanish prayers, fishing poles and the Nicene Creed, fire lanterns and Evening Prayer? You get a youth camp that doesn't just entertain - it transforms. This past July, youth from parishes across the diocese gathered at Walnut Ridge Retreat Center for four unforgettable days of faith, friendship, and formation. From July 21 through 24, we immersed ourselves in the theme "*God's Kingdom Builders*," and from the first welcome to the final farewell, the Spirit of God moved powerfully in every moment.



The experience began with a flurry of arrivals, bags in tow, name tags ready, and laughter already in the air. Monday afternoon set the tone as Deacon Doug warmly welcomed the youth and laid out the vision for the retreat. It was more than just a getaway; it was a shared encounter with Christ. Our energetic youth chaplain led a round of icebreakers that had everyone laughing and connecting, breaking down walls and opening hearts. Dinner that evening became the first of many shared meals where new friendships were formed and community began to take root. The night concluded with our first attempt at learning the "Our Father" in Spanish, preparing us for bilingual worship and teaching us that the language of prayer truly transcends borders. Evening prayer brought a sense of calm and reverence, and even as lights went out, the quiet whispers of new friends promised that this week would be something special.



Tuesday morning began with enthusiasm as Father Senior John led *Session 2: "Living Stones."* His passion and testimony stirred the youth to reflect on their own faith journeys. Each participant selected a "rock" that represented themselves - some rough, some smooth, different shapes - and shared why it spoke to them. These individual stones were then combined into a single, unified structure, symbolizing that we are all part of one Body in Christ. That morning's Mass carried the message home beautifully. Celebrated by Father Senior John and preached by Deacon Doug, the liturgy emphasized belonging, identity, and the unshakable truth that each youth was chosen and loved.



After a joyful lunch, camp activities unfolded across the sunny grounds. The pool became a place of refreshment, while canoes and kayaks filled the lake with laughter and splashes. Fishing lines were cast, ping pong matches grew intense, and even bug spray became a shared commodity. In that natural setting,

friendships deepened, and God's presence felt near. That evening, Eliana and Zena led *Session 3 on Kindness*, continuing the day's themes with grace and authenticity. Their stories of honest compassion reminded us that being kind takes courage, and their transparency touched everyone in the room.

Our community service project continued into the night - creating handcrafted placemats for local veteran homes. Inspired by prototypes from Michael of All Saints Parish, the youth poured creativity and love into every piece. These beautiful works are already scheduled to be duplicated and distributed at the **National Youth Convocation in 2026**, turning a simple camp activity into a national ministry effort. Afterward, we returned once more to our Spanish prayer lesson, followed by Evening Prayer. This time, youth were invited to name those for whom they wanted to pray. The vulnerability and sincerity of those intercessions brought many to tears. It was, in the best way, a moment of deep connection - with one another and with God.



Wednesday began with a mini youth leadership meeting, encouraging young people to bring back new ideas to their home parishes and consider taking on leadership roles in the wider Church. Mid-morning featured one of the most impactful parts of the retreat: a *Teaching Mass* led by Father Jason, accompanied by a panel including Father Jim, Senior John, and Senior Charles. The Mass was reverent yet instructive, and when the "Our Father" was prayed in Spanish by the entire group, the sense of unity was powerful and palpable. Some participants also had the special opportunity to attend Prime Bishop's presentation on the **1700th Anniversary of the Nicene Creed**, giving historical depth to the faith they were living out in the present.

The afternoon brought a return to fun: swimming, fishing, sunburns, and the ever-present camp laughter. It was hot and muggy—but no one seemed to mind. As dinner wrapped up, new officers were elected to lead the diocesan youth movement into the next year. Their energy and enthusiasm were infec-

tious, signaling a bright future ahead. Afterward, Deacon Doug led a clever and spirited *Treasure Hunt*, reviewing the week's themes through games and challenges.

That night, the retreat reached its emotional and spiritual peak. A glowing *Prayer Circle and Reflection* invited youth to decorate and release lanterns into the night sky, each carrying prayers, hopes, and memories. Surrounded by mini lights, gathered around a crackling campfire, the group roasted s'mores, sang songs, and shared testimonies. Laughter and worship rose together, and you could sense it: this was sacred ground. Bonds had been forged not just with one another, but with Christ, who had been with us all along.



Thursday morning began with final prayers, the installation of new youth officers, and blessings for safe travel. As everyone packed up their gear, exchanged phone numbers, and gave tearful goodbyes, the talk was already turning to next year—and to the excitement of seeing each other again at the **National Youth Convocation in 2026**.

The Youth Camp at Walnut Ridge Retreat Center was far more than just a retreat. It was an encounter—with nature, with Christ, with one another, and with the truth that when we build on the rock, we are never alone. We experienced joy through games and swimming, communion through shared prayer and sacraments, and purpose through acts of service. Together, we built memories, community, friendship, and a foundation of faith that will last a lifetime.



Word of God Sunday at St. Mary's Parish Parma, OH



The final Sunday in June, the 29th, was the P.N.C.C. Solemnity of the Word of God, which features the Gospel Procession and enthronement of the Gospel to conclude the procession. It is a fitting Sunday to close out the Easter and post-Easter Solemnities, bridging that beautiful gap to the Sundays of Ordinary Time.

Afterward, coffee hour featured delicious cheesecake!

The Solemnity of the Word of God is celebrated in the P.N.C.C. on the Sunday following the Octave Sunday of Corpus Christi. This is a unique aspect of our Catholic denomination.

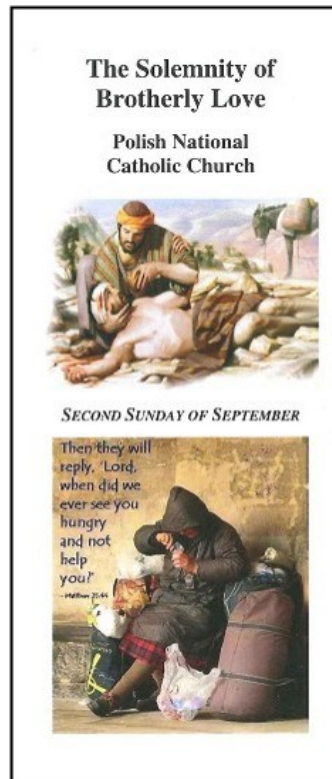
At the second Synod of the P.N.C.C. (1909), this incredible and important decision to elevate the Word of God to the status of Sacrament took place. The official title is the “Word of God, heard and preached.”

This 100+ year history of the Word of God culminated in its recognition as Sacrament to be a Solemnity within the last few years. As sacrament, our Church proclaims our belief that Sacramental Theology can indeed evolve. The P.N.C.C. also therefore believes that Christ can be encountered in the hearing of the Word of God, which culminates in the preached sermon or homily of the ordained deacon, priest, or bishop.

For this reason, the P.N.C.C. never has pre-constructed messages or letters that are read in place of the Sunday homily. There will not be a financial letter read in lieu of that wonderful chance for a mystical encounter with Christ in the Holy Spirit-inspired words of the preacher.



The Solemnity of Brotherly Love P.N.C.C. Pamphlets Available to Parishes



The Solemnity of Brotherly Love is Sunday, September 14, 2025. A full color brochure describing this unique feast of the Polish National Catholic Church is available for purchase from the Office of the Prime Bishop.

This brochure was created to help us understand and commemorate this Solemnity, and we hope that all parishes will help to spread the awareness of the Solemnity of Brotherly Love by sharing this information with all parishioners.

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