

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

February 2015

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Christmas is taking forever!

40 is a holy number in the church. The Israelites roamed for 40 years, Christ fasted for 40 days in the desert, and the season of Lent lasts for 40 full (non Sunday) days.

This was one of those years where it seemed like we were just singing Christmas hymns...forever! On the surface, that is no problem-they're fun, they're happy, and even I can't screw them up...unless you ask anyone who attended our New Year's Day services!

This Christmas season lasted every bit as long as all the others that preceded it, but you know the story; Christmas begins in stores right after Halloween, radios change their format shortly thereafter. The buildup is fun, exciting, taking our minds off the plummeting temperatures and dwindling sunlight.



Christmas arrives, it's awesome, and the world is ready to push those trees out December 26...meanwhile, the church is rearing to celebrate this glorious Incarnation of our God for 40 full days.

When you think about it, we can be spending well over 2 months of the year with Christmas hymns buzzing around our ears.

As a church, though we celebrate, we cannot spend all of that time simply "enjoying the season." There is work to be done.

For us, it is our 100th year as a parish. As part of the extended Christmas season, I am blessed to be able to visit many parishioners for Pastoral Epiphany blessings.

Unfortunately for some of you, I spent hours peppering you with questions on the history of our parish, on past Pastors, and questions traditions and nuances, all while drinking your coffee and eating your pastries.

Though my waistline and my scale are upset with you (and me), I genu-

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inely feel as if, after 15 months in Ohio, I am becoming a source of knowledge about our beloved parish.

As January wound on and the Northeast was peppered by all sorts of winter storms, the Christmas decorations were long pulled down across the country. My wife and I were treated with a few hundred tick-sized tree mites populating our living room as we took down our tree, hastening our...everything...when it came to "tearing down Christmas".

For us, in those panicking and gross moments, Christmas couldn't end soon enough, with curses on real trees and resolutions to get an artificial one. Then, we went to church and heard our beautiful Christmas hymns, laughing at our adventure with the tree while at the same time reminding us in those frustrations, that Jesus is that reason for the season.

Next year, Christmas will last forever again. From November until February 2nd: guaranteed. During that time, lots will happen from the plague of insects to the revelation of this parish's history, I got it all, in what was truly a full and memorable Christmastime.

Fr. Jason

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Western Diocese/Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese Lock-In

Our humble St. Mary's Parish was chosen because of its central location to be the host site of the first ever Western Diocese/Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese Lock-in.

This event was the result of a brainstorming session of the kids of these respective dioceses during the last Youth Convo at Heidelberg University in July 2014.

It slowly built momentum throughout the end of the year and came together quickly as the Christmas Season approached.

The event featured roughly two dozen children from the Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Chicago areas. Clergy in attendance included Rev. Jason Soltysiak, Pastor of St. Mary's in Parma, OH; Rev. Mr. Thomas Klusek, Deacon at Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral in Lancaster, NY; and Rt. Rev. Stanley Bilinski, Bishop Ordinary of the Western Diocese.

Children began arriving Friday afternoon, January 2nd. By 6pm or so, the place was packed,

with the children enjoying both of our halls and stage area.

Meals, snacks, and drinks were provided by St. Mary's parishioners. Many thanks to those who took the time and money to attempt to feed children that never quite get full.

After a Friday evening packed with activities, a meeting, movie, Mid-night lecture and a too-late bedtime, the group awoke to eat breakfast and venture out for laser-tag.

The group was split into three



Above Left: The scene of the notorious meeting. Above: PNCC tradition that goes back decades-the card game "drug dealer". Below Left: The service project-all of the children polished the wordwork throughout the entire church. Below: Nope - can't give an explanation



Diocesan Lock-In (Continued)

teams, with whatever team Fr. Jason was on always winning...there would be no other way.

After laser-tag, the group ventured back to St. Mary's. There, the group in its entirety spent its last full meal together, as the Chicago and Buffalo groups had to head home because of responsibilities (Christmas Pageants) at their respective parishes.

After lunch, the group was directed upstairs for a presentation by Dr. Jim Ploskonka on Bishop Hodur: the athlete. He

equated Bp. Hodur's endurance and miles of walking to the athletic abilities of Tom Brady, the greatest football player in the history of the planet Earth. Those gathered all breathlessly agreed. Dr. Jim also handed out a prepared worksheet full of Bp. Hodur trivia to aid his presentation.

Bishop Bilinski gave a wrap-up of his observations and let the children know how proud he was of them for having the pride and the gumption to put together an event like this.

After this, the group picture was

taken and groups that were left then had time to catch up on a few minutes of sleep that were lost from the night before. Youtube videos were watched, jokes were told, card games were played...the usual.

Those left then ventured up the road, where Parish Chair Elaine Ploskonka and husband hosted the children with movies, pizza, sandwiches, and wings.

All kids woke up and attended church the next morning. They were recognized during Mass for their participation. Coffee Hour concluded the event. Thanks to all!



Above Left and Below Left: groups of participating kids. Above Right: The group picture of most participants. Below Right: Dr. Jim Ploskonka's presentation, showing off the most athletic stance he knows!



What a Gesima???

The Polish National Catholic Church has made a concerted effort to have churches express the Pre-Lenten Season in a very direct way.

The Pre-Lenten Sundays of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima are ancient church traditions that lead up to the Lenten season. They were to signify how much time was left until the day of Christ's Resurrection, Easter Sunday. They were also continued in the pattern of the Latin word "Quadragesima", which is translated as a 40-day period of fasting, such as that of Jesus Christ.

While "Quinquagesima" literally meaning "50th" is indeed the 50th day before Easter Sunday, Sexagesima and Septuagesima do not correspond as the "60th" and "70th" days before Easter. The meaning and development of these words is up to much historical debate, with their roots lying in traditional holy numbers (70 years of Babylon captivity, 60 grains of a Rosary or 60 cubits, the width and height of the temple in Jerusalem).

The Pre-Lenten season is very much a source of pride and individuality that differs us National Catholics from the Roman Catholic Church.

The proceedings from the Second Vatican Council brought about the elimination of the Pre-

Lenten season, thus continuing the period of the winter "Ordinary Time", when the Liturgical color (what the Priest wears) is green and there is an Alleluia, Gloria, etc.

What that means is this: if you walked into a PNCC church on Sunday, February 15, the priest *should* have been vested in rose colored vestments (see caption below). If you walked into a Roman Catholic Church, the priest would still be wearing green vestments.

The purpose of the season of Pre-Lent is to have that segue, a guided shift, from Ordinary Time to Lent.



Lent, as we know, is the most extreme and solemn penitential time of the church year. 40 days long plus 6 Sundays, we are to treat that time with the utmost respect of ourselves, our Savior, and our devotion to increased prayer, fasting, and giving.

Pre-Lent makes sure that we don't go from smiles to stone-faces in an instant. Pre-Lent is like the fading of autumn into winter. Pre-Lent also is...a last hurrah.

Though Mardi Gras literally means "Fat Tuesday", it signals the end of Shrove Tide, the beginning of Pre-Lent to the end of Fat Tuesday.

It is during that time that...gulp...Catholics get their ya-yas. Many go to places like New Orleans, LA and party to their heart's content.

Pre-Lent serves those purposes in the church for us as well—as that segue to the Lenten season and as a season of "last hurrah's" before we enter the solemn time of Lent.

It should also serve as a time where we decide on what we plan on sacrificing during the Lenten Season, so that when Ash Wednesday comes, we have an answer, not to our friends, but to God on what we are doing for Him during this season.

That, my friends, especially for those who asked, is Pre-Lent in a nutshell.

January 6: The Epiphany of our Lord

On Tuesday, January 6, we celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord.

Commonly known as "Three Kings Day", the importance of his day was in the revelation of the Christ Child to those outside of the Jewish

Faith; that he was the Messiah not only for "God's Chosen People" but for all who would seek him.

At St. Mary's, parishioners scratched their heads and furrowed their brows as the Magi were not in the manger scene Christmas Day. Over

the 12 Days of Christmas, they ventured from one side of the Church to the other, conquering the Lectern, Pulpit, passing by the Sacrificial Altar, getting in the way of the collection plates, and finally settling in gathered around the infant



Christ.

During Mass this day, chalk, incense and charcoal were blessed, representing the 3 gifts of the Magi as well as in preparation for the pastoral visits of the Epiphany season. Holy Water is also permitted to be made and blessed on this day .

Parish Annual Meeting

Our Parish Annual meeting took place on Sunday, January 25th.

Many items were discussed, many planning our 100th Anniversary.

A synopsis of this will be provided in the next Newsletter. Pictures can be found online on our Facebook page. Thanks to all who attended!



New Altar Server!

We were blessed at St. Mary's to welcome a new Altar Server on Sunday, January 4th, the Feast of the Holy Family.

Mr. Blake, after a period of intense training during his Christmas break, was deemed ready to debut on our altars on a Sunday morning.

Blake's training consisted of hours of lessons as well as a "soft opening" of serving at some weekday Masses with minimal crowds. Mr. Blake was so excited about these that he insisted to anyone who would listen (and

drive him) that he needed to be at church every morning because "Fr Jason needs me there!"

We look very much forward to his maturation on the altar and the training that will be continued to be provided by our other acolytes.

Now...the only question is: which child will be the next to join this lovely

group below here?



February Days of Note



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



Happy Anniversary

- 2nd – Bill & Joan Kastak
- 20th – Nick & Eileen Evanoff

Quick Announcements

Help is always needed for our monthly Food Ministry. On the first Wednesday of every month, a group of parishioners take the time out of their schedules to prepare a fresh, hot meal that is served from 4pm-6pm.

Our needs vary from month-to-month. Sometimes, we need help cooking the meal. Other times, it is the setting of the tables and preparation of the hall. Other times, serving and cleanup.

If you are at all interested in offering your time and ministry to this endeavor, please feel free to speak to Fr. Jason or to Dr. Jim Ploskonka. Thank you in advance!

Our Prayer List

Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Marlane Oleniacz | Barbara Baranowski |
| Bill & Joan Kastak | Anna Dawidziuk |
| Craig & Judy Atherton | John Spilka |
| Louise Cygan | Edward Basiewicz |
| Mary Ann Loschelder | June Zaun |
| Alison Jambor | Jim Boehnlein |

Please pray for our family and friends:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Wanda Clark | Beth Chihill |
| Michael Cosevin | Helen Cummings |
| Laina Dachtal | Colby Howard |
| Jay Grabowsky | Pam Chesar |
| Cecelia Hall | Caroline Kunes |
| Oliver Kuta | Thomas Lill |
| John & Anne Nemetz | Bea Miskow |
| Rose Neyman | Carol & Chuck Boesch |
| Joanie True | Daniel Rinella |
| Joanel Rollen | Veronica Babic |
| Fr. Tom Sheha | Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard |
| Gracie Pijor | Ben Soltesy |
| Don and Pam Tropiano | Linda Vect |
| Dennis and Sue Vect | Jack Amburgey, Jr. |
| Bryson Dzurhoff | George Beggin |
| 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 |
| Gina Crosetti | Madilyn Perry |
| Elsa Vogl de Gomez | Joyce Dicken |
| Kim Blaha | John Clark Sr. |
| Tom Bowen | |

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Shirley Paulus | Tony Mudrak |
| Gene Mora | Ted Jurczyk |
| | Polly Gajda |

WE ALSO REMEMBER

ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY NEEDING HEALING
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Lord, bring all service personnel safely home!!!

Bless them, O Lord.

Valentine's Poem

You are
my wonderful Valentine,
I could never want
for more

Each year you
grow more beautiful
And graceful
in the Lord

I love you
just as much today
As I did
when we first met,

The love we've shared
over the years
Has never
faded yet

And will never fade
as the years
Continue
to pass us by,

For as the Lord
is part of us,
Our love
grows more inside.

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