

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

August/September 2016

Pastor: Rev. Jason H. Soltysiak
frjason82@gmail.com

Parish Chair: Mrs. Elaine Ploskonka
elaineploskonka@gmail.com
Cell: (216)536-3496



Grasping for Straws?

To begin, apologies for the condensed summer versions of the newsletter. Sometimes, the schedule of production is conducive to a monthly production of a newsletter at a small parish, and other times, things get backed up a bit. Also, since this newsletter covers events from the two previous months (July & August), some things may seem like old news...

It wasn't until the very last day of August that I got some inspiration to write my thoughts. In a rarity for the summer, there was no one at morning Mass, so those "lonely" Masses I celebrate have a different vibe—they become much more introspective. As I examine my conscience for an Absolution that *is not* coming, it tends to take a while.

I went through my summer of service to the parish and to my Savior—what was done well, what was done poorly, what was not done that should have been. The things that fall under the "good" pile tend



to go out-of-mind as quickly as they went in...while the "bad" seem to continue to fester.

I remember a feeling I had just a couple of weeks ago: St. Mary's was hopping for a week straight. I had family and friends visiting, the Diocesan Synod took place, followed by a night with visitors at a parishioners, followed by the Golf Tournament and dinner, then Confirmation, an afternoon with family...and then by late Monday morning, everyone was gone. Everyone.

After having such a set purpose to the previous number of days (and, of course, the planning days immediately preceding these events), it seemed like a letdown. On one hand, a break was nice. On the other hand, there was a certain substance to the lined-up events that were getting accomplished.

In pastoral work, a pastor needs to be self-motivated as well as God-motivated. I've seen, in many denominations, men and women who have sort of "checked-out" of the bigness that ministry can be, choosing instead the path of least resistance.

I felt this in the days to follow the

St. Mary's P.N.C.C.
5375 Broadview Road
Parma, OH 44134
Office/Hall Phone: 216-661-9246
Rectory Phone: 216-741-8154
Email: stmarypncc@sbcglobal.net
www.stmaryspncc.org
Like us on Facebook-St. Mary's Parma OH

busy time here. Then the question that every minister has—Why me, God? Are you sure I was the one you wanted to call? We haven't had a flow of new parishioners God...what am I doing wrong?

I pray for those whose minds are dominated by these thoughts—mine merely gets pocked with the points of these mental darts.

This morning at Mass, in the midst of certain woe, the readings assigned for today's Mass were apparently written for a greying 34-year old priest in Ohio. "For we are God's co-workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). "Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be His own" (Psalm 33:12). And just for good measure, the gospel was from Luke 4:38-44, with Jesus ministering to Peter's mother-in-law, an ode to the ministry of a married clergyman.

Perhaps to some, this is grasping at straws. "All scripture is good" you may think, "you can probably apply something to yourself any day." And that pessimist in you might not be wrong. But our faith tells us that the Lord is at work in us and for us...and sometimes that work comes in mysterious ways. Personally...selfishly...I got a boost of inspiration and confidence from this scripture. For me, it truly was what I needed.

Father Jason's Article (continued)

My faith tells me that anyone can encounter Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Word of God. Though the receiving of the Eucharist is always a tantamount moment in our faith journeys...The Word can be just as powerful at times.

I was blessed to lead a Bible Study at the Synod...in the middle of those events where everything seemed to have such purpose, such gravitas...and my focus of that Bible Study was the presence of the reverent Word throughout my journey through

life into priesthood. Sometimes, God will talk simply when you make that little effort and open His word—the old, flip-the-pages, read-what-page-it-stops version of reading the Bible—it helped me in my youth, and lookie—it got me again just now. How bout you?
Fr. Jason

PolishFest 2016

St. Mary's was once again the buzz of northeast Parma this past July as we hosted our third iteration of our PolishFest from Thursday July 7-Sunday July 10.

The Good Lord and the prayers of our Diocesan Bishop provided the good weather—a series of signs, advertisements online & in printed media, and good ol' word of mouth made this our best-attended and most profitable Fest yet.

Our goals have always been simple: have fun, glorify God through His Son Jesus, and make a little money.

As the festival has grown, we find ourselves in increasingly better positions to accomplish these.



New goals for this year included an expanded menu (hello, golabki!), musical entertainment every night, and opening to outside vendors.

Our musical ventures were led by parishioner Bill Zychowski on the

accordion on Thursday and Saturday afternoon, 2 Guys, 12 Strings on Friday and The Honky Express polka band on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon. Unfortunately, in between each set and at the top of every hour, attendees were



PolishFest 2016 (continued)

forced to listen to Father Jason's joke telling, an acidic mix of corny jokes, dad jokes, and priest jokes.

After our third year, it seems we have really developed a formula for this event. Amusements were handled by Great Lakes Expositions for a second straight year. It is quite a joy to work with a professional company that is transparent in everything it does.

Our parishioners are what makes the gears turn. Many people have asked how a parish our size can put on an event of such magnitude. The answer lies in the devotion of our people! At any one time on any of the four days, we need at least 30 people volunteering their time, ready to do a job. 30 people at 24 total hours is indeed a lot to ask...and that doesn't include prep or teardown!

It is because our parishioners are willing to take on this monumental weekend of work in lieu of monthly dinners or breakfasts that we can be successful.



Various Announcements

Spojnia Sunday

As the PNCC celebrates Spojnia Sunday this September 25, let us always remember to support the efforts of our sister organization as the PNU continues to support the members, clergy and parishes of the PNCC. Contact your PNU Branch Secretary or call the PNU Home Office at 1-800-724-6352 for more info.

Spojnia Social Memberships

Spojnia and the Polish National Union are offering social memberships which virtually guarantee insurability, including life insurance policies. See Mike Wisniewski or the bulletin board for more details. As a member, you have access to the Credit Union, which hosts rates of loans that are rarely matched.

Seniorate Meeting

A meeting of the Northeast Seniorate of the Western Diocese takes place on Sep. 17 at Resurrection Parish in Temperance, MI. St. Mary's will be represented by our Pastor, 3 parish representatives, and a Diocesan council member.

Christian Family Presentation

At 7pm on Wednesday, October 5th, there will be an online presentation on the Solemnity of the Christian Family by the Most. Rev. Anthony Mikovsky. This will be in a similar vein as last year's Brotherly Love presentation – A

visual podcast in which parishes are asked to gather and experience together.

School of Christian Living

Will begin September 18th. We ask that the parents of all SOCL aged kids please make this an important part of your children's life and educational process.

Animal Blessing

The Blessing of Pets and Animals in honor of St. Francis of Assisi takes place 7pm on Tuesday, October 4

PGSC

The Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland will be resuming its normal schedule of meetings this Tuesday, September 6th at 7:30pm. They meet monthly on the first Tuesday. This group provides assistance in genealogical research, as well as providing historical and cultural information for attendees. This is an open meeting and all are invited to attend.

AA

For those who are interested, two AA groups meet at St. Mary's on a weekly basis. Parma Saturday meets for an hour every Saturday from 8-9pm. This is a very large and active group, with weekly at-

tendance 75+. The Thursday evening group meets from 7-8pm and is for women only. This group came from another section of Cleveland and has been met with enormous growth since its move to St. Mary's about a year ago. They went from about a dozen weekly attendees to almost triple that.

Guppy Club

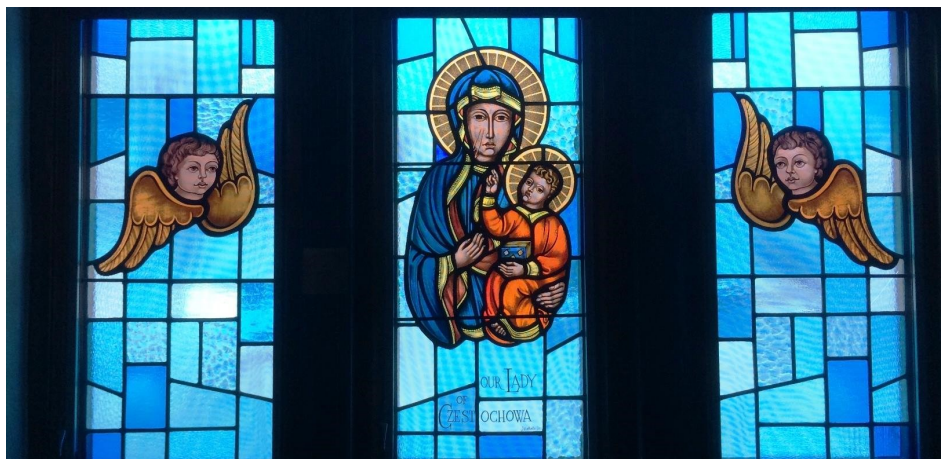
The Guppy Club meets usually on the 4th Wednesday of every month at St. Mary's. They are what you are thinking—guppy (the fish) enthusiasts. They meet and bring in exotic fish, trade stories, and share fellowship.

Bowling

St. Mary's Bowling League will begin on Sunday, September 18 at 3:30pm at Red Circle Lanes on State Rd. This league is open to all level of bowlers—even someone who rolls in the 60's is a huge help to a team, as all scores are set to an average. If anyone is interested in bowling this year, please contact Elaine Ploskonka.

Email Addresses Wanted

A couple of years ago, the parish did a drive to gather current email addresses. We are asking for email addresses of parishioners, family and friends in order to keep them in the loop of what goes on at St. Mary's. We also desire to be able to use email as a free source of sending out our parish newsletters... saving the cost of printing and a stamp. Please let Fr. Jason know of any updates.



What Happened at the Synod? (Should not stay at the Synod!)

Submitted by Dr. Jim Ploskonka

Over the past year so many programs and events have taken place at St. Mary's, but this month all of the work and sacrifice seemed to come together for me. As I was standing in the choir loft on August 17, 2016 singing, "Lift High the Cross," the Holy Synod of the Western Diocese of the Polish



National Catholic Church procession entered. First Father Greg incensing the path, and ending with Prime Bishop. The sanctuary of the church, which was recently updated last year, displayed our new cross in Pentecost Red for the Holy Synod Mass. As the sanctuary was encircled with clergy and the bishops were greeted I thought of my mom. I would love to have her participating in mass with me as I am sure she had the same desire to be

with her mom and dad at synods that she attended. There came a point in the Mass, when the Sacrament of the Word



was being delivered by Prime Bishop, when a stillness seemed to take over; no sound, no bells, and no paper shuffling, no cars or motorcycles. Then suddenly a gushing breeze flowed into the church from our beautifully refurbished front doors

that were propped open as the temperatures and humidity reflected August in NE Ohio. A feeling of the Holy Spirit coming upon all of us. Yes, the wind was so prominent that Prime Bishop's cope was flowing with the breeze.

As Mass concluded and the delegates, clergy and guests went downstairs for evening supper, comments were candidly made how attractive and beautiful the church looks and how welcomed guests felt. The downstairs hall was all decked out with black table cloths, center pieces and NO flour on the floor. How many pierogi have been made down there for the car show, "Polishfest," and fish fries? Remembering how the basement transforms into a flea market paradise with bags filled with other "mens" treasures and delicious homemade baked goods that are quickly bought. So many interactions, friendships, laughs, sharing and relationships have been formed through these activities in this basement. So much time, work and energy echoing the motto of our Church: with truth, work and struggle, yet enriched with commitment, focus and love. After dessert it was up to the much appreciated air conditioned fellowship hall complete with new paint, tables well prepared for the meeting needs, a PA system loaned to us, and all lights working to

begin the synod. After synod appointments were made it was down to business, yet it seemed different, somehow relaxed and focused, somehow structured and yet free – maybe it was just a big family reflecting on the past, but with eyes to the future. Speaking of eyes, all eyes and ears were on Ethan, a member of our parish



What Happened at the Synod? (Should not stay at the Synod!)



who presented the report and thoughts of the youth of the Western Diocese. FYI: this was the first synod that I attended where someone was called back to the podium later in the week to present again the report and thoughts of an organization or commission, which sparked a brainstorming session of how to improve our parishes. Awesome job Ethan! As the day came to an end, I felt so proud to be part of our parish, not just for that day, but rather for the past year filled with work, hope, optimism and community. So many have helped to make St. Mary's who we are.

The following meeting days took place at the Holiday Inn in Independence. While there were plenty of reports and comments, there continued to be that single-minded focus of the future. A future that is not snared by

reasons of what *can't be* but what *can be*. Daily prayer, luncheons, laughter, greeting each other, listening, learning and sharing continued. Extraordinary Sessions, as they were coined, featured organizations – one of which was the National United YMS of R facilitated by our very own Father Jason. He, like Ethan, hit it out of the park. Just a little pun on baseball. :-)

The LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi – sexual and transgender) community was a topic of conversation and presentation at the synod, an Extraordinary Session. Welcoming and accepting members for this community into our Church was what most expected, but for me, and noticeably others, the presentation and discussion was less about the LGBT community and more about not judging any group or person or painting with broad strokes

a particular group. Not at all what I anticipated or expected – not confrontational or awkward, but freeing as it separated groups from individual sin and took the responsibility of “judging” away and replacing it with love and understanding. Isn't that what growing spiritually is about? I think it is really cool to be challenged in our thoughts and actions. This provided time for reflection and thought. There are no major changes or synod enactments to report, but isn't that how the Spirit works. A ton of work was accomplished and directions for the next four years were discussed, but the real work was done behind the scenes through our

time, energy, talents and treasures making our parish a place that welcomes everyone and that the Holy Spirit, like a gushing breeze, filled our sanctuary at the beginning of the synod and brings relief to the challenges and hope for the future. My only regret was that we didn't sing “Tyle Lat” at the conclusion of the synod, but it is probably for the best as my mom wasn't there to belt it out with me. The bottom line, it was a great synod stemming from a great foundation built by our parish! Let's take this beyond our walls



and, with urgency, welcome others to the family with expectation and hope for an amazing future with Christ!

Confirmation Sunday

After a period of study that began in early 2014, Mr. Ethan L. completed his studies to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday, August 21, 2016.

Along the way of his studies, Ethan made the choice to have himself baptized in the summer of 2015, as well as receive his First Communion.

Holy Mass was celebrated by Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky. Bishop Stanley Bilinski offered the Homily and conferred the Sacrament to Ethan. Deacon Tom Klusek from the Lancaster/Bufalo Cathedral assisted Prime Bishop. These clergy were still in town from the golf tourney. Bishop Bilinski was assisted by Father Jason and Father Greg.

In his homily, before Ethan made his Confirmation Vow, Bishop Bilinski



spoke on Ethan's maturity and spiritual growth he had shown in his attendance over the summer to the Youth Convo and the Diocesan Synod.

After Mass, the PTO held a wonderful

breakfast honoring Ethan. He was delighted and held court at the head table, which featured the clergy and the wives. He spun tales that left our attending bishops more than satisfied with the collective decision to confirm him in the faith of Jesus Christ.



2nd Annual United YMSofR Golf Tournament

The Second Annual United YMSofR Golf tournament took place on Saturday, August 20th once again at Skyland Golf Course in Hinckley, OH.

We were honored by the presence of our Prime Bishop, Anthony Mikovsky, who kicked off the event with prayer. He made sure to let us know he'd practice over the next year to play in next year's tourney. Then, the 11 teams kicked off with a shotgun start on a beautiful warm summer day.

After a day on the links, golfers went to St. Mary's for an hour of cocktails and appetizers, followed by dinner, awards, and dessert. Congratulations to the team of Dr. Jim, Mitch, Nate, and Kenny Ploskonka, who *won* the overall

award. The team of Tom Fox, Andy Ross (St. Stanislaus; Scranton, PA) and Father Jason Soltysiak and David Micka (St. Mary's, Parma) won the YMSofR flight. Finally, the team of Justyna Pietrus (Woonsocket, RI), Sarah Dicken (Parma), Cathy Bilinski and Lauren



Bilinski (Sterling Hts, MI) won the women's division.

Many thanks to all who attended, golfed, and enjoyed. The United YMSofR will be meeting on Tuesday, September 6 to decide the site of next year's tournament, as it was agreed to move from Ohio.



7th Annual Dinner and a Car Show

The 7th Annual Dinner and a Car Show took place on an absolutely picturesque Saturday afternoon, August 6, 2016.

Event Coordinator Steve Fesz and his family attended many a car show and car cruise before our big event in order to pass out flyers, talk to classic car owners, and make friends with DJ's in order to make sure St. Mary's Show was a success.

Every spot on our parking lots were filled with display cars. Can you believe we can fit nearly 150 cars on our property?!

Car enthusiasts and Polish food enthusiasts joined forces to descend upon the downstairs hall and kitchen for a late lunch or an early dinner.

The menu included all the Polish favorites, including go-labki, kielbasa, sweet cheese, potato, and kraut pierogi, haluski, hot dogs, dessert, and more.

Visitors were allowed to submit a car for an end-of-night award, a trophy hand-crafted by Mr. Fesz himself. After a number were given to the runners-up, the coveted Kielbasa Kup (a mammoth trophy with the top cup filled to the brim with St. Mary's fresh homemade kielbasa) was awarded to our winner.



As with any good car show, after the event ended, people stuck around and traded stories and enjoyed the good weather and good people. Many thanks again to Steve, his family, and all who helped or attended this event.



Convo 2016

Convo 2016 was hosted by the Eastern Diocese of the PNCC at St. Anselm University in Manchester, NH, about a ten minute drive from the Cathedral. The theme was "I Am", with the sessions, projects, and speakers focused around the scripture including these words.

Father Jason and our parishioner Ethan



attended. Many thanks to Branch #29 of the YMSofR who helped sponsor Ethan's trip. The young man also did quite a bit of work around the parish in early summer as well as attend almost every parish event where his help was needed.

As the Convo has been written up already in the God's Field/Rola Boza, this will speak from a St. Mary's point-of-view. Father Jason was called upon to be a support character in the "Reenactment of the Life of Bishop Hodur." You can view this informative presentation on Youtube by searching "PNCC Future Direction" in the Youtube search bar or by clicking here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWx_fSKYfpl.

Father Jason also presented a session on the True Vine. Though powerpoint failed him a bit, a swift recovery was made (God bless Google Drive!).



Ethan was chosen to portray Pontius Pilate in a rendering of the Passion during Father Michal Gitner's Session "I Am the Way". He also was a master song-writer and performer for the small-group sketches (they'll be on YouTube soon!) and was elected to serve as a member of the Western Diocesan United Youth Association. Later, he was elected by his fellow youth to attend the XVII'th Synod of the Western Diocese.

Ethan also won the award for "sweatiest kid" after the dance on Thursday night. He shared his award with his friends.



A note from your parish chair.....

Once again we can be proud...

We've wrapped up the last of the events, quite successfully may I add, that we've been preparing for and talking about the past several months; the hosting of the Western Diocese Synod August 17th-19th, and the National YMSofR Golf Tournament on August 20th. Once again Thank You to Everyone who volunteered their time!

Many times we don't mention names in fear of leaving someone out but I feel this time I must do a few shout-outs to those who put in hours upon hours to the success of these events: Fr. Jason; Jim Ploskonka; Jo Ann Long; Chris Paulus; and David Micka. We should all feel very proud of how welcome visitors feel when they walk through our doors! So much so that they look forward to us visiting again.

As far as a summary of the proceedings of the Synod, you'll find a reflective overview, in the pages of this newsletter, shared by Jim Ploskonka. As synods are one of the important elements of the life of our Church, I hope you will plan to attend a Synod wrap-up meeting on September 11th following 9am Mass. This will be an opportunity to hear first hand from the parish representatives (Fr. Jason, Jim & Elaine Ploskonka, and Mike & Barb Wisniewski) and ask any questions you may have. If you cannot attend, we're only a phone call away.

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Thank you Elizabeth Starnawski for sharing this recipe!

Tiramisu

- 5 egg yolks
- 8 T sugar
- 2 pkgs cream cheese
- 2 8oz tubs of cool whip
- Vanilla
- 7 oz. pkg lady fingers
- Strongly brewed coffee

Mix yolks and sugar together until white. Add cream cheese and cool whip. Add vanilla to taste. Set aside.

Dip lady fingers into the coffee and cover the bottom of a baking dish in a single layer. Spread 1/2 of the cream mixture on top. Create another layer of dipped lady fingers and spread remaining cream mixture on top. Cover with shaved chocolate.

Refrigerate for about 2 hours before serving.

**In Remembrance of
September 11, 2001**

HE WAS PRESENT

By: Diane Johnson

Some thought we'd
never see this day-
The day some say God
went away

How could this hap-
pen-How could this be
How terrible this was
for all to see

The horror the pain -
The sorrow the grief
It was hard to find
some much needed relief

We need to mend -
We need to heal
We all know this was unmistakably real

But all through the rubble -
And all through the loss
What was to be found
but the sign of the cross

It was placed there for a reason -
A reason indeed
God was ever present
for all the world to see

So remember that day -
Remember what was done
And remember it well -
the day of 9 one-one



elaine p. ploskonka

Aug/Sep. Days of Note



August

- 2nd – Kyrsten LeMessina
- 4th – Blake Colwell
- 5th – Bob Samelson
- 6th – John Spilka
- 13th – Chester Budney
- 14th – Sarah Dicken
- 15th – Tom Petrie
- 16th – Bruno Tracy
- 18th – Steve Fesz
- 19th – Len Pryer
- 20th – Claudia Toburen
- 24th – Matt Spilka
- 28th – Cherie Kugler

September

- 1st – Judy Lynne Mondok
- 1st – Brett Spilka
- 5th – Jim Ploskonka
- 7th – Elaine Ploskonka
- 7th – Sharon Skiba
- 9th – Marcus Todorovich
- 13th – David Knapp
- 14th – Monika Gorchek
- 16th – Andrea Grmovsek
- 17th – Rose Kronen
- 21st – Bob Bernacki



- Au-1st – Chuck & Elaine Repede
- 5th – George & Roseanne Ziefle
- 14th – Chester & Helen Budney
- 17th – Bruce & Claudia Toburen
- 24th – Doug & Stephanie Waugh

September

- 19th – Pete & Marge O'Conner
- 26th – Steve & Barbara Fesz
- 26th – John & Adrienne Michalczyk
- 26th – Bp. Stanley & Debbie Bilinski
- 26th – Tom & Cherie Kugler

“When You Thought...”

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you displayed my first report,
and I wanted to do another.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you fed a stray cat, and I thought it was
good to be kind to animals.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you gave me a sticker, and I knew that
little things were special things.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you put your arm around me,
and I felt loved.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking I
saw tears come from your eyes,
and I learned that sometimes things
hurt--but that it's all right to cry.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you smiled, and it made me want to
look that pretty too.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
you cared, and I wanted to be every-
thing I could be.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking--
I looked...and wanted to say thanks for
all those things you did when you
thought I wasn't looking.*

Our Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

Marlane Oleniacz	Barbara Baranowski
Bill & Joan Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
Craig & Judy Atherton	John Spilka
Mary Ann Loschelder	Ralph & June Zaun
Len Pryer	Marty Bengala
Floyd & Elaine Rzonca	Frank Dominik
John Kasperczyk	Chester & Helen Budney
Chester & Ann Warzala	Hilda Grabowski
Tom & Alice Petrie	Amy Dreger

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
Elsa Vogl de Gomez	Wanda Heffner
Kim Blaha	John Clark Sr.
Abby Sobolewski	Geri S.
Robert Winlock	Colleen Howard
Chris Minch	Nancy Jablonowski
Jason Dreger	George Pofok
Stephanie Milla	Rich Dombrowski
Muffie B.	Dan Colwell
Shannon Alberino	Bp. Thomas Gnat

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

Shirley Paulus	Gene Mora
Polly Gajda	
WE ALSO REMEMBER	
ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY	
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN	
Bless them, O Lord.	

Mary Rita Schilke Korzan

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