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

August 2023

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Sp. Rt. Rev. Jerry Rafalko



Our parish and diocese was terribly saddened to learn of the passing of our shepherd, Bishop Jerry. His obituary follows, as well as an article by Fr. Jason on the passing of a bishop and later on, his words at this funeral. We fondly remember his ministry and presence at St. Mary's during his short, yet memorable tenure as our Diocesan Bishop. Pictured above is him confirming Damion with grandfather George as a sponsor in September of 2022.

Right Reverend Jaroslaw Rafalko, Bishop Ordinary of the Western Diocese, Polish National Catholic Church, Pastor of All Saints Cathedral Polish National Catholic Church. Beloved husband of 33 years to Leslie 'Wieslawa'; cherished son of the late Wanda and Jan Rafalko; loving brother of Elzbieta (Jozef) Wasilewski and the late Janina (Stanislaw) Serwin; dearest uncle of Anna (Dominik) Dym, Artur (Cortney Johnson), Piotr (Wioletta)



Gryko, Michal (Iwona) Gryko and Grzegorz (Beata) Gryko; great-uncle of Aleksander Dym, Damian Johnson Wasilewski and Piotr Gryko; dear son-in-law of Eugenia and the late Stefan Czaban; loved brother-in-law of Barbara Czaban and Alicja (Mikolaj) Gryko. Jaroslaw was ordained to priesthood,

June 8, 1980 in Bialystok, Poland. Appointed Pastor of Holy Trinity Parish PNCC in Kewanee, IL in 1990. Appointed Administrative Senior of the Northcentral Seniorate of Western Diocese PNCC in August of 2016. Elected Bishop of the Western Diocese PNCC October 25, 2019. Consecration as Bishop at St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Cathedral, Scranton, Pennsylvania on Sept. 14, 2020 and Installed as Bishop at All Saints Cathedral Parish in Chicago, IL on October 3, 2020. Bishop layed in state on Sunday and Monday, July 23 & 24. Requiem Vespers took place at 7pm Monday night and his funeral liturgy began at about 10:15 am on Tuesday, July 25 at All Saints Cathedral PNCC.

"Dignity of a Bishop" (Fr. Jason's regular monthly article for August 2023)

When I was younger (and still a little bit now), I played a lot of video games. Some

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> games have collectibles and a percentage of how much you can complete it. You can "beat" the game with a 45% total rate of accomplishment...but there is always a trophy or achievement for 100%. Gamers who go after

> > this are called (and it is not a real word) "completionists."

Upon the passing of Rt. Rev. Jaroslaw Rafalko, our Diocesan Bishop here in the Western Diocese, many from our parish were able to virtually worship and witness his funeral liturgy

without traveling to Chicago. A question was asked the next day at Bible Study that I answered partially but promised to answer in total regarding the liturgy of removing the bishop's appointments before the liturgy concludes.

It is perhaps the emotional crescendo of the burial of a bishop. The lid of the casket gets placed on right afterward, so there is a firm finality to it all. Though it has occurred much more often than anyone cares for in our denomination, I have been blessed to have been chosen to place the lid on the casket a number of times in this liturgy.

But the question was asked – why? Why do we take those appointments off? It actually has a center in the day the bishop was Consecrated (other

Opening Article (Con't)

denominations will use "ordained") to the holy office of Bishop. I'll run through the appointments that are removed: The Pectoral Cross, Crozier, Episcopal Ring, and Miter (Mitre).

Each item that the bishop-to-be (the liturgy calls him "chosen one) receives are blessed immediately before presentation by the Consecrator (usually the Prime Bishop). The Pectoral Cross that a bishop wears is given with the words "Receive this cross, the sign of sacrifice, love, and devotion." The chosen one is then given a crozier with the words "Receive this pastoral staff, the sign of episcopal authority, and in love, patience, understanding, and righteousness endeavor to fulfill your office of instructing, improving, and perfecting the souls entrusted to your care". The chosen one then receives the episcopal ring, with the words "Receive this ring, a sign of faith and your unity with the Church of God." The chosen one receives a Book of Gospels in a similar way that he did upon his diaconate ordination. Finally, later in Mass, he will receive the miter with words "Most merciful Lord and God, bless and sanctify this miter which will be placed upon the head of this Your chosen and anointed servant. Through Christ, our Lord."

The PNCC has a rather unique circumstance that only our bishops and senior priests are permitted to wear exterior pectoral crosses. It is one of our practices that has grown organically and serves simply as a differentiator amongst the clergy. Since we do not have monastic orders (monks, nuns, brothers, etc.), it is easy to note that if the clergyman is wearing a cross on the outside of his vestments or has one tucked into his clerical shirt's breast pocket, he is a bishop or senior priest. It is traditional (but not quite required) that the bishop's pectoral cross is gold while the senior priest's is silver (another differentiator).

The pastoral staff, or crozier, is that of the Good Shepherd and symboliz-

es the care that a shepherd has for his sheep, be it calm and gentle or, if needed, somewhat forceful (like the comical shepherd's crook yanking someone off a stage!). For the eagleeved, the direction the crozier faces has meaning! When your diocesan bishop (or Prime Bishop) comes to the parish, he carries the crozier facing outward - this symbolizes that he has jurisdictional authority at this parish. At a bishop's consecration, if he is being consecrated in a cathedral that he will not be leading (usually our case), he will hold it sideways for his first episcopal blessing. And finally, once a bishop passes to his eternal reward, a Cathedral can keep a miter in place at his Cathedra (Bishop's Chair of authority) facing backwards, which represents that the Chair and the bishop's authority is vacant.

The Episcopal Ring given at his consecration is usually the ring the bishop wears at his funeral. A bishop has three traditional rings he can wearonce noted as the gemmed, the pontifical, and the ordinary. One would be with the large purple amethyst, one may feature the bishop's signet (a stamp that he would use to sign/seal, perhaps his or the diocesan coat of arms), and one may be more plain. There is plenty of historical leeway in what those 3 rings may feature.



The miter, or bishop's hat, should always be white, even if it features other colors. The two-sided triangular shape represents the Old and New Testaments, reflective of the charge of Scripture placed upon his head at his Consecration. The shape, like a tongue of fire, is like what those present at the Pentecost would have received. The two bands in back? Well, they are timepieces of when the miter was more cone-shaped and were actually used to tie it to the bishop's head! It represents authority, and dignity.

Each of these four items are removed, unless otherwise desired by the family or request of the bishop. Though the items were presented with pomp and blessing on the day of the bishop's consecration, they are removed in silence and given back to the family. In the PNCC, these items remain at the discretion of the family, as opposed to, say, the Roman Catholic Church where some are subject to the diocese.

Hopefully, when we attend or witness a consecration of a bishop in the next matter of months or years, we will have a greater understanding behind each item he will be receiving on that blessed day!

Fr. Jason

Fr. Jason's words at Bishop's Funeral

Fr. Jason served as a Master of Ceremonies at the funeral along with Fr. Sr's Rob Nemkovich & John Kowalczyk and Fr. Antulio Alvarado. Attending priests served as con-celebrants, including our own Rev. Jim Ploskonka. Fr. Jason was tremendously honored to be asked by Mrs. Leslie Rafalko to speak before Mass.

Genesis 1:27 says: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God created humankind in his own Divine Image, and yet, still offered incredible uniqueness to each of his creation. I'm always taken aback by emotional processing – People, in the face of great emotion, can and do completely have their behavior altered.

I have long processed great emotion by writing. Most of the time, what I write ends up taking up space on a hard drive

somewhere. Sometimes I press "print" or sometimes I even press "share". I believe that is why I was asked to share some words about someone I really grew a deep affection for in a short period of time.

"Time" is the operative word. The first conversations I held in the moments of aftershock upon receiving the sad news of Bishop Jerry's new call from God was how much impact, how much of a relationship, how many plans, how much communication was exchanged in what our PNCC history will show was a very short time as a diocesan bishop.

Bishop Jerry won the hearts of the priests of his diocese in that period of time. He did this because he never lost sight of his three Holy Orders.

Though our bishop, he never stopped being our deacon. He took great pride in serving his priests: being in charge of the snacks at our clergy conference meetings. He prided himself like any good host does – trying to attain that perfect mix of cheeses, meats, breads, Polish and Mexican fare, and even honoring requests. He tended to the table, as the scriptural deacon was prescribed, often insisting on being the one to clean up at the end of the night. As Prime Bishop Emeritus Nemkovich spoke of last night, he took his

role of gospodarz seriously!

As bishop, his pastoral sense never left him, honoring that order of priesthood. He pastored this parish and he pastored us, his priests. I mean, he really pastored us. He begged us to lay the burdens of our parish and families upon him. He stuck his neck out for the Hispanic communities, and took chances on priests that perhaps no one else would...all very pastorally.

And like I noted earlier...his impact as bishop. I took note of the things he did for our diocese. He strongly supported vocations with action and with checkbook those in who are in this sacred formation. He plotted things that would be uniquely "Western Diocese". He shared with his priests the going-on's from elsewhere in the diocese. And he waited for...I'll use his phrase...a couple of years until addressing certain authoritative subjects in this Diocese.

His tenure as our shepherd exemplified the Sacrament of Holy Orders that he received in its most complete form, as deacon, priest, and bishop. His impact on my family's life was needed, is enduring, and will never be forgotten – He was the hand that helped us out of the pit, as the psalmist wrote in psalm 40.

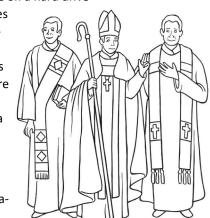
His impact on our church is manifold, but one of the ways it will be sustained is through us, his priests. The priests in our diocese, simply, like each other; we really all get along quite well...which means we all share this loss. May we keep his memory eternal and give God great praise for sharing with us his child, our shepherd and bishop, Leslie's husband, your family's brother, uncle, and faithful apostle of Jesus Christ.

Requiem Mass for Bishop Jerry

On Monday morning, July 17, 9am Holy Mass was offered for Rt. Rev. Jaroslaw Rafalko. Understanding that many would be unable to travel 6 hours for the funeral, we remembered Bishop by offering Holy Mass in the sorrow of black vestments, awaiting to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial the next week, where the focus would be on his Resurrection.

About a dozen people attended this Mass as we remembered and shared stories about his visits to our parish.





Parish Food Ministry

Another great month of St. Mary's Food Ministry! We served 349 meals for the month of July. This makes our total for the year 2,721, with our cumulative total at 20, 163. Food Ministry is always looking for volunteers. If you can donate 2 hours a week or even just 2 hours a month, please see Cathy Avondet, Nancy Roharik, or Patty Bennett.







Sp. Michael Matis

Michael E. Matis, age 92, formerly of Maple Heights, OH, passed away Wednesday, June 28, 2023. He was the beloved husband of the late Josephine S. (nee Wojtowicz); loving father of Sue (Roy) Dufton, Ken Matis, and the late Dennis Matis; dear step-father of Richard (Pia) Plaga, Susan (George) Farrar, and Deb (David) Gruber; cherished grandfather of 6 and great-grandfather of 15. A Memorial Mass to celebrate Mike's life was held at 10am on Friday, July 28th, 2023, at 10:00 am at St. Mary's Polish National Catholic Church in Parma, OH. The repast took place at the parish Fellowship Hall, hosted by the parish.



Parma Police



The Parma Police worked with St. Mary's to set up our parking lot as a safe area for an OVI (Operating a Vehicle Impaired) checkpoint on Friday, July 7. Pattie Dotson stayed late at church to allow use of the bathrooms for the working officers as well as a bite to eat. Thank you to Pattie, and appreciation for the Police for writing a heartfelt thank-you note to our parish.





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St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

OFFICE OF THE PRIME BISHOP NATIONAL CHURCH CENTER 1006 Pittston Avenue Scranton, PA 18505-4109 (570) 346-9131 (570) 346-2125



MOST REV. ANTHONY A. MIKOVSKY Prime Bishop Polish National Catholic Church pbmikovsky@pncc.org FAX (570) 346-2188

July 28, 2023

Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, Pastors and Administrators of the Western Diocese, Reserve Priests, Deacons and Clerics in Minor Orders, Parish Committees of the Western Diocese Parishes, Faithful of the Western Diocese,

My dear brothers and sisters,

At this time, following the funeral of sp. Rt. Rev. Jarosław Rafalko, we still continue in prayer for the repose of Bishop Jerry's soul and for the strength and comfort of his wife, Leslie, his family and the entire Western Diocese.

During his time as Ordinary, Bishop Jerry showed great faith and trust in Fr. Sr. Charles Zawistowski in naming him Chancellor of the Western Diocese. In this role he was involved in all the ongoing work of the Western Diocese, her parishes and her ministries.

Therefore, with the same trust, I have appointed him as Administrator of the Western Diocese as of July 14, 2023. This action was done with the knowledge and support of all the active bishops of the Polish National Catholic Church.

With this appointment, I ask that on all matter of the administration of the Western Diocese, you contact Fr. Sr. Zawistowski, on all pastoral and administrative matters of the parishes of the Western Diocese.

If the need arises, Fr. Sr. Charles will then to be in touch with me on any major matters or decisions of the Diocese or its parishes.

Keeping you all in prayer as you continue to remember and pray for sp. Bishop Jerry and also as you continue to build the kingdom of God within the Western Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church. With my prayers and blessing, I remain,

Sincerely yours, in Christ Jesus, our Lord,

a Muhandy

Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky Prime Bishop Polish National Catholic Church

Parish Update—Downstairs Kitchen

Bringing the Downstairs Kitchen Up To Mandatory Code - per the City of Parma Fire Inspector -

As has been reported in the bulletin the last few weeks the basement kitchen needed (per the City of Parma Fire Inspector) and is undergoing mandatory code updates. Steve Fesz, our parish Building & Grounds coordinator, led this project. Steve used his decades of field experience in spending countless hours with the inspector, contacting and meeting with contractors, conferring with Tom Kugler and researching options for this update. Steve researched and presented three options for the Board of Directors consideration:

 Move exiting stove to deep fryer location Repair Old Stove Increase Gas Line Bring Hood and Control Box Up-To-Code Deep Fryer Electrical (Tom Kugler labor donation)

2. Purchase, new, smaller stove (48" 8 burner 1 ½ oven), keep in same location Deliver new stove and remove old stove Gas Tech Charge (for warranty purposes) & Connect New Stove Bring Hood & Control Box Up-To-Code CHURCH

3. Purchase, new, same size stove (60" 10 burner or griddle, deep fryer location Deliver new stove and remove old stove Increase Gas Line and Gas Tech Connect (for warranty purposes) Bring Hood & Control Box Up-To-Code

The Board voted unanimously on Option #1. Per Steve, the first 5 points below have been completed, the final 3 we still await word on completion. We are thankful to those who have responded to pleas for increases in donations towards this project and other Improvements.

1: Hired a Certified Gas Repair Service to go over the old stove, ensuring that there are no gas leaks and that all burners operate properly, installed new thermocouples in the ovens and cleaned the pilot lights.

2: The stove was then moved from its original location to the deep fryer location – the fire inspector said the Fire Sup pression Hood (suppresses a potential fire on the stove) above the original location of the stove was too small for a 10 burner stove.

3: Hired another contractor to install a larger gas line to the new stove location and replaced the Fire Ansul System Emergency Shut-Off Gas Valve and installed new gas shut offs.

4: Had two of the existing electric deep fryers moved to the original stove location. The 3rd deep fryer will not be in stalled as it will not fit under the Fire Suppression Hood.

5: Hired the fire safety company to completely go over the Ansul Fire Suppression System including the control panel and tanks and everything was brought up to code.

6: Tom Kugler will provide the needed electrical work, running new wiring to the fryers in their new location.

7: After all of the above work is complete the City of Parma Fire Inspector will be called to reinspect the work and certify that the kitchen is in compliance with the current fire codes.

8: Once approved, get your dupas downstairs and start cooking!



Various Announcements

<u>TODAY</u> – and for all of August, we will use the 2^{nd} Eucharistic Prayer, based on the Canon of St. Hippolytus on p. 82.

CHRISTMAS TREES – Approved for this coming holiday season is the rental of our spare parking lot and empty grass lot for the sale of Christmas Trees. The venture that previously sold on the corner of Broadview and Snow will be renting from St. Mary's from Nov 1 - Jan 1.

NIGHT AT THE RACES – Our Second Annual Night at the Races takes place Saturday, September 30. There will be a basket raffle at the event, and we have our white board filled with tags filled with "inspiration." Please grab a few sticky notes and help fill some baskets.

<u>ACME–</u>We are participating in the Acme "Community Cash Back" program which runs...well into 2024! Hooray, more months to help out our parish! Turn in all receipts you have from Acme now until our end date- St. Mary's receives 5% back from each Acme item!

BASKET RETURN – Since we will be getting ready to fill some baskets soon, we are asking that if you have won a basket at a parish raffle in the past few months or years, please return it so we can fill it up with some goodies and raffle it off once again.

<u>CAR WASH</u> – Cub Scout Pack #216 out of our parish of St. Mary's is hosting a

car wash in our parking lot on Saturday, August 19. Get your cars dirty before then! The pack will be selling homemade beef jerky and beverages; the parish will be offering deep fried pierogi & hot dogs.

NEW ASSIGNMENT – Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski has been named the administrator of our PNC Western Diocese in the days following the death of Bishop Jerry Rafalko. Fr. Jason posted the letter and has included it in our newsletters for August.

NEW COPIER – The parish recently has contracted a new copier company and leased a new copier – you may have noticed a quality increase recently of our copies. The copier is *locked* due to some misuse in the last months- but a code is available for access to print and/or copy parish related documents.

<u>GOLF TOURNAMENT</u> – The upcoming United YMSofR Golf Tournament takes place Saturday, August 26 and will be hosted by St. Mary's. Flyers are available for golfers- the event takes place at Briarwood Golf Course on W. Edgerton Rd. with a shotgun start at 8am. Tell all your golfer friends! Full teams of 4 can enter and individual golfers will be placed in a foursome. The cost is \$125 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf and cart, lunch during play, prizes, and dinner.

AWARDS BANQUET - There will be a

full homemade Italian Dinner on the same day as the Golf Tournament that is open to everyone on Saturday, August 26. The dinner will even be the same price as in 2015 - \$25!! It will feature appetizers, wine & beer in the upstairs Fellowship Hall as well as multiple main courses, a short banquet presentation, and dessert in the basement hall. Menu includes appetizers and open wine & beer bar (as well as the return of the "St. Mary's Mulligan"), antipasto, salad, homemade meatballs, sausage and peppers in red sauce, chicken strips in garlic sauce, eggplant parmesan, meatless baked ziti, salad, and ice cream dessert. See Chuck R., Bruce B., Mark A., or George B. to reserve your spot for this delicious dinner.

WORD OF GOD STUDY – Fr. Jim is offering a 7pm Tuesday evening online study of God's Word thru Aug. 15 titled "Why Suffering?" Fr. Jim will use scripture to answer that agonizing, age-old question of why a loving God allows suffering for His creation. To participate, please email Fr. Jim at RevJPloskonka@gmail.com to receive a Zoom link.

<u>KITCHEN WORK</u> – Majority of the work on the downstairs kitchen was completed to bring the facility up to legal fire and safety code. For any questions, please see Steve Fesz.

Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's

August 6 – Wanda & Casey Putynski of. by daughter Carole D'Arcy August 13— Clarence Sobocinski of. by Elaine Ploskonka August 20– Gary Bogzevitz (40th Anv.) of. by brother Bruce Bogzevitz August 27 – William Krajewski of. by sister Rose Kazinetz & family

September 3 – Stanley Dobrowolski of. by daughter Pattie Dotson September 10-Mary Repasky & Irene D'Arcy of. by Mike & Carole D'Arcy September 17– George Stepanik of. by brother Gene Stepanik September 24 – Open for an Intention



Final 2023 open dates: Sep. 24; Oct. 15, 29; Dec. 10, 17

August Days of Note



August Birthdays

- 1st Johanna Markiewicz
- 2nd Kyrsten LeMessena
- $\mathbf{4}^{\mathsf{th}}$ Blake Colwell
- 5th Bob Samelson
- 5th Pete O'Connor
- 6th John Spilka
- 12th Garry Patla
- $\mathbf{14}^{\mathsf{th}}$ Sarah Ploskonka
- $\mathbf{14}^{\mathsf{th}}$ Hannah Bilinski
- 18th Steve Fesz
- 22nd Gene Stepanik
- 24th Matt Spilka
- 28th
 - Cherie Kugler



August Anniversaries

- 1st Chuck & Elaine Repede
- 5th George & Roseanne Ziefle
- **21st** Bob & Kathy Samelson

Have we missed a birthday or anniversary? Just give us a shout so we can fix any errors that have been made :-)



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"The Transfiguration"

This poem honors the Solemnity of the Transfiguration of our Lord, which takes place each year on August 6 (a Sunday this year!)

Stay, Master, stay upon this heavenly hill A little longer, let us linger still; With these two mighty ones of old beside, Near to the Awful Presence still abide; Before the throne of light we trembling stand, And catch a glimpse into the spirit-land.

Stay, Master, stay! we breathe a purer air; This life is not the life that waits us there: Thoughts, feelings, flashes, glimpses come & go; We cannot speak them-nay, we do not know; Wrapt in this cloud of light we seem to be The thing we fain would grow-eternally.

"No!" saith the Lord, "the hour is past, we go; Our home, our life, our duties lie below. While here we kneel upon the mount of prayer, The plough lies waiting in the furrow there; Here we sought God that we might know His will; There we must do it,-serve Him,-seek Him still."

If man aspires to reach the throne of God, O'er the dull plains of earth must lie the road. He who best does his lowly duty here, Shall mount the highest in a nobler sphere: At God's own feet our spirits seek their rest, And he is nearest Him who serves Him best.

By Samuel Greq



Jesus' Transfiguration

Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

Bill & Pat Glatzer	Bob Kaczmarek
Bill Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
George & Linda Mako	•
Johanna Markiewicz	Mary Ann Loschelder
June Zaun	Shauna Smullen
Marty Bengela	Tom Putynski
Kim Kolens	Millie Dominik
Kathleen Beres	Joseph Bischoff
David Micka	Jeff Lukas
Ed Pierson	George Bennett
Daniel Morgan	Pattie Dotson
Elizabeth Starnawski	Jack Spilka
Elaine Repede	David Vaden
Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Michael McGivern
Jay Grabowsky	Pam Chesar
Cecelia Hall	Caroline Kunes
Linda Marks	Thomas Lill
John & Anne Nemetz	Rhonda Smith
Al Piniecki	Carol Boesch
Joanie True	Daniel Rinella
Penny Dennison	Tom Slomka
Wojciech Fedorowicz	Ben Soltis
Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Marcus Vaughn, Jr.
Bryson Dzuroff	Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak
, Doreen Stanley	Jane Hunter
, Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
John Wisniewski	Cathy Pieciak
Nan Cramer	Barb & Jim Lukas
Mike Pescitelli	Kathy Robertson
Phil Repko Ricl	nard & Edna Samelson
Jim Giles	Kathleen Sobocinski
Bill Zychowski	Loretta Baldwin
Donna Kidd	Paulette Lilli
	largaret & Lew Heifner
Marilyn Girard	Courtney Austin
Stephanie Milla	Shannon Alberino
Jayden Pieciak	Joyce Zeigler
Jeremy Steinbrick	Katie Stallbaum
Marcia Klein	Kim Penney
Rev. Jim Ploskonka	Patrick Kmitt
Roseanne & George Z	
Jim Boehnlein	Sam Bass
	Jaili DdSS

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

