



NEW ENGLAND PROVINCE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

Provincial's Newsletter

Volume 2024/ February

FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Confreres!

An Arab fable tells of a traveler startled by seeing a camel's nose thrust in at the tent's door where he was sleeping. "It's frigid outside," said the camel, "I only want to get my nose in." The nose was allowed in, then the neck, and finally, the whole body.

Soon, the traveler began to be inconvenienced by such an ungainly companion in a room not large enough for both. "If you are inconvenienced," said the camel, "you may leave; as for myself, I shall stay where I am."

"Give but an inch," says Anglican bishop Lancelot Andrews, "and the devil will take an ell; if he can get in an arm, he will makeshift to shove in his whole body."

This happens in our lives much too often. In our busy lives, we compromise with the devil by allowing him to tempt us. And then we fall to the devil's temptation quite often. And finally, we allow the evil spirit to enter our hearts and dwell within us. The Holy Time of Lent is an excellent opportunity to eliminate it.

How often did our cell phone or computer freeze, get stuck, or become unresponsive? What did we do in such a situation? We had to restart or even do the reset of the equipment to make it work again.

Lent is, for us, such a reset to get rid of the devil's presence in our lives. To get rid of our failures, weaknesses, wrongdoings, and shortcuts. It is a time to turn around and become holy as we were holy during our Baptism.

You may find it hard to believe, but I remember that my grandmother did not eat meat, cold cuts, sweets, and cakes, nor drank milk, coffee, sodas, or alcohol throughout Lent. On the other hand, she prayed a lot and went to Church for Lenten services such as the Stations and Lamentations.

According to historical sources, many early Christians rejected the pleasures of this world, the comforts of life, or good food by fasting 290 days a year. Their goal was to live in God, to sacrifice themselves to increase God's glory.

In the Old Testament Book of Daniel 9:3, we read: "So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, fasting and sackcloth and ashes."

The author reminds us that Lent is a time of prayer, petition, fasting, and repentance. And the purpose of Lent is to get closer to God, who wants to be closer to us.

During Lent the Church tries to lead us to a metanoia or true "repentance" and renewal of life through fasting, prayer, almsgiving, self-control, and practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The Superior General, Father Gregory Gay, in one of his letters writes: "The Church offers us a precious gift: the season of Lent. It is a sacred space, a time beckoning us to pause, draw back from life's daily grind, and drink more deeply of Jesus' story of our salvation: his life, passion, and resurrection. Simply put, Lent is a time of sabbatical for the soul."

As a people claimed by Christ and committed to the charism of St. Vincent de Paul, this holy season can help us better live out our Catholic faith and the Vincentian way. Like Vincent, our identity is rooted in Christ. These forty days of Lent are not only a time for prayer, penance, and almsgiving, but also for reflection, connection, and action".

Referring again to modern achievements of technology in this digital age we may say that "We're all connected" through all kinds of electronic media. How true it is. Our faith and charism challenge us to connect Jesus' command to love God and serve our neighbor more profoundly. Lent calls us to examine the presence of the suffering Christ in the world more clearly so that we might understand their plight and be Christ to them.

Make your Lent a time for personal reflection on where you stand as a Vincentian in accepting the Gospel challenges in thought, word, and deed. Assess your relationships with the people you serve and the people who still wait for your help or services. Connect them with the love of God.

Examine whether you can make any positive contribution to other people's lives.

Convert your Lent into a time for spiritual growth and Vincentian maturity.

Take up the fight daily against the evil within and around us, and never give up. Jesus has assured us that the Holy Spirit is with us, empowering us to achieve final victory through Jesus Christ.

In other words – get rid of your own evil and live in holiness of God's love. This is what Lent is all about.

Marek Sobczak CM

REST IN PEACE, MRS. MARKULAK

Zofia Markulak (81), Mother of the Rev. Grzegorz Markulak CM, had died on Monday January 8th, 2024. The funeral occurred at Our Lady of Czestochowa in Lubomysl, Poland, on Thursday, January 11th, 2024. Rev. Marek Sadowski, CM, was the delegate of the Province and prayed in our name with the family of Zofia.

Our Province bought a beautiful funeral wreath with the inscription "Eternal rest deign to give her Lord" - "Priests of the New England Province." Also, local priests will soon celebrate Masses for the soul of the late Zofia Markulak at MB Czestochowskiej church in Lubomysl, as requested by our Province.

In our Houses, the priests also prayed for the intention of the soul of Zofia. May she rest in the Lord. We wish Father Grzegorz and the entire Family of Zofia peace and strength from the Lord so that they can prayerfully experience the passing of their loved one.

Link to the Mass:

<https://www.facebook.com/SSKCBrooklyn/videos/745800177403084>

FUNERAL MASS AT ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA IN BROOKLYN

On Thursday, January 18, 2024, Vincentians celebrated a funeral Mass for the soul of the late Sophia Markulak at St. Stanislaus Kostka parish in Brooklyn, where Fr. Grzegorz Markulak is pastor. The priests of the parishes of St. Stanislaus Kostka and St. Cyril and Methodius, as well as Fr. Stanislaw Choragwicki, Deacon Andrzej Lewandowski, crowds of parishioners and schoolchildren of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Academy attended the celebration.

The funeral sermon was delivered by Fr. Provincial Marek Sobczak, who emphasized the great merit of the late Sophia as a mother who raised seven children, including a son priest. Thanks to Zofia's faith and zeal to realize the vocation set by God, thousands of people received countless graces from the hands of her son, a priest. Sophie imitated the faithful and devoted attitude of the Blessed Mother, Mary, who gave her life to God for her son, Jesus Christ. At the end of the sermon, the Provincial encouraged her children to live a life of responsibility to God and their Mother, who from heaven will support them and find joy in their lives.





THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

The Provincial Council will meet on Thursday, February 29, 2024. If you have any discussion points, please inform one of the Council members as soon as possible.

DONATION FROM BROOKLYN 2 HOUSE

Father Jan Szylar, CM of the Brooklyn-2 House, has forwarded a donation from the Friends of the Mission Circle, which operates at St. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Brooklyn. The donation of \$2,000 is earmarked for missionary work carried out by our Province or to help missions in which the New England Province participates.

EUCCHARISTIC DEVOTION - GREENPOINT

From February 10 to 13, 2024, the parish of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Greenpoint celebrated a Eucharistic feast associated with the annual feast in honor of the Patron Saints and a 40-hour devotion. For three days, parishioners had the opportunity to gather for contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament displayed on the altar, to adore and show gratitude to God. The faithful also participated in solemn Masses with homilies on the Eucharist and received the Bread of Life.

On Tuesday, February 13, a solemn Mass was held at night. Invited guests, priests of the Polish Apostolate from the Diocese of Brooklyn, and confreres were in attendance. The Mass ended with a solemn procession with the Blessed Sacrament around the church and a special blessing for those gathered.

The evening festivities were preceded by a dinner for the priests prepared by parishioners. We thank all the diocesan priests and confreres who took part in the celebrations. Special thanks go to the 4 confreres of the Eastern Province of the Congregation working at St. John University for their prayerful support and presence during the closing ceremony of the three-day service and our Eucharistic feast.



BEAUTIFUL PHOTO

Tuesday morning, February 14, greeted us with the silence of falling snow, which covered the town of Derby and several northeastern states. The snow fell quite heavily throughout the day until the afternoon hours. It seemed that it would be snowy and gloomy for the rest of the day. Meanwhile, the sky cleared entirely unexpectedly, and the sun showed up, but only to go behind the horizon.

Someone managed to capture this beautiful moment with a camera lens. Congratulations to the photographer for this picture, and thanks to Brian, the caretaker of our cemetery, who sent it. Our cemetery looks very attractive in its winter coat after a snowstorm and in the sun's glow.

