On April 1, 2016 we honored the 150th anniversary of the birth of the First Prime Bishop and Organizer of the Polish National Catholic Church, Franciszek Hodur. On Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866 in the small village of Zarki, Poland, Franciszek Hodur was born into a large and poor family. So much of what he experienced during his years as a child would mirror those families that he would later pastor as priest and eventually bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church.

As a young child Francis Hodur knew the difficulties of poor families. Many within the village of Zarki and throughout the Katowice region worked farming small tracts of land or at the number of coal mines in the area. It was with people such as these that Bishop Hodur would band together with in organizing St. Stanislaus Parish in South Scranton. What is unfortunate though is that because of a lack of information regarding the early life of Bishop Hodur we do not know exactly how these people and events might have affected his upbringing and his later thoughts and actions.

After his early education in Zarki, we know that from the years 1882 to 1889 Franciszek Hodur attended the St. Anne’s Gymnasium a well-known high school in Krakow. This school was also known as the Nowodworski School as it was endowed in 1617 by Bartlomiej Nowodworski, a Polish nobleman. This prestigious school was originally founded by the faculty senate of the Jagiellonian University in the 1500’s. Throughout its history a number of well-known Poles had attended this (Continued on Page 3.)
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school. While there Franciszek Hodur was an excellent student ranking in the top ten percent of the 37 graduates. It was also during this time that Franciszek Hodur became friendly with Adam Krzyzanowski, who would eventually become a renowned economist and Jagiellonian University professor.

After graduation Francis Hodur entered the Catholic Seminary which was a part of the Jagiellonian University. There too it would seem that he was a good student. In regards to his religious life there is record that he received tonsure and the minor orders during his first year in the seminary 1890. But we also know that Francis Hodur left the seminary before his ordination to the diaconate. It would seem that there is question as to exactly why he was dismissed from the Seminary. We know that during the years 1891 and 1892 there were many complaints at the seminary regarding the living conditions and the quality of the food. There were also investigations into these matters by the seminary administration. Many of the students refused to eat at the seminary and went elsewhere to obtain their meals. In a paper from Professor Andrzej Halas he cited from a Fr. W. Mis from the seminary, who wrote: when during Lent humble Lenten fare was served, several seminarians revolted and found better food in the city. This was publicized in a humorous publication in Cracow and Bishop Dunajewski, who had charge of the seminary, punished the revolt severely, dismissing its main instigators. Was Francis Hodur among those who were dismissed for this reason? We do not know. But because of a clue in the later writing of Bishop Hodur there also could be other reasons as well.

In later writings Bishop Hodur mentioned that it was during this time in seminary that he became a follower of Fr. Stanislaw Stojalowski, a political activist known as “The People’s Tribune,” who fought for the rights of the ordinary people of Poland. Could this involvement have played a role in his dismissal?

The truth is that we might never know. Research still does continue into the life and ministry of Bishop Hodur and while we might find the answers to many of these questions, there are also many others which may never we answered. But to think about the early life of Bishop Hodur does give us pause though. From his earliest years, he not only lived in difficulty, but was concerned about the difficulties of those around him. From helping to teach his fellow students at St. Anne’s Gymnasium, to his getting involved with Fr. Stanislaw Stojalowski in his seeking rights for the downtrodden, to his trying to raise up the living conditions for his fellow seminarians, Franciszek Hodur knew of God’s love for His people and sought to have them live their lives in accord with this love.

This trajectory of his life would certainly continue when he finally came to Scranton, Pennsylvania and its nearby towns and he began his ministry as a priest. While we must remember that it was the people of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish in South Scranton who first decided to break away from their former parish and build anew to escape oppression and gain their rights as children of God, it was Father Francis Hodur who helped to teach and organize them during his years as assistant there. And later when they were looking for a pastor to lead them, they called on Fr. Hodur, a priest who was already steeped in the ideas of fighting for the rights of God’s people against those who would oppress them.

This is the legacy that we remember as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Bishop Hodur in Zarki, Poland. But as we celebrate and honor this occasion, let it not just be a remembering of the past. There is still much that needs to be done. The conflicts are a little different now, but there are conflicts all around us just the same. Our society now tries to tear people away from religious thought and religious action and set them on a secular course. The worship of God is held in low esteem and morals have been redefined. We must not only stand strong in our faith, but, as Franciszek Hodur was from a young age, we must bring up the children around us to care for the faith life and dignity of God’s people. We must stand for the importance of service to others, as well as the importance of faith and prayer.

(Continued on Page 4.)
In order to be inspired for this continuing work of the faith and life within the Polish National Catholic Church, I encourage all Polish National Catholics to read the history of the P.N.C.C., “The Origin and Growth of the Polish National Catholic Church” written by Rev. Stephen Wlodarski, PH.D. and especially concerning the life and work of Bishop Hodur in “Bishop Hodur: Biographical Essays” by Dr. Joseph Wieczerzak. It is from these two books that the information above was gleaned and within them there is a voluminous amount of interesting and inspiring information. Reading them can lead all Polish National Catholics to a better understanding of the road traveled to organize a Catholic Church which is one, holy, catholic and apostolic in its faith and in its governance in line with the foundations of the apostles and fathers of the early church.

In this church, handed on to us by Bishop Hodur, the many priests and bishops and the early organizers throughout the United States and Poland, each of us has and continues to have a vital role to play. It is a role in listening to the voice of God which calls to His people, in setting a course to follow in the catholic and apostolic faith, and to serving all of God’s people with the respect and dignity that they all deserve as children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

In this we must remember that we cannot sit back and leave the work to others for there are always those who desire to either enslave us or marginalize us. We must stand by the words of the motto given us by Bishop Hodur, “Through Truth, through work and through struggle, we shall overcome.” We have the truth which has been given us in the words of Scripture and the tradition of the apostolic faith. Let us make sure that we continue to hand it down to our children, not only in catechetical classes, but also in how we live our lives and how we stand up for what we believe in against the directions of our culture. We have received the benefits of the work of the past, but it is work that must continue in every generation. The work of past generations will not make the church strong today if we do not take up the banner and continue in the same way that they have. And lastly we know that the struggle still continues. No generation will win the final conflict until the beginning of the age to come, announced by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Until that time it is our lot to struggle, but as told us by Bishop Hodur, we also know that if we continue in the struggle, working as those before us in the truth of the Holy Gospel, then we know that in the name of Jesus Christ, we will overcome. We will share in that joy that is God’s love and God’s way in the world.

In this year as we honor 150 years since the birth of Bishop Francis Hodur, let us continue to build up the kingdom of God as we find it within our holy Polish National Catholic Church.

A Gift of Love

As many of you throughout the Polish National Catholic Church know, the Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, Diocesan Bishop of the Western Diocese has been waiting for some time for a kidney transplant. Through the pages of God’s Field we ask for your continued prayers for Bishop Stanley as he awaits this procedure. We also wish to find those who may be interested in giving the selfless gift of serving as a transplant donor in this case. After much prayer, if you are interested in helping Bishop Stanley, please reach out to him at (847) 698-0578 to discuss this matter.
A brief history of Bishop Hodur
taken from An Abridged History of the Polish National Catholic Church
published on the Solemnity of Brotherly Love Sept. 9, 2012:

The first Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church was Franciszek Jan (Francis John) Hodur. Born in Zarki, Poland on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866, to Maria and John Hodur, he was one of seven children. Although his father was a tailor and farmer, the Hodur family was very poor, having little money for food and clothing. At the age of 10 Francis attended a small village school and showed much potential by completing his first four years of elementary school in three years.

At the age of 14 he left his impoverished living conditions and walked to Krakow, a distance of 33 miles from Zarki...Upon completing his secondary education in June, 1889, he enrolled in the theological program at the Roman Catholic Seminary in Krakow that was affiliated with the Jagiellonian University. Due to his political activism he was expelled from the seminary in 1892 and never completed the program. On the last day of 1892 Hodur boarded the ship, the M.S. Sorrento, bound for America. Three weeks later, on January 23, the ship arrived at Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Because he had no sponsor when he arrived, Hodur had to spend some time in a temporary shelter on Ellis Island. After submitting letters to a Polish newspaper indicating his plight, he was finally sponsored by the Rev. Benvenuto Gramlewicz who brought him to Nanticoke, PA. Father Gramlewicz arranged with Bishop O’Hara of the Scranton Roman Catholic Diocese to enroll Hodur in St. Vincent’s Roman Catholic Seminary in Beatty (now Latrobe), PA. He completed his seminary studies and was ordained to the priesthood in Scranton, PA on August 19, 1893 by Bishop O’Hara. His first assignment was as assistant pastor at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish in Scranton, PA.

On the evening of March 14, 1897 Father Hodur arrived in Scranton and met with the congregation of the newly organized St. Stanislaus parish. They seriously discussed the actions they were taking. Sympathetic to the plight of these Polish immigrants, he chose to accept the invitation of these people to lead their church. Father Hodur formally accepted the pastorate of St. Stanislaus Parish. On Sunday, March 21, 1897 Father Hodur celebrated the first High Mass in the new St. Stanislaus Church, which was still in the process of construction. The first organizational meeting of the parish also took place on that day.

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Father Hodur proposed a “Church Constitution” that was unanimously accepted and the first parish committee was elected in accordance to it. Soon after, Father Hodur established and published a weekly newspaper, the Straż or “The Guard.” The first issue was published on Saturday, April 17, 1897. The purpose of the Straż was to be a true “Guard of our divine rights and the herald of a better future to come.” (Włodarski, p. 52) Through the Straż Father Hodur challenged several Roman Catholic teachings, including papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction. The solemn consecration of St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, Church took place on July 4, 1897 and was performed by Father Hodur.

Father Hodur did not intend to break away from the Roman Catholic Church. He was hopeful that the demands of these immigrants would be granted within the framework of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, in January 1898 he traveled to Rome to present the National Church (Kościół Narodowy) Program, created by the St. Stanislaus parish committee and co-signed by the neighboring churches of Nanticoke, Wilkes-Barre, Plymouth, Duryea and Priceburg (now Dickson City). The program called for:

1. legal ownership of church property by the local parish;
2. parish governance by parish committees elected by parishioners;
3. appointment of pastorates of priests approved by the Parishioners;
4. appointment of Polish bishops by priests and parishioners, subject to confirmation by the Pope.

When Father Hodur was elected as a bishop at the First P.N.C.C. Synod in 1904, his consecration did not immediately follow. Father Hodur wanted to make sure that the Polish National Catholic Movement would be a valid Church with unquestionable Apostolic Succession. On September 29, 1907 Father Hodur was consecrated a bishop at St. Gertrude’s Cathedral in Utrecht, Holland by the Archbishop of Utrecht, Gerard Gul; Bishop of Haarlem, William Van Thiel; and the Bishop of Deventer, Michael Spit. The consecration of Bishop Francis Hodur was a moment of great joy and enthusiasm for the entire Polish National Catholic Movement. On October 17, 1907 Bishop Hodur was welcomed back to the United States by 28 priests and 46 lay people in New York City. Upon his return to the City of Scranton as Bishop, a great multitude of PNC faithful met Bishop Hodur at the train station and together they marched up Pittston Avenue to St. Stanislaus Cathedral. Bishop Hodur emphasized that “the consecration he received will never change his spirit of love toward the people which inspired him to work for his fellowman. He assured his congregation that he would continue along the same lines in the work which he chose ten years ago.” (Włodarski, p. 96)

From the time Bishop Hodur accepted the call to be the pastor of St. Stanislaus Cathedral in March 1897, he never wavered in his dedication to the cause for which he devoted his entire life. He firmly believed that God had in His providence led him and his people to organize the Polish National Catholic Church... Truly he was an outstanding man of God. On February 16, 1953, the Polish National Catholic Church mourned the death of its beloved organizer, the Most Rev. Francis Hodur. He left us a legacy of love, dedication, sacrifice and devotion that is an example for us all. Submitted by P.N.C.C. Future Direction Subcommittee

Prayer for Bishop Francis Hodur

from the Mass for Departed Bishops (2006 P.N.C.C. Missal):

Let us pray.

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

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

**Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky**

In 1994 the Plymouth Seniorate of the Central Diocese published a small book compiled by Very Rev. Louis Orzech entitled “The Home Sanctuary – The Child’s First Church.” This publication was to be used by parents, together with their children, within the home. It was to be a way that there would be a spiritual connection between the worship of God at the parish church on Sunday and what occurs during the rest of the week within the home. This spiritual connection is something that each Christian family should strive to foster regardless of whether or not there are children or what their ages are.

Within this publication there are chapters on prayer, a short service to be celebrated when the family cannot, for a good reason, be attend Holy Mass on Sunday, the ritual of breaking and sharing the Christmas wafer and also sharing the blessed egg at Easter as well as some very short writings for thought and reflection. Each of these topics is of vital important within the life of the Church and especially within the life of her members. Each of these things is where there can be some sort of connection between the life within the Church building and our religious life at home. And of course while this publication was written with the education of children in mind, we also know that each of us also need to be reminded that what is important for young children is also important for each of us as a child of God.

Prayer – Within the Catechism of the Polish National Catholic Church there are 31 questions on the topic of prayer which point us in the direction of what prayer is and what role it should have in our life. The first question on prayer states: “What is prayer?” With the answer: “Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God. It is our talking with God and listening to God.” This question alone points to a very important truth concerning our religious life, that God is truly a person and that He desires to be in a relationship with us. He is someone with Whom we can be in contact and someone Who desires good things for us. Within our own families, whether we have children or not this is certainly something that needs to be put into practice on a seasonal, weekly and daily basis. How easy it is, even if we attend church each week on Sundays, to have that be the only contact with God that we have all week. There are so many opportunities within our lives on a weekly basis to spend some moments in prayer. A second question from the Catechism regarding prayer asks: “Why do we pray?” With the answer: “We pray to adore God, expressing our love and loyalty to Him; We pray to thank Him for His gifts to us; We pray to beg His pardon for our sins and shortcomings, and; We pray to ask His blessings and graces for ourselves and other.” Within just these four ways, we could certainly think of hundreds of times each day to pray to God. There are always things for which we can be thankful, occurrences where we need to seek forgiveness, and situations where we need God’s help, blessing and protection. At each of these times we should, as Christians, turn our hearts and minds to God in a moment of prayer. But I also must admit that sometimes I too am not as conscientious as I should be about my own prayer life, sometimes I forget to pray in a number of situations. But as an answer I try to practice myself and I suggest to others is to choose one area in my life and try to remember to pray in that regard. Maybe it’s to start by praying each time you sit down for a meal. Again this is something that a family can do together having a different member pray each time. Maybe it’s taking a moment to ask for God’s blessing, protection and guidance each time you get into your car. I’m sure each of you could think of countless situations throughout your day where you can foster a deeper connection to God. And of course then in the reverence that is to be fostered within the family, share this prayer action with other family members and especially your children.

Another aspect is to remember that prayers do not have to be long and complex. People often say to me after I pray at the beginning of a meeting or event how nice the prayer was. I remind them that in part it’s because I pray often. None of us took special classes in the seminary about the best ways to compose a prayer, but what we did do was pray often. As prayer becomes a constant aspect of your life, it is something that comes to a person easier. It is also good to remember that God is not grading your grammar or sentence structure. It is your heart that He desires and He smiles on those who seek Him in prayer.

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It is good to remember then that a great way to start is to remember just a short prayer that is said when entering or leaving a Christian home, especially your own. To just say, Praise be the Lord, Jesus Christ,” or in the Polish tradition “Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus.” In these few words said regularly can be the beginning of a more active and meaningful prayer life.

Another aspect of the reverence of the family is dealing with things of a religious nature that may be found within our homes. Over the years as I have visited homes, I find less and less religious items. I am not saying that one needs to have their house look like a chapel, but a few items within the home can witness to the world and especially those who visit that yours is a Christian home. It is a common tradition to have a crucifix or holy picture within the bedroom and an image of the last supper in the kitchen or dining room. A part of this witness can also be the chalk markings for the home blessing during the Epiphany season. Even if your pastor does not come to do this blessing the home can still be blessed with holy water and the door marked with chalk. By the way the markings for this year would be “20+K+M+B+16,” K, M, B being the initials of the three kings.

And of course I had mentioned that the home could be blessed with holy water. How many of us have a small bottle of Holy Water within our homes. It was once a common sight to see church members on the days following Holy Saturday filling small bottles of the newly blessed Holy Water from Church. In a like way, homes should have a candle that is blessed on February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord. This candle is to be lighted on special occasions, but also at times when someone is sick and prayers for the sick are being offered. This candle can be used if the priest or bishop ever comes to visit someone who is sick with Holy Communion. Again, items and things such as this may not seem like they are special and important, but when considered in total all of these things help to make the connection between our Church life and our home life.

During this Year of Reverence, I encourage each of the families and households of the Polish National Catholic Church to consider their home life and to ask, does it express my catholic identity, does it express my faith. If the answer is no, or even if the answer is not enough, now is the time to begin small changes to bring it in line. Drastic measures are not what is called for, but rather small intentional ways or things will help to bring these two parts of our life in tune with each other. And this is the unity of the reverence of the family that we seek, that what we express at church, in prayer, in attitude and in action, will be the same when we are in our homes and in the rest of our lives. Let us all make a concerted effort to witness to the Risen Lord Jesus Christ at every moment. Not just for an hour on a Sunday morning, but each day and each moment of our lives.

NUC Music Scholarship Update

August 4, 1966 was the date 50 years ago when the first Music Scholarship Awards were presented in Cleveland, Ohio at the Seventh General Convention of the National United Choirs. Who were the recipients?

Theodore Biernacki, BVMC, Albany NY
Sandra Smolka, Divine Word, Chicago, IL
Helen Wolanski, Holy Trinity, New Castle PA
Cynthia Zaranski, All Saints, Black Rock, NY

The Music Scholarship Program was tailored to develop musicians within the Polish National Catholic Church and to make scholarships available to enrich the musical life of the Church.

Has the program been successful? Without a doubt! Were you a Music Scholarship recipient in these last 50 years? If so, drop an email to nucscholarship@gmail.com. Let us know who you are, when you won you award(s), your home parish and what you are doing musically within the Church.

Will you be a recipient for this Golden Anniversary year? The application deadline is just weeks away – May 15, 2016.

Visit nucmusicscholarship.weebly.com to download the necessary forms and instructions.

As always, contact me at the NUC Scholarship email address (above) if you have any questions regarding the scholarship program and please add the music ministry of the P.N.C.C. to your prayer lists!

Praise through song!

Submitted by Cathy Bilinski, NUC Music Scholarship Administrator
Focusing on Reverence in the Family

As we continue in our Year of Reverence this month we focus on Reverence in the family. We know how important the Christian Family is especially in our ever changing and more secular society.

It is in the family setting where children learn their values and about the Catholic faith. May we teach them reverence by setting an example for them in dealing with life situations. We show reverence in the family by incorporating three things into our day to day situations with our children, spouses, parents, siblings and others:

1. Prayer
2. Living the Ten Commandments
3. Living the Two Commandments of Love

Prayer

Make time to pray together - teach your children to pray - help them to learn the importance of giving thanks to God. There are many ways to do this - one way is to pray before meals. Here are some prayers from our 2010 P.N.C.C. Prayer Book:

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these Your gifts, which we are about to receive from Your bounty. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace After Meals: We give You thanks, O Almighty God, for all Your mercies, Who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Morning and Evening Prayer is very important as well as it teaches our children and reminds us of the importance God has in our lives and how we are called to live holy and virtuous lives as His holy people. The Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be offered in addition to various petitions and words of thanksgiving and praise.

A Parent’s Prayer

Loving God and Father, You gave me my child (children) and I am committed to bring him (her, them) up in the Church in love of You. Assist me in this sacred duty. Teach me what to give him (her, them) and what to withhold; when to correct and when to refrain; when to be gentle and when to be firm. May my child (children) grow in Your grace and in piety. By word and example may I lead him (her, them) in the ways of faith, wisdom and love. I pray that I may fulfill my parental responsibilities that You have placed upon me, so that my child (children) may be faithful to You and Your Church. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

For a Husband or Wife

Almighty Father, You have consecrated marriage so that it reflects the spiritual unity between Christ and His Church. May my spouse and I always love, honor and cherish each other, and so live together the rest of our lives in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, so that our home may be a haven of blessing and peace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Child’s Prayer

Heavenly Father, You gave me my parents and commanded me to love, honor and obey them in all things. Give me Your grace, so that I may respectfully fulfill Your commandment to honor my mother and father (guardians). May I also love and respect my siblings, friends, teachers and relatives. Remove from me all pride, rebellion, stubbornness and carelessness. Create in me a clean heart and mind. Keep me strong in my faith, so that I may continue to grow in Your grace and in wisdom each day. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

(Continued on Page 10.)
(Focusing on Reverence in the Family - Continued from Page 9.)

For Families

God, our Heavenly Father, You have blessed each of us with the gift of family that through our family life we may learn to love and care for others. Open our eyes to recognize in all people the bonds of kinship. May we unselfishly serve them who with us have been made co-heirs with Christ. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ. Amen.

Teach those in your family about the importance of following the 10 Commandments – those to God and those to our neighbor. Set the example yourself by regularly attending Mass and receiving the Sacraments. The same for showing reverence and respect for creation, God, His Church, our clergy and our neighbor.

The Two Commandments of Love

Make some time as a family to put into practice the 2 commandments of love - participate in a community service project – volunteer at the Church, a local charity, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, etc. Spend some quality time together putting our precious faith into practice in our lives and teaching our children such important lessons.

We ask you to consider setting up a challenge for your family – if you are not doing some of these ideas then incorporate them into your family life and time together. Let us do this over these next months and when we celebrate the solemnity of the Christian Family see the difference in the life of your family.

Please remember to save the date of Wednesday – October 5th 2016 at 7 pm (EST) for a presentation by our Prime Bishop in the Solemnity of the Christian Family in our P.N.C.C. The solemnity this year will be celebrated on Sunday – October 9th. Perhaps your parish could put together a community service project to focus and help families in your local community – remember we are asked to do a minimum of 3 service projects this year.

If you know of parishioners or friends who are not a part of our monthly email updates – please have them email us at FutureDirection@pncc.org to become a part of this important effort for our Holy Church.

Please keep this church wide undertaking in your daily prayers – asking God to bless this work and allow it to bear fruit for the building of His Holy Church.

May God bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

P.N.C.C. Supreme Council Future Direction Committee
Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop
Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., Chairman
Journeying Together in Christ-the Journey Continues

Joseph Francis Seliga
Chairman, P.N.C.C. Commission of History and Archives

This publication, Journeying Together in Christ: the Journey Continues, covers the Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue meetings from 1989 to 2002. Its 123 pages include an introduction, a report on the thirty-three Dialogue meetings between June 1-2, 1989 and October 23-24, 2002 written by James B. Earley, Chancellor of the Diocese of Scranton, three appendices and an index. The introduction was written by the two editors, Most Rev. Robert Nemkovich, Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church (P.N.C.C.) and the Most Rev. James C. Timlin, Bishop of Scranton, Roman Catholic Church (R.C.C.). The report was written by James B. Earley, Chancellor, Diocese of Scranton. This publication was by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana, 46750, as was the volume covering the first ten Dialogue meetings.

The report began with a description of the press conference on May 3, 1990 releasing Journeying Together in Christ: The Report of the P.N.C.C.-R.C.C. Dialogue and its reception by the faithful of both churches. Both churches spent time in focusing on healing the hurts caused over the years. This culminated in the Service of Healing held at St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Cathedral in Scranton, PA on February 15, 1992. “All of those assembled in Bishop Francis Hodur’s venerable cathedral were earnestly seeking healing and reconciliation. All sensed that they were not only witnesses to history, but that they were also participants in a holy moment in the lives of the faithful of both churches.” The P.N.C.C. Bishops at the service were Prime Bishop Swantek, and Bishops Rysz and Peplowski. Cardinal Cassidy was accompanied by R.C.C. Bishops Brzana, Timlin, McCormick, and DiLorenzo. “The R.C. bishops sought to place the break in Church unity within its historical context. They maintained, The dispute was not over doctrine but over organizational matters. Hoping to consign the harsh words and uncharitable behavior of the past to oblivion, the bishops offered a sincere apology to the clergy and faithful of the P.N.C.C. The bishops declared, We deeply regret, all the times, that we, their brothers and sisters in the Lord, have been insensitive or have offended them in any way”

Cardinal Cassidy read a personal message from Pope John Paul II, addressed to Prime Bishop Swantek wherein said that he had great interest in the dialogue and expressed hope for the future. Pope John Paul II wrote, “Through the dialogue and further steps taken recently, new hopes are raised that the events which some decades ago led to a break in the ecclesial unity which we had previously enjoyed can be put behind us, and that one day full communion in the one apostolic faith, sacramental life and mission which Christ calls us, can be restored”

Both the R.C.C. Scranton Diocesan newspaper, The Catholic Light and the P.N.C.C. bi-weekly God’s Field published the complete texts of the R.C.C. and P.N.C.C. bishops given at the Service of Healing. In addition, they were also distributed by the Catholic News Service Documentary Service and thus made available to every R.C.C. Bishop in the USA.

A similar service was later held on March 29th at the P.N.C.C. Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral in Buffalo, NY, during which P.N.C.C. Bishop Peplowski and R.C.C. Bishop Head “signed a covenant in which they pledged to foster between the churches ongoing dialogue, mutual respect and concern, sharing of devotional services, and cooperation in matters concerning our community.”

Just prior to the June 1992 dialogue meeting, it was reported that the extension of Canon 844, n.3. to members of the P.N.C.C. was being reviewed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. The retreat sponsored by the P.N.C.C. Fellowship of Saint John the Evangelist was conducted by two R.C.C. priests, Monsignor John Esseff and Father Leo McKernan. The warming of relations between the P.N.C.C. and R.C.C. was helped during the Lenten Devotions of 1993, when clergy from both churches took part in praying the Stations of the Cross at both St. Stanislaus Cathedral and at St. Peter’s Cathedral in Scranton, PA. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome replied to the petition regarding Canon 844.n.3 with an affirmative response. Members of the P.N.C.C. were given the same rights as members of the Orthodox Church for the reception of the three sacraments of Penance,

(Continued on Page 12.)
Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick. “The fall dialogue sessions were held on Oct 27-28, 1993, in Hartford, Connecticut. The clergy from both churches gathered for the celebration of Mass and, for the first time since the start of the dialogue in 1984, P.N.C.C. participants received the Holy Eucharist from the R.C. celebrant.”

Bp. Rysz reported on the P.N.C.C.-R.C.C. dialogue meeting at the XIX General Synod. Following his report, Very Rev. Casimir Grotnik said that he was speaking on behalf of thirty-eight former R.C.C. priests who are now members of the P.N.C.C. He said that the paragraph in Canon 844. n.3 restricting the rights of former R.C.C. members “was discriminatory and divisive of the clergy and faithful as well and it does not contribute to the main goal of the dialogue, the unity of the church.”

Bp. Rysz then responded with his understanding of the meaning of the Canon. “Canon 844.n.3 does not address any matter of unity. It does not in any way approve or foresee any concelebrations, whether with former R.C. priests or that matter with priests baptized, raised and educated in institutions of the P.N.C.C. All it does is treat the P.N.C.C. as it does the Oriental Churches which allows P.N.C.’s to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Communion and Anointing in the absence of their own priest on the same conditions as those are received by R.C.’s in the own Church.

Every R.C. priest is totally aware of the sanction placed upon him by his church, when he chooses to break the law which he promised to uphold when he was ordained. Bishop Hodur and the organizers of the P.N.C.C. knew and understood this. Once they decided that the Canon Law of the R.C.C. no longer bind them in conscience and in fact they never let it interfere in the work they undertook for the Gospel of the Lord and for his Church. They also were totally unconcerned with the reception of Sacraments in the R.C.C. because they never doubted the validity of the Sacraments in their own.

Every R.C.C. priest is also aware that he automatically incurs excommunication when he attempts to marry. This is R.C. law. There’s nothing the P.N.C.C.’s Commission can do to change this. Since the P.N.C.C. allows its priests to marry, this matter was never an impediment to the exercise of the priestly ministry in the P.N.C.C.”

After the guidelines for the use of Canon 844.n.3 were accepted and promulgated by the R.C.C., the next step was an attempt to add reciprocity for R.C.’s in receiving the sacraments from P.N.C.C. clergy. “Bishop Timlin informed the group that upon further consultation the Catholic bishops’ committee felt sufficient guidance already exists in the Church’s Code of Canon Law and 1993 Ecumenical Directory, so the projects of specific R.C.-P.N.C.C. guidelines should not go forward. The bishops have not developed comparable guidelines on when U.S. Catholics may receive sacraments that the Catholic Church recognizes as valid in other Christian Churches”

Father Senior Marcell W. Pytlarz’s paper, written for the Spring 1998 session of the dialogue meetings “argued that the challenge before the dialogue team was to find the path that would restore unity without depriving the P.N.C.C. of its historic achievements and its unique place in the Catholic family. While recognizing the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the P.N.C.C. seeks equality, affirmation of the autonomous Church structures, self-governance, preservation of the cherished customs, practices, and ecclesial traditions.”

The XX General Synod, Oct 5-9, 1998, approved the Guidelines for the Reception by P.N.C.’s of Sacraments in the R.C.C.

There have been problems which arose during these dialogue meetings, one of which was the re-ordination of Father Jerzy Sieczynski by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. He had been ordained by Bishop Swantek on Feb, 1, 1989. He was suspended by the P.N.C.C. and sought admittance to the R.C.C. Another was the lack of R.C.C. participation in the Consecrations of Father Senior Casimir Grotnik and Father Jan Dawidziuk, again bringing up the status of former R.C.C. priests in the P.N.C.C.

The publication of Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church on September 5, 2000 by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith caused considerable consternation not only in the P.N.C.C. dialogue participants but also in the wider church community because it asserted that “there exists a single church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him.”
James B. Earley, Chancellor of the Diocese of Scranton ends his report with, “It is true that the minutes of the dialogue for the last five years disclose that the unity which seemed almost imminent in 1993 is not on the horizon.”

The First Appendix includes many documents that were prepared during the years of this dialogue. The first six documents were presented at the Service of Healing, held on February 15, 1992, at St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Cathedral. These documents provide a record of this historic event where Bishops of the P.N.C.C. and the R.C.C. and R.C.C. Cardinal Cassidy presented papers and prayed together. The following three documents, numbers 7 through 9, were prepared after the announcement that P.N.C.C. members would be able to receive the Sacraments of penance, reception of the Eucharist and anointing of the sick in accordance with the requirements of Canon 844.n.3. The tenth document is the message given by Most Rev. James C. Timlin, R.C.C. Bishop of Scranton, at the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the P.N.C.C. at Holy Mass, March 1997. The eleventh document describes the “Guidelines for the Reception by Polish National Catholics of Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church” The P.N.C.C. describes how its members may “receive the sacraments of Eucharist, penance and anointing of the sick from ministers of the R.C.C. It also mentions that in the view of the P.N.C.C., the faithful of the R.C.C. should not be impeded from receiving these same sacraments from the ministers of the P.N.C.C.”

Following are lists of the meeting numbers, dates, attendees, host church and topics of discussion for each of the twenty-four meetings.


Joseph F. Mtytych. The Topics of Discussion were:


Meeting Number 21 was held on May 17-18, 1995


and Rev. Ronald Roberson. The Topics of Discussion were: (1) Liturgiam Authenticam, (2) Debate Over the Role of the Universal and Local Church Between Cardinals Walter Kasper and Joseph Ratzinger in America Magazine, (3) Cardinal Walter Kasper’s Prolusio from the Plenary Meeting of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, (4) Establishments of Apostolic Administration for the Union of St. John Mary Vianney Campos in Brazil, and (5) Pedophilia Concerns.


71st Annual P.N.C.C./Y.M.S. of R. Bowling Tournament

The P.N.C.C./Y.M.S. of R. 71st Annual Bowling Tournament is co-hosted by Our Savior Parish, Dearborn Heights, MI and Holy Cross Parish, Hamtramck, MI from Friday, June 3, 2016 to Sunday, June 5, 2016. The tournament is being played at the Cherry Hill Lanes in Dearborn Heights, MI. The Awards Banquet and Dance on June 4th is being held at American Legion Stitt Post 232, also in Dearborn Heights. Registration for the tournament and banquet closes on April 30, 2016.

Complete information regarding this year’s tournament, along with all necessary registration forms, has been sent to all P.N.C.C. parishes. All information and forms also can be found on the P.N.C.C. Web site at pncc.org/?event=p-n-c-c-y-m-s-of-r-71st-annual-bowling-tournament

The purpose of this tournament is to share in Christian fellowship. We cannot think of any better way to promote such fellowship than to share the Eucharist with our fellow Polish National Catholic Church members from across the country. We know many of you will be traveling long distances to get home, but hope you will take the time to be with us. We pray for your safe journey.
Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese

Ashton Drakulich Visits Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

On Saturday, March 5, 2016, Ashton Drakulich (pictured below in patterned jacket) was one of 4 students from West Seneca East Middle School, Buffalo, NY, who had the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery during their 8th Grade class trip to Washington, D.C.

After the ceremonially changing of the guard, the four students presented the wreath, adorned with their school ribbon. The student representatives were selected through an essay contest judged by school administrators.

Ashton and her family are members of Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral, Lancaster, NY, Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese.
Scout Award Presentations

Holy Family Parish, McKeesport, PA

A Scout is Reverent. The Scout is reverent towards God. The Scout is faithful to religious duties and respects the conviction of others in matters of custom and religion. The Twelfth Scout Law recognizes the place of religion in one’s life. All scouting activities supplement experiences in the home, school and the Church. It also stresses the need for growth in spiritual development and appreciation of the fact that you need the Church and the Church needs you.

The Polish National Catholic Church offers Religious Awards to Cub Scouts, Brownies, Junior & Cadette Girl Scouts, Senior & Ambassador Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts/Explorers. They are the Love of God Award (Cub and Brownie, Junior & Cadettes Girl Scouts); God and Community Award (Senior & Ambassador Girl Scout); and God and Country Award (Boy and Explorer Scouts). There is also an Award for Scout Leaders known as the Bishop Thaddeus Zielinski Adult Scouting Award for those who dedicated their lives in the scouting movement through leadership and program support.

The Scouts and their parents were processed into the Church by the Parish Acolytes, members of the Society of the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Boy Scout and Cub Scout Honor Guard. On behalf of the Scouting Committee of the Polish National Catholic Church, Fr. Bruce Sleczkowski awarded Scouts Fred Angel, Jr. and Tyler Bagshaw the God and Country Award and the Love of God award and read a letter of congratulations sent by Richard Daum, chair of the Committee on Scouting for the P.N.C.C. during the February 14th 9:00 A.M. Mass. Congratulations to Fred Angel, Jr. and Tyler Bagshaw on their achievements.

For Scouting information contact Richard Daum 11 Everett Place, Wayne, N.J. 07470 or dickdaum@gmail.com.

Fred Angel, Jr., Rev. Slesckowski and Tyler Bagshaw
Central Diocese

Holy Mother of Sorrows Celebrates a Century of Faith

Dupont, PA

Holy Mother of Sorrows P.N.C.C. Parish was organized on Palm Sunday, April 16, 1916 in Dupont, PA, formerly known as Smithville. Since then, on every Palm Sunday we have observed and celebrated our anniversary. This year, the official celebration of our Centennial was held on Sunday, April 3, 2016.

After months of planning and preparation, our congregation joyfully and solemnly gave thanks to God for the 100 years of worship, work and dedication through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We were honored by the presence of our Prime Bishop, Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, who preached the sermon, and our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki, who celebrated Mass. Other clergy in attendance were Rt. Rev. Thomas Gnat, retired Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid, pastor of Holy Mother of Sorrows Parish, Very Rev. William Chromey, pastor of St. Adalbert’s Parish in Dickson City, PA and administrator of Holy Trinity Parish, Throop, PA; Rev. Walter Placek, pastor of Providence of God Lithuanian Parish, Scranton, PA; Rev. Carmen Bolock, pastor of St. Mary’s Parish, Duryea, PA; Rev. Janusz Lucarz, assistant pastor of St. Stanislaus Cathedral, Scranton PA; and Rev. Joseph Verespy, pastor of The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Parish in Dupont, PA.

An Anniversary Banquet at the Hilton Scranton Hotel and Conference Center followed our liturgical celebration. At dinner we were welcomed by Paul Kaspiskie Jr., Parish Committee Chair; Mike Carol, PA State Representative; Daniel Lello, Mayor of Dupont; and Rev. Joseph Verespy. Parishioner and President of the Central Y.M.S. of R., Nick Kazinetz, was the Master of Ceremony. Susan Baldan, Parish Committee member, was the keynote speaker. Bishop Nowicki enriched us with a very meaningful spiritual message and Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky extended the message he gave us during Mass. Pastor, Fr. Sr. Zbigniew Dawid, concluded our Centennial Banquet with closing remarks.

We would like to thank all who made this event beautiful and meaningful. We especially appreciate the work of our Centennial Committee, Parish Committee, Choir, Y.M.S. of R., ANS Society, Acolytes, Lectors, Ushers and all the good people of our parish. Sto lat and God bless!

Submitted by Very Rev. Zbigniew Dawid

Photographs by Kristy Marie Black Photography/Design
Holy Mother of Sorrows Spring Happenings
Dupont, PA

Our New Sanctuary

Palm Sunday Procession

Our Acolytes

Our Newest Member, Benjamin Yuschovitz

Easter Bunny Breakfast

Lenten Penance Service
Sell Your Stuff — Shop for Bargains

St. Mary’s Parish, Duryea, PA

St. Mary’s Polish National Catholic Church, 200 Stephenson Street in Duryea, PA is conducting a Yard Sale on SATURDAY APRIL 23, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

For $10.00 you can rent an 8 foot by 2 foot table space (you must bring your own table) to sell your unwanted treasures. The yard sale is open to anyone who would like to sell their stuff. We will have food and beverages all day, as well as a door prize and a bake sale.

PLEASE NOTE: VENDERS & CRAFTERS WELCOME. To reserve a table space, phone 570-457-2291.

YARD SALE
SELL YOUR STUFF
SHOP FOR BARGAINS
SATURDAY APRIL 23rd
9AM TO 2PM
ST. MARY’S POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
200 STEPHENSON ST. DURYEA
RENT AN 8 FOOT BY 2 ½ FOOT SPACE $10.00 EACH SPACE
PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN TABLES
FOOD & BEVERAGES ALL DAY
TO RESERVE A SPACE
PHONE 570-457-2291
SET-UP TIME 8AM
VENDORS & CRAFTERS WELCOME
In accordance with the program introduced by the P.N.C.C. Future Direction Committee, St. John the Baptist Parish in Frackville, PA conducted Spiritual Retreat Sessions during Lent. But, instead of keeping people for 3-4 hours at the parish for one long session, I decided to spread the sessions out to three Sundays.

The first session was held on Sunday, February 21. Before the Holy Mass, I spoke on the theme of “God is Love.” Stations of the Cross followed Mass. The lay members of the parish community took part in the readings.

The second session was held on Sunday, February 28. Before the Holy Mass we heard the meditation upon the Seven Last Words of Christ, read by Mr. James Abicunas and myself. After the Mass the Congregation prayed the Litany of the Passion.

The last day of Retreat was held on Sunday, March 13. Before the service, the newly-elected Parish Committee took their oaths. Afterward, I spoke on the topic of Sin. Immediately after this the Penitential Service with the Sacrament of Penance took place. The Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament ended the service.

During all three sessions, the Sacrament of the Word of God was read and preached (as a homily). The sessions were well attended, and the majority of our active parishioners were participants in the sessions.

On Sunday, March 13, the whole congregation was invited for a brunch sponsored by our newly elected Parish Committee chair, Mrs. Ann Marie Wycheck, and her husband, George, with the help of Mrs. Sandra Elsavage and Mrs. Janina Plichta.

Note: Private adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament takes place in our church every First Friday of each month from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. (during winter, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.).

Submitted by Rev. Robert Plichta
Mohawk Valley Seniorate of the Central Diocese
Conducts Lenten Retreat

New York Mills, NY

The six parishes of the Mohawk Valley Seniorate met for a Lenten Retreat at the Sacred Heart of Jesus/Holy Cross Parish in NY Mills, NY on March 12, 2016.

Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa Parish Happenings

Latham, NY

Parishioners go to the local Ronald McDonald House twice each month to cook breakfast for families residing there.

On Music Scholarship Sunday, Rev. Mark A. Gnizinski and Music Director Regina Z. Pollack presented a certificate to Grace Zofia Alberti, 2015 recipient of the Bishop Francis Bonczak Youth Award. Grace studies voice and piano and is very grateful for the NUC scholarship program.

The Blessed Virgin Mary of Czestochowa Parish is gearing up for PolishFest 2016, which will take place June 3-5, 2016 at the parish grounds, 250 Old Maxwell Road, Latham, NY. PolishFest is the largest Polish cultural event in the Albany, NY area. This year the festival will include polka bands, dancing, folk dance exhibitions, a Chopin piano recital, a Slavic folk music concert, genealogy, book signings, historical exhibitions, cooking demonstrations, children’s activities and more! To learn more about this year’s event, please visit our website at www.polishfest-ny.org. You can also follow us on Twitter @PolishFestNY.

There are many opportunities for YOU to participate in PolishFest:

- Exhibit your art work
- Perform
- Be a vendor
- Advertise in our program book
- Volunteer at the event

If you are interested in being a part of the fun, contact Anntonette Alberti at anntonette.alberti@hotmail.com. Many thanks!

Submitted by Anntonette Zembrzuski Alberti
† śp. Rev. Frederick Mechowski

The Rev. Frederick Mechowski, 78, of Monroe Township, New Jersey, passed into the rest of the Lord on April 6, 2016 at Cranbury Center in Monroe Township. Fr. Fred was the father of the late śp. Mark Mechowski. Surviving Fr. Mechowski are his wife of 51 years, Ruth Czyzewski Mechowski of Monroe Township; daughter, Melissa A. and William McLaughlin of Odessa, FL; two granddaughters, Amanda and Olivia McLaughlin; brother-in-law, Alan and Christine Czyzewski of Old Bridge, NJ; two nieces, Laura and Edwin Grodovich of South Windsor, CT and Stephanie and Jamie Capuano of Oaklyn, NJ; two grand-nieces and a grand-nephew, Samantha and Jake Grodovich as well as Fiona Capuano; close friend Henry Nepela and James Keller.

Born and raised in Syracuse, NY Fr. Fred received his early sacraments at Holy Cross Parish in Syracuse. He attended Syracuse University and then transferred to Savonarola Theological Seminary in Scranton, PA. Fr. Fred was ordained to the priesthood of Christ on September 14, 1960 at St. Stanislaus Cathedral by Prime Bishop Leon Grochowski. He was assigned as assistant to SS Peter and Paul Parish in Passaic, NJ. He later served as pastor at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Schenectady, NY and finally at the P.N.C. Church of Our Saviour in Lawrenceville, NJ where he served as pastor for 42 years. In 2011 he retired and settled in Monroe Township, NJ.

Fr. Fred was active in Trenton and Lawrenceville, NJ area organizations and social events including the Lawrence Senior Citizens Groups 1 and 2, Chaplain at St. Francis Medical Center, Catholic War Veterans, Holy Cross Post 417, as well as conducting his many pastoral duties for the members of Our Saviors Parish.

A rite of reception occurred at SS Peter and Paul Parish, 126 River Drive, Passaic, NJ on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at 4:15 p.m. with visiting hours following from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Holy Mass of Resurrection was concelebrated by Rt. Rev. Bernard Nowicki, Diocesan Bishop of the Central Diocese together with the clergy of the Diocese. Burial followed at the East Ridge Lawn Cemetery in Clifton, NJ.

Eternal rest grant onto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him.

May his soul rest in peace. Amen.
Greater Manchester Clergy Association Discusses Opportunities to Meet Spiritual Needs of Inmates in County Jails

Manchester, NH

The Greater Manchester Clergy Association meets the first Thursday of every month and encourages people of all faiths to attend.

The March 3 meeting, hosted by Holy Trinity Cathedral, Polish National Catholic Church, featured a discussion on opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of people incarcerated in county jails.

The presenter was a local Roman Catholic deacon who has served in prison ministry for more than 25 years.

In the front row, from left, are the Rev. David Reynolds of Pastoral Counseling Services; Sarah Jane Knoy, Granite State Organizing; the Rev. Zane Knoy; Father John Buccino, Blessed Sacrament Church; Rabbi Beth D. Davidson, Temple Adath Yeshurun; and Pastor John Cerrato, First Baptist Church.

In the second row, from left, are F. Joseph Gurdak, St. Ann/St. Augustine; the Rev. Kevin Pleas, First Congregational Church; Rabbi Eric Cohen, Temple Israel; Msg. Charles DesRuisseaux; and Bishop Paul Sobiechowski of Holy Trinity Cathedral.

New Hampshire Union Leader – March 9, 2016
Eastern Diocese Adult Retreat
Fr. Michel Gitner - Retreat Master
“A Different Worldview”
Journeying with Jesus through the Gospel of St. Mark

Mercy Center by the Sea – Madison, CT
Friday June 10 to Saturday June 11, 2016
Begins at 3 pm on Friday and ends after lunch on Saturday
Cost $75 per person double occupancy and $105 per person single – includes dinner on Friday and breakfast and lunch on Saturday

We have reserved just 26 rooms so if you are interested please make your reservations ASAP - deadline is May 1, 2016 – to join us email RobNemec21@ao.com

A view from the beautiful retreat center - mercybythesea.org

Eastern Diocese Acolyte Retreat
Tuesday – June 28, 2016
Divine Providence Parish – Norwich, CT
“Saints Peter and Paul”
Begins at 8:30 A.M. with Holy Mass and ends at Mystic Aquarium
Interactive sessions on Saints Peter and Paul and Serving with Reverence

Time in prayer, fellowship and fun with your fellow servers
Plus a trip to Mystic Aquarium and time with Saints Peter & Paul
Open to Altar Servers of our diocese – registration is just $10
Deadline to register is June 25th

To register or for additional information contact:
Fr. Sr. Rob Nemec (508) 672-4334  RobNemec21@aol.com

Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat 2016
“Reverence: Walk His Way”

Camp Howe - A camp for all youth
Come and Worship,
Learn and
Have great Fun!

All at Camp Howe in Goshen, MA
From August 21-25, 2016
Registration and Health Forms are available from your pastor
and the cost is only $100.00 per person

Come and end your summer with friends in Christ

July 8-10, 2016
God and Country
PNCC Scout Camp
Contact:
Rose and
Jim Gebo
at
413-363-9129

Holy Cross Parish,
723 Enfield, CT
Contact deadline:
July 3, 2016

Cost: $10.00
per person
The members of Resurrection Polish National Catholic Church are continuing their observance of the Christian Passion today, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday.

“Our Masses are all in English. The organist does play Polish songs every now and then,” said Pat Zdawczyk, 83, who was one of Resurrection’s founding members a decade ago. She attended St. Anthony’s, a now-closed Roman Catholic Polish parish in Toledo’s Kuhschwanz neighborhood, before moving to Walbridge in the 1970s.

A Polish custom at Resurrection, as well as at some Roman Catholic churches, is to bless the food to be cooked at home for the Easter meal. It is brought to the church in baskets.

“It’s symbolic food, because eggs are a symbol of the resurrected Jesus,” Father Nowak said. “People say, and we have this in the prayers, all this meat which is blessed is like flesh, symbol of the Paschal lamb, which Moses was asking for the blessing of God, and Jesus is the symbol of this lamb.

“Basically, what people put in these baskets is the bread, and salt because it’s always on the table,” Father Nowak said. “We have also the butter, which is formed as a lamb and you can buy this in any Polish store, I believe. … The eggs are not just white hard-boiled eggs, but we paint these eggs. It’s called pisanki.” The pisanki decoration can be very artistic, he said.

“There is kielbasa, of course, because it’s Polish. And szynka, ham. And people now started adding different things. Kids bring a chocolate Easter bunny to put in the basket.”

Food is important to churches, and besides blessing the Easter feast, Resurrection raises funds via Polish meals. It will have a “Taste of Poland” dinner from 5-7 p.m. April 7 at the church, featuring kotlety — Polish meatballs — and other items for $10.

“We try to do good things, not just our fund-raisers, but these fund-raisers keep us alive” and pay the bills, Father Nowak said.

Resurrection is the only Polish National Catholic Church in the area. It has been in existence 10 years, and in Temperance since 2008.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Toledo closed 17 parishes and merged 16 others in 2005. About a dozen displaced parishioners formed a P.N.C.C. parish in 2006 after some of them went to Holy Cross P.N.C.C. in Hamtramck, MI., where Father Nowak is pastor. Father Nowak was assigned to be Resurrection’s administrator.

Having the name Resurrection “is sent from God,” said Mrs. Zdawczyk. “He’s the one that asked us to name our church Resurrection.”

Other names had been under consideration, Father Nowak said, but someone said that “this parish was resurrected for the people who lost something [their former Roman Catholic parishes]. They came, and it was like starting a new life. The resurrection is always, for us, very special. Our resurrected Jesus is a patron of the parish, and for us it’s a special Solemnity.”

The Polish National Catholic Church was established in Scranton, Pa., in 1897, and a former Roman Catholic priest was the leader. It established a mission in Poland in 1921.

In the 20th century, according to the Toledo Polish Genealogical Society, three congregations — Our Lady of Czestochowa and Nativity parishes on Nebraska Avenue, and St. Joseph Parish in Rossford — were in the P.N.C.C.

The P.N.C.C. has ongoing talks with the Roman Catholic Church, and in the 1990s both churches set standards for members to receive sacraments, including communion, from the other church.

“The people that come here to our dinners, some ask what’s the big difference between the Roman Catholics and us, the P.N.C.C.,” Mrs. Zdawczyk said. “Two big differences are general absolution at Mass [in which all in the congregation are forgiven of sins rather than through private confession], and our priests can be married and have a family; that’s such a blessing because they understand where we all come from, what we’re all a part of.”

Father Nowak is an immigrant from Poland, a former Roman Catholic priest who moved to the United States in 1999. He has a wife and two sons, and all are U.S. citizens.

The Toledo P.N.C.C. members first met in a VFW hall, then in a private home before renting space from Advent Lutheran Church in Sylvania (Advent closed in 2015). In 2007, they bought their present building, the former St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, at 1835 Temperance Rd., Temperance, and held their first Mass there Jan. 1, 2008. Their membership now is above 40.

There was some tension between the P.N.C.C. and the Roman Catholic diocese before the move to Temperance, which is not geographically in the Toledo diocese.

“The day we moved here, I pictured Bishop [Leonard] Blair [then Toledo’s bishop] going ‘whew, it’s not my problem,’” Father Nowak said.

“We are here to help those people who do not know where to go,” Father Nowak said. “They are former Roman Catholics and other denominations, Christian people who cannot find a religious home for themselves.”

The P.N.C.C. doesn’t recruit people active in other churches, Father Nowak said.

“We would like to tell people we are here, but I would not go in the parking lot of a Roman Catholic church and wait for the people coming from their service and give them flyers to come to our church. We live in the 21st century. We have Internet, Facebook, whatever is available. They can find us, and if somebody’s looking, they can come. If they would like to stay, we would be so happy to have those people here.”
Convo 2016 Registration Forms are now available on our Facebook page and have been emailed to your pastor. The cost per participant is $300 if received by May 15, 2016, $350 after May 15th. The Convo Committee has been meeting and is planning for an exciting week of worship, prayer, learning and Christian fellowship. Our Convo Theme is “I Am”!

Please follow us on Facebook at: Convo 2016

If you have any questions or would like a registration form emailed to you - contact us at: RobNem21@aol.com May God bless you and we hope to see you at Convo.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Eric R. Nemko
Convo 2016 President

Rev. Robert M. Nemko
Convo 2016 Chaplain

Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski
Bishop of the Eastern Diocese

Further information and registration forms can be found on the P.N.C.C. Web site at www.pncc.org/?event=convo-2016