St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

November 2026

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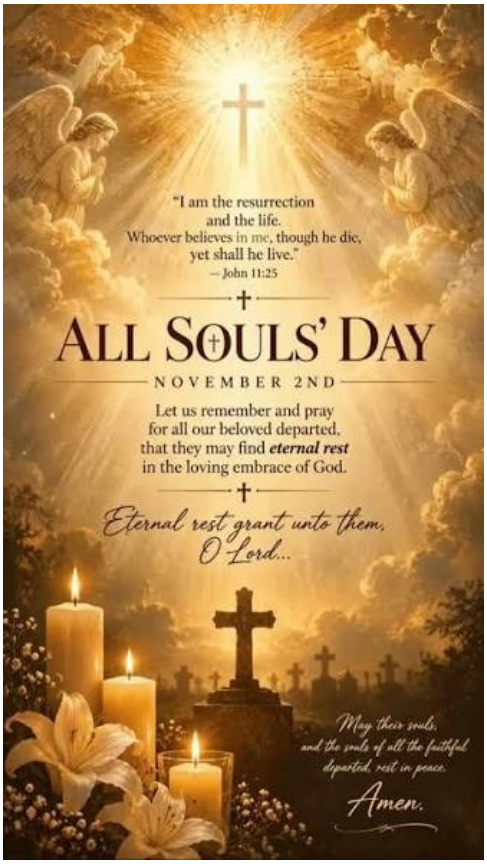
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All of Them...Saints n Souls

The month of November begins with the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls...more commonly known as, All Saints Day and All Souls Day.

It happened again this year, and has been a question as long as I have been in ministry– clarity as to why the Church prays for the dead. On an individual level, we sort of never beg this question, right? It seems natural and personal to recall our fond memories of a departed loved one and in the midst of that recall, express a desire for his or her continued peace.



It shows our human love, and that is enough for some people, though they may ask with a curious heart. However, the question often has been asked with the theological hope– didn't Jesus' death and Resurrection already save that person's soul? So, what aid, then, does prayers from an external source (you, I, the Church, etc.) have on "the outlook" of a particular person's soul?

An eternal question, right? And one that the Church has generationally addressed numerous times...but for the sake of our parish who will pray for the dead throughout November, let's get some assurance behind our prayers:

In the Apostle's Creed, which we recite on days we baptize or confirm the faithful, we recite the line regarding Jesus that "He descended into Hell" or "descended to the dead". The Church, then, acknowledges that His death was like ours in every way.

In 1 Peter 3:18-19, we read "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison…"

The Church has long interpreted this chapter of scripture to show that our Lord entered the spiritual realm of the dead and released the pious souls before Him from their place of repose (Hades...not necessarily "Hell" as we know) to a place of glory.

The theology of the effects of praying for the dead reflects this very idea; that souls are to be rescued.

Prime Bishop Francis Hodur wrote what would be accepted in Chicago in 1914 by the Church: "The Confession of Faith of the Polish National



Catholic Church". It includes two statements on life after death:

I BELIEVE in the ultimate justice of God, in a future life beyond the grave, which will be a continuation of this temporal life and which, as to its condition and degree of perfection and happiness is dependent on our present life, but above all on the state of our soul in the final hour before death.

I BELIEVE in immortality and everlasting happiness in eternity in union with God of all people, races and ages, because I believe in the Divine power of love, mercy and justice and for nothing else do I yearn, but that it may be to me according to my faith.

I always thought this was written quite well to sort of subvert the discourse on the idea of Purgatory—the place of final purification. This would become doctrine in the Catholic Church in portions throughout the middle of the 2nd millennium. I have heard it said numerous times that the Polish National Catholic Church (because of the entries above) does not "believe" in Purgatory...but it could never be entirely accurate to say that, given Catholic history and Sacred Tradition. The definition of "Purgatory" must be nebulous– how could a place/process/spiritual purification/time in the spiritual realm even be defined? It

Opening Article (cont)

(some sort of purification) *has* to happen, and in our human frailty, we try to do our best to understand by assigning our typical interrogatives: who, what, where, when, why, how?

Looking at the developed and succinct answer in the Roman Catholic Church, we read from The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (1030): *Purgatory is defined as a state for those "who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified". Because they die in God's grace, their salvation is already secured; purgatory is simply the final stage of being cleansed so they can enter the presence of God.*

The more one would read, the more restrictive the idea of "a third place in the beyond" becomes. So, our friends from the East, the Orthodox Church, embrace some of that nebulousness.

In a nutshell, Orthodox theology is that once the soul separates from the body in death, the soul lives in a "middle state" and undergoes what is called the particular judgment, based on Hebrews 9:27: "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." In other words, immediately after death, one experiences a foretaste of paradise or hell, depending on the kind of life the one has lived on earth. And our souls remain in this state until the Final Judgment.

This middle state...this waiting...this place...or lack of place...the immediacy after death...how paradise or hell is glimpsed...doesn't stray terribly far from purgatory or even from what Bishop Hodur wrote...because they all still have that base in scripture and tradition. All of this falls under the branch of a sort of speculative theology– using scripture, tradition, doctrine, faith practices and history to organize further theological thought.

Of course, there is the reality of the history of the Catholic Church where it skewed quite imperfectly and leaned into a transactional idea behind "freedom from Purgatory". Where the PNCC and the Orthodox Church would share thoughts would be that the prayers, Masses, and offerings given on earth would be those of mercy and love, and not with a specific "target" in mind. It is almost akin to the Magi's gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh to the infant Christ –the Son of God needed none of these, yet the offering was done with love, awe, and respect, and received not with confusion, but with unspeakable gladness.

Personally, I draw comfort not from speculation, but practice. Saint Tertullian, as early as the 2nd century AD, wrote how we must celebrate Mass (offer sacrifice) on the birthday (death day) of a believer. I always take pause at the moment in the Eucharistic Prayer when recalling the dead -our Sunday Mass usually has an intention, and Lord knows that as I have aged, my personal list has grown.

It makes me feel good to pray for the dead, even if those memories bring about a tear or two to my eye at times. And if it has effect on me and my imperfection, I only can imagine the effect on perfecting someone else's soul, and the effect in petitioning our awesome God. Prayer that allows us to feel good and begs the aid of the soul of another just seems like an objective good, right? *Fr. Jason*

Post-Synod Meeting & Blanket Blessing

On Sunday, October 11, a few days removed from the XXVI General Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church in Manchester, NH, Fr. Jason and Elaine Ploskonka offered an informational presentation to the faithful after 9am Holy Mass.
It was preceded by first addressing the spiritual needs of the faithful and friends of the parish, as Fr. Jason offered a blessing upon three prayer blankets for distribution for those in need.



The meeting provided a recap of the Synod, some timelines, and how it would affect our parish in the near and longer-term. Some items were simply not up for discussion, while others needed a little more follow-up.



The parish sends its pastor and delegates based on membership to a synod. If interested in being our representative at a synod, one must be nominated at an election meeting of the parish.

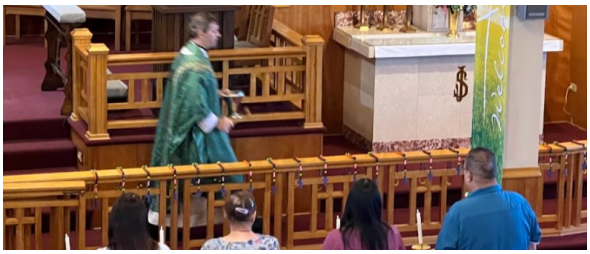
Sunday, October 4th Events





Sunday, October 4th was an incredibly blessed day in the life of our parish and people. The work of the St. Mary's Mission Team, as well as those brought in by the faithful, were on display for a special blessing of rosaries that took place within the 9am Holy Mass.

The colorful rosaries aligned the Communion Rail, with Fr. Jason instructing the faithful that after they are blessed, once they come up to received Communion or a blessing that they are able to take one. A table was also prepared for some overflow rosaries.



Later on that early evening, to honor the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, friends and family brought in their pets for a special blessing. There was a nice turn out of over two dozen animals, with a few sparrows stopping by to watch and chirp throughout the short liturgy. As per every year, the smallest dogs were the loudest dogs and the chatter overcame not only the voice of Fr. Jason, but the Broadview Road traffic as well!



Thank you to those who brought donations to the animal shelter—they were brought to Parma Animal Shelter on Brook Park.













Pierogi Dinner

St. Mary's held a delicious potato and cheese pierogi dinner on the late afternoon of Friday, October 9th.

Rumors of a delicious dinner spread throughout the land as visitors, parishioners and friends came to enjoy the fruits of our labor. They were given the choice of a traditional or vegetarian meal, and even given the choice of fresh or smoked kielbasa– what a deal!

The parish had plenty of help for the dinner, which was very welcome. And although there were leftovers after the dinner was over, our 9am worshippers did a wonderful job of buying up what we had left, putting a bow on a nice fundraiser.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in the prep work, the serving and the clean up. Thanks to Trish Karabowicz for taking pictures (and in a few other parts of our newsletter). And of course, thank you to all who supported this event...no matter which day!





Monthly Eucharistic Adoration

The monthly Eucharistic Adoration for the month of October took place on October 7th, which was the Solemnity of the Holy Mother of the Rosary.

An hour of Eucharistic Adoration was held before the Blessed Sacrament upon the altar dedicated to St. Mary. The Rosary was prayed by those in attendance, with an explanative guide and short reflections provided by Fr. Jason for the faithful.

After Adoration, Holy Mass was celebrated for this Solemnity of our Lady. Thank you to all who made this part of their devotion for October. Our next Eucharistic Adoration will be on Monday afternoon, November 29th from 11:30am-12:30pm.











October Fellowship Luncheon

The October Fellowship Luncheon of St. Mary's took place at Blue Ginger Japanese Restaurant in Parma on Thursday, October 22nd.

As we have done so throughout the year, a number of parishioners took the opportunity to have a long lunch, full of delicious Asian food and getting to know each other even better in Christian Fellowship. We will do it again on Thursday, November 19.





Trunk & Treat!



As is the popular 21st Century tradition, we at St. Mary's make sure that before kids go out on Halloween to get their candy, they have the opportunity to come to the parish to get some candy.

A warm up, perhaps, but our main goal is to allow the local community come to our campus in order to simply be served. Our parish does quite a bit of that, but perhaps only once a year in costume.

Thank you to the tremendous turn out of cars present to support this event! It was definitely a blessing for all the kids to come and have more than a dozen cars to fill their pillowcases and candy buckets. God blessed us with some unseasonably warm weather...with perhaps only a few swirls of wind!









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From the Parish Chair:

A few quick-hits from our Parish Chair, Susan Boehnlein:

-On Sunday, November 22nd at 2pm, Elvis impersonator, Walt Sanders, will be performing Hymns of Praise at St. Mary's. Walt is from Bellevue, Ohio has been an Elvis tribute artist since 1993 and usually performs with The Cadillac Band. While Walt will not perform with his band nor will he dress as Elvis for the Hymns of Praise (Elvis Presley won three Grammys for his performances of "How Great Thou Art', "He Touched Me" and "You'll Never Walk Alone") concert he channels his inner Elvis for a spiritual, tranquil afternoon. The concert will be followed by a dessert reception provided by St. Mary's bakers. This is a free-will concert.

-We are looking for bakers and "ushers" for this event. Audrey Spanjol and Susan Boehnlein are happy to answer questions.

-Parish elections take place in December. Members in good standing are encouraged to consider a Committee position. Meetings take place once a month, usually after Sunday Mass and Coffee Hour. Participation in fundraisers, volunteering around the parish and a desire to see St. Mary's flourish are encouraged. Please see a current Committee member (Barb Wisniewski, Mike Wisniewski, Patty Temesi, Gene Stepanik, John Spilka, Audrey Spanjol, Stella Pietka, Cherie Kugler, Tom Kugler, Steve Fesz, Patti Dotson, Carlos Cancel, Carole D'Arcy, Susan Boehnlein, Fr. Jason) for more information.

-2027 Sunday offering envelopes will be ordered soon. If you do not need your weekly envelopes (choosing to donate in a different way - on-line, monthly, yearly, etc) please let Susan know. A book of envelopes cost the parish about $10. We ask for an initial offering of $5 to offset the cost.

Susan Boehnlein

Consecration of Bishop Zawistowski

Fr. Jason was in Scranton, PA for the Consecration of the Rt. Rev. Charles Zawistowski to the Office of Bishop in the Polish National Catholic Church on Wednesday, October 28 at St. Stanislaus Cathedral.

Fr. Jason served as one of Bishop Zawistowski's chaplains. That means he was to be part of the consecratory liturgy in ceremonially processing items needed for the ritual (Miter, Bishop's Ring, Pectoral Cross), assisting in holding the Book of Gospels upon him, aiding him in the changing of vestments, and being by his side throughout. It was indeed an honor.



Bishop Charles is assigned as "our" Bishop-Ordinary of the Western Diocese. He will be making his first Episcopal visit to St. Mary's on Sunday, January 10 for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Elaine Ploskonka attended from St. Mary's as well. Our Seminarian, Jonah Cornish-Godfrey was placed in charge of the live broadcast. A number of people from the parish were able to enjoy worshipping alongside the Church with the broadcast.



Liturgy Meetings

The National Commission on Liturgy of the Polish National Catholic Church met October 27 and 28 for its course of work as well as to serve as Masters of Ceremony of the Consecration of Bishop Zawistowski. The meetings took place in the National Church Center—pictured are those who participated in the meetings on Tuesday, October 27.



Various Announcements

CANON – for all November, we use the 1st Eucharistic Prayer on page 77, based on the Traditional Rite of the Mass.

CHILI COOK-OFF – Sponsored by the YMSofR is Sunday, Nov. 8th. Gather your ingredients and mark your calendars! Bring in a pot of your best recipe and after coffee hour, we will have a competition for best "traditional" and "non-traditional" chili. This is open to everyone, even if you aren't a cook and just would like to be a judge. Bring a friend! We welcome pots of chili from "outside the parish" as well. Squares for $2 are available.

CLOTHES COLLECTION – Has begun! Please bring in clothes, shoes, coats, dresses, sweaters, shirts, and more!

WORD OF GOD STUDY- Online Study of the Diocese takes place Tuesdays 8pm from November 10-December 15. "Living in Christ" by Stephen J. Binz is the book that will be used – see Fr. Jason if interested for more information to participate in this Zoom Study.

GOLABKI DINNER – Following up on the success of our parish pierogi dinner a couple weeks ago, the parish committee will be putting on a golabki dinner 4:30-6pm on Friday, November 13 – Golabki (stuffed cabbage rolls), mashed potatoes, and green beans, the classic! Flyers are posted – please plan on grabbing a bite or perhaps even lending a hand in the prep or in the meal itself.

DINNER PREP – Help is needed 9am this Thursday Nov. 12 to prep golabki and mashed potatoes – if available, please stop by for some friendly work and fellowship in order to aid our holy church.

CEMETERY THANKS – Appreciation for all who were in attendance for the All Soul's Day service at the SHOJ Cemetery. The grounds were in impeccable condition, the weather was perfect and the prayers were robust. Please remember all of your beloved departed in prayer. Pictures next month.

WHY ALL SOULS ENVELOPES? – The Catholic Church makes it a point to allow her people to pray for the dead, by name, in this time of All Souls remembrances. This is to show our belief in the shared Communion of Saints we have with the dead and the living. This means the church on earth and the church beyond earth offer Almighty God praise together. Your choosing individual names are indeed a help, an aid to one's heavenly ascent. It is an acknowledgement that not all souls end up in heaven, but we pray for those especially whom we desire to share God's glory with one day in all eternity.

ALL SOULS –Envelopes are available around church for you to fill out and remember your loved ones- you can place them in the Sunday Collection basket, drop them at the parish office or give them directly to Fr. Jason. All submitted names are remembered in prayer during the first 4 November Sunday Masses, November 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd as well as at Mass on November 30th, the Feast of St. Andrew.

CATECHISM CLASSES –Have begun! May God bless those committing to the study of our Lord and His Church.

FAVORITE HYMN? – Do you have a favorite hymn, be it from another church, the radio, or wherever that you would like the choir to consider learning? Drop a note to Fr. Jason, who will collect your favorites and pass them on to our Choir Director/Organist Chris.

SEMINARY – For anyone wishing to further support Jonah in his journey to the priesthood, send him a line at: Savonarola Theological Seminary, 1031 Cedar Avenue Scranton, PA 18505. The Seminary also has a website, Savonarola.net, where we can keep tabs on him.

PERSONAL STUDY?- Savonarola Seminary and institute is offering classes to anyone interested– please see the inside front cover of this newsletter to learn what classes are being offered now and in the near-future.

Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's



Nov 1 – Rose Bielecki (birthday) and Janice Bielicki (5th Anv.) of. by Jim Bielecki, Cathy Avondet, and family
Nov 8 — Ronald Tiffe of. by son Jeffery Tiffe
Nov 15 – Hanna Pryer of. by daughter Evonne Pryer
Nov 22– Ann Stepanik of. by son Gene Stepanik
Nov 29– Adolph & Helen Kasperczyk (74th Wedding Anv.) of. by son John & family

Dec 6 – Jack & Stella White of. by daughter Patty Temesi
Dec 13—Gene Mora of. by daughter Cherie Kugler
Dec 20 – Deatra "Dee" Mora of. by daughter Cherie Kugler
Dec 27– Len & Hanna Pryer of. by daughter Evonne Pryer

We have run out of Sunday dates for intentions. Should the need arise, an intention can always be scheduled at a weekday Mass or as a Sunday Second Intention.

November Days of Note



November Birthdays

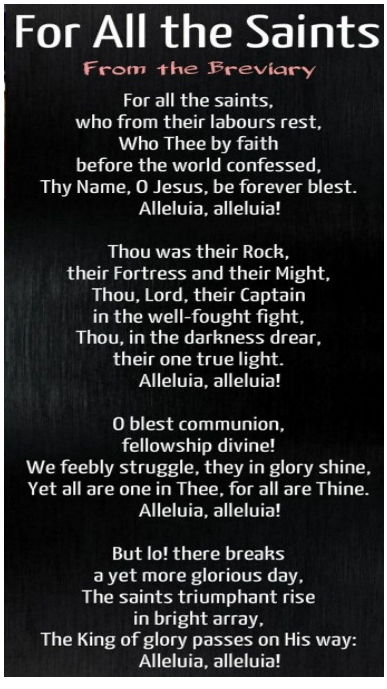
1st - Brady Soltysiak
5th - Ron Ference
6th - Alice Petrie
7th - Kathleen Beres
7th - Mike Wisniewski
15th - Tom Pietka
16th - Mike Paulus
18th - Eileen Kasperczyk
19th - Bill Glatzer
21st - Krista Holtcamp
22nd - David Kubala
24th - Jeff Dreger
25th - Michael Petrie
27th - Vicente Suarez
29th - Eliza Dreger



November Anniversaries

5th – Vicente & Alison Suarez
9th – Marty & Sue Bengela
17th – Brad & Krista Holtcamp
22nd – Anthony & Lauren Hostman
28th – Dale & Pattie Dotson

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



"The Ladder of St. Augustine"

Saint Augustine! well hast thou said
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;
The strife for triumph more than truth;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will; —

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern — unseen before —
A path to higher destinies.

Nor doom the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.

Honoring All Saints Day

- **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

Bill & Pat Glatzer	Rev. Greg Gronn
Bill Kastak	Gail Perz
George Makovicka	John Spilka
John Beno	Patrick Kmitt
Judy Alexin	Lucy-Louise Hoegler
Marty Bengela	Tom Putynski
Jeff Pardy	Millie Dominik
Kathleen Beres	Mike Paulus
Donna Micka	Ron Ference
Ed Pierson	George Bennett
Florence Nemkovich	Pattie Dotson
Nicole McGivern	Jack Spilka
Kenneth Parks	David Vaden
Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Michael McGivern
Jay Grabowsky	Carmen Torres
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
Pete James	Tom Pietka
Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Marcus Vaughn, Jr.
Bryson Dzuroff	Sue Simenc
Doreen Stanley	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
Toni Colwell	Cathy Pieciak
Nan Cramer	Joe Litto
Connie Benko	Shyanna Tiller
Jim Giles	Kathleen Sobocinski
Bill Zychowski	Loretta Baldwin
Donna Kidd	Paul Smith
Joseph Zubel	Margaret & Lew Heifner
Marilyn Girard	Courtney Austin
Stephanie Milla	Shannon Alberino
Jayden Pieciak	Joyce Zeigler
Sam Bass	Katie Stallbaum
Marcia Klein	Kim Penney
Laurie Slominski	Amanda Monyak
Roseanne & George Ziefle	Jeff Hyatt
Kathy Sagy	

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

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