

St. Mary's of Parma, OH Monthly Newsletter

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

January 2015

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Thoughts for the New Year

Hello everyone— and Happy New Year! It has been my prayer during all the Masses I have celebrated in the New Year that our parishioners and friends would truly be blessed by God in these first moments of 2015.

Whether it is your own life or the life of the church, the end of one year and the beginning of a new one does bring forth some emotion and introspection.

Case-in-point: one of the traditions from my last parish of St. Stanislaus Cathedral was one I was dubious of at first...but brought it with me to my first pastoral assignment here at St. Mary's (I'm guessing many young pastors have done the same in our PNCC).

That is the reading of the "parish statistics" to close out the year at



the last service held. I read this as we began our Litany to the Most Blessed Sacrament and as we prepared for Benediction/Wystawienie.

They weren't great, to say the least. In terms of sacraments administered, the parish was lacking. Funerals, and they were many, dominated the short report.

However...it feels different. Though not many have been born and baptized into our fold recently...the spirit here is good. Ask anyone in the parish—I believe truly that most would agree that the parish is headed in "the right direction."

There always is a "but" with these, isn't there? The "but" is present in that we are headed in the right direction BUT how do we make sure we continue?

We, as a parish, are blessed with the carrot at the end of the proverbial stick. This is a big year for us! We celebrate our 100th year as a parish in just a few short months, a blessing that proves this parish has

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seen its way through the bad times while being blessed with the good.

Throughout this year, we will be doing lots and lots (and lots) of planning. We plan on giving the carnival another whirl, in whatever shape or form that may be. We have literature to gather to honor our centennial, photo albums to make, names to add to faces, holes in the roof to patch up, a fund-drive to push to make successful.

That is quite a bit...all while still working towards building up the Body of Christ here on the corner of Broadview and Wexford.

The flesh is willing...and luckily, the spirit seems to be strong. We have our goals laid out for the 2015 year as a parish. It is our duty as parishioners and friends to make sure these are carried out.

It is a tremendous responsibility, but, as we are reminded in scripture, by St. Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:13) "I can do all things through Him, who strengthens me."

Happy New Year! *Fr. Jason*

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Election of the New Parish Board/Committee

In between Holy Masses on Sunday, December 7, the work of the Nominating Committee as assigned by the Parish Chair was revealed as those who were willing and ready to serve on the Parish Board for 2015 were revealed.

As an official meeting was called by the Parish Chair, Mrs. Elaine Ploskonka, she turned the chair over to Fr. Jason to run the election meeting.

At the meeting, per the vote and acclamation of the entire gathered parish body, the parish officers and directors were elected.

We sincerely thank all of those who took on the responsibility to serve our St. Mary's Parish, all while looking forward to a bright and challenging year ahead of us.

Time must also be taken to honor those who have left the Board—Thank you for your year(s) of service: Dr. James Ploskonka, Michael Ference, Louise Cygan, Jack Spilka, and Karen Dicken.

There are still a couple of Director spots available—if anyone is interested in serving for this centennial of our parish, please speak to Elaine Ploskonka or Fr. Jason.

ST. MARY'S POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH PASTOR REV. JASON SOLTYSIAK		
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE		
Elaine Ploskonka Chairman		Stephen V. Fesz Vice Chairman
Josephine Ference Treasurer	Jo Ann Long Financial Secretary	Chuck Repede Recording Secretary
BOARD OF DIRECTORS		
Marty Bengela	Ron Ference	Mike Paulus
Bob Bernacki	Greg Hodor	John Spilka
Barb Bogzevitz		Bruno Tracy
Jeanette Chambers		Mike Wisniewski

Oath of Officers

Those elected at our December meeting to be Officers and Directors on our Parish Committee were also called to take their Oath of Office before the congregation that duly elected them.

Using the new liturgy prescribed by the PNCC in the new Ritual Book, our Parish Chair, Mrs. Elaine Ploskonka, presented the assembled elect before the Pastor and the congregation.

Upon vouching for their worthiness, Mrs. Ploskonka took her place with them as the re-elected Parish Chair.

Fr. Jason then read them their rights and duties as members of this board, how they were required to

adhere to the scriptures, to the Constitution of the PNCC, and to the Parish By-laws.



Advent 2014

Advent 2014 has come and gone, but it was well-represented at St. Mary's.

Continued was the tradition of parish youth lighting the candles of the Advent Wreath and reading the accompanying reflection regarding the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

As noted in last month's newsletter, we were also able to behold the new blue Advent Vestments as we glorified God through our Advent celebrations.

As we prepared for the coming Christ Child throughout the month of December (and one day of November!), we were called as a Parish to be "properly" prepared. The sermons for the season surrounded those themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love and how these themes help Christians prepare for their

Lord.

Thanks to all the youngsters who got over his or her stage fright in order to make sure our wreath was blessed, our prayers read, and our candles lit.



Above: The Third Sunday of Advent, as we rejoiced in the glory of the coming Lord.

Left: The "collectively holding our breath" moment as the youngest SOCL class was called as group to light each candle. This wasn't the smoothest process...but, obviously, it could have been much worse!

Fr. Jason attends Ordination Services

On Saturday, December 6, Deacon James Konicki was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at Saint Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Cathedral in Scranton, PA.

Unbeknownst to Deacon James, I had also attended his service of

Minor Orders at the Cathedral a number of years ago. Having ministered alongside Deacon James for a number of years with work at the Central Diocese and at the National Youth Convos, it was only fitting that I was able to see him complete this life-long goal of answering the call of Jesus Christ to become a priest in His holy vineyard.

I was blessed to serve as a Master of Ceremonies—you can see me *almost* doing something important in the picture at left. Fortunately, my job was mostly standing around and enjoying this great moment in the life of the Polish National

Catholic Church.

Upon returning back to St. Mary's, I made sure Father James' ministry was kept in our prayers during our Sunday morning Intercessions.



Blessing of New Altar Cloths

On Monday, December 22, we were blessed to have almost the entire Love of God Sodality present for 9am morning Mass.

However, the occasion was a very good one. As the Christmas holiday was bearing down on all of us, it was time to bless the fruits of the Sodality's labor.

Over the last number of weeks and months, a project was put forth by the ladies to beautify the Sanctuary for the Christmas Season. It was decided that new, hand stitched altar linens would be crafted.

Upon their completion, they were presented to be blessed at Holy Mass. After they were blessed, the

new linens were expertly and lovingly put into place in the appropriate locations, beginning the process of "the greening" of the church, the main preparations for the Feast of the Nativity.

Many, many thanks to the ladies who took it upon themselves to take on and complete this difficult project. A very, very proud day for the Sodality and for all of St. Mary's.



Above Right: The cloths blessed with incense. Near: Our acolyte Chuck and his newest protégé. Far: A close-up of the detail on the cloths.

Christmas at St. Mary's

Christmas at St. Mary's in 2014 was a booming, resounding success. Holy Mass was celebrated, and the child Jesus was welcomed by our parish with open arms, with joyous song, with prayer, all on the most joyous of nights.

Holy Mass at Midnight was preceded with a concert featuring mostly Polish hymns by our parish choir. They sounded wonderful, as did our late-night instrumentalists.

At the conclusion of the concert, candles were lit up and down the pews, casting the church in a soft, yet warm, flickering glow.

Procession began led by our crucifer and acolyte, Chuck Repede. He was followed by Mr. Bruno Tracy,

who was called by the Pastor to carry the statue of Baby Jesus into the Sanctuary. Many thanks to Mr. Tracy for this. Father Greg Gronn brought in the Light of Christ used to light the Christ Candle, followed by Father Jason.

The crèche was blessed, the Christmas Candle was lit, and Mass was celebrated. We were honored to have 156 people welcome the Lord at our Midnight Mass and at our 10am Christmas Day Mass.



PTO Christmas Party

As is parish custom, the PTO held its annual Christmas Party on the last Sunday before Christmas, December 21st.

The Party featured the typical delicious food items-pastries, donuts, coffee, cakes, bagels, but the now world-famous basket raffle and a second chance raffle that still has everyone talking weeks later.

The raffle consisted of baskets on display that parishioners could drop tickets into in the weeks leading up to the big day.



Many thanks to outgoing PTO President Debbie Moritz and her close-knit PTO staff for putting together this production. Also, thank you to any and all who put together baskets for this event.

Above Left: Santa is visited by an angel. Above Middle: The door handles were never the same...Above Right: Santa's youngest elf in for a visit. Below: Various scenes from our PTO Christmas Party



Christmas Caroling

Our Choir and friends continued its yearly tradition of trekking out the Saturday after Christmas in order to bring some Christmas cheer in the form of song to parishioners and friends who can no longer make it to church as often as they would like.

We toured much of the Cleveland

area bringing our own brand of cheer, delivering songs in Polish and in English, whether they knew Polish or not!

We were blessed to be welcomed so

warmly, be it with open hearts or, well, open refrigerators. We were blessed as well to perform in front of crowds at the various nursing homes. The more the merrier!



January Days of Note



- 1 Barbara Wisniewski
- 6 Katie Repede
- 7 Pattie Dotson
Natalie Soltysiak
- 12 John Kasperczyk
- 14 Josie Matis
- 21 Tony Mudrak
- 22 John Kobalka
Tom Kugler
- 23 Pete Moritz



Happy Anniversary

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

Quick Announcements

***Fr. Jason will be away from January 14 -19. For any parish issues, please contact our Parish Chair Elaine Ploskonka at 216-536-3496.

***Our parish Christmas Program will be taking place towards the end of the 40 day Christmas Season on Saturday evening, January 24 beginning at 5pm. We invite all parishioners and friends to clear out a bit of time to enjoy our program, featuring music and performances by our choir and our parish youth. We are also asking of everyone to bring a covered dish- yes, we would like to have another pot-luck meal that has been so successful over the last few months here at St. Mary's. A sign-up sheet for the pot-luck is in the Board Room – if you know there is something you would like to bring, please write it down so as to help others plan. The parish will provide kielbasa & kraut and pierogi casserole. Thank you!

Our Prayer List

Prayer List

Please pray for these St. Mary's parishioners:

Marlane Oleniacz	Barbara Baranowski
Bill & Joan Kastak	Anna Dawidziuk
Craig & Judy Atherton	John Spilka
Louise Cygan	Edward Basiewicz
Mary Ann Loschelder	June Zaun

Please pray for our family and friends:

Wanda Clark	Beth Chihill
Michael Cosevin	Helen Cummings
Laina Dachtal	Colby Howard
Jay Grabowsky	Pam Chesar
Cecelia Hall	Caroline Kunes
Oliver Kuta	Thomas Lill
John & Anne Nemetz	Bea Miskow
Rose Neyman	Carol & Chuck Boesch
Joanie True	Daniel Rinella
Joanel Rollen	Veronica Babic
Fr. Tom Sheha	Fr. Sr. Gus Sicard
Gracie Pijor	Ben Soltesy
Don and Pam Tropiano	Linda Vect
Dennis and Sue Vect	Jack Amburgey, Jr.
Bryson Dzurhoff	George Beggin
Cherise Pacanovsky	Jane Hunter
Dennis Thome	The Finnie Family
Carlene Fliss	Jim Fliss Jr.
Duda Family	Fr. Sr. John Kraus
Nan Cramer	Bp. Stanley Bilinski
Bp. John Mack	David Vaden
Bp. John Swantek	Jeannie Bartko Muran
Gina Crosetti	Madilyn Perry
Elsa Vogl de Gomez	Joyce Dicken
Kim Blaha	

Those in nursing homes or assisted living:

Shirley Paulus	Tony Mudrak
Gene Mora	Ted Jurczyk
Alan Tonti	Polly Gajda

WE ALSO REMEMBER

ALL ACTIVE & RETIRED CLERGY NEEDING HEALING

ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Lord, bring all service personnel safely home!!!

Bless them, O Lord.

New Year's Blessing

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be,
In working, or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness
In the shining of Thy face.

Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of service,
Of witness of Thy love,
Another year of training
For holier work above.

Another year is dawning,
Dear Master, let it be
On earth, or else in heaven
Another year for Thee.

--Francis Ridley Havergal
(1874)

