

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

A PARISH OF THE WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

February 2017

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Strength of Silence

One of the unique aspects of the priesthood, as I seem to have touched upon recently on a number of occasions, is the self-motivating factor. Often, the "success" of a priest, be it on earth or in Heaven (I'd like to think) comes from the time and effort put in to things that he "could" or "should" do.

Prayer is the same way....and really, much of life is as well. It is about the time, the effort, the desire to do things. Recently, at St. Mary's, we just completed a Bible Study that was focused on prayer and that emanated from a movie that we watched: "War Room."

It was a Hollywood release, with the male lead a local to Cleveland. It had the bells, whistles, and production quality of any other 2015 movie, but its center was Christ and prayer.

The conscience of the movie was a character named "Ms. Cleo". She was a repentant Christian, who described and lived the type of prayer any Christian should seek to be part of...especially in the comfort of home.

For me, it awakened feelings to the time in life when I was the most prayerful. Against all odds, it was actually in my late



teens and early twenties!

I happened to have fallen in love with the girl that would become my wife, but she lived 206 miles away from my parent's home in Western Massachusetts. At the time, I was driving a 1999 Chevrolet Malibu. It was the bare-bones model— automatic nothing, no cruise control, no cd player, no tape deck. And to top it off, it had to have the worst radio antenna in all recorded history. It could get FM stations from one or two towns away and not a hint of AM.

Needless to say, 206 miles happened once a month, each way, in mostly silence. At first, it drove me nuts...but love makes you do funny things. Eventually, it seemed like I memorized Interstate 84 from Hartford to Mt. Cobb: the turns, the signs, how many minutes away each exit was.

Of course, this silence also led to incredible prayer. It came to that I looked forward to the drive. I would spend the first hour or so planning my life— schoolwork, my job, future plans. I'd review, debate, talk to myself, maybe make a phone call (roaming was big \$\$\$ in 2002).

I would pray. And why not? Now I know that "Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent" (Proverbs 17:28). My internal debate throughout the second half of my college life was whether or not I should take a job out of college or go to seminary. My prayers centered around

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this conundrum, really making me wonder if that meant that God actually was not calling me if it was such a debate.

My internal turmoil would really make me squirm. Sometimes, the time of prayer left me more confused and frustrated. Eventually though, it provided clarity. It might have taken a few dozen hours, but it was real and powerful.

Twenty pounds and some grey hair later, I go back to my relationship with silence. And now that I know a thing or two, it is more eagerness than frustration. After all, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent" (Exodus 14:14).

St. Mary's is on a main drag, right on the border of Parma and Cleveland. Thousands of cars drive by every day, hundreds of loud, lumbering trucks as well that shake the place. The flagpole shakes violently in a heavy wind, buckles and rope clanging everywhere.

I've found the spot in the church where I like to pray the most. Recently, I've thought about how *War Room* showed how to blot out distractions. The advice was to find our place and to work on becoming better in prayer, whether it was by taking notes, setting up reminders, or even shutting out previous things in life that you thought important.

The good Lord knows that I am laughably, embarrassingly, depressingly far from perfect...but I'm trying! Embrace silence! It is an incredible feeling to get real, prayerful dialogue with God, as fleeting as it may be. Hey, it is the least we can do, to try to get closer to the one who is the author of all that is good!

Fr. Jason

Installation of Parish Officers

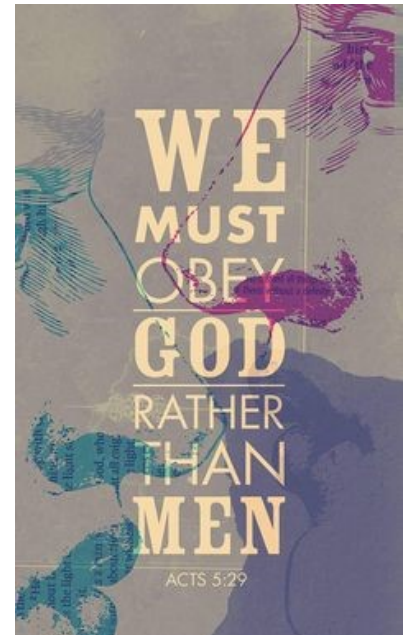
The 2017 parish officers of St. Mary's parish were installed at Holy Mass on Sunday, January 8, 2017.

The officers were elected at a December 2016 meeting. Then, per the Constitution of the PNCC, their names and information were submitted to the Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, along with a verification from the pastor that they are faithful members and were duly elected.

Upon the bishop's approval, an official installation service was held. Those taking the oath of office include all those serving on our Parish Committee, auditors, and other various essentials of the parish. Our Parish Committee 2017: Elaine Ploskonka, Chairperson; Steve



Fesz, Vice-Chair; Josephine Ference, Treasurer; Jo Ann Long, Financial Secretary; Rose Kronen, Secretary. Directors: Bob Bernacki, Jeanette Chambers, Ron Ference, Greg Hodor, David Micka, Jim Ploskonka, Chuck Repede, Gene Stepanik, John Spilka, Bruno Tracy, Mike Wisniewski.



Epiphany

The Feast of Epiphany took place on January 6. Along with it was the blessing of chalk, incense, charcoal, and Holy Water. After, home visitations began.

Epiphany visitations are an ancient tradition in the Church. Pastors and assistants visited the homes during the season following the feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings).

The purpose of these visits was originally was to gather gifts to maintain the church in the cold winter months. Today, the pastoral aspect of these visits is emphasized. The shepherds of the parish community visit the homes of the faithful to become better acquainted

and to knit the parish community into a real and close parish family. The visit begins with prayer and the blessing of the home and members of the family.

Many thanks to those who invited Fr. Jason to their homes during the Epiphany season this year. If anyone would like a visit, they can still take place up until Ash Wednesday. Please contact Fr. Jason.



St. Mary's Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Mary's took place on Sunday, January 29.

The meeting took place after the 9am Holy Mass, with 11am Mass postponed for the weekend.

Among the items discussed included the acceptance of all reports, any old business and a review of the financials. Any of these reports are available to our parishioners by contacting us via email.



Ideas for fundraisers were discussed as well.

Major items passed for 2017 included the yearly budget, an update to our Parish By-laws and rental agreement, and the approval to look into the demolition and building of a new garage that would better serve the pastor and the parish, as the current one is structurally unfit.



We thank all who attended for exercising his or her democratic right as a Polish National Catholic to be a voting member concerning the future of this parish.



Scholarship Opportunities

The year is new, which means many organizations have opportunities for scholarships!

POLISH ANCESTRY Is anyone you know in college and has Polish blood? Then they are eligible for a scholarship opportunity. Check out <http://paccf.org/> and look at the scholarships open to our young students.

PNU MEMBERS to all students who are attending a college or university, either part-time or full-time, now is the time to submit your stipend application for the 2016/2017 school year. Remember, one must portray the following criteria; a

member who is current paying; single premium; or fully paid-up member of the PNU for at least 5 years (this does not include Social Membership). The deadline to apply for the stipend is April 15, 2017. The new application is under our bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Any questions or concerns please contact *Mary Ann Stankowski, Education and Youth Commission, Chair*, EYC@pnu.org.

MUSICIANS Please keep in your prayers the music ministers of our parish and of the entire PNCC. Give thanks for those that are currently giving of their talents & help

support the future of this ministry. Your donation today can make a difference! A flyer is posted to the bulletin board and applications can be found online at nucmusicsscholarship.weebly.com.

FOR THOSE WITH GLASSES

Scholarships are available simply if you need to wear glasses! In fact, there are 8 of them! Visit <https://weirdscholarships.net/scholarships-for-people-with-glasses/>

COFFEE DRINKERS A scholarship is available if you love coffee and are willing to write a 500 word essay telling why— search *CoffeeForLess* “Hit the Books” for more info!

From the Future Directions Sub-committee of the PNCC

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP - WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Christian stewardship and Christian giving work hand in hand. Generosity is one of the primary ways in which Christians show the fruit of the Spirit at work in their lives. How important our faith and our parish is to us is evidenced in how we use our **TIME**, **TALENT** and **TREASURE** towards God's work.

PARISH STEWARDSHIP: One of the ways our church is unique in its democratic structure is that the people purchase, build, and maintain their own Church property in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the Polish National Catholic Church. Just as our homes must be maintained and the bills paid to keep the lights on, heat working and everything running in proper order the same holds true for our spiritual homes.

Some view the meeting of their church obligations as attending Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Others acknowledge that attendance at church is one of the many gifts received to enrich our lives with the Word of God and the receipt of Sacraments. It is easy to focus on the spiritual fulfillment, knowledge and growth that is the center of our attendance. Of course, that is the basis for learning more of our faith and advancing our relationship with Christ. We trust the church will be there with open doors when we come to worship.

As we worship in the pews, it is sometimes difficult to be aware of the earthly concerns that impact our ability to worship: our Pastor's salary and health care, utility bills, organist, care of the church grounds, insurances, maintenance and repairs, mortgage, and the list continues. Do you know all Parish finances are the responsibility of the parishioners?

Many of these same items appear on our household budgets. Imagine trying to cover these expenses with a few dollars a week and a bake sale fundraiser. None of us would even consider that a reasonable possibility.

We are also called upon to care for each other, to look for opportunities to serve one another. It is then that we abide in Him and show gratitude for all that He has given to us and for us.

BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP: THE TRUTH ABOUT MONEY: Biblical stewardship requires that a Christian view money differently from the way the secular world views it. The secular world equates affluence with success and happiness. Therefore, society constantly struggles to acquire as much wealth as possible. The Bible, however, exposes the worthlessness of such a struggle by revealing the truth about money. The Psalms proclaim, "But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish" *Psalms 49:12*. No matter how much one struggles for wealth, death still awaits because money cannot add anything to one's life. Let us show that our heart is with Jesus by how we choose to support His Church - see *Matthew 6:21*

How are you doing on your parish community service projects? Great job to Holy Trinity and St. Joseph's Parish in Linden, New Jersey pictured above preparing cold weather packages for the homeless. A great effort and commitment to living the Gospel mandate. Also we are glad that Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River made a commitment to their community by hosting a city warming center each and every Monday this winter feeding and clothing many homeless in the city. Please do share pictures of your community outreach projects so that we may share them across our PNCC.

You should be planning your parish and/or seniorate/deanery Lenten Retreats as well. Lent is right around the corner, as is our Prime Bishop's Presentation on the Solemnity of the Institution of the Eucharist. That will be coming next month! 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 begun at Holy Synod in your daily prayers – asking God to bless this work and allow it to bear fruit for the building of His Kingdom through our Holy Church. As we continue our Year of Commitment - let us show our Commitment to Christ and our Holy Catholic and Apostolic PNCC.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee
Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, *Prime Bishop*
Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., *Chairman*



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Various Announcements

National Clothing Drive

The National United YMSofR Clothing Drive has concluded. Thank you to everyone who donated towards this cause. Branch #29 of the YMSofR (St. Mary's) has tallied the results for a total of over 1000 unique items, coming in 1st place (!!!) in the PNCC! Items were picked up by the City Mission of Greater Cleveland and will be distributed locally by this wonderful organization to those in need. The United YMSofR will be sponsoring a pizza party for Branch #29 in the near future.

Choir Party

Thank you kindly to the Paulus family for opening their home to the parishioners of St. Mary's last Sunday afternoon. It was well-earned

after a fruitful meeting- the food and drinks were delicious, the company was wonderful, and the white elephant couldn't be more enthralling. *Bóg Zapłać!*

Fat Tuesday

St. Mary's will be holding a Fat Tuesday Pancake, Sausage, and Pączki dinner on February 28! Pączki is also available for pre-order. They are from Rudy's, one of the proven premier pączki providers in the area. Please see Steve Fesz or view the flyer attached to the Newsletter Cover.

Quick Note

There will be only one Mass at 10am on Sunday, February 12. We will have a parish pot-luck after Mass to enjoy some delicious food and fellowship. Please mark your schedule now!

Food Ministry

Hunter. Our former pastor, Rev. Roman Misewicz, served as an extra in this movie! If you have

Our monthly Food Ministry was held Wednesday, February 1st. Thanks to our volunteers who are so consistent in his or her help to those in need, as well as those who stepped up and took on new jobs this time.

Financial Information

For 2016 has been placed in your parish mailboxes. For any further questions, please stop by the Board Room.

Scheduling Masses

There are plenty of open Sundays for scheduling Masses— please see, call, or email Fr. Jason to schedule an intention for a Mass.

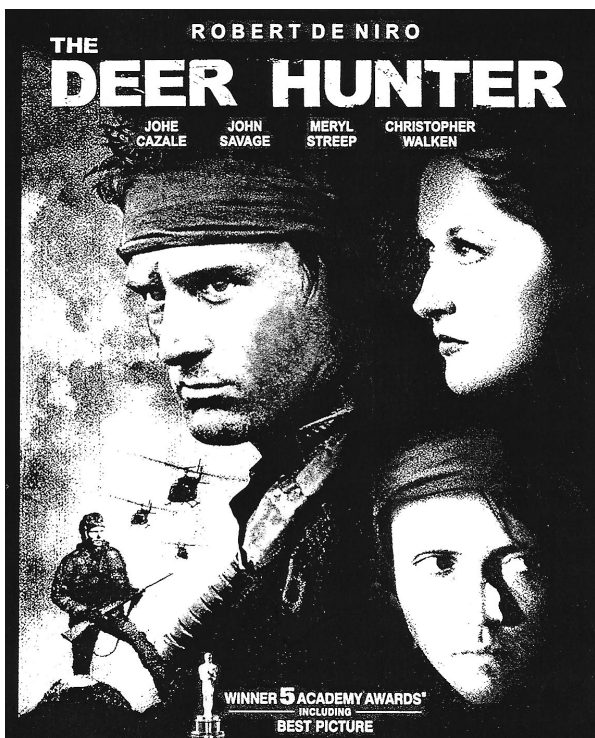
Epiphany Blessings

Thank you to all who opened their homes to Father Jason this past Epiphany Season. It is a joy to pray with you in a different setting, and especially joyful to share stories, conversation, and...well...food and coffee! Fr. Jason

some time and would like to share a memory, stop by!

Movie Screening

Be there! On Saturday, February 18, the Tremont History Project is presenting a screening of "The Deer



Saturday, February 18th
The Tremont History Project presents
a FREE screening of the
award-winning locally-filmed 1978 classic
'THE DEER HUNTER'
at St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral
733 Starkweather Avenue

Partially filmed in Tremont!

Show begins promptly at 12:30pm
Admission is FREE, donations are welcome!
Running time is 182 minutes!
Free popcorn, coffee, & light refreshments!
Rated R - Seating is limited!

WERE YOU THERE???

Tremont History Project will also be gathering residents' memories and stories of the filming of this movie to compile a collection of oral history accounts of this renown chapter of Tremont's rich and unique history. So please come and share your memories following the film!

More info? Contact Dan @ 216.272.5046 or dlotz9@yahoo.com

A note from your parish chair.....

Happy February everyone - As of the writing of this page, only 40 days until Spring! We would have thought it was already here at 58 degrees and rainy on February 7th!

Thank You

I would like to take a moment to thank those that volunteered plenty of hours to the decorating and un-decorating of the church and hall for the Christmas season: Jo Ann; Natalie; Rose; Ron Amburgey (who continues his family's tradition of setting up the manger which his grandfather built!); and the Moritz & O'Connor families (who also continued with the Valentine's theme in the Fellowship Hall)! More could be said but I think I can wrap it up with... Job well done!

Expression of Sympathy

St. Mary's recently lost one of our parishioners, Michael Gierlach. Michael was raised in our Parish, active as a youth and serving on the altar. Although not present on a regular basis in past years, Michael's faith in God was strong and he held his parish and St. Mary's family dear in his heart. Many of us will remember him offering a helping hand during pierogi making as well as cooking the corn-on-the-cob he so proudly donated for our annual picnics. We offer our prayers to his entire family that they find God's peace and strength in this difficult time.

Michael Gierlach – December 8, 1956 ~ January 18, 2017
"Au revoir ~ God Bless ~ Over and out"

*With the saints give rest O Christ
to the souls of Thy servants,
where there is neither sickness, nor sighing,
but life everlasting. Amen.*



Random Acts of Kindness

If one were to look up a list celebrations, some referred to as "National", you would find them celebrating anything from Secretaries Week; Library Week; last month's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; to Donut Day; Kite Flying Day; and Name Your Car Day! Some are very meaningful and others are quite bizarre and just fun to smile about, and yes even celebrate... who can turn down a good glazed donut!!! Yes, I am going somewhere with this. February is the month which encourages us to carry out deeds during Random Acts of Kindness Week which is February 12-18. Who doesn't believe this world needs A LOT more kindness spread among us! The Bible teaches: "By our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants - by the Holy Spirit, by our true love," 2 Corinthians 6:6. I share with you now some history and information I found when searching the internet. Something you may also want to do to spark some ideas of the acts you may want to show to someone.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."
– Leo Buscaglia

Sometimes it's the smallest act that makes the biggest impact, something as simple as saying please or thank you can turn a day around, and make a life seem that much better. Random Acts of Kindness Day encourages you to get out there and be the light you want to see in the world.

History of Random Acts Of Kindness Day

Random Acts Of Kindness Day was first created in Denver, Colorado in 1995, and nine years later it spread to New Zealand in 2004. Random Acts of Kindness can include just about anything, including something as simple as taking a tray of muffins to work. The idea behind this holiday is to make the world a better place by spreading a little light around. Lift someone up with your words,

February Days of Note



February Birthdays

- 2nd – Mrs. Andrea Grmovsek
- 3rd – Carole D’Arcy
- 4th – Paul Wankowski
- 7th – Louise Cygan
- Claire Hunek
- 8th – Pollyanna Gajda
- 11th – Teresa Kasperczyk
- 13th – Matthew Moritz
- 18th – Karen Bedocs
- 22nd – Amy Dreger
- 23rd – Joyce Knapp
- 25th – Fr. Greg Gronn
- 28th – Helen Budney
Tom Putynski



February Anniversaries

- 2nd – Bill & Joan Kastak

In honor of Valentine's Day, February 14th...

"Love Can..."

Love can surely rescue
A heart in deep despair,
A heart that has given up
And no longer feels God near

Love can breathe new meaning
When there's nothing left inside,
When there's no feeling or emotion
Just dryness in our lives

Love can restore new hope
After it's withered and died,
For hope is what will get us through
And love can be its guide

Love can run and embrace
The prodigal returning home
And the one that has come to the end,
Those hurting, lost and alone

For God's love is the answer
To our broken, empty lives,
As we come with an open heart,
He can dispel all the hurt inside

And He will heal our brokenness
And lovingly, He will bind
The wounds that have left us scarred
And bring soundness to our minds

So give it over to God's love,
Our lives, and all that we are
Then we will know and walk in His love,
For His love shall dwell in our hearts.

@ By M.S.Lowndes

Our Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Pat Glatzer | Barbara Baranowski |
| Bill & Joan Kastak | Anna Dawidziuk |
| Craig & Judy Atherton | John Spilka |
| Tom Petrie | Mary Ann Loschelder |
| Ralph & June Zaun | Len Pryer |
| Marty Bengela | Amy Dreger |
| Floyd & Elaine Rzonca | Frank Dominik |
| John Kasperczyk | Chester & Helen Budney |
| Chester & Ann Warzala | Hilda Grabowski |
| Louise Cygan | |

Please pray for our family and friends:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Wanda Clark | Beth Chihill |
| Michael Cosevin | Helen Cummings |
| Laina Dachtal | Gayle Green |
| Jay Grabowsky | Pam Chesar |
| Cecelia Hall | Caroline Kunes |
| Mark & Kim Andreas | Thomas Lill |
| John & Anne Nemetz | Bea Miskow |
| Rose Neyman | Carol & Chuck Boesch |
| Joanie True | Daniel Rinella |
| Joanel Rollen | Mike Szydowski |
| Fr. Tom Sheha | Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard |
| Gracie Pijor | Ben Soltesy |
| Don and Pam Tropiano | Linda Vect |
| Dennis and Sue Vect | Marcus Vaughn, Jr. |
| Bryson Dzurhoff | Howard Dicken |
| Cherise Pacanovsky | Jane Hunter |
| Dennis Thome | The Finnie Family |
| Carlene Fliss | Jim Fliss Jr. |
| Duda Family | Fr. Sr. John Kraus |
| Nan Cramer | Bp. Stanley Bilinski |
| Bp. John Mack | David Vaden |
| Bp. John Swantek | Jeannie Bartko Muran |
| Johanna Markiewicz | Edna Samelson |
| Rev. Raymond Drada | Wanda Heffner |
| Kim Blaha | John Clark Sr. |
| Abby Sobolewski | Geri S. |
| Robert Winlock | Colleen Howard |
| Muffie B. | Nancy Jablonowski |
| Jason Dreger | George Pofok |
| Stephanie Milla | Rich Dombrowski |
| Shannon Alberino | Bp. Thomas Gnat |
| Donna Micka | Al Tomasello |
| Marilyn Girard | Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak |

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Polly Gajda | Gene Mora |
|-------------|-----------|

WE ALSO REMEMBER
ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
Bless them, O Lord.

Visit us online at
www.stmaryspncc.org

