

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

April/May 2026

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Lent & Easter 2026

The church's preparation for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ begins each year with that changeover from Ordinary Time to Pre-Lent, the 3 Sundays prior to Ash Wednesday that then lead to the 40 days of the Lenten Season.

The preponderance of Lent took place throughout the month of March with reminders of how we, as Catholics, are to react to the season. Each Sunday during Lent, the penance was an expansion of the readings- if we read half a chapter of scripture or just a few verses, we were given the full verse each week for each reading. On the First Sunday of Lent, Jesus battles the tempter with a full knowledge of scripture, so this is how we were assigned to battle each week. Stations of the Cross were held along with the Bitter Lamentations on a weekly basis.

Early on in the season, we hosted the Seniorate Lenten Retreat (later in this



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Below L: Stations of the Cross, Friday, March 20
Below R: Palm Sunday chant before scourging of the Cross



newsletter). As Lent continued, we grew closer to the Lord in his journey to Calvary, with Sunday scriptures detailed the Transfiguration, the vine and branches, the trial of the man born blind healed by our Lord, the raising of Lazarus, and ultimately and excitedly, the Passion of Our Lord on Palm Sunday, read by roughly a dozen worshippers.

Palm Sunday features the Liturgy of the Palms each year. This liturgy includes the

blessing, the chant, the music, procession around church, entrance with the knocking of doors, and scourging of the cross. All of it is done to show the culmination of Lent for those who attend Mass each Sunday- everything that needed to be said has been so and the congregation is prepared for Easter.

Below: Palm Sunday worship begins, with a view from the choir loft
Below R: Scourging of the Cross in middle of the church



Above: Sorrowful Lamentations chanted



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Lent & Easter 2026 (cont)

Although not obligatory, Holy Week



serves the richest of worship and liturgy. Each Mass of the first half of the week tells what Jesus was doing each day of the last week before his death. All the way to "Spy Wednesday" and the selling of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. Things change on Maundy Thursday, as a continuous three day liturgy called "The Holy Triduum" begins.



As the Gloria concludes, not a bell is rung until Easter procession. The Mandatum is performed during Mass, and Fr. Jason's joy was made manifest in the fact that all twelve seats prepared for the Mandatum

were filled for the ceremonial foot washing. The Holy Eucharist is instituted, and a short procession concludes Mass of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose. From there, the altars are stripped, signifying the displacement of Jesus and the chaos left behind.



Good Friday began with the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified. Within it, the Passion according to John was read, the traditional Good Friday Intercessions are read, the crucifix is revealed and adored, and the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy takes place. This is "Mass" that isn't Mass- the Liturgy of the Word has already taken place, nothing is offered so no offertory, and

Eucharist is "pre-blessed" from the evening prior". Also on Good Friday, Stations of the Cross were read by children of the parish at 3pm with a procession of the statue of the crucified Christ and at 7pm, the Tenebrae service was held, with the singing part held by Fr. Jason and Bill Zychowski.



Maundy Thursday Mass begins with the reception of the blessed Holy Oils from the Diocesan Chrism Mass. Once placed, a High Mass is celebrated, replete with appropriate incensation. The Gloria is magnificent...until it isn't.



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Lent & Easter (cont)



amongst the people. The liturgy closes with the Litany of the Saints.

Holy Saturday at St. Mary's had the Easter Basket sale take place in the morning, blessing of baskets at noon, and then at 3pm the Liturgy of Holy Saturday (followed by another blessing of baskets). As this day marks the full day Jesus was in the grave, it functions a bit differently. Here, the new fire was prepared from which the Paschal Candle and all other candles would be alit. Holy Water is blessed and created, as well as baptismal water. The Holy Saturday prophecies, PNCC style are read, and then baptismal vows are renewed

Easter was celebrated in full throat and song at 7am Holy Mass, beginning with the procession to the four corners. After Mass, an Easter breakfast was served, prepared by Mrs. Natalie Soltysiak and with plenty of helpers. The Easter Egg Hunt, prepared by the PTO, took place as well. Our second Mass was celebrated at 10am, with breakfast following that as well.

Our Easter celebrations continued throughout April. Low Sunday (2nd Sunday of Easter) wasn't really that "low", and the 3rd



Sunday of Easter featured the culmination of smells from the Easter Flowers – it was magnificent. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!



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Seniorate Lenten Retreat

On Saturday, March 7, the Northeast Seniorate of the Western Diocese held its annual retreat at St. Mary's. This was the first time the Northeast Seniorate's Lenten Retreat took place at our parish. The Title for this year's retreat was: "We adore you, o Christ and we bless you: because by your cross and passion you have redeemed the world."

Rev. Jim Ploskonka, visiting priest at All Saints in Sterling Hts., MI presented first on "We adore you, o Christ". His focus was on adoration and the

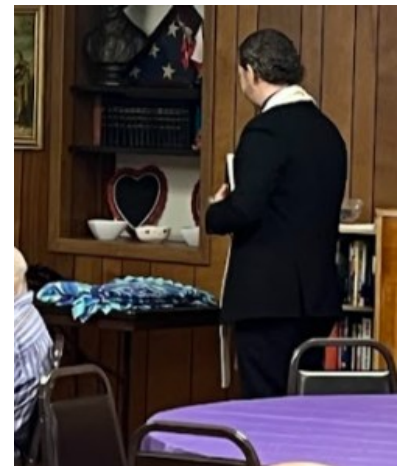
reverence surrounding it. He gave theological background, history, and instruction regarding the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He even included a take-home handout for everyone in attendance.

Rev. Jason Soltysiak, host pastor, presented on "And we bless you." This detailed traditional scriptural blessing and how it evolved in the Catholic setting. Prayer blankets were blessed following this to emphasize blessing.

Very Rev. Jaroslaw Nowak presented on "Because by your cross and passion, you have redeemed

the world!" He focused on the cross as redemption, giving scriptural emphasis on the prophecies and actions of the cross.

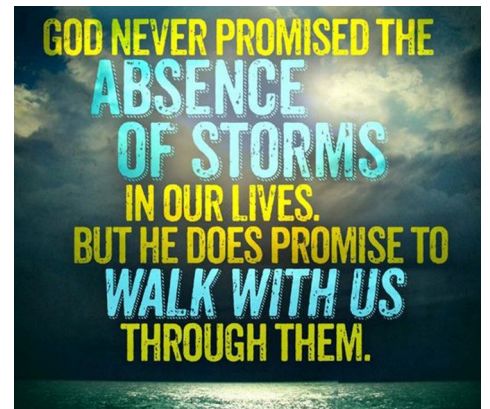
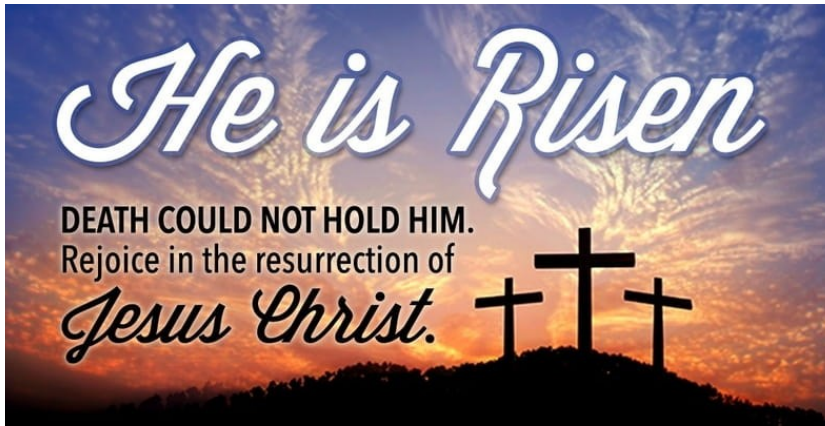
The Holy Hour of St Augustine was offered to conclude the retreat and a delicious lunch followed. Much appreciation to all at St Mary's who made this an enjoyable and spiritual time together.



Clerical Elevations

Fr. Jason attended the elevation of Clerics Al Becker and Jason Fox to the order of the Sub-Diaconate. This wonderful event took place at All Saints Cathedral in Park Ridge, IL on Tuesday, March 3rd with Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky officiating and

conferring the orders. Fr. Jason assisted in the ceremonies, along with Fr. Jim Ploskonka, to Master of Ceremonies Very. Rev. John Kowalczyk. Fr. Jason also offered the Sacrament of Penance the evening prior to the candidates.

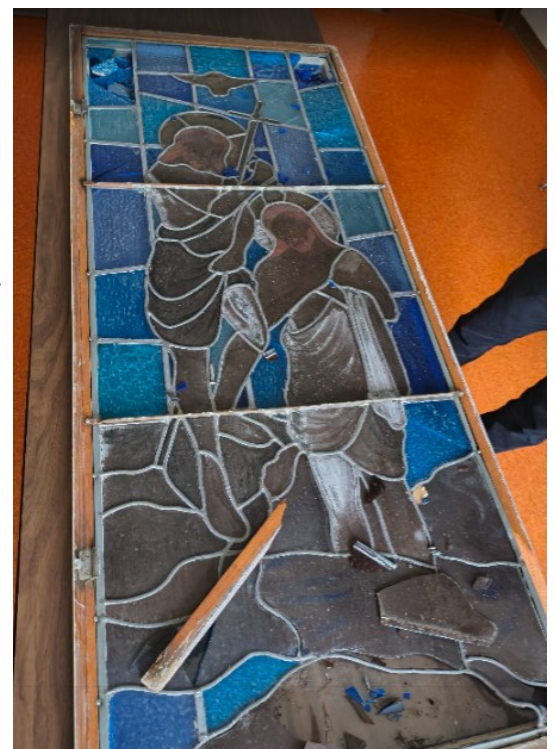
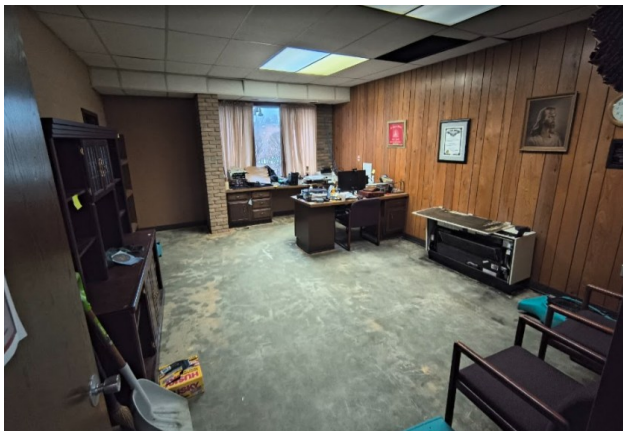


Friday the 13th Strikes

An historic windstorm hit northeast Ohio on Friday, March 13th. While the precipitation was light, the wind was so intense that it caused multitudes of damage to our parish. Parishioners noticed right away the stained glass window of John the Baptist was missing. The wind caught the window and wrenched it off its hinges, hurling it to the ground outside. Quick response from a number of St. Mary's parishioners led to a cleanup, a safekeeping

of the window, and a sealing of the hole. Unseen to our eyes at the time was major damage to a section of our flat roof. The storm also caused the power to go out until Tuesday, which led to loss of some stored items as well as a lack of heat...which lead to a burst pipe within an hvac unit, flooding Fr. Jason's office and causing quite a bit of damage. The damage was caught on Wednesday, March 18, and another dedicated crew spent many hours alleviating the situation. Thank you again.

The repairs are ongoing and our insurance is being put to use. We look very much forward of the return of a repaired stained glass window and for Fr. Jason's office to be able to meet with people again.

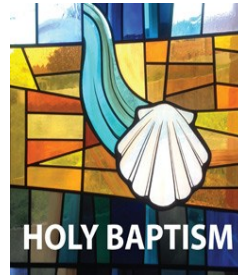


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Baptism of Clover

Holy Mass on March 15 was quite memorable, as parishioners were met with, well, darkness. With the electricity and heat out, we did our best to bring the warmth of the Lord to all worshippers, especially Nick, Ashley, and baby Clover. Clover was baptized during our 9am Sunday Mass by candlelight.

With adoring family and parishioners, she played it cool and became a member of Christ's Church right after the homily. May God continue to bless and guide her throughout her life.



Cleric Visits

Enroute from his home in Canada back to Savonarola Theological Seminary after his father's funeral, Cleric Joel Smith came through the Cleveland area and assisted Fr. Jason at Holy

Mass on Monday, March 16th. He remarked how nice it was to have a number of people worshipping on a Monday morning as well as how unique it was to celebrate by candlelight only, as the power was still out from the Friday the 13th Storm.

Joyfully, Cleric Joel was ordained Deacon on March 19th at St. Stanislaus Cathedral. Deacon Joel was ordained with Deacon David Dudzinski, Deacon

Todd Godwin, and Deacon Jonathan Johnson. God bless their ministry in the Polish National Catholic Church and beyond.



Choir Kielbasa

The choir of St. Mary's held its pre-Easter, "Palm Saturday" annual kielbasa making venture on March 28. Making sure parishioners and friends had all the fresh Polish Sausage they need before the holiday, many good minds and (garlicky) hands came together to tackle this task.



In Memorium



+ Joan Dittrich

Joan Dittrich (nee Czernitsky) passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family on March 7, 2026. She was preceded in death by her devoted husband, William M. Dittrich Sr. Joan was born June 22, 1935 in Cleveland to the late Mary (nee Tokacz) and Joseph Czernitsky.

Joan is survived by her daughter Diane Bronikowski (Mike), son Bill Dittrich (Kathy), grandchildren Lauren Dittrich (Nicole), Kelly Kerr (Jason), Danielle Coyne (Cameron), Julia Glover, Joe Glover, William Dittrich III, and great-grandchildren Hailey and Rylee. Her legacy lives on in the warmth and love shared by her family.

A cherished friend to many, Joan, found joy in planting flowers in the spring and tending to them all summer. Joan was a huge fan of slot gambling. She was always present at family gatherings, bringing laughter and

kindness to every occasion.

Joan dedicated over 25 years to Sears Company as Assistant Personnel Manager and continued her career at Herold Family Automotive. She retired to lovingly care for her youngest grandson, William. A memorial Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's on Saturday, March 28th, with Fr. Jason serving as celebrant and homilist. A reception was held after in the Fellowship Hall.



+Josephine Ference

Josephine Ference (nee Sady), age 102, Beloved wife of Frank (deceased). Dear mother of John, Frank, Jr. (deceased), Joan Edington (David), Ron, Michael, and Jeffrey. Cherished grandmother of 12 and great-grandmother of 9. Dear aunt and friend to many.

Josephine was born in central Pennsylvania in 1923. As a member of the Greatest Generation, she and her six siblings endured the

hardships of the Great Depression, and she later sent the love of her life, Frank, off to serve in the war in Europe. At just 17, she supported the war effort by traveling to Baltimore, where she became "Josie the Riveter," helping assemble flying boats used to rescue downed pilots. Josephine and Frank chose to raise their six children in Cleveland, where they helped build St. Mary's Church in Parma, Ohio. Deeply devoted to her faith and her church community, she was an active member of the choir, bowling league, and the Love of God Sodality. She also generously shared her time and talents as the church treasurer well into her 90s, only stepping back when she decided it was time to travel cross-country by train and see more of the America she loved.

To her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she was a constant source of love and comfort. Whether at the park or visiting the many animal shelters she supported, she made sure life's lessons were gently passed on and never forgotten. She will be deeply missed, and lovingly remembered always. Her love, strength, and gentle wisdom will continue to guide us every day, a lasting gift she leaves behind.

Josephine's Funeral Mass was held on Thursday, April 30th at 10am. Fr. Jason served as celebrant and homilist, with Fr. Jim Ploskonka offering the Liturgy of the Word and sharing the Absolution Rite with Fr. Jason. It was a joy to have so many parishioners present to worship our Lord and offer appropriate thanks to Him for sharing the life of Josephine with us. A reception was held after in the Fellowship Hall.

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Good Shepherd Sunday

On Sunday, April 26, the Good Shepherd was celebrated on the 4th Sunday of Easter at a special 10am Mass. Afterward, the parish came together in the Fellowship Hall for a tremendous pot luck luncheon, featuring all sorts of salads, sweets, meats, and more. The fellowship was wonderful, and everyone ate as much as they could on what started as a grey day.

As the pot luck wound down, a group headed outdoors to begin the spring grounds clean up. Bushes were uprooted, weeds were pulled, trees and bushes were trimmed, mulch was shoveled and spread all as the day warmed up around us. A group of parishioners who stayed after the potluck for a healthy amount of time to clean and put away everything (thank you) gave en-

couragement to the outdoor workers as well.

The day resulted in a solid 60 or so man-hours completed on the property. Mrs. Cathy Avondet kept everyone hydrated, full of chips, and cooled off with ice cream at the end. A blessed day!



Liturgy Meetings

Fr. Jason attended meetings of the PNCC National Commission on Liturgy in Scranton, PA on April 8 and 9. The goal of the meeting was to complete, at long last, a decade plus long project on *Rites and Rituals*. This book will serve as a total replacement for what was created decades ago; it will provide theological and liturgical backing on the sacraments of the Church along with a PNCC "point of view"; an updated Sanctoral Calendar; rubrics for all approved liturgies of the church and much more. The group meets again in the autumn.



Various Announcements

CANON –for the month of May, we will use the 5th Eucharistic Prayer on p. 92, the Union of Utrecht Canon.

KURS CAMP – United YMS of R National youth encampment takes place July 4-11. Also on that date The Most Rev. Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky will be celebrating Mass at 11am on July 4th. Open to all. Independence Day Picnic celebration to follow, featuring all sorts of Polish and American foods.

EASTER – The Easter Season begins with the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday and lasts 50 days, until the day of Pentecost, this year May 24. The length of celebration reminds us of the importance of this season and the importance of the Resurrection event in the story of our salvation. Please keep your Easter spirit strong over these next few weeks, as we remain standing throughout the Canon of the Mass, as we add extra “alleluias” throughout the liturgy, and as our lilies and Easter decorations stand out in our church proper.

SKIP A NIGHT – Our “Skip a Night” fundraiser is active! The children of our SOCL spent some of their precious time at home preparing these envelopes. A reminder – as our restaurant fundraiser interest has waned, we offer that you

skip a night out and donate what you would've spent to your parish. Feel free to add your name to the envelope along with your donation and either drop it in the collection basket or drop it off at the parish office. This four-week fundraiser concludes on Sunday, May 24th.

POLISH PARADE – St. Mary's will participate in the 76th Anv. Polish Constitution Day Parade in Parma. Meet up at 1-:130 for a 2pm step off at the Parma Circle. Wear a St. Mary's and/or a red t-shirt.

GREETERS – We are in need of additional greeters to welcome folks to Mass and to hand out bulletins with a smile. Please see Fr. Jason to relay your interest to be added to the schedule – no training needed!

MEN'S RETREAT- The 2026 Men's Spiritual Retreat takes place June 17-20 at Spojnia Farm in Waymart, PA. The theme is “Broken Chains”. The cost is \$175 for 3 nights/4 days and transportation may be provided. See Fr. Jason with any questions you may have.

MARIAN DEVOTIONS – Will be celebrated in English & Polish at 7pm each Wednesday evening during the month of May. Consider attending these Eucharistic Devotions in honor of the Blessed Mother, patroness of our Parish. It is an opportunity to see one of the unique

liturgies of the church: Litany, Exposition, & a small procession.

JOB OPENING – St. Mary's will be having a job opening to be the custodian of most of the parish interior. The job entails the cleanup of the Fellowship Hall, Kitchens, Basement Hall, bathrooms, classrooms, offices, and more. The job will open June 1st. See Fr. Jason.

YOUTH CONVO/RETREAT - takes place Jaffrey, NH August 3-7. if any children are interested, please speak to Fr. Jason.

ADORATION – We continue our monthly adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. April offered Good Friday as a day-long adoration. May offers weekly liturgies honoring the Blessed Virgin where the Eucharist is adored. In June, a focused hour-long adoration returns.

YOUTH CONVO/RETREAT— The 2026 PNCC Youth Convo/Retreat takes place in Jaffrey, NH August 3-7. Fr. Jason and Brady plan on attending—if any children from the parish are interested, please speak to Fr. Jason, as we must plan early for this travel.

LENTEN CROSS – Thanks to all who pinned their prayers on the Cross – they have been burned and offered to God.

Scheduled Mass Intentions at St. Mary's

May 3– Ruth Dobrowolski of. by daughter Pattie Dotson

May 10 — Barb Thome of. by Barb Bogzevitz

May 17 – Stanley & Yolanta Kwiatek of. by John Spilka

May 24– Evdokia Szczerban & Sandra Schwartz of. by family

Mar 31– Very Rev. Anthony R. Wisniewski (29th An.) of by Mike & Barb Wisniewski

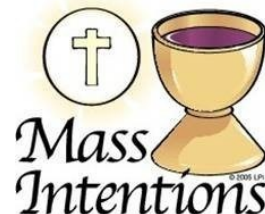
June 7 – Joan Spilka (wedding anniversary) of. by husband John Spilka

June 14 — Frank Satola of. by daughter Barb Bogzevitz

June 21 – Len Pryer of. by daughter Evonne Pryer

June 28– Elaine Tiffe of. by son Jeffery Tiffe

There are only seven Sunday Masses open for intentions for the rest of 2026: July 5, 19; Aug. 2, 23; Sep 6, 13, 27. See Fr. Jason to schedule.



April/May Days of Note



April Birthdays

- 7th– Helen Wankowski
- 12th – Michael Oleniacz
- 14th – Karen Barnes
- 17th – Walter Mielcarek
- 22nd– Julie Koehler
- 29th– Nick Sivik
- 30th– Sue Bengala

May Birthdays

- 1st – Marianne Viers (Misiewicz)
- 1st – Bruce Toburen
- 2nd – Tom Bedocs
- 2nd – Pat Glatzer
- 5th - Jack Amburgey
- 6th - Carlos Cancel
- 9th – Demi (Paulus) Bengston
- 9th – Lolly Spilka
- 12th – Maxwell Bengston
- 13th – Debbie Moritz
- 13th – Chuck Repede
- 15th – George Ziefle
- 16th – Adrienne Michalczyk
- 18th – John Grmowsek
- 18th – Jim Matteson
- 18th – Ramon Torres
- 22nd – Dolores DeLong
- 24th – Wendy Zychowski
- 28th – Roseanne Ziefle
- 29th – Andre Spanjol
- 30th – Jo Ann Long
- 30th – Audrey Spanjol



April Anniversaries

- 1st– Tom & Karen Bedocs
- 28th – Elizabeth & Zbigniew Starnawski

May Anniversaries

Someone plan a May wedding!

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

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“Jesus’ Easter Light”

Praise Jesus this Easter for being our Savior!
Praise God for calling Jesus to Him.
Jesus rose from the tomb
the stone door could not hold Him in.

Nor could the entire universe -
when the stone was rolled aside,
Jesus walked out!
He is Alive! Hallelujah! Jesus is alive!
Friends, have no doubt!

Jesus' light lives and so do our souls
all thanks to our Lord!
Shout out praises! Jesus lives!
All believers' reward.

Jesus lives He is in our hearts
He is our Easter holy delight.
Our holy and beloved Jesus is alive
in this Easter morning light.

• George Edward Noe



Our Prayer List

Praying for St. Mary's Parishioners & Friends

Bill & Pat Glatzer	Bob Kaczmarek
Bill Kastak	Gail Perz
George Makovicka	John Spilka
Johanna Markiewicz	Patrick Kmitt
Eddie Kawa	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
Elaine Repede	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.
Josephine Ference	Cathy Pieciak
Nan Cramer	Jim Lukas
Sage McLane	Dave Tuma
Phil Repko	Shyanna Tiller
Jim Giles	Kathleen Sobocinski
Bill Zychowski	Loretta Baldwin
Donna Kidd	Paulette Lilli
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	Judy Alexin
Connie Benko	Joe Litto
Tammy Knotek	Diane Ellis
Kenneth Parks	John Beno
Rev. Greg Gronn	Toni Colwell

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

