

# St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

**December 2018**

**Pastor: Rev. Jason H. Soltysiak**  
**frjason82@gmail.com**  
**Cell: 216-978-6645**  
**Office hours— Mon 10-1, Thu 12:30-3**

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



**St. Mary's P.N.C.C**  
**5375 Broadview Road**  
**Parma, OH 44134**

**Office/Hall Phone: 216-661-9246**  
**Email: stmarypncc@sbcglobal.net**  
**www.stmaryspncc.org**  
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## Polish Christmas

*This issue, I am adding some simple insight of "Polish Christmas", as taken from an excerpt from the Polish/American Center on "Wigilia"*

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Among Poles, wherever they are, the most beloved and beautiful of all traditional festivities is that of Christmas Eve. It is then that the Wigilia (Wilia), or Christmas Eve Dinner is served. It is a solemnly celebrated occasion and arouses deep feelings of kinship among family members.

For days in advance, traditional foods are prepared and everyone anxiously awaits the moment when the first star, known as the Gwiazdka, appears in the eastern sky. For that is when the feast to commemorate the birth of the Christ Child begins.

There is always a thin layer of hay un-

der the white tablecloth in memory of the Godchild in the manger. Before sitting down at the table, everyone breaks the traditional wafer, or Oplatek and exchanges good wishes for health, wealth and happiness in the New Year.

This is such a deeply moving moment that often tears of love and joy are evoked from the family members who are breaking this symbolic bread. The Oplatek is a thin, unleavened wafer similar to the altar bread in the Catholic Church. It is stamped with the figures of the Godchild, the blessed Mary, and the holy angels. The wafer is known as the bread of love and is often sent by mail to absent family members.

The dinner itself differs from other evening meals in that the number of courses is fixed at seven, nine or eleven. According to myth, in no case must there be an odd number of people at the table, otherwise it is said that some of the feasters would not live to see another Christmas.

A lighted candle in the windows symbolizes the hope that the Godchild, in the form of a stranger, may come to share the Wigilia and an extra place is set at the table for the unexpected guest. This belief stems from the ancient Polish adage, "A guest in the home is God in the home."

The Wigilia is a meatless meal, the result of a Church mandate that a strict fast and abstinence be observed on this day before Christmas. Items that would normally be included in a traditional Wigilia menu include mushroom soup, boiled potatoes (kartofle), pickled herring (sledzie), fried fish, pierogi, beans and sauerkraut (groch i kapusta), a dried fruit compote, babka, platek, assorted pastries, nuts and candies.

After the meal the members of the family sing Polish Christmas Carols called the koledy while the children wait impatiently around the Christmas tree or choinka for the gifts to be exchanged.



### ...on Polish Christmas

Aside from the beautiful Wigilia, the Polish people have a number of other traditions that they practice throughout the Christmas season. Polish Christmas Carols or koledy are numerous and beautiful, especially when sung in Polish parishes at the Christmas Eve Mass.

This Mass is called Pasterka, which means the Shepherds Watch, and there is popular belief that while the congregation is praying, peace descends on the snow-clad, sleeping earth and that during that holy night, the humble companions of men - the domestic animals - assume voices. But only the innocent of heart may hear them.

Christmas Day itself is spent in rest, prayer, and visits to various mem-

bers of the family. In Poland, from Christmas Day until the twelfth night, boys trudge from village to village with an illuminated star and a ranting King Herod among them to sing carols. Sometimes, they penetrate the towns in expectation of more generous gifts. In some districts, the boys carry on puppet shows called shopky. These are built like a little house with two towers, open in the front where a small crib is set.

During the Christmas season, the theaters give special performances. On the feast of the Epiphany, the priests visit homes, bless them and write over their doors the initials of the three wise men - KMB (Kasper, Melchior and Balthazar) - in the belief that this will spare the homes



from misfortune.

The Christmas season closes on February 2, known as Candlemas Day. On that day, people carry candles to church and have them blessed for use in their homes during storms, sickness and death.

Wesolych Swiat, Bozego Narodzenia i Szczesliwego Nowego Roku!  
*Info taken from the PolishAmerican Center on "Wigilia"*

### Thanksgiving 2018

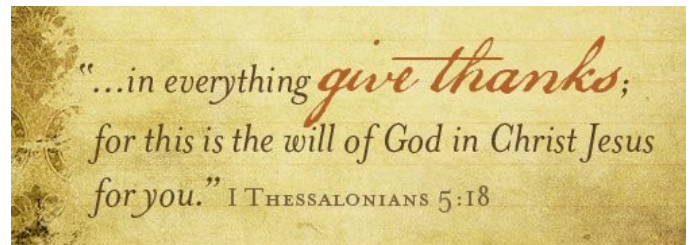
Services for Thanksgiving Day were offered at 10am by Cleric Jim Ploskonka, as Father Jason was scheduled to be out of town and had arrangements with Bishop Stanley Bilinski before his death to have Cleric Jim lead his first prayer service in the PNCC.

As a cleric, he is not allowed yet to proclaim the Gospel or preach, so he

put together a service which included a Liturgy of the Word, without a Gospel, and some words spoken by Prime Bishop Franciszek Hodur in a homily many years ago.

Many thanks to Cleric Jim for leading services and to all who attended and

supported him as he continues on his path towards the Diaconate.



## Parish Potluck Sunday

Sunday, November 4 served as a memorable day in the life of St. Mary's Parish. There, at a Mass that was once scheduled to have a visit from our Diocesan Bishop and include Cleric Jim's elevation to Sub-Deacon was now different.

As Bishop Stanley Bilinski entered his eternal rest days prior, the Very Rev. Joseph Soltysiak [my dad (I'll call him Father Senior)] went from having a weekend in Ohio to celebrate his grandson's 1st birthday and to watch his seminary classmate bestow a portion of Holy Orders to...taking over for his friend of 40 years.

There was certain beauty to the day—Father Senior split the sermon into two: the first part, going along with the day's Gospel of the perfection of Christ's Commandments, and the second part, recollecting his brother in the priesthood.

He made it a point to note times they shared in seminary, cars wrecked, how their ministries intersected over time, sharing the altar with him on the day of their Ordination, and finally "doing everything" on a Sunday at his former parish

when his original plan was "doing nothing".

Mass was concelebrated by Father Senior, Father Jason, and Father Greg, with Cleric Jim serving as Sub-Deacon of the Mass. After Mass, Father Senior blessed a chasuble for Father



Greg. In a neat quirk, it was actually the 4th time (by our count) that he had blessed a vestment for Father Greg, even going back to his ordination!

The parish kept the original scheduling of one Mass only, followed by a potluck, so the congregation headed downstairs to enjoy fellowship and our wonderful potluck afterward. There again, Father Senior shared a couple stories about Bishop Stanley that, although they weren't salacious, perhaps weren't fit to be told from the altar.



## Remember When?

This picture, though unmarked, has a number of familiar faces in it. It was from the Administration of the Sacrament of Confir-

mation, performed by the Rt. Rev. Francis Rowinski, who served our Western Diocese from 1959 to 1978. How many do you recognize?

**INTERESTED IN  
TIME TRAVEL?  
Meet Here Last  
Thursday, 7pm**



## Autumn Craft Fair

St. Mary's played host to the Annual Autumn Craft Fair, an event that has become well-known in the crafting community in the early run-up to the holiday season.

We were fearlessly led, as always, by Maryann Kasperczyk. She has spearheaded our event since its inception, providing the parish with an event where we have next-to-nothing to worry about. She serves as con-

# FUNDRAISER

tact person, table-arranger, ruckus-diffuser, and overall coordinator.

The event charges a set amount for each table rented, as well as bringing in the sales of a light lunch that is served. Overall, the event made over \$1000 for the parish, while also building relationships to make each successive Craft Fair even more successful.

Unfortunately, we were short cameramen, so the only picture we got is a selfie of the priest and his kid!



## All Souls, Wypominki, Cemetery Blessing

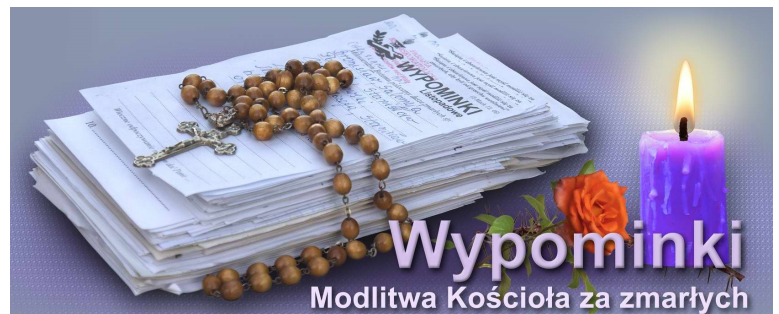
November begins with the Solemnity of All Saints on November 1st and is followed immediately by the Commemoration of All Souls on November 2nd.

As is parish custom, we read all submitted names on the remembrance list (Wypominki) not only on All Souls Day, but split among the Sundays of November as well. This means that each Sunday morning Mass begins with humble prayer and recollection of parishioners, friends and families that have entered eternal rest.

At 10am on Saturday, November 3rd, our cemetery service for All Souls was celebrated at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cemetery

on West 54th Street. There, prayers were said for departed parishioners, clergy, family, friends, service men and women, and all others. As the ground was a mess, each grave in the cemetery was blessed later in the month.

May we continue the dignified practice of remembering our dead in most holy prayer.



## Various Announcements

### VISITATIONS

If you have a family member or know of a parishioner that can use a pastoral visit or hasn't been visited, please contact Fr. Jason. As the holidays approach, we want to make sure our parishioners are spiritually tended-to.

### FOOD COLLECTION

During the weeks of Advent, we will have a guided food collection. There will be a collection table placed in the back of the church, with non-perishable items needed to fill it! The items will then be donated to our local food bank, Parma Hunger Center, located across the street at Parma Lutheran church.

### NEW LITURGICAL CYCLE

The First Sunday in Advent brings about many changes – different vestments, a wreath, & a time to collect thoughts in a penitential season. It also brings about "Liturgical New Year: Cycle C" that is, the readings are of a prophetic nature, the gospel begins in a new point of history (preparing for the coming of Christ), and the gospel is from St. Luke after hearing from mostly St. Mark for the past year. Any questions about this,

please see Fr. Jason.

### CONGRATULATIONS

To the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Parish Committee, the Auditors, Seniorate Delegates, and Parish Tribunal elected at this past Sunday's meeting. The official Installation and oath of office takes place at 10am Mass Sunday, Jan. 6.

### POLKAFEST

St. Mary's is holding our first PolkaFest Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, from Noon -6pm. It features Jody Maddie's Uptown Sound (formerly Honky Express), a Kolendy sing-along, a similar food menu as our PolishFest, and beer, wine, etc. available for purchase. This is our first foray into an event like this in a number of years—perhaps some can remember the dances from the "days of yore?" Our prayers are for the event's success.

### THANK YOU

Thank you to: the PTO, for the set-up of all the Christmas decorations; for anyone who lent a hand in last Saturday's kielbasa-making project; for all those who provided set-up and planning work for today's Polka event, and for those who helped cook,

serve, or clean up after last Wednesday's food ministry (84 served!).

### OPLATKI

Has been blessed and is placed on St. Joseph's Altar. You may take however much you want – we just ask that you leave a donation in the basket. Since it is a blessed item, you are to use all of what you take and are not to throw any of it in the garbage.

### SOCK TREE

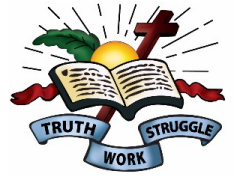
The Love of God Sodality is sponsoring a "sock tree" that is located in the back of the church, opposite the food collection. Please bring NEW socks that will be attached to the tree. Socks are one of the most important donations sought in winter –plan accordingly!

### PTO NEWS

The PTO is asking for your support as they host next week's Christmas party. Surely you have noticed the incredible baskets on display each Sunday morning in the Fellowship Hall. Please make sure to purchase your tickets! The Christmas Card fundraiser is active once again. Save money by not using the Post Office and instead using the PTO! For the 1980's cost of 25 cents per card, the PTO will sort and deliver each card you would like to give to one of your church member friends. Incredible!

## PNCC Future Directions Update

December 1, 2018



"The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness... "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" *Luke 3:2b,4-6*

As we conclude this Year of the Family across our Holy Polish National Catholic Church, we focus during this month on preparing the way for the Lord: to celebrate His Incarnation at Christmas and for His return in Glory.

Let us make the time to share this Holy Advent season as a family and prepare the way for the Lord. In the midst of all the non-secular Christmas activities, make time to bring Jesus and the true meaning of Christmas into the lives of your family.

Here are a few ideas for you to consider:

A Reverse Advent Calendar: [Click here for a reverse Advent calendar](#) for your consideration (*either do this as a parish or just your family and bring the food collected to a food pantry or soup kitchen during the Christmas season*)

Christmas Tree Decorating prayer: [Click here for a family Christmas tree prayer](#) (*if your tree is already put up please still use this prayer as a family and when finished just light the tree*)

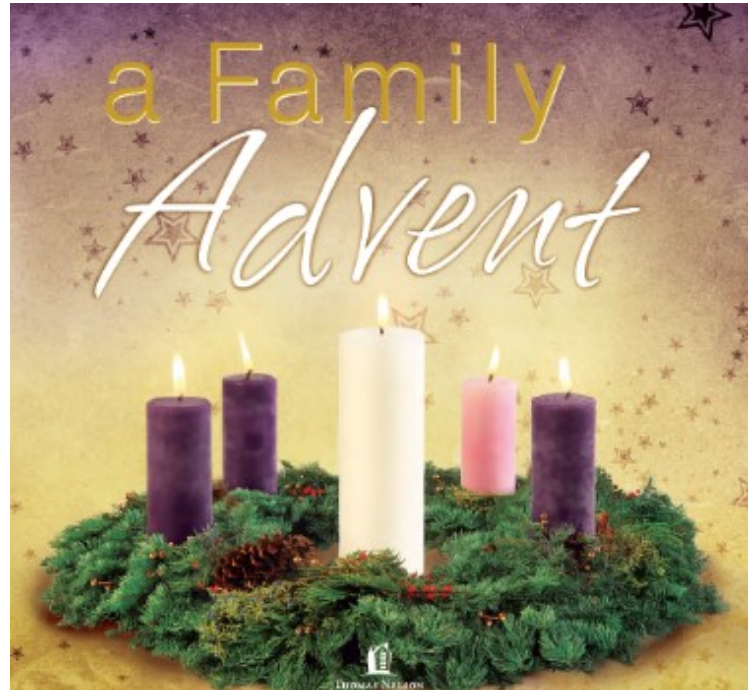
Use a small Advent wreath in your home and light the appropriate candle(s) during family meals

Have a reading from Scripture as a family either prior to or after a daily meal.

Remember Jesus is the Reason for the season and remember Him in your Christmas shopping. Supporting those in need as well as His Church.

Attend Holy Mass as a family during Advent and especially on Christmas!

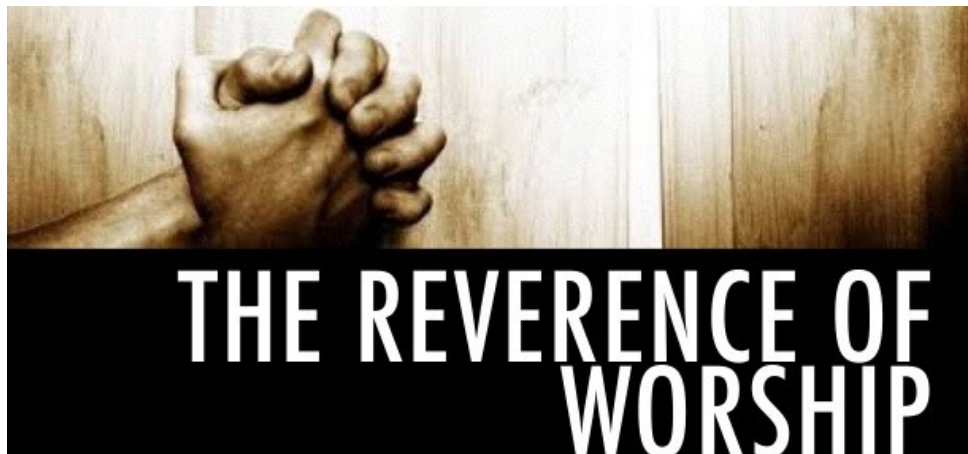
Support worthy efforts such as Christmas Food, Clothing and Toy Drives, the Salvation Army, Wreaths across America.



### Advent Prayer for Families (From Dynamic Catholic)

Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together as a family this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to your son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in you. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to you. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of your love. Amen.

**Immediate action item for implementation from Holy Synod for Increased Spirituality.** A 10 to 15 minute business free zone prior to the celebration of Holy Mass for priest and faithful. Use at least page 8 of the Mass booklets for spiritual preparation as well as other introductory pages. Let us prepare properly for the wonderful gifts of Christ in the Eucharist and hearing of God's Word during



**PNCC Future Directions Update (continued)**

the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.  
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 Kingdom through our Holy Church.

We wish you, your family and parish family a blessed Advent season as we prepare spiritually to celebrate Christmas and await the return of our Lord and Savior in Glory.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
**PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee**

Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, *Prime Bishop*  
Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., *Chairman*

We continue to implement the five themes the Synod determined for our future direction:

- Growth and Membership
- Increase Spirituality
- Lifelong Learning
- Sacred Vocations
- Community Involvement and Presence



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2018</h1> <p>PNCC Eastern Diocese Mission / Evangelism Prayer</p>					<p>We are called to recognize &amp; live the true meaning of Christmas as a family. Prepare!</p>	<p>1 The new church year begins with Advent. How can we get ready to welcome &amp; celebrate Jesus?</p>
<p><b>2 ADVENT 1</b> Don't let worry distract you. Bring your cares to Jesus (see Luke 21).</p>	<p>3 Pray as a family for your spiritual growth and well-being and that of your parish family.</p>	<p>4 .Lord, make us overflow with love for one another and for all (1 Thess. 3:12-13).</p>	<p>5 (1 Thess.5:23-24) God of peace, make us perfect in holiness... You are faithful.</p>	<p>6 May bishops and all leaders follow the example of <b>St. Nicholas</b> in caring for their flocks.</p>	<p>7 If you love Jesus, know and keep His commands. Read John 14 for His promises to you!</p>	<p>8 Ask your pastor or church leaders how you and your family can help during this busy season.</p>
<p><b>9 ADVENT 2</b> May we be open to God's Word, even when it challenges us to change.</p>	<p>10 Lord, remove anything that keeps us from receiving Christ with joy.</p>	<p>11 Instruct us in Your ways, Lord. May we walk in Your paths (see Isaiah 2:3).</p>	<p>12 Only God knows what is in each person's heart. Don't be the judge (1 Cor. 4:5).</p>	<p>13 Keep <b>CHRIST</b> in <b>CHRISTmas</b>. It's all about Him.</p>	<p>14 Take time as a family to attend a special holiday program which points to Jesus.</p>	<p>15 May pastors, and all who teach, faithfully proclaim Your coming, Lord Jesus. Help us to listen.</p>
<p><b>16 ADVENT 3</b> "To <i>prepare the way</i> means to pray well..."</p>	<p>17 ...it means thinking humbly of oneself." ~ St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.)</p>	<p>18 "Keep peace within yourself, then you will be able to create peace among others." ~<i>Imitation of Christ</i></p>	<p>19 Lord, set captives free and give joy to those who mourn. - <i>Lit. of the Hours</i></p>	<p>20 What does God ask of you today? Can you say "Yes" as Mary did? 'Do not be afraid!'</p>	<p>21 Thank God for those who have helped your faith to grow. Pass it along to someone else.</p>	<p>22 "Endure trials with patience...God's justice and mercy have the last word." ~ <i>Sacred Space</i></p>
<p><b>23 ADVENT 4</b> Will Jesus find a place of welcome in your home and heart?</p>	<p>24 "Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today... Abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!"</p>	<p><b>25 CHRISTMAS</b> Reach out to those who are far from family at this time of year.</p>	<p>26 May we be like <i>St. Stephen</i>, whose love for Christ led him to pray for his attackers.</p>	<p>27 Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - have life in His name. (1 <i>John</i> 1)</p>	<p>28 <i>Holy Innocents</i> Take action to ease the suffering of children living in dangerous places.</p>	<p>29 May the <i>Holy Family</i> - Jesus, Mary, and Joseph - continue to be a model for our lives.</p>
<p><b>30 Humble Shepherds</b> - May we be faithful in sharing Christ joyfully with all.</p>	<p>31 Continue to live in Christ...rooted in Him, built up in Him, growing stronger in faith.</p>	<p>"When God saw the world falling to ruin because of fear, He immediately acted</p>	<p>to call it back to Himself with love." ~St. Peter Chrysologus (380-450 A.D.)</p>	<p>"Love, indeed, is the source of all good things; it is an impregnable defense, and the</p>	<p>way that leads to heaven. He who walks in love can neither go astray nor be afraid.</p>	<p>Love guides him, protects him, and brings him to his journey's end." ~St. Fulgentius of Ruspe</p>

### December Days of Note



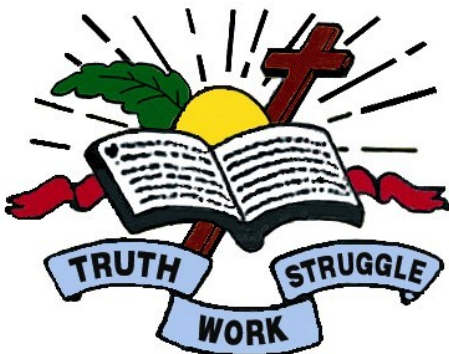
#### December Birthdays

- 1 Nick Paulus
- 4 Matthew Adams
- 7 Michele Barry-Misiewicz
- 8 Dale Dotson, Sr.
- 8 Bill Zychowski
- 11 Adolph Kasperczyk, Jr.
- 15 Ralph Zaun
- 17 David P. Micka
- 18 Ann Warzala
- 19 Ethan Long
- 20 Jessica Moritz
- 21 Jan Sobolewski
- 22 John Dankanich
- 24 Dale Dotson, Jr.
- 25 Katie Burger
- Eileen Matteson
- 27 Paul LeMessena
- 29 Halina Dreger
- 31 Jack Spilka



#### December Anniversaries

- 2 Chester & Ann Warzala
- 25 Ralph & June Zaun
- 28 Don & Marilyn Burger



BC -> AD

This was the moment  
when  
Before turned into After,  
and the future's  
Uninvented timekeepers  
presented arms.

This was the moment  
when  
Nothing happened.  
Only dull peace  
Sprawled boringly over  
the earth.

This was the moment  
when  
even energetic Romans  
Could find nothing better  
to do  
Than counting heads in  
remote provinces.

And this was the moment  
When  
a few farm workers  
and three members  
of an obscure Persian sect  
Walked haphazard by  
starlight straight  
Into the kingdom of  
heaven.

By U.A. Fanthorpe- b. 1929

### Our Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Bill & Pat Glatzer    | Barbara Baranowski  |
| Bill & Joan Kastak    | Anna Dawidziuk      |
| Craig Atherton        | John Spilka         |
| Johanna Markiewicz    | Mary Ann Loschelder |
| Ralph & June Zaun     | Len Pryer           |
| Marty Bengela         | Tom Putynski        |
| Polly Gajda           | Millie Dominik      |
| Kathleen Beres        | Louise Cygan        |
| Helen Budney          | Bruno Tracy         |
| Chester & Ann Warzala | Tom Petrie          |
| Amy Dreger            | Patti Dotson        |
| Halina Dreger         | Jack Spilka         |

Please pray for our family and friends:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wanda Clark              | Beth Chihill             |
| Michael Cosevin          | Helen Cummings           |
| Laina Dachtal            | Sharon Seitz             |
| Jay Grabowsky            | Pam Chesar               |
| Cecelia Hall             | Caroline Kunes           |
| Mark & Kim Andreas       | Thomas Lill              |
| John & Anne Nemetz       | Rhonda Smith             |
| Rose Neyman              | Carol Boesch             |
| Joanie True              | Daniel Rinella           |
| Fr. Tom Sheha            | Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard       |
| Gracie Pijor             | Ben Soltesy              |
| Pam Tropiano             | Linda Vect               |
| Dennis and Sue Vect      | Marcus Vaughn, Jr.       |
| Bryson Dzurowf           | Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak |
| Cherise Pacanovsky       | Jane Hunter              |
| Dennis Thome             | The Finnie Family        |
| Carlene Fliss            | Jim Fliss Jr.            |
| John Michalczyk          | Bill Hinton              |
| Nan Cramer               | Mike Sikut               |
| Bp. John Mack            | David Vaden              |
| Bp. John Swantek         | Jeannie Bartko Muran     |
| Mary Cawley              | Edna Samelson            |
| Anthony Soltysiak        | Geri S.                  |
| Wanda Heffner            | Larry Bernacki           |
| Donna Kidd               | Paulette Lilli           |
| Muffie B.                | Nancy Jablonowski        |
| Marilyn Girard           | Courtney Austin          |
| Stephanie Milla          | Rich Dombrowski          |
| Shannon Alberino         | Jayden Pieciak           |
| Jeremy Steinbrick        | Katie Stallbaum          |
| Marcia Klein             | Julia Badarzynski        |
| George & Linda Makovicka | Julie L.                 |
| Kelly B                  | Barbara B.               |
| Loretta Baldwin          | Michael McGivern         |
|                          | Julie R.                 |

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

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