

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

January 2023

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Holy Name

There was an article written in the *Rola Boza/God's Field* recently by the Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski how, because 2023 started on a Sunday, it will feature 53 Sundays...or, a bonus Sunday! I loved this observation and let him know it.

While I won't use the word "unfortunately", the year starting on a Sunday meant that the Solemnity of the Circumcision of the Lord, January 1st, fell on a Sunday. This priest is telling no lie when he says that it may be his least-favorite Sunday to preach on.

The reason is perhaps a bit adoles-

cent but hey, it still is a reason. The liturgy celebrates the importance of the Holy Family's adherence to the laws and practices of the Jewish Faith, which not only included that physical sign that a male takes in becoming a Jew, but taking on a name as well.

The church celebrates, then, the Solemnity of the Holy Name of Jesus on January 2nd. It was a blessing this year for it to be on a Monday, because we have had a "Monday crowd" consistently since my first few months here at St. Mary's some 9+ years ago. Monday Mass has long afforded me a further expansion of the previous day's scripture, an opportunity to extend and remind everyone of the Penance assigned for Sunday's Absolution, or another prospect to preach God's Word, be it a Solemnity, Feast, or plain Jane kind of day.

I spoke about the symbol you see here "IHS". I started serving as an altar serv-

er at Holy Saviour PNCC in Union City, CT, right around my 4th birthday...which was possible be-

cause my brother AJ was an acolyte, five years my senior. At some point over the next few years, I noticed the lace of the altar frontals and how they spelled out "IHS" ...but the "I's were kinda curved like a "J". It made sense to me because "JHS" were my father's initials and it was nice that the ladies put his initials on the altars while he celebrated Mass.

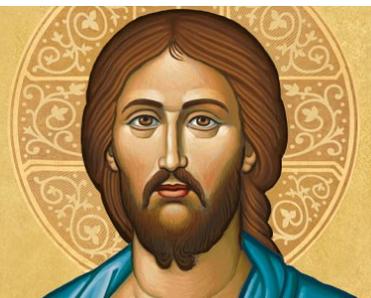
Of course, at a point sometime later on, I realized that this couldn't be the case because, well, what if we moved and the next priest was named Mieczyslaw Kapowski or something? But, like anything in Christendom, there is a rich explanation.

Old Testament and Gospel selections aside, our scripture that guides us is St. Paul in his Letter to the Philippians (2:10-11), "So that at Jesus' name every knee must bend in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father: Jesus Christ is Lord". We hear this in our 5th Eucharistic Prayer as well, if it seems familiar and cannot put your finger on why.

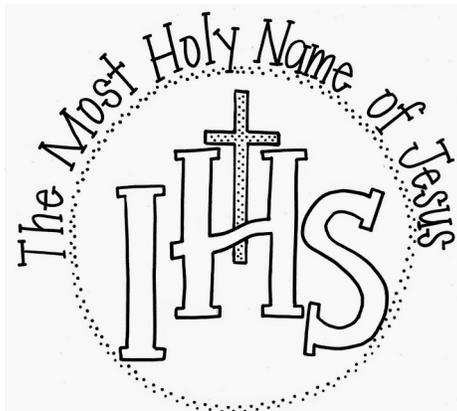
IHS is a Christogram – a combo of letters that represent the holy name "Jesus." In the early church, the sacred

The Name of the Lord
is a strong tower.
The righteous run into it,
and are safe.

PROVERBS 18-10



Opening Article (Cont)

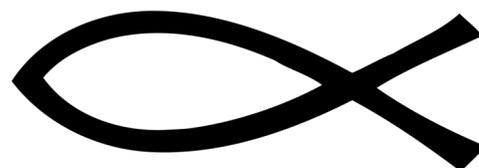


names of Jesus would be abbreviated by using the first two letters of the name, or the first and last letters, with a line over the letters. For example, the Greek letters Chi-Rho (which looks like our English X and P) was an abbreviation for the name "Christ." (see picture all the way to the right)

Likewise, I (iota) and H (eta) are the first two Greek letters for "Jesus." Sometime in the second century, the third letter, S (sigma), was added, thereby rendering IHS. Christograms served as secret codes, whereby inscribed on a tomb, they indicated a deceased Christian, or on a doorpost, a Christian home. Why secret codes?

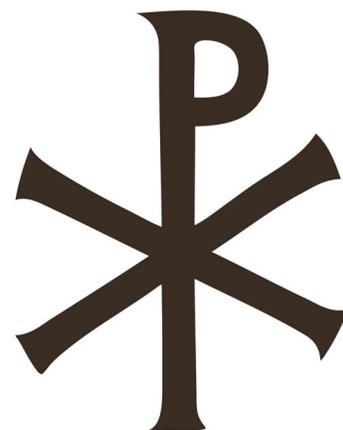
Christians were persecuted, and symbols told a story without incriminating. Aggressors would dismiss the fish symbol as perhaps something occupational, certainly not faithful. This also includes what we might call the "Jesus Fish", or the Ichthys (see picture) because, well, followers of Jesus starting with the first 12 were all "fishers of men."

Later on in Catholic History, the "IHS" was also used to promote devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. It was Saint Bernardine of Siena, a passionate preacher and somewhat controversial figure, who piously spread knowledge of this symbol throughout Italy. Much



in the way we contemporarily wear and hang crucifixes and crosses to show our faith, he deemed this should be done with this symbol. After some pushback, it was Pope Martin V who approved this monogram along with the addition of the cross. On an interesting sidenote—because of Bernardine's preaching and influence, the "Hail Mary" prayer was changed: the name "Jesus" was added to the prayer: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

Fr. Jason



Love of God Sodality Christmas Luncheon

Members (and supporters!) of the Love of God Sodality met at noon at Das Schnitzel Haus on Saturday, December 17 for a wonderful early afternoon of fellowship and delicious German food. The Sodality has done luncheons, cookie swaps, and other sorts of parties through the years and the ladies wanted a day out! God's continued blessing on our Sodality and the blessings they offer back to our parish and community.



December Advent Sundays

The second Sunday of Advent on December 4 was full of peace at St. Mary's as we moved further towards the birth of Christ and the true preparations needed for our own Christmas holidays. The second blue Advent Candle was lighted to begin Mass and (then) Deacon Jim offered God's blessing upon the Oplatek that many of our families share around the dinner table at Wigilia. After Holy Mass, the parishioners were treated to gifts from St. Nicholas, as he made a quick stop at the parish earlier in the week (with the help of the Mission Team) in order to provide a little gift in advance of his Feast Day on Tuesday, December 6.

The Third Sunday of Advent featured not only the lighting of the fourth

Advent Candle, but a short and anticipatory Penitential Service before Holy Mass began. This parish tradition of having some extra time for penance in the Advent Season has taken place for decades.

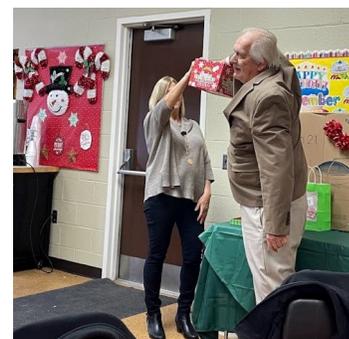
The Fourth Sunday of Advent featured the lighting of the 4th Advent Candle. Fr. Jason led this lighting.



Advent at St. Mary's Con't

After our 4th Sunday Mass, we enjoyed a tremendous Christmas Party in our Fellowship Hall, sponsored by the PTO. Bagels, donuts, fruit, and more were served on a raucous Sunday morning. After a bit of pleading and singing by our younger ones, jolly ol' St. Nick

stopped by to pay a visit— thanks to the PTO for arranging such a special treat for our kids (abd treat bags) and for so many of our people.



Various Announcements

PARISH MEETING –Our Annual Parish Meeting will be Sunday, January 29.

PARISH POTLUCK– Sunday, January 15 we enjoy our first parish potluck in the basement hall of the church since...January 2020! Enjoy!

FOOD PICKUP – Now that the holidays have slowed down, we wanted to make sure parishioners know we have some frozen food still for sale- an announcement will be made at the potluck for the items available.

PARISH EMAILS- Has anyone not been receiving emails from the parish/Fr. Jason on a periodic basis that would like to? Or, if you used to and do not anymore? Please let him know so our email lists can be appropriately updated.

RESULTS – Thanks to all who attended this past week's election meeting. Officers elected will begin their terms upon installation during an upcoming Mass. Executive officers include: Parish Committee chair- Susan Boehnlein; 1st Vice- Gene Stepanik; 2nd Vice- Mike Wisniewski; Treasurer- Cherie Kugler; Fin. Secretary – Pattie Dotson; Secretary- Patty Temesi.

PARISH ENVELOPES - Are available for 2023 – grab yours today.

SCHEDULING MASSES – Fr. Jason is now scheduling Masses for 2023. You may offer a Mass for the health or in honor of someone who is living, perhaps for a particular life event, or you may offer Mass for one who is now living in Heaven. These can be offered at anytime, but often coincide with the day they left this world, a birthday, anniversary, etc.

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP – Info for scholarships from the National United Choirs is available by talking to Chris Paulus or Fr. Jim. Flyers are also posted on the bulletin board above the parish mailbox table and on Fr. Jason's door.

FIRST MASS OF REV. PLOSKONKA – A tradition for a newly-ordained priest is to have a First Solemn High Mass. Though a priest may celebrate a few Masses before this, it is a tradition to have the neo-presbyter celebrate this Mass with the people who helped foster his journey to the Holy Priesthood of Jesus Christ - the people of St. Mary's. This Mass will be at 11am on Saturday, February 4, with a reception to follow- first in the Fellowship Hall, then proceeding downstairs. There will be visiting clergy from

across the PNCC in support of Fr. Jim for this Mass & celebration – these don't happen as much as we would like! Please mark your calendar and consider attending this very special Holy Mass at our parish, the first of its kind since Fr. Greg's back in 2007! We will also have a guest celebrant for Sunday Mass the next day, Sunday February 5.

EPIPHANY –Throughout January, Fr. Jason will visit and bless homes of parishioners upon request – please speak to him after Mass or call/text/email him to make an appointment.

CLOTHES COLLECTION FINAL –The final count for the YMSofR Clothes collection will be done by the men of the YMSofR after 9am Mass on Monday, January 16. We will count all of the items and bag them for pick-up the next day. Please get your final items in for donation before that date!

STILL? Our Christmas celebration hasn't ended yet, as we highlight our liturgy with Christmas Hymns for the entirety of the 40 days of the Christmas Season. Though the world has moved on, the Church continues with joy celebrating the celebration of the Savior's birth.

CANON –For all of January, we use the 5th Eucharistic Prayer on p. 92.

Christmas 2022

Even though we laud Bing Crosby's annual dreams for a White Christmas, we were left with a feeling this year of "not like that!" A major winter storm and cold front came blasting through the Midwest, stopping people in their tracks in the final days before Christmas with sub-zero temperatures and wind chills in the negative 30's...c'mon Bing!

While the storm kept many indoors and under blankets, we soldiered on for the cause of Christ in celebrating Christmas appropriately. We continued our tradition of holding Pasterka at the Midnight Hour, preceded by a concert of carols by our parish choir. Mrs. Barb Bogzevitz was chosen to be the bearer of the Christ Child in procession.

Christmas Day Holy Mass was celebrated just a few hours after Midnight Mass attendees arrived home, at 10am. The roads, unfortunately, didn't prove much better almost a half day later, but the spirit was indeed strong as we felt the true warmth of the savior's birth. Fr. Jason preached on the role that the Christmas liturgy has in re-telling the Christmas story from the Gospels.

Christmas continues for days...12 of them, to be exact! On Monday, December 26, St. Stephen's Day, the first deacon and proto-martyr was celebrated, with Fr. Jim offering a sermon on the role of Stephen's strong faith in his ministry. Wine was blessed to open St. John's Day Holy Mass on Tuesday, December 27, with Fr. Jason touching on the role of the Beloved Apostle and Evangelist. The Holy Innocents were commemorated with Holy Mass on December 28 with Fr. Jim serving as cele-

brant and homilist. After a couple of quiet Masses within the Octave of Christmas, Litany to the Most Blessed Sacrament was conducted to close out 2022 with an afternoon liturgy, with Fr. Jason also offering the Liturgy of the Word and a sermon on the Solemnity of the Holy Family.



Ordination of Rev. James Francis Ploskonka

The Ordination of Deacon Jim Ploskonka to the Holy Order of Priest took place on Saturday, December 10 at All Saints Cathedral in Chicago, IL...but many years of devotion, study, conversation, preparation, and more went into that day.



The day prior, Deacon Jim was part of a pre-ordination retreat and subsequent Canonical Exam that was offered by priests of the PNCC Western Diocese: Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, Very Rev. John Kowalczyk, and Rev. Jason Soltysiak. Our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jerry Rafalko, permitted us his chancery and chapel for prayer, examination, discussion, preparation...and even cooked us a pretty impressive meal! He also took the time to consecrate the

chalice Deacon Jim had regilded for use in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

After retreating and inquisition, a rehearsal was held at All Saints Cathedral, where Rev. David Rowinski, Rev. David Gaydos, and Cleric Douglas Scott stopped by for help and support. As is appropriate before receiving any Sacrament, Deacon Jim attended private confession with one of the priests. Once prepared for the upcoming morning's liturgy, the group broke for some dinner and a good night's rest.

The Ordination liturgy began at the call of our Bishop, and the attending clergy, assistants, and ordination candidate processed into All Saints Cathedral on the morning of the 10th with family and faithful in attendance.



The ordination liturgy began early in Mass, immediately following the Gospel. Upon presentation to the bishop by the Archdeacon of the Mass (and chair of the WD Diaconate Program), the Very Rev. Charles Zawistowski, the bishop states the duties of the priest and the Litany of Saints is then chanted. After the Litany concludes, Bishop Rafalko placed his hands upon Deacon Jim's head, followed by all the priests in attendance.

After this laying on of hands, Bishop Rafalko vested the ordinand, changing his diaconate stole to that of a priestly nature and placing upon him the chasuble, pinned in the back as is custom.

Bishop Rafalko then petitioned the Holy Spirit and anointed Fr. Jim's hands to do the sacred work of a priest. After anointing, Bishop presented the ordained with a chalice and paten, giving him the authority to celebrate Holy Mass.

Bishop Rafalko preached on the changes Fr. Jim would now experience in his new role as well as his role in being the sole con-celebrator with him in this Ordination Mass. After Fr. Jim distributed Communion, the Apostles Creed was



St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

Ordination (con't)

recited and the final two steps of ordination were taken. Bishop Rafalko gave Fr. Jim further authority to absolve sins

and had him take the oath of obedience to him and his lawful successors.

Mass concluded with the first blessings given by the neo-presbyter, first to his ordaining bishop, then to all clergy who came and knelt before him, then to his family and the faithful.

Following Mass, a delicious luncheon was served in the Cathedral's hall. Bishop Rafalko presented Fr. Jim with his ordination certificate and assignment as reserve priest of the Western Diocese. Many blessings!



Rorate Mass

Before even the crack of dawn on Monday, December 19, a spirit-filled group of worshippers filtered in to a dark, yet warmly-candlelit St. Mary's for the Advent Rorate Mass to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As Mass began sharply at 7 in near pitch-black, the warmth of the rising sun through-

out the celebration changed those tired eyes to those seeking the Word of God that was offered by Fr. Jason. He preached on the role of light in the church. This included what different candles mean, how often they are used and how they are tied in to the light of Christ.



Mass closed precisely at the moment of sunrise as we all sang a Marian Hymn welcoming the new day. A few devoted helpers even stayed for a few hours afterward to help with Sanctuary and church set-up for the Christmas holiday.

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

Sp. Don Zeigler

Donald M Zeigler (88) passed away December 25, 2022 in Fort Myers, Florida. He was born on January 24, 1934 in Alliance, OH to Clarence and Alberta (Klinesmith) Zeigler. Don was a loving and sacrificial husband and father. He enjoyed spending time with family, being involved with the church, taking cruise vacations, going to the movies, doing Sudoku puzzles, and eating ice cream. He was known as a very early riser with an incredible work ethic. Don served in the Army, was a dedicated employee at the Ohio Bell Company and still worked part time at Corporate Quarters up until his final days. He loved to laugh and cried at all the Lassie movies.

Donald is survived by his loving wife, Joyce; children, Donna (John) Cook, Tracy Lezark, Scott Zeigler, Karyn (Earl) Gentile, Karen Cicman, Sharon (Randy) Rosenlieb, and Precious Daughter Denise

Zeigler. Also left to cherish memories are his grandchildren, Kyle & Kevin Lezark, Kelly (Marc) Gerhart, Grace & Joey Gentile, Madeline Cook, Ariel, Adina, Levi & Terah Rosenleib, Ashley, Amanda & Joshua Little Sun; great grandchildren, Wesley, Sophia and Riley, as well as many nieces, nephews, family, and friends who will forever love and miss him.

Don, his wife Joyce, Karen, Sharon, and Denise were all active members at St. Mary's for many years before Don & Joyce moved to Florida.

He is preceded in death by his parents and siblings; Mildred Jaratz, Lenore McManamon, and Larry Zeigler.

A memorial service will be held at First Christian Church 2620 Country Club Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33904 on Monday, January 16, 2023 at 11:00am

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.nationalcremation.com/locations/north-fort-myers for the Zeigler family.



Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's

January 1— Len & Hanna Pryer of. by daughter Evonne Pryer

January 8 – Bruno & Dorothy Tracy of. by Randy Tracy

January 15– (10am) Open Intention

January 22 – Open Intention

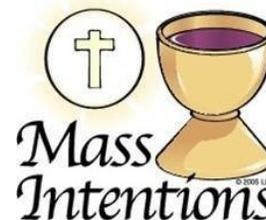
January 29 - Open Intention (Music Scholarship Sunday)

February 5 – Sophie & Martin Szpilka of. by John Spilka

February 12—Open Intention

February 19– Open Intention

February 26 – Open Intention



Fr. Jason is now taking Mass Requests for the 2023 Year.

PNCC Future Directions Update

January 2023

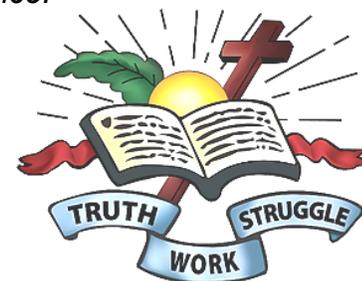
After a period of years under the leadership of the PNCC Future Directions Sub-Committee, the monthly updates have come to a close. God's blessings on everyone who did the tireless and consistent work to provide our parishes with a National Program of prayer, information, and guidance.

On behalf of St. Mary's PNCC, thank you to:

PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., Chairman



St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter



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January 4, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As I celebrate my next year as your bishop, I wish to express my deepest hope for our Western Diocese in this Pastoral Letter. The longer I serve as a priest and bishop, the truth of this statement becomes more evident: The Church exists to evangelize! Put simply, if we believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died for us and rose again to set us free from sin and death, we are compelled to share that Good News with everyone around us.

We are living in challenging times, to be sure. Our world, families, and even our beloved Polish National Catholic Church are experiencing many problems. However, there is a way out: embracing and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who said, "Seek first the kingdom of God ..." (Mt 6:33). In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ brought the kingdom of God to earth. "Proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Mt 10:7) In word and deed, our Lord inaugurated the kingdom and taught us to long for its perfection in heaven. "... your kingdom come, ... on earth as in heaven." (Mt 6:10)

Is there anything more hopeful and joyful than knowing that in Christ Jesus, we are loved, redeemed, and given the promise of eternal life? If we genuinely believe that, we can say with St. Paul: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31) May we live our faith well, confident in the glory that is ours in Jesus Christ, so that people around us may say the same thing: "Tell me about God, for I am sure that he is with you!" This is our task and our challenge. If we believe in the Good News, we must share it with everyone we encounter.

I humbly ask everyone in the Western Diocese to read this letter and meditate on it. My prayer is that all of us – as families, and as individuals – will put this teaching into practice and heed Jesus' call: "Go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Mt. 28:19). Be ready to articulate and defend the faith at work, in grocery stores, airports, schools and wherever people gather.

Mary, the Mother of God, after receiving the message about incarnation from the angel Gabriel, went in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth and share the good news of salvation. She followed Jesus faithfully, shared in his suffering, rejoiced in his resurrection, and received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost with the Apostles. Perhaps her words at the Wedding at Cana of Galilee are most appropriate for us today, "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

Let us pray at the beginning of the new year.

God our Father, you sent your Son, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to seek out and save the lost. Through his cross and resurrection, you have set us free. You sent the Holy Spirit as the first gift to believers, enabling us to preach and teach. Send us out into your vineyard so that more and more of your children can know you and make you known for your glory and our salvation. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

May we embrace our Polish National Catholic faith and share it joyfully with our brothers and sisters!

May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit come upon you and remain with you for ever.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Rafalko'.

Rt. Rev. Jerry Rafalko

Bishop Ordinary of the Western Diocese
Polish National Catholic Church

January Days of Note



January Birthdays

- 1 Barbara Wisniewski
- 5 Jeffrey Tiffe
- 6 Katie Repede
- 7 Patti Dotson
- 7 Natalie Soltysiak
- 8 Mak Mak Petrella
- 12 John Kasperczyk
- 22 John Kobalka
- Tom Kugler
- Anna Dawidziuk
- 23 Pete Moritz



January Anniversaries

- 7 Andre & Audrey Spanjol
- 24 Mike & Barb Wisniewski

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

"A New Year With The Lord"

*A new year is about to unfold
With new opportunities to explore
Doors will open for new experiences,
New adventures with the Lord
Remember not the former things,
The things of this past year,
The Lord will do new things in us,
Much more than we are aware
For He will make a way for us
As we put our trust in Him
And He will guide our every step
By His presence we have within
What God has placed within our hearts,
We find we'll be able to do
If we look for the opportunities,
We'll see the door to go through
We mustn't let anything hold us back
But rise up and take our place
And be all that God wants us to be
With a fresh touch of His grace*

• **By M.S. Lowdes**



Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bill & Pat Glatzer | Bob Kaczmarek |
| Bill Kastak | Anna Dawidziuk |
| George & Linda Makovicka | John Spilka |
| Johanna Markiewicz | Mary Ann Loschelder |
| June Zaun | Sauna Smullen |
| Marty Bengela | Tom Putynski |
| Claire Hunek | Millie Dominik |
| Kathleen Beres | Joseph Bischoff |
| David Micka | Jeff Lukas |
| Ed Pierson | George Bennett |
| Amy Dreger | Pattie Dotson |
| Elizabeth Starnawski | Jack Spilka |
| Elaine Repede | David Vaden |
| Wanda Clark | Beth Chihill |
| Michael Cosevin | Helen Cummings |
| Laina Dachtal | Mike Matis |
| 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 |
| Fr. Tom Sheha | 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 |
| Mary Cawley | Richard & Edna Samelson |
| Jim Giles | Tammy Teubl |
| Bill Zychowski | Loretta Baldwin |
| Donna Kidd | Paulette Lilli |
| Azriel G. | Lew Heifner |
| Marilyn Girard | Courtney Austin |
| Stephanie Milla | Shannon Alberino |
| Jayden Pieciak | Sophie Mae |
| Jeremy Steinbrick | Katie Stallbaum |
| Marcia Klein | Kim Penney |
| Robert Owen Miller | Patrick Knitt |
| Michael McGivern | Daniel Morgan |
| Joyce Zeigler | Kathleen Sobocinski |

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



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