

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

March 2019

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Passing the buck...

We've all heard the phrase, "scapegoat" before, right? You know, growing up in New England, Babe Ruth was the ultimate scapegoat for the Red Sox—once they traded him, it took 86 years for them to win another World Series... before that, they had averaged a World Title every 3 years!

Hilariously, before the Chicago Cubs beat these Cleveland Indians in the World Series a couple years ago...sorry to bring that up...their scapegoat was...literally a goat. They were up in the 1945 World Series when the owner of goat bar...yes, a real place, was kicked out of the stadium, and as he exited, he cursed the team never to win again.

And though the term is used often – political parties often pile all their foibles on an exiting official, families can trace issues to that "one guy", and in business, whistleblowers make national news in a somewhat similar regard.

But actually, not only is the idea of a scapegoat scriptural, the existence of



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know enough Old Testament to know what great meaning a lamb has for believers—God chose a way for the 10th and final plague of Israel to be avoided: by sacrificing a lamb in a very specific way. This was the First Passover (hey, our second high Jewish holy day this article!), and by following God's instructions, the Jewish people avoided the final plague, the death of the firstborn.

A lamb for each household took on the brunt of protection from the angel of death. In the very first chapter of the Gospel of John, we hear, unprompted, these words of John the Baptist: "Here is (behold) the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29).

This is the first time Jesus appears in John's Gospel...but doesn't speak yet. When John speaks of "the sin of the world", he refers to sin as singular—the world's collective alienation from God and from each other. This is big!

Between the just-quoted verse 29 and verse 35, John dresses up this Jesus as the greatest thing since sliced bread (John was the forerunner: sliced bread wouldn't be invented until 1928!). In verse 35, he happily exclaims again "look, here is the Lamb of God!" and immediately, John lost two of his disciples to Jesus.

From then, Jesus would take on the personification of the sacrificial lamb and the dreaded scapegoat. It took a while though—the Lenten Season reminds us of a unique part of Jesus' ministry.

them is as well. It comes from the book of Leviticus, Chapter 16...which is a chapter about the Jewish Day of Atonement, which really isn't far from what our Day of Ash Wednesday and our period of Lent represents. In the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 16, God speaks to Moses, describing that forgiveness is needed. God describes a change in vesture for the priests, that a bull be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the priesthood, then two goats were offered. The first would be for the traditional offering of sacrifice for the people in the temple—a bloody sacrifice that would make clean the people of Israel.

Then beginning in verse 21: "Then Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated for the task. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness. "

A goat, of all things, hunkering away and living life, perhaps unknowingly being burdened with the entirety of the sins of Israel. That's a lot for a goat!

But...I think you know where I'm going with this. What is a lot for a goat is what the Lamb was called for. I mean, we

Fr. Jason's Article (cont)

That unique part is that, while teaching the masses, blessing the children, debating the scholars, comforting the afflicted, feeding the hungry, assisting mankind in every feasible way....Jesus of Nazareth had to build a compelling case to others to have him killed.

Call it a side-effect, call it an underlying plan, call it whatever— in order to carry out his Divine, sacred mission of being the scapegoat, of being the sacrificial lamb, of taking away the sins of the world...he needed to incriminate himself.

This is where that God versus Man, the divine versus the human, the "Christology" of Jesus comes into play. God is perfect. God, by that perfect nature is sinless. Man is imperfect,

sinful. Though Jesus of Nazareth lived a blameless life, and though there was no cunning, no foul deeds, no trickery involved, His actions would need to lead men to a place of sin.

Per humanity's free will, this didn't *make* them sin, merely was an avenue by which wickedness was going to seep through, no matter the circumstance.

In this way, though scripture was to be fulfilled that one would betray the Son of Man, and though the betrayer (Judas) was one whom Jesus would offer hospitality— predestination is not a word I would use for that.

In what would be Christ's sacrifice for the world, we see that connection to the sacrifices of the Old Testament. In sacrificing animals, sinless beings were offered, killed, and blood sprin-

kled for various reasons. There was to be a somewhat limited effect of each sacrifice, prompting the need for repeated sacrifices.

In Christ, this was to be one for all, one forever. There would never be the need for this sort of magnitude again. He was doing this for each of us...for the SIN of world.

He was innocent. Sinless. Christ shouldered the burden for all, not to wander off in a desert like a goat, but to make sure it never had to happen again. We offer the Sacrifice of Mass, in an unbloody manner, because His blood was shed once. We receive His Body because He told us that is how we should remember Him. We offer the Sacrament of Penance to our people because He made it available—scapegoat, sacrificial Lamb, Savior.

Fr. Jason

Various Announcements

FAT TUESDAY/ASH WEDNESDAY

We enjoyed a busy week as the church calendar moved from Shrove-tide to Lent. This included our annual Hotcake Dinner and pączki sale. Many thanks to Steve Fesz and friends for leading the dinner. Pączki just about sold out and the dual pancake/potato pancake menu was a hit. Another thanks to Chris Paulus for her recipe and cooking of the potato pancakes. And though Ash Wednesday featured flurries all day, it didn't prevent most parishioners from attending services.

1st COMMUNION

SUNDAY, March 10, Miss Bella receives her 1st Holy Communion. She spent the last year studying with Sub-Deacon Jim in preparation, and passed her exam from Fr. Jason, receiving her 1st Penance as well. May God bless her this day!

PICK A NUMBER!

St. Mary's is running a "Pick a Number" Fundraiser once again, featured in the foyer as it was last year. The fundraiser has begun, and numbers

are disappearing fast! Not only is each number a donation; each number gives you the chance to win something. Prizes range from hefty gift cards to lottery scratch-offs.

LENTEN CROSS

The Mission Team is sponsoring the Lenten Prayer Cross. It has been placed in the back, parking lot side corner of the church. Please take on this Lenten discipline of devotion and increased prayer and plan on placing your prayers upon it.

OLD PALMS

In preparation for Palm Sunday 2019, you may bring your old palms to church so that they may be disposed of properly. Palms are blessed and should not be simply thrown away. There will be a box to collect them in a couple spots around the church proper.

LENTEN RETREAT

Our Seniorate Lenten Retreat takes place Saturday, March 23 at Resurrection PNCC in Temperance, MI— right outside of Toledo. Transportation may

be provided, leaving the church around 7:50am and returning around 4pm. There is no cost— Please sign the sign-up sheet if interested in attending. The event will include an "Explanation & Interrupt Mass", as well as discussion & delicious food. — See the posted flyers & sign-up sheet.

PASTA DINNER

Please note that we will be serving a pasta dinner on Friday, March 22 from 5-7pm as part of our Lenten Dinner series. Please grab a flyer and pass the information along!

MISSION & EVANGELISM WORKSHOP

Takes place March 29-31 at Holy Trinity Parish in Plantsville, CT. Info is posted on the bulletin board.

LONGHORN FUNDRAISER

Thanks to everyone who supported our February Restaurant fundraiser. As per parish direction, we will be holding three more in 2019. Our profit was \$316.79.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS

We take time in devotion and prayer every Friday evening in Lent at 6pm, be they for Stations of the Cross or Bitter/Sorrowful Lamentations. Please join us!

The Elevation of Cleric Jim Ploskonka to Sub-Deacon

They say the third time is a charm, right? Well, on the third scheduled date, the elevation of Cleric Jim Ploskonka to Sub-Deacon took place on the Feast of St. Blaise, February 3, 2019

We were honored by the presence of the Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church, the Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, as he traveled to Parma to impart the elevation on Sub-Deacon Jim. He was accompanied by his lovely wife Carol as well as Rev. David Gaydos, a supply priest of the PNCC's Central Diocese.

Mass was held at 10am that morning and began with solemn procession— first, of the Love of God Sodality, acolytes and clergy, and second, of the visiting bishop, as the choir sang "Witaj, Pasterze Witaj!", the

traditional welcoming of the bishop here at St. Mary's and other parishes. Mrs. Barb Bogzevitz ceremonially presented Prime Bishop with bread and salt. We were lucky to have an experienced guest organist that day, Mrs. Cathy Bilinski, as she was able to cover our organist Chris' absence.

The liturgy of elevation took place quite early during Mass, as Cleric Jim was first elevated to Acolyte right after the recitation of the Introit Verse.

The bishop administers this seated, as this is the position of authority. Cleric Jim first received unlit candles, being given the authority to light the candles in church. He then was given

empty cruets, giving him the authority to serve water and wine at Mass. The blessing then bestowed upon him showed all that the lights he would fill at church would not only be physical, but symbolic of the light of Jesus Christ.

Mass continued with the Kyrie, the Gloria, and the Opening Prayer, which signaled the elevation to Sub-Deacon.

During this time, Cleric Jim changed from cassock and surplice into an amice, alb, and cincture. The amice was not fully fitted, as it would be placed upon him as the symbolic Helmet of Salvation. He also re-entered the church with a lighted candle, signifying the prayed-for light of the previous office.

He would first receive from the bishop an empty chalice and paten, signifying his abil-



Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord!



Elevation of Sub-Deacon Jim (continued)

ity to handle these sacred items during the celebration of Holy Mass, as well as giving him the duty to keep them clean and presentable. He was then given a purificator and filled wine & water cruets, giving him the ability to not only serve wine and water, but to pour them into the chalice himself. The final ceremonial offering is that of the Book of Lessons/Lectionary, which he then immediately read from as the lector of the Mass.

From that point, Mass followed as normal, with the Prime Bishop as the celebrant and

assisted by Father Gaydos and now Sub-Deacon Jim. Prime Bishop preached the homily, urging the congregation to share in Sub-Deacon Jim's evolving ministry. Prime Bishop and Father Jason distributed Holy Communion. Concluding Mass was, in honor of St. Blaise, the Blessing of Throats, which was administered to all by Father Jason, Father Greg, and Sub-Deacon Jim.

Following Mass, all were invited to the Fellowship Hall for a won-

derful breakfast. Prepared by 1st Vice-Chair Steve Fesz and helpers, all were treated to fruit platters, various egg strata's, baked goods, waffles, coffee, and juice.

Many thanks to all who were involved in a memorable occasion. A few pictures are posted here; the rest are available to see on our parish website.



Prayer Shawl Workshop

The Prayer Shawl Ministry has been active at St. Mary's since its inception. Shawls and blankets have been crafted for a number of years by many loving hands.

The shawls are usually kept in the sacristy with Father Jason, and are available for anyone, parishioner, friend, enemy, and so on. They've been blessed at Mass, during Coffee Hour, and at Bible Study.

All of these blessings and loving donations means, well, that we were almost out! A workshop was scheduled and took place on the morning of Tuesday, February 19th.

the day with the celebration of Holy Mass, from there, coffee and a light breakfast was served in the Fellowship Hall. After paws were washed, it was time to get to work!

Many thanks to those who took the time to prepare for the day (preparation takes a long, long time!) and for the beautiful hands that worked on each one.

Part of the unique blessing of each shawl includes the laying on of hands, first, by the blesser, and then by all those present. We will continue to make sure this ministry plays an important, healing role in our congregation and extended community.,



Father Greg Gronn was on hand to begin



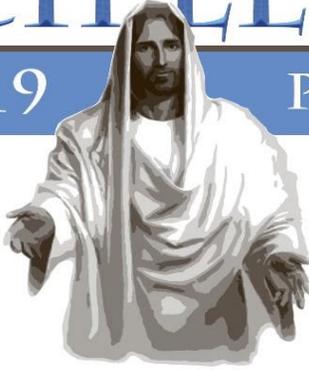
 PRAYER 
SHAWL MINISTRY



PNCC Future Directions Update

DISCIPLESHIP

2019 PNCC



February 1, 2019



Dear Bishops, Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, Deacons and Faithful of our Holy Church,

As we begin this Great and Holy Lenten Season during Discipleship: 2019 we share with you "Capturing the Light During Lent" by Rev. Dr. Scott J. Lill.

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but rather he emptied himself..."
~Philippians 2:5-7

Do you call them "fireflies" or "lightning bugs?" Last summer, I saw a map that suggested it all depends on where you live. According to the geographical data, those who live in the Eastern Diocese of our Church probably call them "fireflies," those residing in the Central or Buffalo-Pittsburgh Dioceses likely refer to them as "lightning bugs," with some of each group among Polish National Catholics within the Western and Canadian Dioceses.

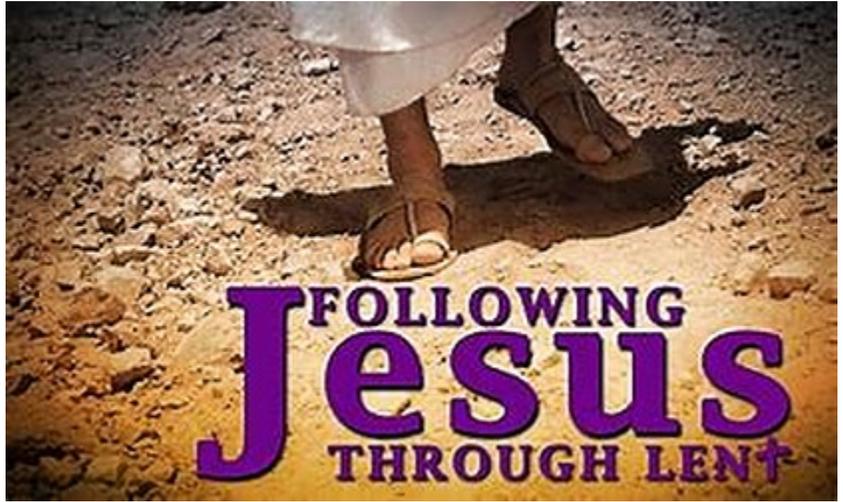
Where I live, they're definitely "lightning bugs," and they feature in some of my fondest, most vivid memories of the summer nights of my childhood, when we, empty jars in our hands, would embark upon excited expeditions into the dark wilds of our backyards in hopes of catching some of these exotic creatures which so enthralled our young imaginations. While it was thrilling to catch even one, the best part of the entire endeavor was a sort of victory parade when we would hurriedly walk back to the porch together with our jars collectively flickering enough radiance to illumine our pathway home, even if just a little. Arriving back at home base, we would spend some time contemplating the magical glow, before removing the lids to watch them fly away, perhaps to be pursued by another group just down the street. Now, I'm willing to bet that many of you—regardless of where you grew up or what you called them—can share a similar story, but even if you were never part of such an adventure, I am sure you can imagine it and recognize the one piece of gear that was absolutely essential to our nightly pursuit: *a jar*. After all, catching them in one's hands could get a bit messy if one was not careful—obviously counterproductive to the overall goal—so *a clean, empty jar* was an absolute must.

As we all prepare to embark upon the spiritual adventure of Great and Holy Lent, those jars that we used night after summer night as children can be an image to help us reflect upon our discipleship and the Lord's call to ongoing repentance. Far too many Christians aim way too low, seemingly hoping to just slide by, avoiding the "big ticket" sins and being a decent enough person to perhaps sneak into heaven through the back gate when the angels who guard it are off duty. This is not, however, the goal that Jesus set for His disciples, when He decreed that "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). We are not charged by the Lord to become somewhat respectable or usually not-all-that-bad. He has *much* greater things in mind for us: participating in His own infinite Holiness...being fully transformed as we come closer to Him and share in His goodness...becoming radiant with Undying Light in a world still so much in darkness. This is the truest understanding of our human nature and its authentic purpose: *we are created to be vessels of God's own divine life in the world*.

In this sense, we are sort of like those jars, right? However, the Light that we are fashioned to carry does not come from any creature—even one as uniquely beautiful and mysterious as a lightning bug/firefly. Instead, this Light of which we now speak is the Light we profess in the Creed: Eternal Light, Light without another source, Light Itself. This Light is *the very life of the Triune God*, and we do not have to wander around in the darkness with the hopes of somehow catching and containing God—as if we ever could—because He so freely gives Himself to us. He invites us to a complete union with Him so that we might fully become who we are, the unique bearers of his radiant image and likeness.

PNCC Future Directions Update (continued)

We do, however, have to prepare ourselves to receive God's life by repenting, which is to say by becoming clean and empty. We must be cleansed not just from particular sins but even more from our sinfulness, that deep-seated fallenness that expresses itself in so many ways, but always originates with our staking a false claim to ultimate authority over ourselves. To counter this, we continually surrender our lives to our Jesus, acknowledging Him alone as our Lord and Teacher. At the same time, we need to spiritually declutter our inner selves, actively pursuing worldly detachment, in order to make room for Him. One way to discern this is to ask whether certain parts of our lives are really under Jesus' control: relationships, money, possessions, status, education, authority, employment, recreation and entertainment, and everything else. While some aspects of our lives, not sinful in and of themselves, must simply be put back into their proper place, other things will have to be completely discarded. After an honest and thorough self-assessment with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can then ask Jesus for the strength to change our way of living accordingly.



Becoming interiorly clean and empty is a daily goal of each disciple of Jesus, as we take up our crosses and follow the example of the one who emptied Himself, but during Lent we ramp up our efforts. In this year of refocused discipleship, then, let us not think of Lent as a burdensome chore or something to be endured until Easter. Instead, let us recognize it as an adventure to be enthusiastically engaged...like children running off into the night to "capture light," but not by trapping it within glass jars. Instead, let us invite the Light to catch us, so to speak, and enter to dwell within souls that are repentant and well prepared, cleansed of sin and emptied of worldliness. Changed little by little through our diligent cooperation with indispensable grace of the Most Holy Trinity, we may go forth together to illumine the pathways of the entire world so that others may joyfully join us on our never-ending journey of discipleship with Christ. Then, wherever we live and worship as Polish National Catholics, there will be no debate as to what we are all called—Disciples of Jesus—and through us the prophecy of Isaiah may be fulfilled: "then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard" (58:8).

We are called to do try new and innovative ways to have adult faith conversations. How have you considered this gathering? "Soup, Sandwich and Sermon", "Wine and Cheese Faith Conversation" ? An adult forum has started at St. Stanislaus Cathedral and is progressing along as adults gather to discuss their faith while the youth attend School of Christian Living classes - a wonderful Wine and Cheese Faith Conversation was tried and was extremely successful at Blessed Trinity. Everyone is looking forward to the next one!

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
- Action Plan for Discipleship: 2019**
 - Develop and emphasize Discipleship throughout 2019
 - Special Masses
 - Create a Business Free Zone
 - Adult Continuing Education
 - Social Media Presence
 - Two Days of Spiritual Retreat
 - Complete Six Community Service Projects

March Days of Note



March Birthdays

- 7th – Bill Kastak
- 7th – Nate Ploskonka
- 17th – Linda Sobolewski
- 18th – Barb Bogzevitz
- 18th – Lauren O'Conner
- 19th – Karen Dicken
- 25th – David Adams
- 26th – Evonne Pryer
- 27th – Don Burger
- 28th – Michael Ference

The Stations of the Cross

- I—Jesus Is Sentenced to Death
- II—Jesus Takes Up His Cross
- III—Jesus Falls the First Time
- IV—Jesus Meets His Mother
- V—Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross
- VI—Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus
- VII—Jesus Falls the Second Time
- VIII—Women of Jerusalem Weep over Jesus
- IX—Jesus Falls the Third Time
- X—Jesus is Stripped of His Garments
- XI—Jesus is Crucified
- XII—Jesus Dies on the Cross
- XIII—The Body of Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross
- XIV—The Body of Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Christ has no Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth
but yours,
Yours are the eyes
with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which
he walks
to do good,
Yours are the hands,
with which he blesses
all the world.
Yours are the hands,
yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes,
you are his body.
Christ has no body now
but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth
but yours,
Yours are the eyes
with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on
earth
but yours.

by St. Teresa of Avila



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 Dzurhoff	Fr. Sr. Joseph Soltysiak
Cherise Pacanovsky	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
John Michalczyk	Bill Hinton
Nan Cramer	Rose Petrosky
Bp. John Mack	David Vaden
Bp. John Swantek	Jeannie Bartko Muran
Mary Cawley	Edna Samelson
Anthony Soltysiak	Geri S.
Wanda Heffner	Loretta Baldwin
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.
Michael McGivern	Sylvia Kowalski
Daniel Morgan	Emma Freshwater

WE ALSO REMEMBER

ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY
ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Bless them, O Lord.

Visit us online at
www.stmaryspncc.org