



EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LIV, NO. 8

AUGUST 2018

NEW ICONOGRAPHY AT SAINT MICHAEL CATHEDRAL

Passaic, NJ



Saints Joachim and Anna, flanked by Saint Irene and Saint Michael the Archangel



Saints Zachary and Elizabeth, with their son, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Nicholas

With characteristic good nature, the parishioners of Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, NJ, put up with scaffolding for much of the summer of 2017 and again in the spring of 2018. On Pentecost Sunday 2018, they were finally able to contemplate twenty-nine new holy icons in the 116-year-old landmark.

The project, which began as a much-needed repair and repainting of damaged plaster, expanded to include new carpeting and new iconography thanks both to one generous bequest and to the enthusiastic response of the parishioners.

The goals of the new iconography, according to Father Jack Custer, rector of the cathedral, were several: to provide

saintly role models for married couples and young people; to include the Old Testament prophets; to celebrate specifically Ruthenian Greek Catholic saints; and to improve upon a few details in the previous design.

On the iconostasis, new icons depict Saints Joachim and Anna, parents of the Theotokos; Saints Zachary and Elizabeth; their son, Saint John the Baptist; and the Great Martyr, Saint Irene, a saint with special significance for the primary benefactor, for Bishop Kurt, and for Father Jack Custer, rector of the cathedral.

Above the iconostasis, on the eastern wall, are large icons of the Wedding at Cana and the Holy Trinity of Saint Andrei Rubl'ev. With the addition of an icon of the

Mystical Supper to its proper place above the Royal Doors, a very meaningful series is created, linking the domestic table of every Christian home, the liturgical Table of the Eucharist, and the table of the heavenly banquet where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit keep open a space for us.

Eighteen images of Old Testament figures were added above and alongside the beautiful stained glass windows of the Apostles on the cathedral's north and south walls. Among these, Daniel and the Three Holy Youths represent teenagers while Melchizedek, Moses, and Aaron especially illustrate the Old Testament roots of our liturgical worship. Each of the Old Testament prophets holds a scroll containing a particular prophecy about

Jesus Christ and His Church. These rows of Apostles and Prophets, often included on a full, traditional iconostasis, remind us of Saint Paul's teaching that Christ's Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (Ephesians 2:20).

Above the Prophets, four circular images commemorate more recent Ruthenian saints: Saint Josaphat (+1623), a martyr for the reunion of Eastern Christian Slavs with the Catholic Church; the martyrs to Communism, Bishop Theodore Romža of Mukačevo (+1947) and Bishop Paul Gojdič of Prešov (+1960); along with Blessed Miriam Teresa Demjanovič (+1927), baptized a Byzantine Catholic at Saint John the Baptist Parish in Bayonne, NJ, and beatified in 2014.

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YOUNGEST ORDINARY BISHOP IN NORTH AMERICA IS 'A GIFT' TO THE U.S. CHURCH

By Laura Ieraci; republished with permission from Horizons

The youngest ordinary bishop of a Catholic diocese in North America was enthroned June 30.

Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, became the fifth bishop of the Byzantine Ruthenian Eparchy of Parma during a Divine Liturgy of Enthronement at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, after having served as its apostolic administrator since June 24, 2017. He succeeds Bishop John Kudrick, who resigned in May 2016.

At 44, Bishop Lach is also the third-youngest Eastern Catholic ordinary in the world and the first foreign-born bishop for the eparchy that comprises 12 states in the Midwest. He is among about a dozen bishops from other countries that Pope

Francis has appointed to the United States.

The Slovak-born bishop has visited almost every parish and mission of the eparchy since his arrival in the United States last summer and has established pastoral priorities that include youth, evangelization, and parish reorganization.

Slovak Greek Catholic Bishop Milan Chatur, CSsR, of Kosice, Slovakia, who was present for the enthronement, said his "wish for all the faithful" in the United States is that they receive Bishop Lach "as a gift from the Slovak church."

"After the fall of communism, we immediately turned to the Greek Catholic Church in America for material needs, to



Newly enthroned Bishop Milan Lach, S.J. in center in bright white vestments

build churches again. We were liquidated for 18 years (under communism)," the 60-year-old prelate told Horizons.

But now, with the Slovak Greek Catholic Church strongly re-established, there may be an opportunity to return the favor, he said.

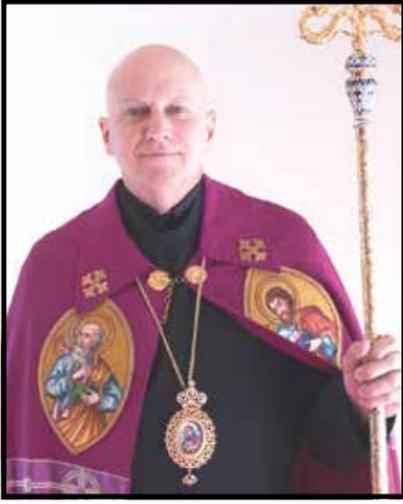
"We sense that, compared with us, there is a certain crisis of vocations and in the spiritual life (in the United States)," he said. "So, just as we received material gifts after

the fall of communism, now we can repay with spiritual gifts."

Bishop Chatur said he attended the enthronement because he realized the importance of maintaining a connection between the Byzantine Catholic churches in the United States and Europe.

"There are people who came (to the United States) 10 years ago or 100 years ago, and they still carry within them the Gospel they received from their

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I LIFT UP MY EYES...

Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

One of the most remarkable aspects of the life of Jesus, is that He allowed Himself to be tempted by Satan, by the Devil, just as we are. What is sin? Sin is a transgression of the Law of God. How is it possible that the Son of God, the Word who spoke the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, could be tempted? Christ’s temptation is one of the great mysteries of our faith, but it is one of the most comforting of those mysteries.

The temptation of Jesus is not hidden in the middle of His life, but appears at the very beginning of his adult life, at the beginning of his public life in the Gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke. Temptation appears at key moments during his public life, and then temptation is manifested again at the very close of his earthly life: His final act of the will when He chooses to die for our sins, overcoming His last temptation.

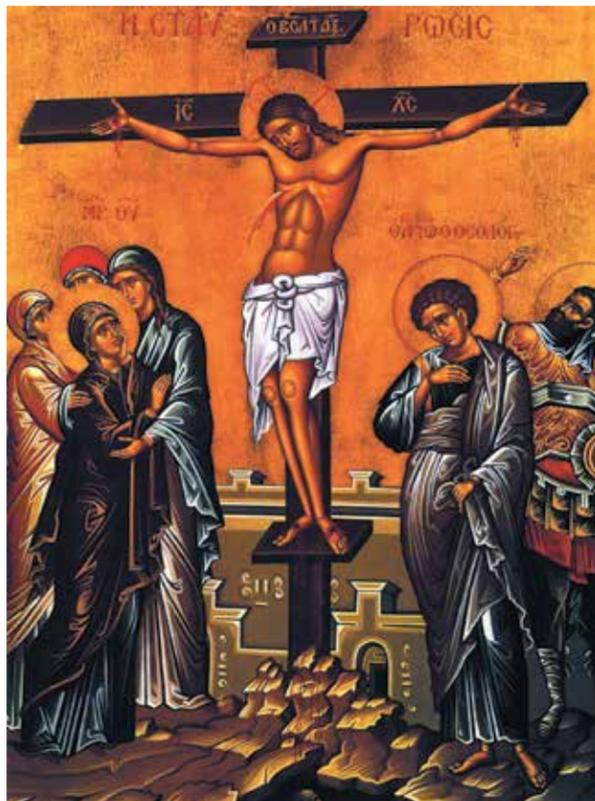
To start from the beginning as far as revelation allows us, we know that at his baptism in the Jordan by John, the Father spoke from Heaven and said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Did Jesus simply take His accreditation and start telling us what to do? No. He began showing us how to repent by going into the desert where he fasted for forty days and forty nights. The Scriptures tell us that, at the end, He was hungry, and it is at this point of physical weakness that the tempter arrives. Satan shows up to offer Jesus all the same things that the tempter offers to us.

The first inducement to sin that Satan offers to Jesus as an inducement to sin is food. How many times have we believed that we will not have the basic necessities of life if we choose God and a life of virtue? In the ancient world, the chosen people, even after God fed them every day for forty years in the desert, feared that their crops would fail and they would starve to death. They chose alliances with pagan nations, or even worse, they began to worship the weather god of the pagans. They believed that if they sacrificed their children, their most precious treasure, they could win the favor of the pagan god and guarantee the weather they needed for their crops. They traded the lives of their children for the promise of their own satisfaction. However bizarre that seems today, isn’t it the state religion now of our formerly Christian country? How many people have been duped into sacrificing their children for the promise of worldly prosperity! It isn’t just the young women who have been lied to, and told that their pregnancy was not really a child. If you spend time at an abortion clinic, you will see how many young women are dropped off by their selfish boyfriends who don’t want a child to interfere with their selfish life choices, and who don’t want to be burdened with child support payments. (In Albuquerque, NM, there was a white-

haired old man who gave out rosaries on the public property in front of Planned Parenthood. One man dropped off his girlfriend for an abortion, then parked in a hidden area, and returned with a baseball bat and beat the old man to near death. The local news media gave the incident not a scintilla of publicity!)

There was a movie a few years ago about a young lady who survived her mother’s abortion. As a teenager, she makes an odyssey to learn her history and to meet her biological mother. When she finally meets her mother, the mother is now a successful attorney who snubs her teenage daughter and drives off in her Mercedes SUV with her new perfect baby in a car seat. I never saw a more poignant depiction of the deep sorrow that follows with the false promises of the tempter. The mother is “living the dream”, a dream she paid for with the blood of her first infant. (The movie is called *October Baby*, and is based on a true story. It was denounced by the entertainment establishment. The same establishment was ecstatic about *Million Dollar Baby* in which a disabled woman is murdered. That pro-death movie was nominated for seven Oscars™ and won four including best picture.)

Indeed, for the last fifty years, western countries including our own have sung a chorus of despair, teaching that the greatest burden to the earth is the children of men—made in the image and likeness of God. They have told us there are too many of us to support, and that the key to survival is to sacrifice our children for our own success and satisfaction.



Icon of the Crucifixion of Our Lord

“What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The chosen people sacrificed their children to the weather god. How many educated people nowadays would laugh at the idea! But these same people today have come to worship the weather god again. Terror of the weather is deep in our blood because so many of our ancestors died when the crops failed, but today irrational fear dresses up as science. I call it irrational because the story changes every few years,

but is presented each time as indisputable science, that is, evidence interpreted by clear logic. The godless leaders of today order us to worship their weather god, they inebriate us with terror, and order us to sacrifice to the new weather god with false promises of security and abundance. Even if sacrificing our children to their pagan god does produce food and wealth, do we really believe that they will share it with us?

Jesus confounded Satan with the scriptures, since He was Himself the Word made flesh, and He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Our first desires are for food and survival. We imitate Jesus when we fast, and in our tradition we fast every week on Wednesday and Friday, and four times a year: before Easter, before Christmas, before Saints Peter and Paul (June 29), and before the Dormition (August 15). By fasting and faith in the source of life, we can overcome the terror of our irrational fears.

At the next temptation in the desert, Satan takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and tells Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” This temptation is especially frightening because we see Satan quoting the Scriptures and using religion as a temptation to sin. Isn’t religion supposed to protect us from sin? Well, no. Religion is supposed to introduce us to God. It is God who blesses us, cares for us, and protects us from evil, not religion. In fact, our Lord answers these very questions when He quotes another scripture to Satan and says, “It is also written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

One of the great trials of today, is that many leaders who pretend to be Christian leaders are teaching sin and temptation. When “Christian” leaders teach sin, we have to remember that Satan tempted Jesus in the same way, and Jesus overcame the temptation for us, and is still with us today.

Finally, Satan gives his last try, he takes Jesus up on a mountain and offers Him all the riches and power of the world.

You might say that these three temptations come in the order that we find them growing up. Our first desires are for food, warmth, and survival. As we get a little older, we seek family and friendship—more spiritual desires. Only as we become adults do we look out at the world and decide that we need to acquire and hoard and gain power to survive. In order to achieve wealth and power, we have to worship the world, and Jesus answers us and Satan at the same time, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.”

The scriptures say that He was “tempted in every way, just as we are, yet He did not sin.” We might infer from this that temptations continued throughout His life in many forms, but only a few more are recorded in the scriptures.

The most powerful and most important temptation came when our Lord was at His weakest in the human sense of the word. After Jesus was mentally assailed and beaten down in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then betrayed by one of His trusted friends, and then abandoned by His other friends, and then challenged in debate by the religious experts and religious authorities of the chosen people, then scoffed at by the Roman governor, and then severely beaten and exhausted and deprived of sleep, as He hung on the cross there was one final temptation. Satan who thought he had won victory by convincing us to kill the Son of God, had failed to make Jesus sin. And so, he made one last assault on the will of Jesus, and tried with the cleverest of temptations to get Jesus to disobey the will of the Father.

There is a popular Black Gospel hymn that begins, “When Jesus hung on Calvary, people came from miles to see.” The Romans executed non-Romans by crucifying them on highways near the city as a warning to other criminals. The humiliation was as public as possible. When our Lord hung on the cross, what did He see? As all kinds of people traveled in and out of the city before the Passover, He saw the sinners for whom He was sacrificing His life, the very people for whom He was suffering excruciating pain. What did these people do? The hymn continues, “They said, if you be the Christ, come down and save your life.” The scriptures record this temptation in the Gospels: “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, ‘Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!’” (Mark 15:29). Oh, what a clever and powerful temptation for the One Who could release Himself from all that pain by His own will. The very people who had caused His suffering by their sins, and all the people in history who had caused all the pain and evil in the world by their sins were saying to Him, “We don’t care about You. We think You are a fraud. We wag our heads so You can see we were right and You were wrong. You are a joke. No one likes You. Show us one more miracle. Entertain us.” How sweet must have been that suggestion: stop the pain and save your life!

The popular hymn goes on to say:

*Oh, but Jesus, my sweet Jesus,
He never answered them,
for He knew that Satan was tempting
Him.*

*If He had come down from the cross,
then my soul would still be lost.*

So, Jesus recognized the voice of the crowd for what it was. Jesus recognized, “the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan” (Apocalypse 20:2). As Jesus Himself said about the devil, “When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of lies.” (John 8:22)

When Satan saw that his temptation was not working, the Son of God was not

disobeying His Father, he tried something more devious than before. The religious authorities and the scripture scholars joined in the chorus, "So also the chief priests mocked Him to one another with the scribes, saying, 'He saved others; He cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.'" How disturbing it is even today when the religious authorities in so many Christian denominations tell us that sin is virtue. They say, "come down from the cross of virtue and walk in the pleasant highway of satiation and self-rule. Come down from the cross and rest awhile in this beautiful garden. How happy you will be when you write your own laws." So-called Christian religious authorities tell their flocks, "Your temptations are who you are. Don't deny them. That only leads to stress and mental illness."

One of the great scandals of our era was recent when the Catholic governor of our largest state signed a law allowing the execution of sick people with drugs. He rationalized that he might choose to break the 5th commandment himself when he is old. A Catholic senator was visited by her bishop who begged her not to vote for this evil law. She said to him, "All your arguments make sense, but I have to vote for it." When he asked her "Why?", she replied, "Autonomy." Autonomy is Greek for self-law. Indeed, she told the truth. She voted to deny the law of God, and choose self-law. When Satan whispered seductively to her, "Come down from the cross," and when the crowds of dishonest voyeurs said

to her, "Come down from the cross," she embraced temptation, she kissed it on the lips. Why should I die on a cross when instead they can put me to sleep like a dog or a cat? She voted to come down from the cross. God told us to choose His law and choose life, and for the sake of comfort she chose her own law and the second death.

According to Saint Paul, the Church is the Body of Christ. Every day, the spectators and critics call out to the Church, "Come down from the cross, and save yourself!!" They tell us that our contradiction to the world is why the Church is disappearing. I disagree. In my lifetime, every concession that the Church has made to the world has led to defections. When the clergy desacralize the Liturgy, and make the Liturgy shorter, and don't ask for sacrifices from the people, the congregation doesn't grow. On the contrary, they ask, "Why bother?" There is no good answer to their question. If the priest always takes the easy way out, why should the people make sacrifices. If the priest says, you don't need to fast, I won't teach too long, let's keep it short, then the people sing in chorus: why bother? In addition, the spectators have been telling us since the 1960's that the Church must conform itself to the world. They tell us "Your Church is no longer popular because you encourage chastity, you discourage promiscuity, you encourage childbirth, your marriages are outdated. Jesus said we can't remarry, but that was in a different time and a different culture. We have advanced beyond that." They tell the Church, "Come down from the cross and save yourself."

The most unsettling of these modern temptations is when even the religious authorities today, and the religious experts, tell us that the most basic laws of morality are wrong. When I say, "religious experts," they really are experts. Some of these are men who gave their lives to studying ancient languages and every manuscript in every library. They not only tell us that we are ignorant or backward or foolish, they go even further than simply telling us that we should give in to temptations. They tell us that unless we follow their new path (which is really not new, which is as old as the serpent in the garden), they tell us that we are cruel, heartless, loveless, and even oppressors. Anyone who loves the God of infinite love is accused of hate. I wish I could tell you that the Catholic Church is free of these people, but even in the Catholic Church there are people in positions of authority or teachers who are deceived by the cry, "Come down from the cross, and save yourself." Just as the religious authorities and scholars two thousand years ago told the Christ, "Come down from cross and we will believe in you," there are religious authorities and scholars today who tell the Church, "Come down from the cross, and everyone will believe in you."

Not content with defying God's law, the sneering mob goes on to criticize all of our sacred rites. Why do they care about our sacred rites, unless there is something in them that challenges their consciences? They demand that all of the sacraments must be changed to satisfy the popular culture. Confession has no point when there is no more sin. The bond of marriage sancti-

fied by Jesus must be shattered for self-law. The sacredness of the Holy Eucharist is an affront to materialism. And Holy Orders, in which men give up their lives and freedom in service, is called oppression. The world looks at our sacred Mysteries and calls out, "Your Church is dying. Come down from the cross, and save yourself."

The onlookers of the world jeer and cry out to our Lord, and to the Church—His mystical body, "if you be the Christ, come down and save your life."

What a comfort it is to know that, even though we often believe the lie, Jesus recognizes these cries for what they truly are:

*Oh, but Jesus, my sweet Jesus,
He never answered them,*

*for He knew that Satan was tempting
Him.*

Unlike in the desert, Jesus did not answer Satan, for He knew that by obedience to the Father He was about to conquer Satan, and evil, and death, and all of our temptations and all of our sins by His own free death. As the popular hymn says,

*If He had come down from the cross,
then my soul would still be lost.*

*He would not come down
from the cross just to save Himself;
He decided to die just to save me.*

+Kurt Burnette

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



TWO TO BE TONSURED AND ORDAINED TO MINOR ORDERS (AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PARISHES):

Seminarian Paul West – Saint Mary Parish, Hillsborough, NJ

Seminarian Timothy Farris – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Levittown, PA

SIX TO BE ORDAINED SUBDEACONS (AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PARISHES):

Reader Richard Ballard – Saint Nicholas of Myra Parish, Orlando, FL

Reader John Harden – Saint Michael Parish, Mont Clare, PA

Reader Robert Knapp – Resurrection Parish, Smithtown, NY

Reader Ryan Liebhaber – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Levittown, PA

Reader John Reed – Epiphany Parish, Roswell, GA

Reader Richard Terza – Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes Barre, PA

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

At the invitation of Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, and at his own request, Father Robert Hospodar has been released for service in the Archdiocese of New York.

IMMIGRATING PRIEST REPOSES IN THE LORD BEFORE ARRIVAL

+Father Iurii Vishchak, a priest of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, recently assigned to serve in the Eparchy of Passaic as Parochial Vicar of Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church, Allentown, PA, and Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Palmerton, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on the morning of Saturday, June 30, 2018, in Mukachevo, Ukraine after a brief illness and hospitalization.

He is survived by his wife, Nataliia; daughters, Anna Kristina and Nadiia; and son, Antonii. Please keep the entire Vishchak family, especially Nataliia, Anna Kristina, Nadiia, and Antonii, close in your prayers as we mourn his passing.

In Blessed Repose, Grant O Lord Eternal Rest to the Soul of Your Servant, the Priest +Iurii, and render eternal his memory!

2018 ALTAR SERVER CONGRESS

AUGUST 4—8 2018

AGES 6-17

Carpathian Village Canadensis, PA

Come and experience a wonderful fun filled Event with fellow altar servers from across the Eparchy of Passaic. Have fun while learning more about your important role as an Altar Server! This Event is underwritten by the

Eparchy

Register by July 20th

<http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com>

For questions and details contact

Deacon Stephen Russo: DcnStephen@gmail.com

EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

(USPS 165-600) (ISSN 0894-9786)

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

Subscription Rate: \$15.00 per year.

News and Photo Services:

Member of the Catholic Press Association of America.

Published monthly by the

Eastern Catholic Press Association

445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Phone: 973-890-7777 Fax: 973-890-7175

Postage paid at Little Falls, NJ, and additional office at Bellmawr, NJ.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Eastern Catholic Life

445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

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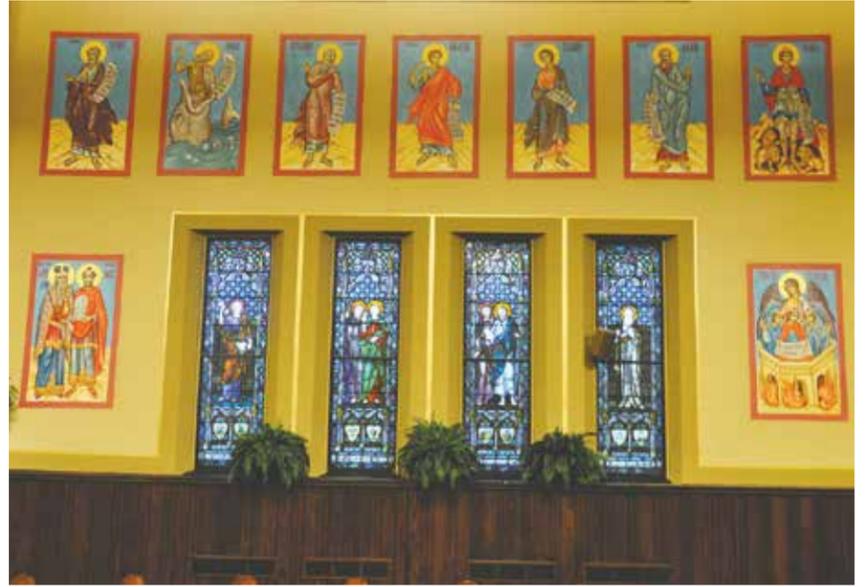
Seven holy persons complete the series of historical paintings in the Cathedral's ceiling, depicting Saint Peter, Saints Constantine and Helen, Saints Cyril and Methodius, and Saints Vladimir and Olga, respectively the foundation of the Universal Church, the first Byzantine Christian emperors, and the founders of the Church among the Eastern Slavs.

These new icons, by the hand of Petro Dzyuba, do more than beautify the cathedral. "Whatever I'm preaching about," Father Jack observed, "whether it's the Old Testament, the New Testament, the

Church or the sacraments, there is something here I can point to, something we can take in with our eyes and well as our ears, to reinforce the Good News of Jesus Christ."



Icon of the Mystical Supper



Icons of the Prophets

YOUNGEST ORDINARY BISHOP IN NORTH AMERICA IS 'A GIFT' TO THE U.S. CHURCH

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forefathers," he said.

At the same time, he acknowledged the mission of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States to minister and to be open to the diversity in American society.

"It is important to understand the roots (of the church), but it has to be open to everybody, all races, everyone is welcome," he said. "The church has to fulfill its missionary vocation."

The Early Christians "didn't stay in the ethnic ghetto, but they went to the whole world," he said. "It is good to understand where we come from, but to spring up new offshoots. This was the foundation we have received, and now we need to build a new church, with new growth, open to everyone."

Bishop Chatur, who ordained Bishop Lach a deacon in 2000 and a priest a year later, was one of three European bishops at

the letter of the pope appointing Bishop Lach to Parma, as well as a message from the prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri.

Archbishop William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh, was the main celebrant and homilist. He urged Bishop Lach in his homily to use his "energy to enliven the spiritual life of the church and protect it from the challenges of secularism and materialism which undermine the faith of our people."

At the end of liturgy, Bishop Sasik presented Bishop Lach with an icon of Blessed Theodore Romzha, the Ruthenian bishop of Mukachevo who was martyred by the communists in the 20th century.

Bishop Lach also spoke at the end of the liturgy. "I would like to express to the Holy Father my gratitude for his confidence in me as bishop of Parma. I will try my best to be the successor of the Apostles, to govern



Bishop Milan with the laity of the Eparchy of Parma

He underlined the need to offer more catechesis and faith formation to the faithful, and to nurture priestly vocations.

Due to the current priest shortage in the eparchy, Bishop Lach has been inviting priests from Slovakia to minister here. Two Slovak priests are currently undergoing the visa application process; one of them is expected to arrive this fall.

Bishop Lach said the recruitment of Slovak priests is a short-term measure to try to meet the urgent need for priests: two

financial, to support the new missions and prayer communities that have developed in the western part of the eparchy.

"Perhaps we will have fewer parishes, but they will be more open (to welcoming others) and more vibrant," he said.

He said there is an urgent need to get the eparchy in stronger financial shape, which includes reducing costs across the board, and has already reached out to the neighboring Roman Catholic dioceses of Cleveland and Youngstown to share resources.



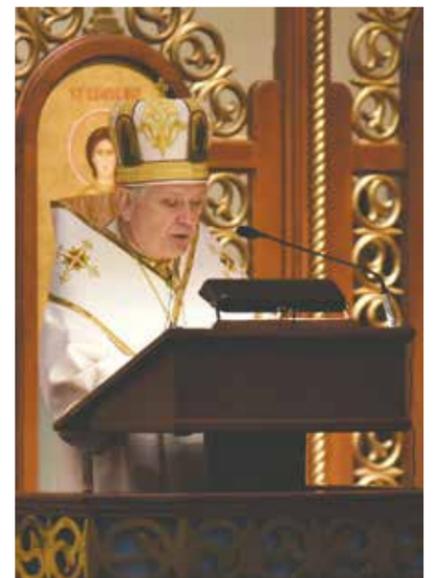
Bishop Milan is greeted the lay faithful



The Papal Bull of Appointment



Bishop Milan and the Papal Nuncio



Metropolitan William delivers the homily

the enthronement. The other concelebrating bishops included Bishop Kudrick, Bishop Kurt Burnette of Passaic, Bishop John Pazak of Phoenix, Bishop Bohdan Danylo of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Saint Josaphat, Bishop Nelson Perez of Cleveland, Auxiliary Bishop Neal Buckon of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, Bishop Milan Sasik of Mukachevo, Ukraine, and Bishop Abel Soczka of Nyiregyhaza, Hungary.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, presided at the enthronement, attended by 400 people. The liturgy was also live-streamed. He read

and serve," he said.

Bishop Lach told *Horizons* he intends to develop action plans in various areas of pastoral ministry and eparchial management to develop a more vibrant church.

"We are invited to be witnesses to the Gospel," he said. "Our church must focus on evangelization, have a spirit of openness and prayer."

His priorities include the "liturgy, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession," which are "part of our Eastern theology," he said.

priests retired this past year and at least another four are expected to retire in the next 12 months. He said he hopes prospective vocations to the priesthood will be nurtured and there will be American candidates for seminary soon. The eparchy currently has two men in seminary formation and a third who will be ordained a subdeacon in August.

Bishop Lach recently created an eparchial youth commission to try to jumpstart more youth ministry efforts.

The bishop also said he will consider reorganizing parishes, in order to shift already limited resources, both pastoral and

In an interview with *Horizons*, the bishop of Cleveland said it has been a "great blessing" to share resources with the eparchy and to get to know Bishop Lach, whom he described as a "wonderful guy, young guy, very spiritual, very pastoral."

"The Eparchy of Parma is certainly blessed to have him as their bishop," said Bishop Perez.

"It's a great celebration for all of us, Eastern rite and Latin rite," he said of Bishop Lach's enthronement. "We all gathered together in an incredible liturgy and a great moment of joy for the church."

DEGREE CONFERRED AT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY

Pittsburgh, PA

Following a Moleben prayer service in honor of Saints Cyril and Methodius, patrons of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Metropolitan William, Archbishop of Pittsburgh, conferred a diploma upon Joshua Van Winkle as a magna cum laude graduate of the seminary's School of Theology on May 17, 2018. Board members, faculty, alumni, staff, family, and friends were in attendance as Mr. Van Winkle received his diploma. Alumna, Helenanne Hochendoner, delivered a brief address. A luncheon honoring the graduate was held after the service. The seminary rejoices in the accomplishments of this fine individual.



18TH ANNUAL SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS LECTURE SPONSORED BY THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC SEMINARY HELD MAY 16, 2018

Pittsburgh, PA

His Eminence Alexander [Golitzin], Archbishop of Dallas, the South, and the Bulgarian Diocese and a popular speaker and gifted teacher, was the keynote speaker at the 18th annual Saints Cyril and Methodius Lecture of the Byzantine Catholic Seminary held on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at 7:00 PM. Archbishop Alexander spoke on "The Place of the Presence of God: Aphrahat of Persia's Portrait of the Christian Holy Man." The entire lecture can be viewed at the Seminary website: www.bcs.edu under "Latest News."



This year's lecture, held at St. John Cathedral Center, was attended by almost 90 people including Metropolitan William Skurla, faculty, staff, seminarians, graduates, and members of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.

Aphrahat, the Persian sage, is the earliest writer in Christian Syriac of whom we have proof. Writing in the 330s and 340s in the vicinity of modern Iraqi Kurdistan, his works are notable for their relative freedom from the lexicon and thought world of Greek philosophy; neither does he appear to know any prominent, pre-Nicene Church Fathers. Although unacquainted with Greek and Latin patristic literature, Aphrahat clearly possessed considerable authority in the Church of the Persian Empire. Archbishop Alexander will

examine the portrait Aphrahat paints of the holy man in his fourteenth Demonstration. The idea of transformation, of becoming divine, is clearly central to Aphrahat. While the language of the Greek Fathers' theosis is absent, he phrases it in an idiom much more akin to that of Second Temple apocalypses, and of the later Jewish Ezekial chariot-throne mystics of whom he was a likely contemporary.

The annual lecture series is sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius, a community of mentors, teachers, and students forming leaders for the Church in an environment of Christian unity, integrity, and missionary spirit, with a commitment to ecumenism. This year's lecture was followed by a question and answer period. A reception followed the lecture.



TRANSFIGURATION CELEBRATION

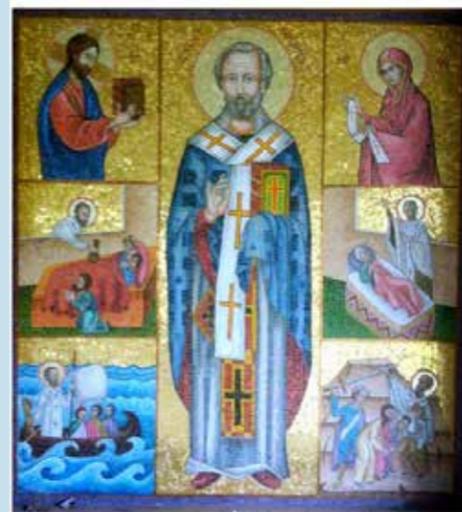
ST. MARY'S BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
NEW YORK CITY
YOUNG ADULTS
Sunday, August 5, 2018

Everyone is invited to join St. Mary's Young Adults and their friends for a Transfiguration Celebration. We will come together with the parish community for the 10:00 AM Sunday Divine Liturgy and a post Liturgy social followed by the celebration of Transfiguration Vespers at 12:30 with the blessing of fruit. St. Mary's is located at 246 East 15th Street, New York, New York. The 14th Street-Union Square Subway Station is a short walk to the church. For more information contact Fr. Ed Cimbala at fredcimbala@gmail.com.

Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage

August 5, 2018

11th Sunday after Pentecost
Prefestive of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ



Carthian Village / Saint Nicholas Shrine
802 Snow Hill Road
Cresco, PA 18326

- 11:00 AM Welcome and Blessing of Pilgrims Begins (Picnic Pavilion)
- 11:15 AM Devotion to Saint Nicholas (Shrine Altar) w/Panachida for Deceased Clergy and Pilgrims
- 11:30 AM Food Service Begins (Picnic Pavilion & Upper Tent)
- 12:30 PM Confessions Begin (Shrine Gazebo)
- 12:45 PM Healing Service with Anointing (Shrine Altar)
- 1:00 PM Children's Program (Lower Tent)
- 2:50 PM Procession from Lower Tent to Shrine Altar
- 3:00 PM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Ordinations to Minor Orders (Shrine Altar) Anointing with Oil of Saint Nicholas from Bari, Italy Blessing and Distribution of Fruit

Golf Club Car Service available for those with difficulty walking. Restroom Facilities for those with physical disabilities also available. Let's pray that God blesses us with great weather and a beautiful day, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos and Our Holy Father Nicholas, of course!

Join us for our **47th Annual**

SLAVIC AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 9, 2018
12 Noon til' 6:00 P.M.

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church
www.slavicamericanfestival.com

Nourishment for the Body
Holupki • Potato Pancakes • Bake Sale • Haluski
• Kolbasi • Pirohi • Nutrolls/Kolachi • Farmers Market
• Beer, Wine, Soda • Ice Cream • Hot Dogs

Nourishment for the Mind
Silent Auction • NFL Football on TV
• Bingo & Instant Bingo • Children's rides,
games & face painting • Rummage Sale
• Fairfax Sheriff Child ID Cards

Nourishment for the Soul
Slavic Religious & Folk Art • Polka Lessons
• Slavic Religious Books, Crosses & Jewelry
• Church Tours: 12:30, 2:30, 3:30, and 4:30 pm
Concert of Sacred Slavic Music at 1:30 pm
Epiphany Slava Men's Chorus

Divine Liturgy Schedule:
Saturday Sept 8th-5pm & Sunday Sept 9th-8:00 & 10:30 am
Free Admission • Free Shuttle parking from 3301 Woodburn Road.
No Pets Please

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Music by **John Stevens' Doubleshot**

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PEOPLE YOU KNOW

IN ANNANDALE...



The Epiphany Men's Club Father-Son Steak Night never fails to attract young men and their fathers!



Four generations of Epiphany's parishioners joined together for the Annual Crab Feast and overnight Camp-out.



Father Michael Kerestes, Vocations Director for the Eparchy of Passaic, spoke at the Men's Club Father-Son Steak Night dinner. Presented with a certificate of appreciation, pictured here are Jeff Nashwinter, Epiphany Men's Club President, Father Kerestes, and Epiphany's pastor, Father John Basarab.



The Annual Camp-out is an opportunity to burn palms and pussy willows from the year's Flowery Sunday celebration!

IN LEVITTOWN...

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church, Levittown, PA, celebrated its Patronal Feast on Sunday, June 24, with Father Vasyl Sokolovych, Parochial Vicar. The Divine Liturgy was held at 10 AM and was followed with a wonderful catered parish luncheon. Parishioner Margaret Churilla coordinated the event. The decorations for the party had a patriotic theme of red, white, and blue, and included children's games. At this event, the parishioners welcomed Father Vasyl and Pan'i Olena and their children: sons, Vasyl and Andriy. At 1 PM, a Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary in honor of our Patronal Feast was prayerfully celebrated. We are confident that Our Lady of Perpetual Help heard our prayers. The event concluded with a special treat: soft pretzels (Philadelphia style, of course!) and ice cream sundaes. Father Edward Higgins is Administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.



IN MAHWAH...

Successful Yard Sale

Just about every able-bodied member of Holy Spirit parish in Mahwah, NJ, pitched in to host a yard sale on Saturday, June 9. The sale filled the parish basement, grounds, and garages with bargains and attracted neighbors and treasure hunters from around northern New Jersey and the Hudson Valley. Many guests took the time to visit the church and learn about their Byzantine Catholic neighbors. Holy Spirit Parish is served by Fathers Jody Baran and Jack Custer.



AROUND THE EPARCHY



IN MYRTLE BEACH...

(Below) Father Mykhaylo Prodanets recently celebrated The Divine Liturgy for the Blessed Basil Hopko Byzantine Catholic Mission in Myrtle Beach, SC.

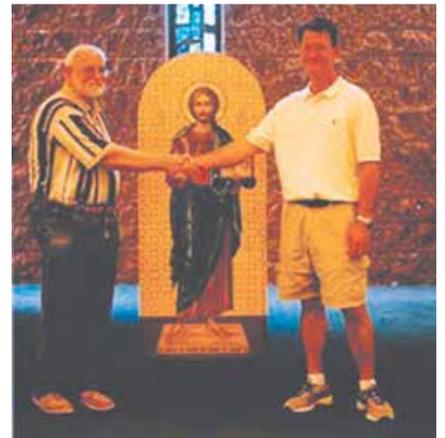
(Right) Father Vasyl Polyak of Saints Peter and Paul in Patton, PA served the Divine Liturgy on Saturday, July 21.



IN CHARLOTTE...

Cathedral Icons Find New Home in Mission

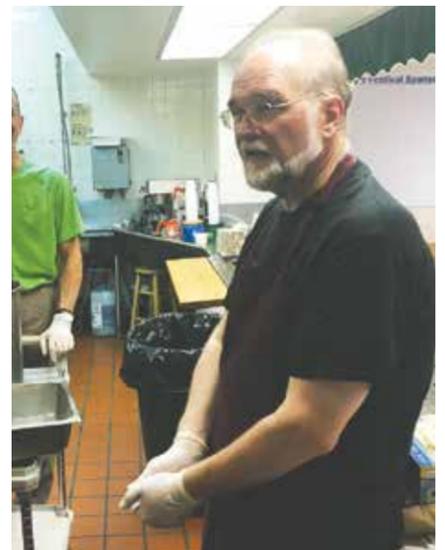
The recent renovation of Saint Michael Cathedral replaced four of the icons from the original iconostasis with new subjects. Cathedral parishioners, Ronald and Elaine Kapusta, volunteered to bring these icons of our Lord, the Mother of God, Saint Stephen and Saint Lawrence on a road trip to the Carolinas. Cantor Ron Somich of the Charlotte mission outreach met the Kapustas and helped install the icons in their new home at Saint Philip Neri Parish in Fort Mill, SC, where the Byzantine Catholic community meets. Father Stephen Galuschik serves the Mission Outreach.



IN WILKES-BARRE...

Bazaar Preparation in Wilkes-Barre

Enthusiastic parish volunteers gathered recently to prepare stuffed cabbage rolls/holupki for the upcoming annual Parish Bazaar. This event takes place the first weekend of August (August 3-5) and features a full menu of Slavic favorites: holupki, haluški, pirohi, kielbasi and sauerkraut, goulash, and kolácsi (nut and poppyseed rolls) – and more!



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 INDOOR AND OUTDOOR
2018
BAZAAR
 FRIDAY - SATURDAY - SUNDAY
AUGUST 3-4-5
 FRIDAY-SATURDAY 5pm-10pm • SUNDAY 12pm-6pm
PARISH SOCIAL HALL
 (ENTRANCE AT) 522 MADISON STREET, WILKES-BARRE
 GAMES OF CHANCE - GREAT PRIZES
 ETHNIC FOODS & HOMEMADE BAKED GOODS
 GREAT CASH RAFFLE - SILENT AUCTION
AIR CONDITIONED FUN!
GIANT INDOOR FLEA MARKET
 LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
 FRIDAY 6-9 PM – THE SPERAZZA BAND
 SATURDAY 6-10 PM – IRON COWBOY
 SUNDAY 4-7 PM – GROUP THERAPY
FUNDRAISING USA
 WILKES-BARRE, PA

51ST NATIONAL MELKITE CONVENTION

Houston, Texas by Ana Villasana

The 51st National Melkite Convention was held in Houston, Texas, from July 5th through July 8th. The theme for this year's convention was "Lift up Your Eyes, the Fields are Ripe for the Harvest", which was meant to serve as a reminder of our call to bring Christ to our world through our renewed spiritual vision of discipleship. The attendees of the convention were honored to have His Beatitude Youssef Absi, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, in addition to Archbishop Cyril Bustros of Beirut, Archbishop Nicolas Antiba, Patriarchal Vicar in Damascus, and Bishop Nicholas Samra, Eparchial Bishop of Newton, as well as other notables.

The local community of Saint Barbara under the leadership of Father Fadi Al Mismass hosted the historical event and the fruits of their countless hours of labor was evident everywhere. The Patriarch himself was pleased to announce to the attendees at the grand banquet

on Saturday that the Mission had raised more than \$350,000 in order to purchase the acreage needed to build their church. A group headed by the Patriarch went to view the land and bless it even though it meant sloshing through the mud as a result of recent rains.

Emphasis was given to the liturgical beauty of daily prayers in addition to the Divine Liturgy itself. The mornings began with Orthros and Confessions, followed by the Divine Liturgy. Vespers and Confessions were offered in the evening. Abbot Nicholas gave several talks and paid particular attention to the importance of Byzantine Rite monasticism. He reminded his listeners that the modern world is filled with millennials, agnostics and the "I'm spiritual, just not religious" who thirst, not for more presentations or intellectual lectures, but for true encounters with God. What better way to assist them in their quest than to take them to experience a monastic life, to witness

lives lived in prayer? But where are the monasteries? He spoke of the need for guidelines for Byzantine Rite monasteries which would differ from the guidelines present in Latin Rite monasteries and his suggestions have been presented to His Holiness Pope Francis.

His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, attended the grand banquet and was presented with a special recognition for his assistance to the Melkite Community. When Father Fadi first arrived, it was the Cardinal who provided room and board at the seminary as well as seeing that Father Fadi had the classes needed, including English classes.

A wide range of entertainment was provided nightly with the country western night presenting some challenges. What are you supposed to do with a bandana? The Melkite Women's Group at Saint Barbara set out numerous cowboy hats on their tables and also distributed free

bandanas. Apparently, not knowing exactly how to tie and fasten a bandana led some men to decide to have the material hang down from the bottom of the cowboy hat to their shoulders in the back of the head: interesting, but not exactly western.

Even though plans were made to visit potential fledgling parishes in San Antonio and Austin after the Houston convention, Father Fadi realistically spoke of the challenges that still await the Melkite Mission of Saint Barbara both financially and in the very gathering of Melkite families residing in the extremely large city of Houston. It is hoped that anticipated activities and educational opportunities will help attract members to the community. The convention itself, however, gave proof that the present Melkite Mission Church of Saint Barbara is capable of great discipleship and dedication to "glorifying God and serving mankind He has loved", for which His Beatitude has prayed.

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Father Nicholas Daddona
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ndaddona@eparchyofpassaic.com

If you or others perceive that God is calling you to serve the Church as a deacon and you would like to further explore the possibility of this vocation, please contact:



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ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelsky



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARISH PRIEST IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

The role of the priest from the days of the Early Church and until today remains the same. In his Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* Pope Pius XI states: "The human race has always felt the need of a priesthood: of men, that is, who have the official charge to be mediators between God and humanity, men who should consecrate themselves entirely to this mediation, as to the very purpose of their lives, men set aside to offer to God public prayers and sacrifices in the name of human society" (cf. #8).

Pope Benedict XVI, reflecting on the role of the priest, says: "The function of the [priest] is essential and irreplaceable in announcing the Word and celebrating the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist...."

According to Canon Law, the role of the priest is to carry out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. In carrying out the function of teaching, he is bound by the obligation of preaching the Word of God to all the Christian faithful so that they may grow in faith, hope, and charity, rooted in Christ, and that the Christian community may render that witness of love which the Lord commanded.

In carrying out the function of sanctifying, the priest is to take care that the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is the center and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community, and also to labor that the Christian faithful are fed with spiritual food through devout and frequent reception of the sacraments, and through conscious and active participation in the divine praises. He is also to be especially attentive to conferring the Sacrament of Penance to foster the Christian life. For this reason, he is to make himself readily available to administer this Sacrament.

In fulfilling the function of governing, the priest is first of all to know his flock. Since he is the minister of all the sheep, he is to foster growth in the Christian life both in individual members of the Christian faithful and in associations, especially those directed to the apostolate, and in the entire parish community. Therefore, he is to visit the homes and schools insofar as the pastoral function requires it; to look out zealously for adolescents and children; to exercise paternal love for the poor and sick.

The priest is to remember to manifest in his daily contacts and solicitude to the baptized and non-baptized, Catholic and non-Catholic, a truly priestly and pastoral example of ministry, and to give the proper witness of truth and life to all. As a good shepherd, he is to seek out those baptized in the Catholic Church who have absented themselves from the reception of the sacraments or even fallen away from the faith (cf. CCEC, Canons §§ 279-303).

In summary, celebration of the Divine Liturgies, providing the opportunity for the faithful to receive the Sacraments and caring for their spiritual well-being, teaching them about God and faith, providing necessary pastoral care and visiting the sick, spiritual direction, along with taking care of the proper handling of all the parish registers and documents, overseeing the maintenance of the physical parish buildings and taking care of the legal matters of the parish are pastor's duties and responsibilities.

Father Schöch, in his interview on *The Role of Priest in the 21 Century*, states: "The parish priest is not obliged to carry out all parish activities personally, but rather, to see to it that they are performed opportunistically, in keeping with sound doctrine and Church discipline, according to the particular circumstances and always under his own supervision. The ideal is not a parish where the priest does everything. The priest should help lay people discover and fulfill their specific vocation in communion with other faithful. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings about this communion and integrates the priest within God's people in communion. As the Holy Spirit fills and motivates the entire sphere of existence, he also penetrates and shapes each person's specific vocation. That is how the particular spirituality of priests, religious, parents, entrepreneurs, catechists, etc. is molded and developed. Each vocation has a concrete and distinctive way of living its spirituality, which gives depth and enthusiasm to the tasks performed. The apostolate of the laity is mainly carried out within associations and movements that operate in full harmony with the Church and in obedience to pastors' guidelines...."

The priest is meeting and holding in his hands a small baby, welcoming him or her into the Church of Christ at the very morning of the child's life. He is the one who is

guiding people throughout their lives in their spiritual journey by leading them in prayers, assisting them in their spiritual searches, sharing their sorrows and joys, by his ministry of presence to them in every moment of their lives. The priest is the one who goes to find a lost sheep and bring it back to the Church. He is the one through whom God Himself unites two people in the Sacrament of Marriage. He is the one who stays at the sick bed of a parishioner, offering his prayers for the sick person and providing the spiritual comfort for the loved ones. He is the one who prepares a person for his meeting with the Lord at the very evening of one's life. The role of the priest is to accompany "the Christian throughout the pilgrimage of this life to the gates of Heaven." He accompanies the body to its resting place in the grave with rites and prayers of immortal hope. Even beyond the threshold of eternity, he follows the soul to aid it with Christian suffrages, if need there be of further purification and alleviation. Thus, from the cradle to the grave the priest is ever beside the faithful, a guide, a solace, a minister of salvation, and dispenser of grace and blessing (cf. *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, #19).

The role of the priest is to be *Alter Christus* – second Christ, to be everything for everyone (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22). He is the one through whom God works in the lives of the faithful, whom God has chosen to serve Him and His people, through whom God reveals His mercy to people today, through whom God forgives.... The priest, in the Sacraments, unseals the fountains of grace. The priest must look after the faithful entrusted into his care by the bishop, to guide them and feed them spiritually. A young candidate at ordination is prostrated on the floor, waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and quicken him into a new form of life, life of service to others. The priests speak for the voiceless, atone for the sinful, plead for the Judases, and intercede for those "who do not know what they are doing." The priest is only the branch, God is the vine.

The role of a priest is to embody Christ's presence and to bear witness to his saving mercy. We can say the role of the priest is to be God's heart – to love and accept everybody, to be God's hands – to bless all, to be God's feet – to go to those in most need, and to be God's eyes – to see others the way

God sees them.

The role of the priest is to be a witness of God's love for them. He must serve them by the ministry of presence: to meet them where they are and to guide them to Christ, to personal encounter with God, to be with the people in their joys and sorrows. The role of the priest is to be an apostle and to share the Good News of the Gospel. While he cannot and should not change the message of Jesus, he can and should find new ways how to deliver it in order to reach out to more people. The life of a priest should always be consistent with the message of the Gospel.

As it is said, "No matter where he is located, the priest must be the sharer of secrets, the carrier of burdens, the fountain of consolation, and the pillar of strength. Although solitary, he is called father by thousands; poor, he enriches the lives of thousands; weak, he gives strength to thousands; unimportant, he does things each day whose importance cannot be told in any tongue on earth. He is never too busy to hear another's sorrows; often too busy to realize his own burdens. He is a 24-hour-a-day man. He is called from his dinner; wakened from his sleep; disturbed at his prayers. He is at the beck and call of any of his people. He is the target of God's enemies, the magnet of God's needy. Occasionally, he attracts attention; but usually he works unnoticed while he does the noblest work on earth – keeping Christ in the lives of the people."

The priest is the one who plants the seed in the souls of the faithful and hopes and prays it will give fruit abundantly. He is the one who provides an opportunity for a person to meet God. He is the mediator between God and a person. He is to help a person to create that sacred space, where the meeting of the person with God will happen. He helps a person to encounter God through his ministry. He accompanies a person in his/her spiritual journey by his prayer, presence and availability.

If I had to put it in one sentence I would simply say: the role of the priest today is to bring God closer to people and to bring people closer to God, not to change the message of Christ, but to find new ways how to deliver it to the people of the Twenty-First century. **ECL**



LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

WHERE DO YOU LAY YOUR HEAD?

A priest once preached on chapter 8 of Saint Matthew's gospel – specifically on verses 18-22, which find Jesus encountering potential followers. They promise to follow Him, but with a tentativeness that reveals their desire to do so on their own terms. Jesus' response perhaps puzzled His listeners – and maybe us, too: "Foxes have their dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere

to lay His head." In his homily, the priest pointed out that while people may have been excited or intrigued by Jesus' words and persona, and inspired "in the moment" to follow, they may not have been ready (or entirely *willing*) to fully embrace what that following meant. Jesus hinted to them in His words that to be His follower is to be somewhat uncomfortable, sometimes misunderstood, and even rejected. Jesus'

enigmatic statement was really a question: "Are you ready and able to be 'without a home' because of Me? Can you trust that if the world doesn't accept you because of Me, that *I will be your place of rest*?" Jesus isn't saying that this way isn't worthwhile; His whole life and ministry was about how His way would bring ultimate joy, peace, and most importantly, eternal life. But being His disciple wouldn't always be easy,

and would be impossible without relying on Him.

The priest's preaching was instructive to me, prompting deeper reflection on Jesus' words, and the reality that though He gained many followers throughout His ministry, in the end – when it mattered most – He truly didn't have a place to lay His head, to rest and be comforted. Instead, He was deserted by all but

a few followers (interestingly, all but one of them were *women*), finally laying His head against the wood of the Cross. This is what we, as followers of Christ, must be prepared for, too. Most of us won't be deserted by family and friends because of our faith in Christ, or be asked to endure a martyr's death, but we will be put into uncomfortable positions on account of our faith. We find ourselves at odds with the culture, perhaps even with family members, because of our unwillingness to compromise, to be anything less than the men and women God created us to be as His icons. Being a follower of Christ isn't always the easiest way to "make friends and influence people" – but it's the *only* way to true happiness, true peace and fulfillment – the only way to abundant Life.

I find the Holy Spirit to be rather *sneaky* in my daily life, tucking away messages meant for me in the most unexpected places, inspiring me to look with fresh eyes at a word or life event and finding new meaning, new insight. This is especially true of the Scriptures, which are inspired by God and through which He offers specific revelations about Himself and messages He wishes to communicate for our salvation. We can't just project our own thoughts and feelings into the words of Scripture, each interpreting its meanings for ourselves. We need the authority of the Church to guide us so that we don't transform the Word of God into our own "infallible word." That said, God

wants His Word to be alive in us, to be active and to activate us. If we are open to Him, and make time for quiet reflection, the Holy Spirit will speak to our hearts through Scripture, drawing us closer to Him, helping us to view problems in a new light, and to be better followers of Christ. When we make space for the Holy Spirit to enter our prayer time, and influence our reading or hearing Scripture, we may be surprised at what insight or help He has waiting for us. Jesus had something specific in mind when He said He had nowhere to lay His head. But those words, through the guidance of the Spirit, can be the catalyst for an important question we should ask ourselves: "Where do I lay *my* head?" I don't mean this literally – like on a pillow or the couch – but "where do I find *my* rest?"

For some, the place we *lay our heads* is in politics, 24-hour news and talk radio. It's important to be informed and engaged in local and national affairs; but we can become so enthralled by our own opinions that we think less about what's right and wrong, and more about whether everyone knows *we're* right. More and more of us *lay our heads* on our laptops and smartphones, constantly checking email and texting, disengaging from the flesh and blood people around us and existing in an online world. Social media is that place where we may *lay our heads*, but find no rest. We spend hours in a day mindlessly scrolling newsfeeds, pinning our hopes and our well-being on the

number of "Likes" our post receives. Controversy, anger and generally bad manners find fertile ground when protected by the "virtual wall" that separates us from each other. We *lay our heads* on piles of money and possessions, in sexual excess and pornography, and in gambling or drinking away our lives and our families. Some of us *lay our heads* on titles, status and the adulation of others. Finally, some of us *lay our heads* on the soft pillow of our own self-righteousness, fretting over those around us who don't love God or "follow the rules" half as well as we do.

A few chapters after saying He has nowhere to lay His head, Jesus generously offers us what He does not take for Himself: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) It's a fact of our fallen human nature that we often seek

satisfaction (rest) in objects, behaviors, habits, and people that actually sap our spiritual and emotional energy, and may even damage our relationships with others, and with God. Jesus warns us about the cost of being a disciple; and He warns us of the dangers in pursuing fleeting moments of pleasure or self-satisfaction in favor of what is truly good and beautiful – of what is meant for our everlasting good, not for a moment's gratification. No matter how many times we lay our head in dark places, no matter how often we return to the false comfort of sin, Jesus is there, waiting.

Now, take a moment to reflect on yourself and your life. Where do you lay *your* head? Perhaps more importantly, can you make room for Jesus to lay *His* head on your heart? **ECL**



SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.S.L., S.T.D.

A PILGRIMAGE PRAYERBOOK: THE PSALMS OF ASCENT, PART 2

Last month, we left our pilgrims, gathered in Jerusalem. Not surprisingly, Jerusalem itself is featured in many of the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134).

Psalms 125 takes the city's geography as a sign of God's care for His people. Set atop a high mountain and built on solid, sparkling limestone, Jerusalem enjoyed some impressive natural defenses. If Jerusalem seems unshakable, how much more the trust that God's people should have in Him? Psalm 125 is one of a number of Psalms that specifically prays for "peace upon Israel." The word peace, in Hebrew, *shalom*, lies at the heart of the city's Hebrew name: *Yerushalayim*.

The heart of Jerusalem was the Temple and the focal point of the Temple, behind the curtain in the Holy of Holies, was the Ark of the Covenant. Psalm 132 recounts how King David, who captured Jerusalem and made it his capital, also brought the Ark of the Covenant into the City. Psalm 132 also recounts the promise made to King David that a descendant of his would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:16). Only one "anointed" king could ever literally fulfill this promise of "forever" – the Anointed One (in Greek: *Christos*), Jesus, the "Son of

David" (Matthew 21:9-15), "whose kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:33). But Jesus fulfilled the promises in unexpected ways. His Kingdom is "not of this world" (John 18:33-36) and His sacrifice on the Cross replaced the Jerusalem Temple with the temple of His own body (John 2:19-21).

Psalm 133 celebrates the sense of unity created when believers come together to worship. It's a feeling people who participate in our annual pilgrimages in Sloatsburg, Sybertsville, or Uniontown often express. The psalmist's emotions may be stirred by family, tribal or ethnic ties, or by the beauty of the Temple and its liturgy. Saint Paul repeatedly calls for a unity in the Church (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12) that is more than a feeling. The Church's unity is based on the example of Jesus' self-effacing love and the fact that the baptized are adopted into the one family of the Holy Trinity.

The mention of Zion and Jerusalem always points beyond the earthly city to Saint John's vision of the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21). The Epistle to the Hebrews (12:22-24) says to the baptized: "you have come to Mount Zion and

to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant."

Along with this powerful sense of family and community, something profoundly personal happens in the Psalms of Ascent. We see it most clearly in Psalms 130 and 131. Psalm 130 cries out to the Lord "from the depths" with an awareness of sin that only God's forgiveness can heal. The Jerusalem pilgrim seems to have kept a prayerful vigil all night seeking that forgiveness. Byzantine Catholic pilgrimages always include the opportunity for sacramental confession and absolution.

Psalm 131 may express the peace that comes from reconciliation with God. If the mood in Psalm 130 is anxious expectation, Psalm 131 describes an attitude of contented calm with an unusual image from family life. "A weaned child at its mother's breast" needs and wants nothing more than to be close to its mother. This is the pilgrim, now reconciled and at peace with God, simply delighting in God's embrace.

A note of childlike humility in Psalm 131 also compliments the prayer for forgiveness in Psalm 130. It was perhaps the experience of measuring himself against the splendor of the Temple, the majesty of its liturgy and the experience of basking in a reflection of God's glory that moved the psalmist to admit his own littleness. Perhaps, somewhat like Job (42:1-6), he has been chastened by his encounter with God's "awesome" dwelling (Psalm 84:1). The pilgrimage described by the Songs of Ascent follows the path laid out by Christ who "humbled Himself" (Philippians 2:5-8). Having left the external enemies behind in previous psalms, the pilgrim has now put to rest the interior enemies – the passions that lead to sin.

Especially for our teens and young adults, the office of Compline late in the night is a highlight of pilgrimages. The final Psalm of Ascent, Psalm 134, captures this moment. At the conclusion of Psalm 134, we find ourselves waiting hopefully and prayerfully in the night. The Psalms of Ascent have done their job, calling us out of exile and gathering us together, at peace, in order, focused and waiting for the Lord. **ECL**



UNDERSTANDING ICONS

Father Joseph Bertha, Ph.D.

CRIMSON CHITON: PART 1

The crimson chiton/himation of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The crimson clothed Christ figure in the north apse of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C.
John Henryk De Rosen, installed 1959

Introduction

Towering over the north apse in a concave conch, a glittering gold background mosaic of Our Lord dominates the north end of the National Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the so-called America's Catholic Shrine located in the north eastern section of our nation's capital in Washington D.C.



Christ Ascension National Basilica Nave

hibits a comprehensive knowledge of both western and eastern art, and details emerge in the pages about how exactly they arrived at the figure of Christ as it exists today.

De Rosen employs all the tools necessary to his understanding and incorporates them into the design of this image. Initially, the iconography committee discussed the possibility of a Pantocrator icon to fill the



Christ Ascension National Basilica Grand Nave View

Our Lord shown vested in crimson garments (both the chiton/himation), designed by Jan Henryk De Rosen and installed by the Basilica's dedication in November 1959 was the first work of art installed in the newly completed basilica.

This majestic mosaic has been variously labeled "Pantocrator," "Christ in Majesty," or even "Christ at the Second Coming (Parousia)." None of these titles actually gives justice to the sophisticated and intricate direct and indirect art historical references quoted within in the work itself by the artist Jan Henryk De Rosen.

Gratefully, De Rosen's unpublished manuscript entitled, *The Iconography of the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception* (1959), can be referenced at the Library of Congress. The notes are crammed with many pertinent clues as to the process of discerning the image which came to be in the north apse. In his remarks De Rosen ex-

north apse. De Rosen references the Byzantine antecedents of the Pantocrator images found in both the western Roman cathedrals of Cefalu and Monreale. These images were used by the Normans to illustrate their perceived divine given right to rule Sicily. This is a narrow perception of the Pantocrator image of Byzantium. The Pantocrator icon of Our Lord actually derives from His depiction as ascending in glory to heaven, usually located in the highest architectural feature of the church. Also, the word *Pantocrator* is Greek for the Hebrew designation *El Shaddai*, which means the "Provider" or "Sustainer." However, De Rosen seems to be quoting the Pantocrator of Cefalu, Jesus resembles the Normans with his strands of blond/gold hair. (see illustration)

Eventually the committee rejected the Pantocrator image and rather selected scenes of the Last Judgment depicted during the Romanesque period of western art, found on Western portals of many great cathedrals. This idea was then conflated with

the prophecy of Daniel 7:14: "He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed," by depicting the Lord as being the Judge at the end of the world. This aspect lends an apocalyptic vision of the figure of Christ.



Cefalu Christ

At the conclusion of his remarks, De Rosen himself leaves a very mesmerizing Scripture from Isaiah 62: 10-12; 63: 1-9: "Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save. Why is your apparel red, and thy garments like his that treads in the wine press? I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come. I looked but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me. I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth," at the end of the discussion. At first strike, this scripture explains the dominant crim-

son colored chiton/himation of our Lord. But upon deeper examination it reveals De Rosen's intimate knowledge of the liturgy of the Eastern Church. The scripture from Isaiah is that prescribed to be read during the Vespers for the Feast of the Lord's Ascension into heaven.

Four details in the image also indirectly refer to the Ascension of Our Lord. First, the three angels at the feet of our Lord all represent our Lord's dominion over the earth.

Second, the Lord is depicted rising above a river, then a mountain, and is seated on a rainbow arc. The rainbow arc is the earthly sign given to Noah to indicate God will never again punish the sinners on earth by wiping them out by a flood.

Third, the Lord shows the wounds of His crucifixion. The chiton/himation is draped over His left shoulder and exposes His wound in the side, and both hands bear the wound marks in His hands. Our Lord does not show His wounds in heaven, or when He is a Judge at the Last trumpet call.

Fourth, in the original design of the cruciform double halo He wears, He is appearing in the glory of His victory of the earthly battle, trampling upon sinners as upon grapes. Out of the three-cross-beam flaming sword, spears flare outward. In this unique depiction, De Rosen recalls the fiery unconsumed bush where God reveals His name as YHWH to Moses. Coincidentally, the Hebrew *tetragrammaton* is usually inscribed with the Greek letters *ὠωη* in each of three bars of an icon of Christ. These flames also recall the words spoken by Jesus in Luke 12:49: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" **ECL**

To be continued....



ST. MARY'S
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SLAVIC FESTIVAL

FRI. & SAT., AUG. 17 & 18: 5-10 PM
SUN., AUG 19: Noon-5 PM

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- Carnival Foods • Clams • Beer Tent
- Raffles • White Elephant Sale
- Igor's Russian Art Gallery

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~ LIVE ENTERTAINMENT ~

FRI: Joe Stankey & His Cadets
SAT: Doubleshot

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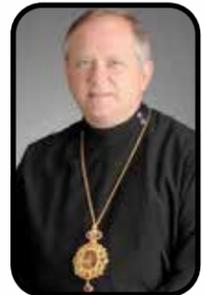
64th Holy Dormition Pilgrimage

August 11-12, 2018

His Beatitude Sviatoslav presiding

MARY, OUR MODEL OF PRAYER

“Do Whatever He Tells You...”



The Sisters Servants joyfully announce that along with His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, His Eminence Most Reverend William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Most Reverend Kurt Burnette, Bishop of the Eparchy of Passaic, will also preside at this year's pilgrimage. Archbishop William will be the main celebrant and homilist at the 5:00 pm Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Saturday, August 11th, and Bishop Kurt will be the celebrant and homilist for the 8:00 pm. Moleben to the Mother of God on Saturday night.

PARISH BANNERS - We ask that parishes bring their banners and have a representative carry them in the procession to the Pontifical Divine Liturgies on Saturday and Sunday.

PRESENTATION: V. Rev. John Custer, Rector of the Cathedral of St Michael the Archangel, Passaic NJ and Syncellus for New Jersey will speak on the topic “Mary, Mother of the Word of God” on Saturday, August 11th.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS - Sr. Michele has acquired the following great rate, and you must book through her for this rate: srmicheley75@aol.com, 845-753-2555 **HOTEL:** Fairfield Inn & Suites

ADDRESS: 225 Ramapo Valley Rd. Mahwah, NJ 07430

PRICE: \$115.00 per night (all inclusive room with breakfast)
King / Queen / 2 Doubles room size



SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

SEEKING GOD

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt. 5:6). We are created by God and for God. Saint Augustine prays, “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You” [Confessions Bk I. Par. 1]. Do you often experience a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction with life? You thought that reaching some goal, such as getting married and having children, gaining a certain level of financial security, or finding a bit of notoriety in your chosen field would lead to contentment. But it didn't. King Solomon attained great fame and fortune. Yet at the end of his life, he said: “Behold all is vanity, and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 1:14). Every worldly thing left Solomon empty. And those who hunger and thirst for earthly things, such as prosperity, power, popularity, and pleasure, are left empty and vexed as well. Why? Because every human being was made by God and for God and only God satisfies! The Psalmist expresses what lies beneath our frustration, dissatisfaction, and discontent. He prays, “O God,

You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1). Be hungry for God for only God satisfies.

God says to the hungry soul, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it” (Ps. 81:10). Know that in Heaven, and only in Heaven, will we “feast on the abundance of [God's] house, and... drink from the river of [His] delights” in full measure (Ps. 36:8). This comprehensive satisfaction is the essence of the Beatific Vision. The elect will see God with the eyes of the mind. In seeing such an Infinite Good, they will be compelled to love Him with their entire being, and in loving Him, they will be united to Him for eternity. Only by possessing this fountain of all Good, will our hearts be delighted, fulfilled, and blessed. What a tragedy to miss out on Heaven. Imagine coming to the end of life, and realizing that every worldly accomplishment is empty and vain. Contemplate being sentenced to endure this agonizing abyss of deprivation forever. Hell is essentially being deprived of the God who alone

satisfies. Those who fail to seek God find a foretaste of Hell even in this life.

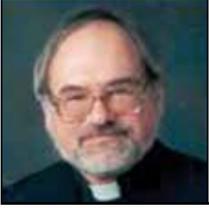
Make sure you are on your way to Heaven. Get as close to God as you can here and now. “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near” (Is. 55:6). Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. He says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6). It is not enough to have been baptized, to attend church services, to do a few good works here and there. While all of these things are necessary, it is only by a total consecration of your heart to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior that you will begin to live out the salvation that Christ has provided for you. Pray, “Lord, I am all yours, and from today forward I will live for you.”

Get close to God through spiritual reading. The Bible is the book that is authored by God (2 Tim. 3:16), and in reading and meditating on the words of the Bible, we can seek and find God. This is not reading for academic knowledge, theolo-

gizing, or learning basic Bible content. Rather, “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Pt. 2:2). The goal of this kind of Bible reading is to seek and to find God.

Seek God by praying. “Seek the LORD and his strength; seek His presence continually!” (Ps. 105:4). Tell God about your spiritual hunger. Explain to Him that no earthly thing can satisfy your heart. Ask Him for more of His presence, His holiness, and His love.

Seek and find God by purifying your life. Set aside distractions and activities that waste your time so that you can have a heart that is pure and prepared to encounter God. Ruthlessly root out sin and compromise, and strive after every virtue so as to make yourself pleasing to the God whom you fervently seek. “Break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that He may come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hos. 10:12). Seek hard after God, for only God satisfies. **BCL**



THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

KNOWING REALITY

How do we know things? We are born into this world with physical senses. We can see the world with our eyes. We perceive depth and color and shape. With these same eyes we can read words, and so learn about places far away that we may never see directly, and even about realities that have no physical form, as justice, mercy, love, and hope. With another bodily sense, we can also hear the sounds that surround us and connect us to this world in ways that our eyes cannot. With our ears we can also learn from the voice of others, as a message is passed on to us. The Psalmist tells us, “O God, we have heard with our own ears; our fathers have told us the deeds You did in their days, You Yourself, in days long ago” (Psalm 43:2). Indeed, through reading and hearing we learn of events that happened in the past. We are also connected to our world through other senses, by touch, by taste, by smell. We have faith that the information we receive through our senses truly corresponds to the reality around us.

The Son and Word of God became a human being for our sakes, so that we could know the presence of God through our senses. Jesus, however, lived among us for a short time. His human life on earth is well attested to historically. We have more evi-

dence of his life than for anyone else who lived two thousand years ago. After his death and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples for a short time in His glorified body to give them the mission to proclaim His gospel to the world. We do not know the historical Christ by our senses, but through the witness of the apostles. This is why we profess our faith “in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.” Saint Paul knew this well and asks, “But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!’” (Romans 10:14-15).

Our Lord tells the Apostle Thomas, who would not believe until he touched the Body of Jesus, “Blessed are those who have not seen (His glorified and risen body) and have believed” (John 20:29). We know Christ because of what we have been told by the Apostles, so later John writes to us, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life – for the life was made visible; we have seen

it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

There is more to our knowledge of reality. As human beings, not only do we know the universe through our senses, but we know that we know. This is very important because it is a sign of our ability to self-reflect, and of self-consciousness and free will. It is the image of God within us, and St. Maximus the Confessor said that it is by our free will that we are able to receive the grace of God, and to know through revelation what we cannot see by our physical senses. Again, St. John tells us, “No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed Him” (John 1:18).

There is no real conflict between religion and science, for reality is one. There is a difference, however, in the ways that we can know this reality. Science is limited to observation of the physical world. Faith is the ability to know beyond what our senses tell us. Crossing this boundary, though, sometimes brings conflict and misunderstanding

between the two. Since science deals with the material world, many people begin to take a “materialistic” view of reality. What we cannot see and touch with our senses is not real, and so self-consciousness and free will become an illusion. This leads some militant atheists to try and find in physical laws the entire reason for the existence of reality as such. Since in our daily lives, we see and hear what is real through our senses, this approach becomes very alluring. The problem with this is that a rigid materialism sucks all the meaning out of reality.

How we know is very important. A simple awareness of facts is not important. Saint James warns, “You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe that and tremble” (James 2:19). Our knowledge must be with our whole being, not only the brain, but also the heart. In church we hear the words of Jesus. He is present to us and His words, as well as His body and blood received in Holy Communion, transform our lives. Saint John describes this: “No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us” (1 John 4:12). Through what we see and hear, then, we come to a knowledge of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **ECL**

SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda



LITURGY: THE ANSWER TO DIGITAL INTIMACY

The current state of detachment and isolation of the modern man, and especially the modern youth and young adult, leaves the most vulnerable of us feeling as if we do not really belong anywhere. This lack of grounding and real human interaction linked with a void of interpersonal responsibility, is not always consciously understood by the individual. But the effects of these deficiencies manifest in different types of vicious behavior. If one is truly vigilant about their state in life and how they respond to different situations and stressful experiences, then one will notice parts of their life do not align with how they wish to behave—especially if they have any grounding in a Life in Christ. This realization can be startling at first because they did not recognize the signs along the path of their reactive behavior, and are now confronted with a self image that is completely foreign to their ideals. But this image is foreign; and the modern person is suddenly aware that aspects of their life have slipped out of control without their knowing it, and without knowing how or even why.

It is all too popular now to point our fingers at the dangers of experiencing our world through pixel screens, through second-hand emotions of streaming media, through simulated intimacy, and through identity politics, that the notion seems like just another huckster bidding for our five minutes of attention. But the growing popularity of exposing these real dangers does not negate the necessity of doing so. These newer experiences have slipped in to replace our older experiences of interaction. The ancient social structures of local tribe, extended and immediate family, and friends, has eroded into groups that can spread the length of the globe, with interaction being experienced electronically. However wonderful and exciting this promises to be, it leaves the individual with fewer real human experiences in their physical location.

As communal sons and daughters of God, made in His image and likeness, we take-on the image of the Holy Trinity and desire the same intimacy the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have with each-other. We

desire a tangible connection with others that goes deeper than just simultaneously indulging in entertainment and repeating the talking points of the ideologies we think we subscribe to. We desire very serious shared experiences of humanity, we desire to think, to ask questions, and to explore the universe in the company of real people.

During His earthly ministry, the only time Jesus was in isolation was for periods of intense personal prayer. But He always returned to be with His disciples and to share meals with them, to talk with them, to teach them, and even to wash their feet. Jesus needed to be with His disciples for real tangible interaction, and His disciples needed the same from Him. It is these first-hand experiences which create lasting memories and impressions and encouraged them to persevere through the tribulations and martyrdom that was in store for many.

The current state of detachment and isolation of the modern man can be remedied through communal prayer. It is when we gather together for this most

profound expression of our humanity—to praise, thank, and worship the God who made us—that we not only experience a real and tangible intimacy with others, but we also experience it from our Creator. We not only receive emotional and spiritual support from those around us, but we receive graces from God. Through our liturgical worship, we do more than just think with our minds, we bend with our bodies, we move our arms, we sing with our voices, we kneel with our legs, we smell with our noses, and we taste with our mouths, and consume with our bodies the real food, the real drink, that is no longer bread and wine, but is now the full presence of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. True intimacy with the only one that can satisfy our needs is met both spiritually and physically within the Eucharist, within His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. **ECL**

NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 PM: August 4, 11, 18, 25

A Byzantine Catholic community is forming at Saint Philip Neri Church, 292 Munn Rd., Fort Mill, SC. Please join us as we grow our community and celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. Father Steven Galuschik of All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church in North Fort Myers, FL, celebrated Liturgy at the end of October and

is now offering weekly Divine Liturgy in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, NC. Please share this information with your friends and family – especially those who have moved “down South.” We will be celebrating the Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 PM. If you would

like to participate in any way, or have questions please contact Ron Somich at 440.477.6389 or ron.somich@gmail.com. The website <https://carolinabyzantine.com/> will be coming soon – please check that out for news, upcoming gatherings, and service times.

The Passion Play of Oberammergau

11 DAYS

AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Hosted by:
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technicians, all of whom are residents of the village.

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Germany; Lucerne, with its beautiful 14th and 15th century covered bridges; Innsbruck and Salzburg (The Sound of Music City), two picture postcard cities situated in the Austrian Alps; Munich, the capital of Bavaria; and Rothenburg, Germany's best preserved medieval town.

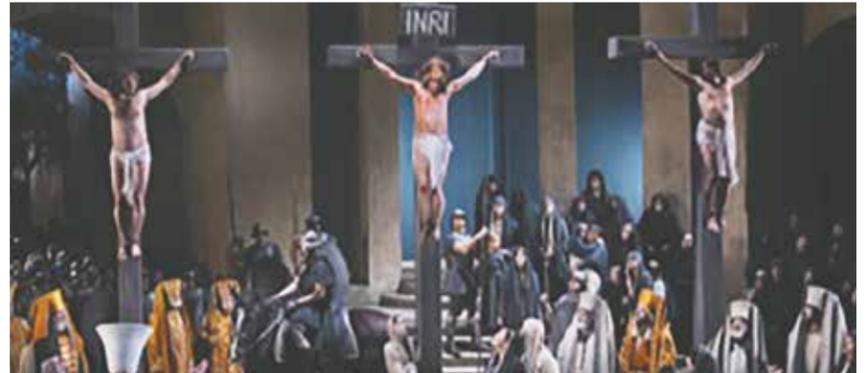
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Father Ed Cimbala and Father James

Spera look forward to having you join them on this trip of a lifetime. It promises to be a wonderful experience for all with time to enjoy the fellowship of old friends and new.

While August, 2020, may seem a long way away, NOW is the time to make plans and reserve your place on the tour as space is limited. Don't miss out on this opportunity to experience the history and culture in one of the most scenic areas of Europe!

For more information or to request a brochure, please contact Father Ed Cimbala at 908-872-2928 or by email – Fredcimbala@gmail.com.



SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



“YOU WERE TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNTAIN, O CHRIST OUR GOD...”

“O Christ our God, when You willed to prefigure Your resurrection, You chose three disciples, Peter, James, and John; and You went up with them to Mount Tabor. At the moment of Your Transfiguration, O Savior, the mountain was flooded with light, and Your disciples fell with their faces to the ground; for they could not bear the sight of Your countenance upon which no one may gaze, O Word. Angels attended with trembling and awe; the heavens were afraid; and the earth shook to its very foundations when they saw the Lord of Glory come upon the earth.” – *At Psalm 140, Vespers for the Feast of the Transfiguration*

“When David, forefather of the Lord, foresaw in spirit Your coming in the flesh, he invited the whole creation to rejoice, crying out prophetically: O Savior, Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Your name, for indeed You ascended this mountain with Your disciples. Through Your Transfiguration You returned Adam's nature to its original splendor, restoring its very elements to the glory and brilliance of Your divinity. Therefore we cry out to You: O Creator of All, glory to you!” – *Aposticha for the Feast of the Transfiguration*

I was struck by two themes, if you will, of these vespers stichera, as they pertain to Christ in His humanity and divinity, and as they also pertain to us. First, the author says, “...when You willed to prefigure Your resurrection...”. We believe that the resurrection of Christ was not merely a reanimation of His body after His death, but that He was raised in an immortal, glorified body. Here we see that this glorification is shown beforehand on Mount Tabor to His disciples. Peter, James, and John saw Our Lord as He would appear to them after the resurrection, and saw distinctly His divinity radiating through His humanity. No wonder our Troparion for the Feast says that He revealed “as much of [His] glory to [His] disciples as they could behold” [emphasis added]. When Moses, on Mount Sinai, asked God, “Show me Your glory, I pray,” God replies: “You cannot see My face; for no one shall see Me and live” (cf. Exodus 33:12-13). Thus, the disciples cannot bear to see but so much glory of the Son of God revealed to them on Tabor, “they could not bear the sight of Your countenance upon which no one may gaze.” Yet, after the Resurrection, they would now be able to

see Him in all His glory. And, in our theology, they and we see the “original beauty of Adam,” and the original beauty will be manifest also in our bodies at the Resurrection of the dead! “Through Your Transfiguration You returned Adam's nature to its original splendor, restoring its very elements to the glory and brilliance of Your divinity.” Thus it is that we see the eventual restoration of all of Mankind in His Transfiguration!

With His Transfiguration, we pray in the Ambon Prayer for the Feast, “Open the eyes of our minds to a sight of indescribable beauty, just as you did for Your apostles.... Guide us also into higher things by Your all-powerful right hand. ...Give us an unfailing memory of the voice of Your eternal Father revealing You as His beloved Son, so that, putting Your commandments into action, we may shine forth among those worthy of Your eternal kingdom....”

The Feast of the Transfiguration is also a call for us to conform ourselves to the will of God, and to carry out our vocation to be lights in the darkness, bringing the Good News to our world today. “We have seen the true light; we have received

the heavenly Spirit. We have found the true faith....” What is the purpose of the witness of the Transfiguration if we do not follow through by our own transformation: “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). Everything we experience during our liturgical year is given to us for our repentance, our transformation, and our salvation. The Transfiguration is a prefiguration of the glorification that we will receive when He raises us from the dead, just as His resurrection is the prefiguration of our resurrection. God's promises are not to be shrugged off as “spiritual talk” but as assurances that we were made for Him, and that, as we pray in the Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, “You brought us out of nonexistence into being, and again raised us up when we had fallen, and left nothing undone until You brought us to heaven and gave us Your kingdom to come.” The Transfiguration is the revelation of what He has in store for us. Therefore, we glorify Him with our lives, and thank Him for this great feast. **BCL**

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PASSAIC subscribes to the

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and young people that conforms to Charter requirements.

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SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Timothy Farris

THE CULTURE PROJECT Entering the Mission with Laura Riebe

When we talk about vocations, our minds usually turn to the priesthood, to monks and nuns; sometimes, we think about marriage, too, but a vocation is simply a way in which we serve Christ. A priest serves Christ through offering the sacraments to God's people; brothers and sisters offer prayers and often serve as catechists and church leaders. Spouses serve Christ by caring for and nurturing a family that loves Christ. These three vocations have distinct attributes and ornate ceremonies that make it easy to say: "The Church needs more of those!" This can overlook an incredible devotion that our Church also desperately needs and that is *missionary disciples*. Missionaries serve in many capacities, but it is usually associated to areas of great need that are underserved. We are all called to be disciples but some are called to take a risk, a leap of faith, to follow where Christ calls them. I was delighted to find out through an alum at my alma mater that a recent graduate had taken this leap. I wasn't all too surprised to find out who it was.

I met Laura Riebe at a *Theology on Tap* event where I had been invited to be a presenter. *Theology on Tap* is a meeting of young adults held around the country in different restaurants and "taprooms" where they gather to listen to a presentation about a spiritual topic over a beer or other refreshment. Then, there is time for the young adults to ask questions and discuss what was presented. Mentioning that I was Byzantine Catholic must have echoed throughout the room because, a moment later, people began clamoring about another Byzantine Catholic in the room: Laura. She wasn't shy to introduce herself with a big smile. She would later invite me to join her Roman Catholic friends in attending their first Divine Liturgy at her parish. Her joy and energy to share Christ will surely be used by God in her missionary work with *The Culture Project*, a Catholic missionary organization that evangelizes high school and college students and encourages living a Christian life and the building of Christian culture, especially a life of chastity and the gift of sexuality in order to use it according to God's plan. I asked her to share in a few words her experiences that brought her to

this moment and how she hopes to use her gifts for this ministry. I hope by sharing a piece of Laura's story, that you, her church family, will pray for her, the people she will be embracing, and for the success of her ministry. Laura's endeavor also requires her to live on the generosity of others so that she may spend her time freely and fully engaged in the mission. I hope that her "Yes!" to God inspires all of us to reflect on how we serve our neighbor (as we discussed at the *Byzanteen Rally*). Laura's opportunity to offer God's love to others is a great service to our community. I asked Laura to share some of her experiences that led to her decision to enter into the mission of *The Culture Project*.

Q1) What were some aspects or events that helped form who you are as a Christian?

Being brought up in the Byzantine Catholic Church has profoundly shaped my formation as a Christian. I grew up immersed in the Byzantine traditions and surrounded by a tight knit community at my home parish, Saint John the Baptist, in Pottstown, PA. My siblings and I often joked that we should set up cots in the basement of the church because we were there so often. Baking paska and nut rolls, cleaning the church, and volunteering at events were just a few of the ways my family and I participated in parish life. Looking back, it was that constant presence at Saint John Parish that fostered my dedication to service and prayer.

My parents sent me to a Catholic school from preschool to high school so I could have a faith-based education. Starting from a very early age, I noticed that I was a little different from my peers. The way I expressed my faith, the traditions I took part in, and my church community were not the same as my classmates. I remember struggling to explain what it means to be Byzantine Catholic because it is something someone needs to experience. The sweet smell of incense, the poetic prayers, and the breathtaking icons – these are not things easily conveyed through conversation. This inspired me to bring my friends to Liturgy and church events. Doing this throughout the years has allowed me to share my Byzantine roots with my Roman Catholic

friends. Being a witness to the diversity contained within the Catholic Church has formed me into the Christian I am today.

Q2) What has helped develop your identity to serve others?

My involvement at my parish and attending a Catholic school instilled the importance of serving others and provided several opportunities to give my time and talent. Although I had a strong foundation in faith and service when I left high school, I quickly discovered that college would present challenges I had not faced before. I attended West Chester University of PA to study early elementary and special education. This was my first exposure to schooling that did not have faith at the center. Living out the call to holiness was a choice I had to make daily. Thankfully, I found the WCU Catholic Newman Center. A women's group within the Newman community, *Koinonia* (Greek for "communion" or "fellowship"), provided a new outlet to serve college women pursuing the faith. When I became an upperclassman, my roommate, Maddie, and I led this group of women in monthly commitments to Liturgy, meetings, the rosary, adoration, and service. In addition to the commitments, we would organize social events and book clubs to bring women together on a regular basis. By the end of college, Maddie and I had successfully built up a sisterhood that transformed my faith journey. Surrounding myself with strong, faithful women sparked a fire in my heart to serve in a way I had never considered before: missionary work.

Q3) Why the Culture Project?

During my time at West Chester University I noticed the lack of young people pursuing a life of virtue. There is a need for faithful, well-informed individuals to share the truths of the Catholic Church in a culture that thirsts for more than what is currently offered. I desired to be a part of this movement and actively searched for a way to pursue this passion. From the first moment I encountered *The Culture Project*, I could tell there was something different about it. The missionaries and staff members all expressed authentic joy in every interaction, and I immediately recognized that I wanted to have that in my life. The more I learned about *The Culture Project*, the more I realized that the root of their joy was found in God and pursuing Him through living a life of virtue. Now that I am a missionary with this nonprofit organization, I am able to serve the youth by proclaiming truths about the dignity of every human person and the beauty of our sexuality. Nothing brings me more joy than living out this calling. Serving alongside other young adults who have the same passion will enable me to do this work that is desperately needed in America.

Q4) What do you hope to get out of your commitment to the Culture Project?

During middle school and high school, I searched for people who were striving to live out their faith. I had good examples at home, but didn't find too many young people in my community to look up to. *The Culture Project* aims to change that. We are an organization of young adults who desire to be role models for students. Setting an example for young people is essential in our culture today. Starting from an early age, society feeds the youth so many lies that it is important that we counteract them with truth. *The Culture Project's* focus on human dignity and sexual integrity shed light on some of the most controversial topics in our world. Conveying that the Church is showing individuals how to live freely through its teachings is a difficult thing to do, but I believe it is a message worth fighting for. If I am able to plant a small seed of truth in one student, I would consider my commitment to *The Culture Project* worthwhile. You never know how your stories, experiences, and witness will work on the hearts of others. I look forward to committing myself to *The Culture Project* and calling others join me on this journey.



Laura Riebe

I thank Laura for sharing a small, but inspiring, portion of her story with all of us. We had the opportunity to discuss all the resources *The Culture Project* has developed for their missionaries and the methods that they use to reach the youth which are too many to list in this column, but I love two of them too much not to mention: the desire to be an example and to connect with each individual to establish a personal relationship with them.

There are many young people who desire to hear the message of *The Culture Project*, and Laura desires to reach them and she has offered herself to the mission. For more information, you can go to www.theculture-project.org. If you would like to hear more about the mission or have any questions, you can e-mail Laura at lriebe@theculture-project.org **ECL**

Eastern Catholic Life

Circulation Department
445 Lackawanna Avenue
Woodland Park, NJ 07424

Next Issue:
September, 2018

Copy Deadline:
Aug 17

The current issue of the ECL was printed at Evergreen Printing, Bellmawr, NJ, and was distributed from the U.S. Post Office via second class mailing in Bellmawr, NJ.

UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

AUGUST

- 4-8 Altar Server Camp
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 5 Annual Saint Nicholas Pilgrimage
Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA
- 6 Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord
*Solemn Holyday * Chancery closed*
- 11-12 Annual Holy Dormition Pilgrimage
Sloatsburg, NY
- 15 Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos
*Holyday of Obligation * Chancery closed*
- 19 Wedding Jubilarians Celebration
Minersville, PA

SEPTEMBER

- 1-2 Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Uniontown, PA