



## A MULTITUDE OF THE HEAVENLY HOSTS

### Glory to God in the Highest

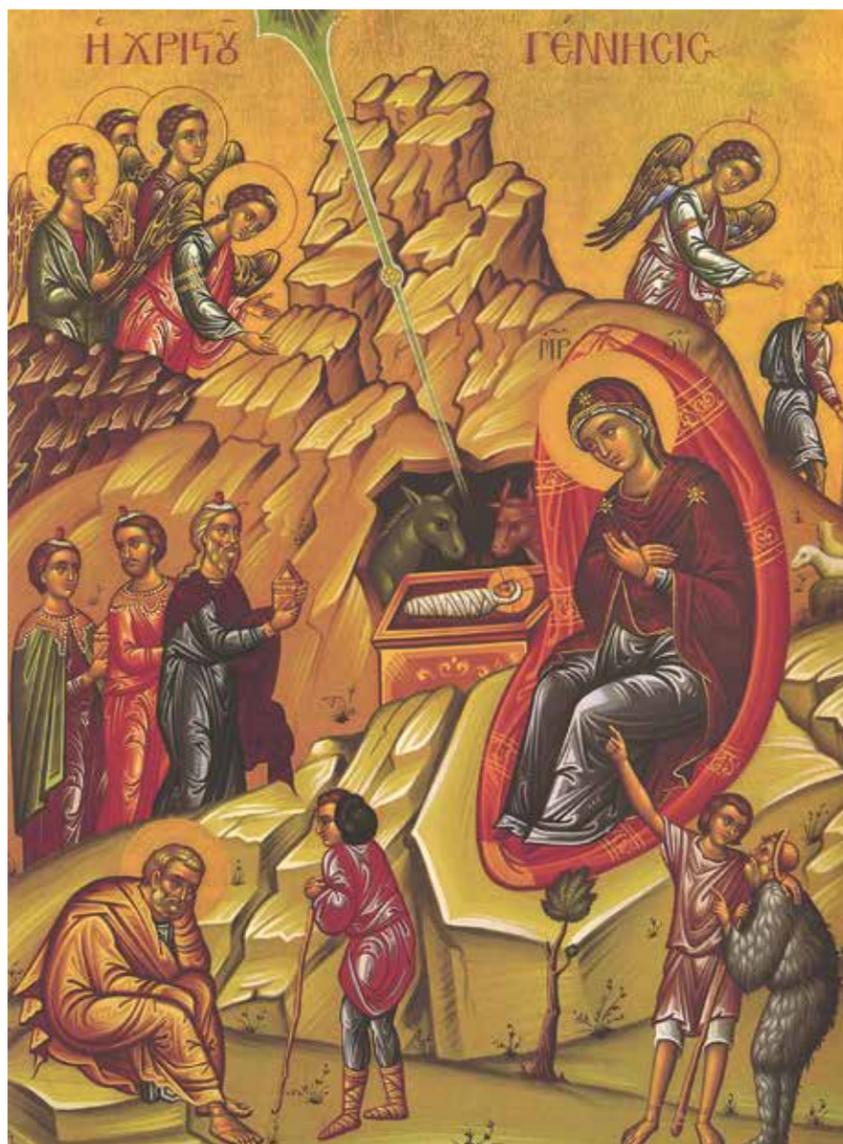
#### Bishop Kurt's Reflection on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

**H**ave you ever given up hope for something? By the time our father Abraham and his wife Sarah were almost one hundred years old, they must have been puzzled by God's promise that Abraham would be the father of a multitude of nations and that all of us would find blessing in his descendants. Around that time, God intervened in history with a miraculous birth. The birth of Isaac was announced by a visit of three angels. In the scriptures, we see more than once that these miraculous births are announced by an angel or sometimes several angels. God brought life from the sterile old age of Abraham and Sarah. In contrast to their message of life for Abraham and Sarah, two of the angels go on to Sodom to announce destruction to its inhabitants.

Although the birth of Isaac was announced by an angel, there is no angel before the birth of Abraham's first son Ishmael. Ishmael and his mother are sent into the desert. When his mother has given up on life and separated herself from her baby so that she won't hear it crying as they die, an angel does appear and saves their lives, and tells Hagar that her son will also be the father of a nation. (The Arabs consider themselves descended from Ishmael, and are sometimes called Ishmaelites. There are some ancient historical references to his descendants outside of the Bible.)



Samson and the Lion



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord

A third time that an angel appears here at the beginning of our salvation is when an angel stops the hand of Abraham when he is about to sacrifice Isaac. The angel calls out from heaven, "Do not lay your hand on the boy." By this action, God abolished human sacrifice for all time, and so once more an angel is the messenger of life.

Centuries later, when the descendants of Abraham had returned from Egypt to the promised land, but had turned away from God, and consequently to slavery, God provided another hero whose birth was announced by an angel. There was a man named Manoah whose wife was barren. (For some reason, her name is not given in the scriptures.)

One day an angel appears to her, "Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son." The angel goes on to give her instructions for bringing up the boy, and says, "He shall deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines." When she tells her husband, he has no doubt that her story is true, but he asks God to send the "man" back so they can know more fully how to care for the child. God answers the prayer of Manoah, and the angel appears again to the wife, so she runs and gets her husband. The angel repeats his instructions, and then Manoah asks him his name. The angel replies, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?" Manoah offers to fix him dinner, but the angel explains that

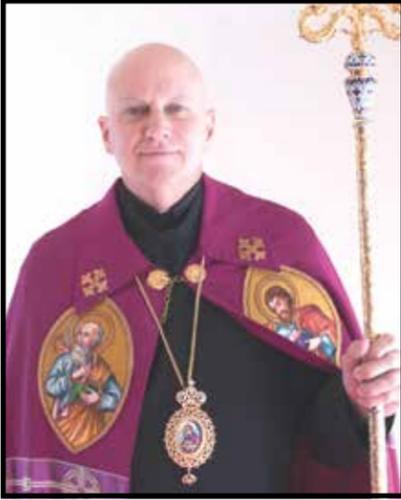
he cannot eat their food, but he will assist in a sacrifice. When the kid goat and the cereal are aflame, the angel ascends to heaven with the smoke. Only then does Manoah realize that he was speaking with an angel. He says to his wife, "We will surely die." But his wife says, "If he wanted to kill us, he would not have offered sacrifice or told us these things." The mystery and awe of God's action is highlighted when the angel says, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?"

The great prophet of the Messiah was Isaiah. Before Isaiah pronounces the beautiful words of the birth of the Messiah, he has a vision of God Himself on his throne surrounded by the six winged Seraphim. It was a terrifying vision, Isaiah tells us that the building shook and was filled with smoke, and in his terror, he cried out, "Woe is me! For I am lost. I am a man of unclean lips... my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" After Isaiah confesses his fear and guilt, one of the seraphim takes a burning coal from the altar with tongs and touches his lips saying, "Behold this has touched your lips. Your guilt is taken away, and your sins are forgiven." (According to the Church Fathers, this was a prefiguring of the Holy Eucharist, which touches our lips and cleanses us of our sins.)

After his vision of God, and his cleansing by the seraph, Isaiah speaks the beautiful words of prophecy about the coming Messiah, including, "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call him Emmanuel", and also, "For to us a child is born, and to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulders, and his name will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, the Might God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

When we come to the birth of Jesus, the Christ and the Son of God,

Continued on page 2



## REFLECTION ON THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD...

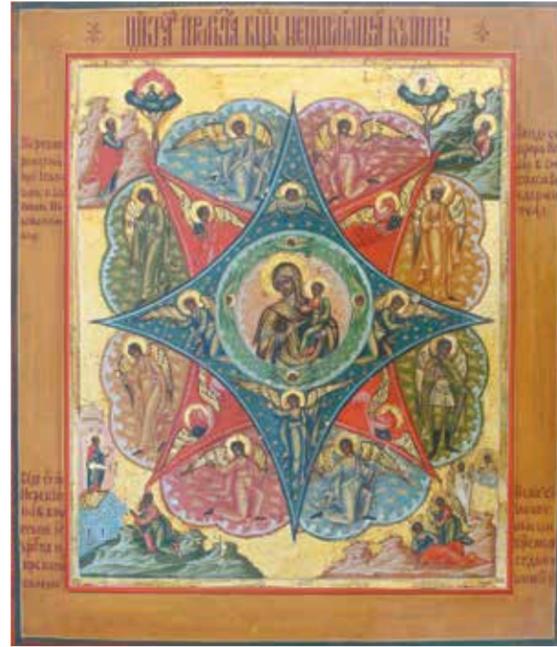
Pastoral Reflections of Bishop Kurt



...Continued from page 1

take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (The name Jesus or Joshua means, "Ja saves.") St. Joseph receives no less than four special revelations, with three of the four described as an angel of the Lord in a dream.

In addition to these revelations to parents, there are yet more angels announcing the birth of the Messiah. The shepherds in the hills of Bethlehem were visited by an angel, and the glory of the Lord surrounded them. The angel said to them,



Icon of the Theotokos: Burning Bush

there are suitably many angels involved in announcing the Good News. Before the conception, the Archangel Gabriel visits Zechariah at the altar of incense to announce the birth of St. John the Forerunner. In his speech the archangel says, "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah." Now the prophets had implied that Elijah would precede the Messiah, so the Archangel is foreshadowing this connection when he speaks to Zechariah.

Six months later the Archangel Gabriel appears to Mary in Nazareth saying, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

After the conception of Jesus, the next angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and says to him, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you Good News of a great joy which will come to all people. For to you is born this day in the city of David

a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." To climax these announcements, a whole army of angels appears with the first angel and proclaims, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!"

Life comes from God, and we often refer to the Holy Spirit as the Giver of Life or the Creator of Life. Throughout history, God has intervened in our affairs to create life beyond the natural order. Did you notice there was something in common with many of the announcements? So many of the angels said, "Do not be afraid." The Lord spoke to Abraham in a vision saying, "Do not fear, Abram! I am your shield." The Angel Gabriel announcing the birth of John the Forerunner said to Zechariah, "Do not be afraid." When the same Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary he said, "Do not be afraid." And when the angel spoke to St. Joseph after the conception of Jesus, he said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary for your wife." Finally, when an angel appeared to the shepherds in the fields he said, "Do not be afraid."

It seems like there is more and more fear in our society. Fear of violence, fear of economic collapse, and fear of each other. I overheard a woman recently telling her friend that she is afraid to go anywhere anymore. At Christmas, we remember the angels carry news to us from the most-high God and they say, "Do not be afraid."

+Kurt Burnette

## SAINT ANN CHURCH, HARRISBURG, PA

## Parish Education Calendar 2017-2018

**Wednesday November 29, 2017** at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) in the Parish Hall and Reflection by Kathy Szarko "On the Nativity Icon," followed by Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

**Saturday December 2, 2017** from 10 AM- 3 PM: Parish Education Day with Basilian Sisters Sr. Joann & Sr. Ann and Ann Koshute & Marie Nester "Living As Missionary Disciples"

**Sunday December 10, 2017** at 9 AM: Maternity of Anna & St. Nicholas Celebration with Parish Brunch

**Wednesday December 13, 2017** at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) and Reflection by Fr. John Szada followed by Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

**Wednesday December 20, 2017** at 5:30 PM: Meager Meal (Soup, bread, PB & J) followed by Christmas Hymn Sing-a-long and Emmanuel Moleben @ 7 PM

**Sunday December 24, 2017** at 8:30 PM: Christmas Pageant and Vigil Liturgy

**Saturday February 7, 2018** from 10 AM- 3 PM: Pysanky Workshop taught by Maria Cicarelli and assisted by Keith Koshute. Fee: \$5 per family, includes materials.

**Wednesday February 21, 2018** Same session given at Noon AND 6 PM followed by prayer: Parish Lenten Education session with Fr. Jim Spera "Living As Missionary Disciples" (snow date Wednesday Feb 28)

**Saturday March 3, 2018** from 11:30 AM - 3 PM: Parish Education Day on End-of-Life Issues and Ethics with Mr. Dominic Lombardi

**Sunday March 25, 2018** at 9 AM: Palm Sunday & The Feast of the Annunciation Liturgy followed by Parish Brunch and Easter Egg Hunt

**Saturday June 2, 2018** from 10 AM - 3 PM: Parish Education Day with Fr. Alexei Michalenko with Sr. Victoria and Sr. Mary Ann of the Community of the Mother of God of Tenderness (CMGT), "Living As Missionary Disciples"

All programs take place at St. Ann Byzantine Catholic Church, 5408 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109. For more details on events, location, or speakers, please contact Angela Sedun at StAnnByzEvents@gmail.com or at 717-490-1284.

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## +SISTER RITA KESHOCK, OSBM REPOSES IN THE LORD

Mount Saint Macrina, Uniontown, PA

Early in the morning of Sunday, November 19, 2017, Sister Rita (Florence) Keshock fell asleep in the Lord at Mt. Macrina Manor. While the community was praying Matins on Sunday, commemorating the Resurrection, she surely met her Risen Lord with joy and gladness.

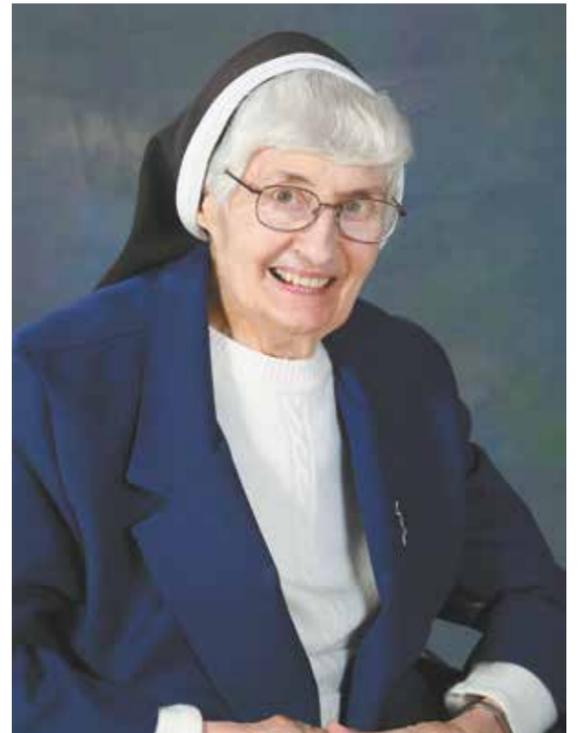
Sister Rita, the daughter of the late Michael and Sophia (Backus) Keshock, was born in Campbell, OH. She entered the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great from Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Youngstown, OH, on June 12, 1947, and made her Final Profession of Vows on Aug. 28, 1953.

Sister Rita spent half of her religious life in the ministry of education for which she was well-prepared, having earned both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education. While she served diligently in the many schools staffed by the Sisters at that time, there was a new ministry waiting for her in the wings. An article in the *Byzantine Catholic World* dated Jan. 14, 1996, summed it up in the words: "Basilian Sister Finds New Home in the World of Art."

This was her passion. In her own words, Sister Rita explained, "I am now a painter, a calligrapher, a crafter, and an etcher." Having learned the craft of etching onto eggs, she discovered that this would be a perfect medium for producing icons. Spending hours in her art room, Sister Rita noted that she often became lost in meditative thought of the beauty of life as she worked. Sister took great pride in the fact that, particularly her etched icons, were displayed in a number of exhibits throughout the country. She also taught the craft of etching on eggs to others in numerous workshops, thus leaving a legacy of this favored ministry of hers.

Sister Rita was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters, Mary Louise and Alice (Kuzmack), and her brother, Edward. She is survived by her brothers, John (Katherine), Robert (+Kathryn) and Charles (Joann); her sister-in-law, Mary Jo; and several nieces and nephews.

Relatives and friends will be received at the Monastery Chapel on Friday, November 24, 3:30 PM to the time of the Parastas Service, which will be sung at 7:00 PM. The Fu-



neral Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Saturday, November 25, at 10:30 AM in the Monastery Chapel by Archbishop William. Interment will follow in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery. Eternal memory!

## +CANTOR NICHOLAS YACKANICZ ENTERS ETERNAL REST

Allentown, PA



+Nicholas J. Yackanicz, 87, of Whitehall, PA, passed away November 7, 2017. He was the husband of Gabriella P. (Klocek) Yackanicz for 64 years. He was born in Hazleton, PA, and grew up in Beaver Meadows, PA, as the son of the late

Nicholas and Ann (Super) Yackanicz. He graduated in 1948 from Hazleton High School. Nicholas served in the US Army during the Korean War. Nicholas earned his Bachelor's Degree in

Commerce and Finance from Bucknell University. While at Bucknell, he played on the undefeated football team of 1951 and was a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity. He worked as an accountant for Trojan Powder Co. and then for PP&L before retiring in 1991.

Nick was a member of Saint Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church in Allentown, PA, where he served as cantor from 1988 -2006, and was a member of the Holy Name Society. He served as a youth football coach for the Fullerton AA for many years. He was a member and on the Board of Directors of the Greek Catholic Union. He was an avid bowler, fisherman, and gardener. He loved music, singing, and sports, especially the Yankees.

Survivors include his wife, Gabriella P. Yackanicz; children, Susan Stafura (Paul) of West Mifflin,

PA; Mary Karch (Kaj) of Easton, PA; Nicholas Yackanicz Jr. (Lori) of Emmaus, PA; James Yackanicz (Sandra) of Bethlehem, PA; Joseph Yackanicz (Jennifer) of Ambler, PA; Michael Yackanicz (Lisa) of South Carolina, John Yackanicz (Linda) of Schwenksville, PA; 21 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and siblings, Maryann Peters, Carl Yackanicz, and Greg Yackanicz. He was predeceased by his granddaughter, Leann, and brother, Paul.

A viewing was held Friday evening and Saturday morning in Kohut Funeral Home. On Saturday November 11 at 10 AM in Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, Allentown, PA, Father Frank Hanincik celebrated the Office of Christian Burial with Divine Liturgy, with cantors William Komnath, Jr., Kurt Elsner, and Ed Chando, Jr., leading the congregation. The burial followed in the parish cemetery. Eternal Memory!

## NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA

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 working towards offering weekly Liturgical services in the area. This community will serve the northern part of South Carolina as well as Charlotte, North Carolina. 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 the

first three Saturdays in December. 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.

### Byzantine Divine Liturgy on Saturdays: December 2, 9, 16—Come Join Us!

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.

For further information regarding the Eparchial Safe Environment Program please contact:  
 Father David J. Baratelli, Ed.S., M.Div. • *Safe Environment Program Coordinator* • 973.890.7777  
 Dr. Maureen Daddona, Ph.D. • *Victim's Assistance Coordinator* • 516.623.6456



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## IN MINERSVILLE...

On November 16, 2017, the clergy of the Mid Pennsylvania Protopresbyterate convened for an “Emmaus Day” gathering at Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Minersville, PA. The day began with the Divine Liturgy, followed by a spiritual conference offered by Father Christopher Zelonis, Administrator of Saint Michael Roman Catholic Church in Minersville. The clergy then repaired to the rectory for re-

freshments, and ended the day with a delicious turkey dinner at Hillcrest Hall. Father Gregory Noga, MA, is the protopresbyter of the Mid-Pennsylvania Protopresbyterate and the pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Minersville.



Father James Carroll, OFM; Father Peter Donish; Father Paul J. Makar; Father Christopher Zelonis; Father Jerome Wolbert, OFM; Father Gregory Noga, Protopresbyter; Father G. Scott Boghossian; Father Gregory Hosler; and Father Vasyl Chepelskyy.



## IN MYRTLE BEACH...

### 50th Anniversary of Ordination

Father Thomas McCann, C.P., recently celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination at the Basil Hopko Mission at Myrtle Beach, SC. Father McCann resides at Saint Ann Passionist Monastery in Scranton, PA.



Join Father Jim Badeaux on a faith and fun-filled trip!

*The Best of Eastern Canada*

July 31 - August 7, 2018

*“From elegant cities to Mother Nature’s Wonders”*

**8 Day, 7 Night trip featuring:**

Montréal, Québec City, Ottawa, Toronto, Miraculous Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Basilica of Notre-Dame-du-Cap, Niagara Falls, the 1000 Islands.

**Includes:**

Full itinerary with 4-star accommodations, airfare, transfers, transportation to the airport, many meals and much more.

Double rate: \$3,059

----- Trip Presentation - January 18! -----

**Please call Fr Jim for a full itinerary or to RSVP for presentation**

Father Jim Badeaux +1(908)725-0615



### Danube River Cruise

14 DAY CRUISE and LAND  
Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland

**Hosted by Fr. Ed Cimbala**

Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Byzantine Catholic Church  
Levittown, PA

**October 31 – November 13, 2018**

For more information, please contact

Fr. Ed Cimbala at 908-872-2928

fredcimbala@gmail.com

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Trip Web-page For More Details & Brochure

<http://www.olphbyz.com/Pg/DanubeCruise.html>

**Danube River Cruise** – Join Fr. Ed Cimbala for a 14 day river cruise and land adventure to Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland - October 31 to November 13, 2018. For more information, please contact Fr. Ed Cimbala at 908-872-2928 or fredcimbala@gmail.com. You can contact the travel agency direct by calling Susan Prendergast at Select International Tours, 800-842-4842, susan@select-intl.com. For a complete presentation of the trip and an online brochure visit the Trip Web-page at <http://www.olphbyz.com/Pg/DanubeCruise.html>.

## SCHEDULE FOR THE NATIONAL PRAYER VIGIL FOR LIFE

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2018**

BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, WASHINGTON, DC

9:30 PM- 10:30 PM NIGHT PRAYER - BYZANTINE COMPLINE  
CELEBRANT – MOST REV. KURT R. BURNETTE, J.C.L., D.D.  
BISHOP OF PASSAIC  
HOMILIST – ARCHBISHOP LEONARD BLAIR,  
ARCHBISHOP OF HARTFORD  
RESPONSES – SLAVA MEN’S CHORUS

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2018**

EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
ANNANDALE, VA

10:00AM DIVINE LITURGY FOR LIFE  
CELEBRANT – MOST REV. KURT R. BURNETTE, J.C.L., D.D.  
BISHOP OF PASSAIC

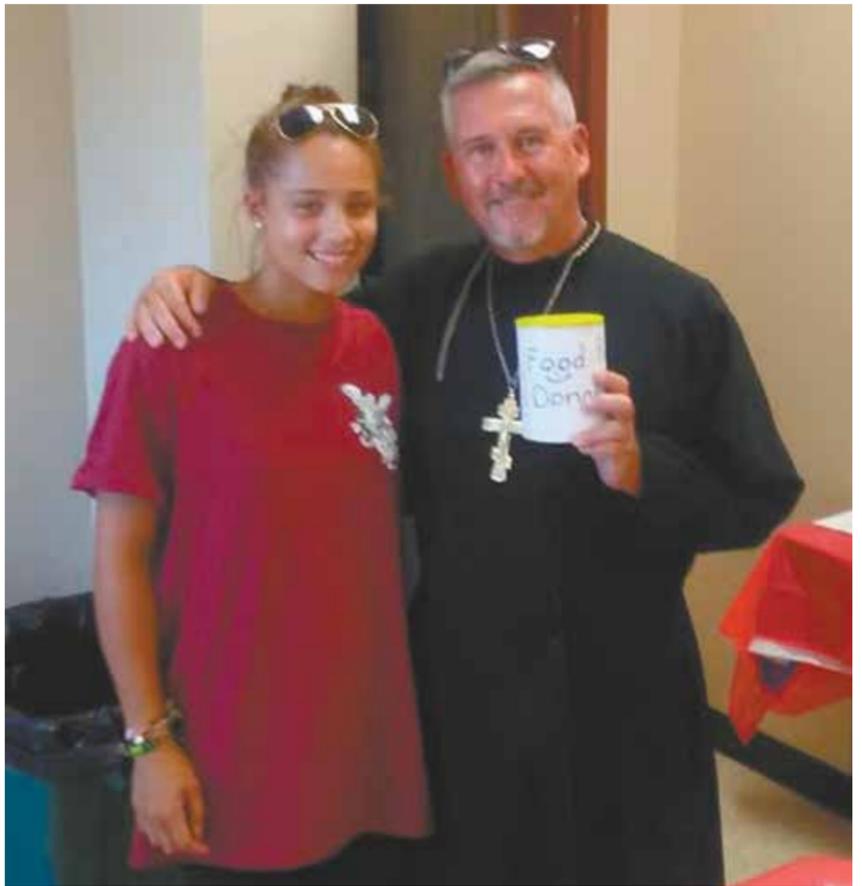
# AROUND THE EPARCHY



## IN PASSAIC...



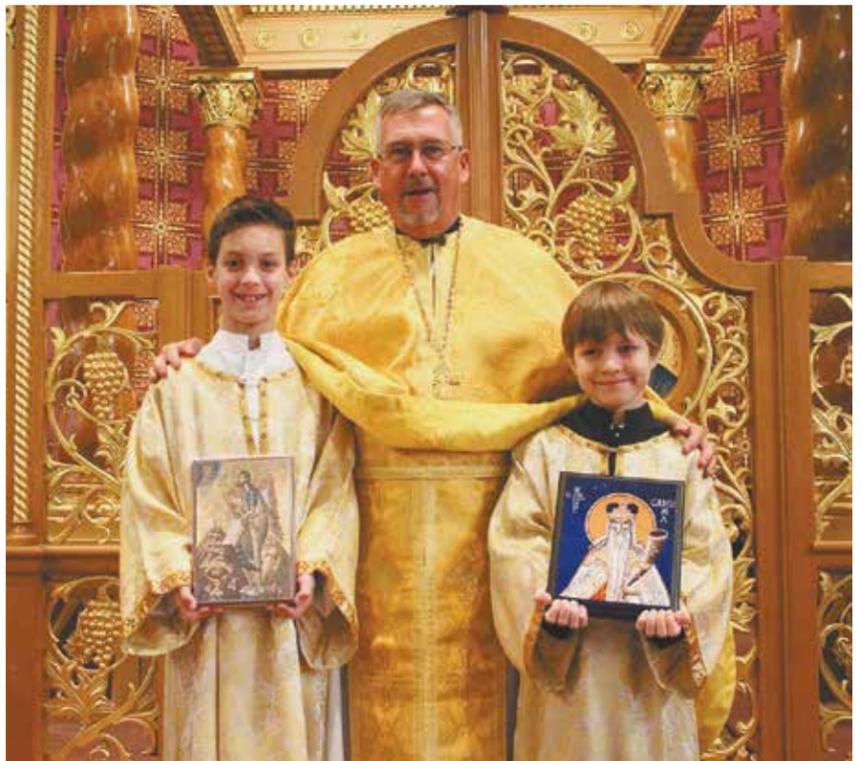
The cathedral and hall were filled to celebrate Saint Michael's Day on Sunday, November 12. The festive meal included entertainment by Dana Draculinova.



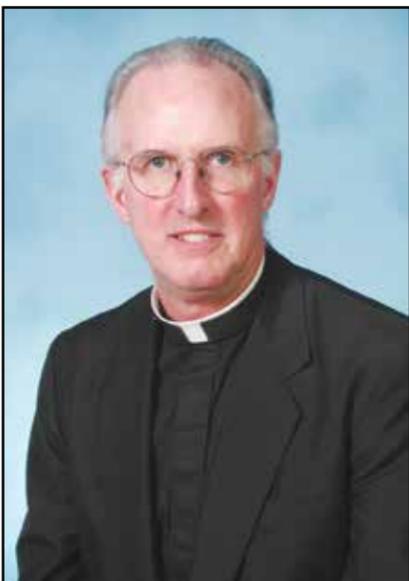
Jacqui Wolak presents \$400.00 to Father Jack Custer for the neighborhood Food Pantry at Saint Michael Cathedral. Jacqui raised the money selling handmade friendship bracelets with Saint Michael medals at the annual Fall Festival



Kate Spontak and Michael Sagan enjoy a fun-filled moment



Evan Lewandowski and Samuel Strawhand, faithful altar servers at Saint Michael Cathedral and Chapel, were presented with icons.



## IN CHICAGO...

### Eparchial Priest Presenter at ASEEEES Convention

Chicago, IL. The 49th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies was held over November 9–12, 2017, at the Marriot Downtown Hotel and Convention Center in Chicago, IL. The theme of this year's convention was "Transgressions" and was more specifically dedicated to observing the 100th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, engaging convention presenters to rethink the ways in which cultural, economic, and political orders are undermined, overthrown, and recast. Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D., a priest of the Eparchy of Passaic, presented a paper on a panel, "Transgressions, Relationships, and Transformations," chaired by Jennie

Wojtusik, Ph.D., of the University of Texas (Austin). The title of his paper was "N. A. Berdyaev: A Revolutionary Spirit in a Transgressing, Dostoevskian, 'Anti-Revolutionary' Mode." Another paper on Dostoevsky was presented by Michael Marsh-Soloway, Ph.D., of the University of Virginia. The discussant of the papers was Yuri Corrigan, Ph.D., of Boston University, whose commentary was read by Brian Armstrong, Ph.D., of Augusta University. ASEEEES is the largest society of Slavists and Eurasianists in this country. Several thousand participants attended the convention.

# DAY OF SPIRITUALITY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2017

Saints Peter and Paul Parish Center, WARREN, OH

The Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church at Queen of Heaven Monastery, Warren, Ohio, are offering a Day of Spirituality in preparation for Christmas on Saturday, December 9, 2017, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. It will be held at Saints Peter and Paul Parish Center at 180 Belvedere Ave., N.E., Warren, OH. To register, please call 330-856-1813 or e-mail qohm@netdotcom.com by Friday, December 1, 2017.

The presenter will be Bishop John M. Kudrick, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Parma. His presentation considers answers to the questions: "Where should we seek the Lord?" and "Why do we need to seek Him? Why doesn't He just show himself?"

There will be time for reflection, questions, and refreshments, and an opportunity to receive the Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation. You are welcome to pray Vespers with the sisters.

Benedictine Sisters of the Byzantine Church Queen of Heaven Monastery • 169 Kenmore Avenue NE #301 Warren, Ohio 44483 • 330-856-1813

## EPARCHY OF PASSAIC FINANCIAL REPORT

Eparchy of Passaic and Affiliates

Combined Statement of Activities for Year Ended June 30, 2017

### Revenues

Eparchial assessments	\$580,336.00
Eparchial Stewardship Appeal	399,046
Donations, bequests and other income	57,124
ECL Newspaper Revenues	64,783
Interest and dividend income	562,910
Realized and unrealized gain on marketable securities	750,853
Hospitalization and life insurance	1,003,070
Net insurance proceeds	18,897
Total Revenue and other support	<u>3,437,019</u>

### Expenses

Property and casualty, Auto & WC insurance	49,810
Hospitalization	995,369
Life Insurance expense	91,553
Pension	67,508
Administrative salaries and payroll taxes	132,460
Clergy salaries	168,582
Clergy subsistence	78,546
Stewardship rebates to parishes	66,626
Stewardship expenses - postage, printing and office expenses	13,302
Diaconate program expenses	7,184
Eastern Catholic Life publication - postage, printing and office expenses	62,718
Office administration and supplies - general	38,158
Office postage and printing - general	13,387
Legal Fees	113,553
Accounting fees	160,500
Safe environment audit fees	5,530
Celebrations, anniversary and gifts	7,690
Consulting fees	4,537
Eparchial transportation and meeting expenses	133,310
Utilities and telephone	41,607
Maintenance and repairs	42,216
Bishop's residence	1,285
Assessments - NJ, US and Eastern Catholic Conferences	17,915
Eparchial retreat and Presbyteral Days	74,822
Continued education and well being of priests	59,035
ECF Operating expenses - Eastern Christian Formation programs	17,086
Investment management fees	81,000
Books, literature and subscriptions	457
Carpathian Village expenses, net of income	74,648
Heritage Museum and Library	7,030
Aid to Eastern Europe eparchies	91,320
Property maintenance and upkeep	281,867
Depreciation - buildings and equipment	125,816
Total expenses	<u>3,126,427</u>
Net assets as of end of year	<u>\$310,592.00</u>

# 2017 Bishop's Annual Appeal



## O Most Holy Theotokos

You are the Gardener of the Gardener of Life. You are the Soil whose Fruit shall not perish, You are the Key to Paradise. You are the mother of both Lamb and Shepherd, You are the Protection against unseen enemies, You are more Spacious than the Heavens. You are the trust of mortals before God, You are the Unfading Rose.

October, 2017

My dear friends,  
Glory to Jesus Christ!

If we look around in our society now, it seems as though the news gets worse and worse. It seems as though a spiritual darkness is descending on our country, what the scriptures call, "the web that is woven over all nations, the veil that veils all people". If we ignore the news, and focus on our own community and family, we cannot escape it. I asked a local priest the other day how he was doing, and he said he had a rough week, a thirteen year old girl committed suicide in his parish—bullied by schoolmates. In my own family, a young enlisted man has buried too many of his close friends in the military—all suicides. These were not returning warriors with trauma from battle. These were healthy young men who seemed to have everything in life, but found no happiness or purpose in this world.



I thank God that I have our Church for support in these times. I can receive the Body and Blood of Christ, and I can go to confession to a priest. In our Church, we have the light of Jesus Christ to guide us through the darkness. We are guaranteed the truths of the Gospel in times of doubt. The ancient comfort of the Gospel is preserved from Apostolic times fresh and always new. The prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled today as they were 2000 years ago, "The deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of the gloom and the darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly shall find fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." The Word of God is spoken to us in the Holy Scriptures and in our sublime Liturgy, filling up the emptiness in our souls and giving us eyes to see beyond the materialism and false friendship of this world. God has blessed our Church on the east coast so abundantly in the past 125 years. And the generous and faithful people of our Church have built a system of parishes from the north to the south so that we can usually find one of our communi-

ties a reasonable distance away. Even now, God has sent us young dedicated priests with families to renew our communities, and two young men in the seminary preparing for the priesthood. I am in awe of the dedication and hard work of so many of our priests, both young and old. God has been so generous to our Eparchy that we in turn have been able to help others.

Every year, I ask you to help with the financial support of the integral Eparchy. Your generosity allows us to support struggling parishes and to establish new missions. Even this summer promising new missions have been established in the South to accomodate our faithful moving there. Your support also aids eparchial activities such as pilgrimages and education, to educate seminarians, to bring new priests from Eastern Europe, to care for priests who are unable to work, and even to be generous to our Church in Eastern Europe. You make it possible to bring the Light of Christ to the east coast.

+Kurt Burnett

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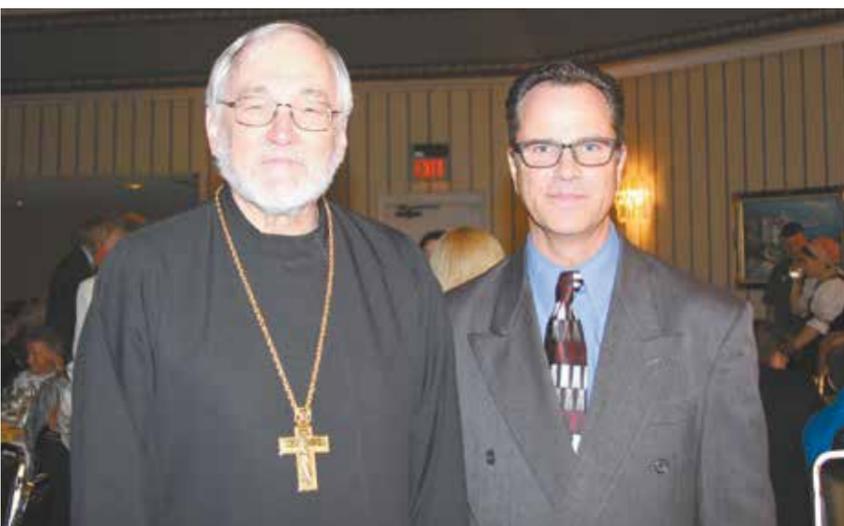
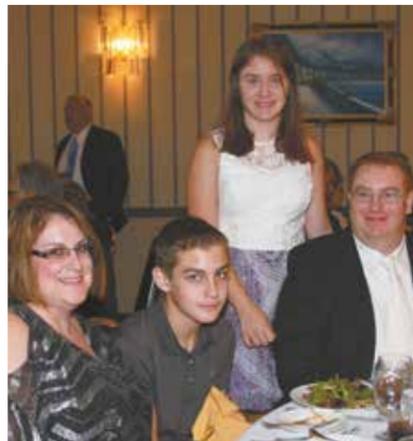
# SAINT MARY PARISH IN HILLSBOROUGH

*Photographs by Father Lewis Rabayda and Peter Kulina*

August 20, 2017, was an “august” day in the history of Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, NJ, not only for the month, but for the celebration of its 100th anniversary as a parish family. In 1917, a group of Byzantine Catholic faithful met in Manville, NJ, and formed what was to become Saint Mary Parish in Hillsborough, and their legacy lives on in the faith expressed these 100 years later by their descendants and everyone else who calls Saint Mary Parish their spiritual home.

The festivities began, as is proper, by offering thanks to Almighty God through the celebration of a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy by Bishop Kurt, who was greeted at the door of the church by parish trustees, Margaret Pavol and Brian Bezick, who welcomed His Grace by offering him the traditional signs of Slavic hospitality: bread and salt. Then Bishop Kurt entered the church, which was filled to capacity, and began the Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with Bishop Kurt were Father Jim Badeaux, pastor of Saint Mary Church; Father Edward Cimbala, D.Min., pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Levittown, PA, and previous pastor of Saint Mary Parish; Father Ron Hatton, pastor of Saint Nicho-

las Parish in Danbury, CT, vicar of Saint Mary Church; and retired eparchial priest and pastor of Saint Mary Church. Given seats of honor in the front of the church were Mitred Archpriest James H. Hruska, pastor of Saint Thomas Parish in Rahway, NJ, and Father Jack Custer, syncellus of Saint Michael Cathedral in Passaic, NJ. Deacon Michael Puhak, retired eparchial priest, also served at Saint Mary Parish. Deacon George C. Thomas, pastor of Saint Thomas Parish in Rahway, NJ, assisted in choir. Father Edward Cimbala, pastor of Saint Mary Church, served as cantor. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated with solemnity, assisted by Paul W. Williams, a priest in vocation from Saint Mary Parish, and by faithful altar servers of Saint Mary Parish. The Holy Communion was distributed by the Saint Mary Choir, directed by Pr.





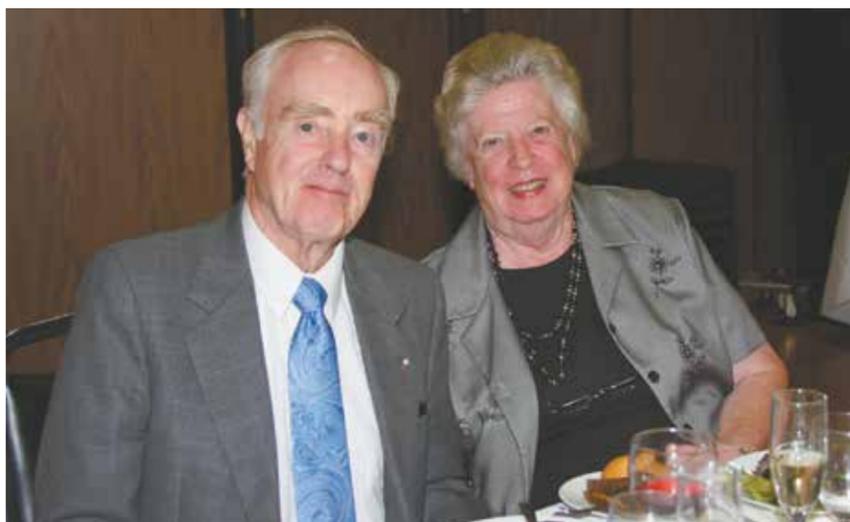
# LSBOROUGH, NJ, TURNS 100!

who was previously assigned  
 and Father Harry Untereiner,  
 friend of Saint Mary Parish.  
 Holy Place were Right Rev.  
 ayar, eparchial protosyncel-  
 omas Parish in Rahway, NJ;  
 as of NJ and rector of Saint  
 ic, NJ; and Msgr. Nicholas  
 iest and previous pastor of  
 n Nicholas Sotack of Saint  
 Charles Laskowski of Saint  
 NJ, served as the deacons of  
 Kubik of Saint Mary Parish  
 ward Higgins, protopresby-  
 topresbyrate, pastor of Holy  
 nia, PA, and previous pastor  
 d as liturgical master of cer-  
 vest, an eparchial seminarian  
 ry Parish. They were joined  
 Saint Mary Church. The re-  
 ng by the faithful and Saint  
 ofessor Elias Zareva, parish

music director; Glenn Sedar and Melanie Anderson, as-  
 sistant cantors, also helped with the responses. Many ep-  
 archial priests and deacons and priests from the Roman  
 Catholic Church and Syro-Malabar Catholic Church at-  
 tended in choir.

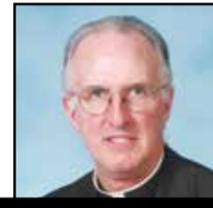
After the Divine Liturgy, the faithful and clergy en-  
 joyed a festive banquet in Saint Mary Parish Center,  
 with almost 500 in attendance! Margaret Pavol, parish  
 trustee, served as Master of Ceremonies for the banquet.  
 Remarks were offered by the pastor, Father Jim Badeaux,  
 as well as by Brian Bezick, parish trustee and chairman of  
 the 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee. Music  
 was provided by the Adler Brothers and by Dana Dracu-  
 linova, a local accomplished accordionist, who played  
 and sang Slovak and Rusyn folk songs.

As the evening was completed, Father Jim and the  
 faithful of Saint Mary Parish look forward to the next  
 100 years, always depending on Divine Providence for  
 the blessings to come. Father Jim wishes to thank every-  
 one who worked so hard to make the 100th anniversary  
 a great success!



# CATECHETICAL REFLECTIONS

Father Robert F. Slesinski, Ph.D.



## MAN BEFORE GOD

### Selfhood as Understood in the Slavic East—Installment 3/3

S. N. Bulgakov Speaks On the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution

Youthful fascination with Marxism was not unique to Berdyaev; numerous others were of the same mindset. A striking example, of course, is S. N. Bulgakov (1871–1944), who even began his career as an economist, but soon turned his interest to philosophy and eventually theology, becoming the most original Orthodox systematic theologian of the twentieth century. His decisive break with Marxism entailed a whole new philosophical orientation that was first staked out in his article “Ivan Karamazov as a Philosophical Type,” which he first read as a public lecture in Kiev in 1901. Dostoevsky’s character captured his attention both for his Marxist-sounding rhetoric (the needless suffering of innocents repulsed him from God) and his equally un-Marxist stance rejecting the socialist vision of the altruistic service of human progress even if it meant the oppression of people along the way or “being manure for future harmony” in the words of Ivan Karamazov. Ivan’s nihilistic outlook on life could only foster an *atheistic amorality* devoid of value that only led to his own eventual nervous breakdown.

Bulgakov used Ivan Karamazov as a springboard for articulating his own views, thoroughly Christian in character, concerning the inherent dignity of the human person, that a human person is of paramount value in and of him or herself who can never be reduced to a mere means for some end, however noble in itself, to his or her own detriment. In a word, the principle that “the end justifies the means” is totally rejected by Bulgakov as contrary to the good of the human person. This is one of the points of his contribution to the collection, *Problems of Idealism*, entitled “Basic Problems of the Theory of Progress.” The “theory of progress” favored by positivism, on the other hand, pushed a contrary narrative. This narrative, interestingly enough, was the point of view argued by two leading Marxist theorists of the time, namely, A. V. Lunacharsky (1875–

1933) (who incidentally attended Bulgakov’s Kiev lecture), the future first Commissar of Education of the Soviet Union, and L. I. Aksel’rod (1868–1946), who both wrote scathing reviews of Bulgakov.

For starters, in one article, Lunacharsky attempts to debunk Ivan Karamazov’s rejection of the socialist theory of progress with a set of rhetorical questions: “Is it worth living in general? And if to live, then for oneself or for others?” expressing his “confidence in the powers and instinct of people.” In another piece, Lunacharsky clearly promotes positivism while at the same time being entirely dismissive of all things religious. To quote him: “The world is nothing other than the world of [empirical] experience; the supra-experiential is simply not given to us.” For her part, Aksel’rod castigates Bulgakov for his claim that positive science is incapable in principle of addressing the depth-meaning of history for humankind and its final destiny. She also insists that those who sustain the “categorical imperative” that one cannot use others as means, but only as ends in themselves deserving absolute respect for their personal freedom in thought and action are simply “bourgeois” and that only members of the propertied class would make this claim to the detriment of the proletariat. In her own words, “the person demanding the restriction of the freedom of people for the sake of his freedom is the propertied one (*imushchii*), i.e., the bourgeois; the divine element of the person, which suffers no limitation, is the purse of the bourgeois, and the absolute freedom of this person is the freedom of the same bourgeois, and the absolute freedom of this person is the freedom of the same bourgeois ‘to tan and hide’ (*dubit’ shkurru*) the worker.”

It should be noted that for one like Bulgakov, who was steeped in the centuries-old traditions of Orthodox Holy Rus’, Marxist Bolshevism

could only be viewed as an unwelcome foreign import onto Russian soil. Berdyaev, for his part, would certainly agree. In one of his articles on the Russian Revolution, he forthrightly declares that “Russian internationalism is the inside out of German imperialism.” Bolshevism, indeed, had its German roots, specifically in Karl Marx (1818–1883) and then further back in his intellectual mentor, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872). Feuerbach himself best expresses the bottom line of atheism: *Homo homini deus est* (God is the man of man or Man is the god of man), meaning that God is only the projection of man himself. Man, alienated from himself, projects his deepest self and yearning onto God. Religion, in this way, is little more than a *vampire* feeding on the substance of mankind, drinking its blood and eating its flesh. Marx states this view otherwise and more simply: “Religion is the opium of the people.”

As has been noted by commentators, the etymology of Feuerbach’s last name means “stream of fire” or “burning brook,” suggesting an imagery: Flowing along the stream of fire that constitutes Feuerbach’s purgatory, we come ashore onto Marx’s paradise. That this was taken for “gospel” truth defies the imagination. Yet, the hegemony of the atheistic Soviet Empire with its satellites in its time (and somewhat so to this day), sad to say, cannot be denied, and this to the general and everlasting dishonor of humankind itself.

Enduring an express war on religion was a fact of life under Communism. The countless imprisonments, the countless deaths, the closing and destruction of churches and seminaries, the true impoverishment of society in general, all are its legacy. But as Josef Stalin put it to Winston Churchill, obviously without any pangs of conscience, “God, is He on your side? Is He a conservative? The Devil is on my side; he is a good Communist.” **ECL**



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### BIG ENOUGH TO BE LITTLE

In the 1988 film “Big,” a boy goes to a carnival and comes across the mysterious *Zoltar Speaks*: a fortune-telling machine that grants wishes. Seeing his opportunity to escape the world of adults telling him what to do, he inserts a quarter and asks to become one of them. The little boy wishes to be *Big*. Nothing happens, until the boy awakens the next day to find that, while his wish has been granted, getting what you wish for isn’t always what you expect. In some sense, we all want to *be big*, whether as a child wanting to grow up, or adults wanting money, status, or greater recognition for our accomplishments.

“Bigger is better” is the theme of our consumerist, achievement-driven society, and we all want it – either for ourselves or our children. Being *big* means not getting left behind, taken advantage of, or slighted. Big is dominance, excellence – the best. We want to make it big, do big things, and be big enough that someone *even bigger* can’t overpower us. Like the little boy in the film, we’re convinced that we have to be *big* in order to be something in this world.

God is aware of this inclination in us, and how it can make us self-centered. Salvation History

bears this out, from the first pages of the Book of Genesis, through the final words of Revelation. God knows we sometimes forget about His generosity and get too big for our “gotchies,” yet His love endures and He fulfills the promise of redemption. To show us how much He’s willing to take us where we are, throughout this History we meet ordinary men and women called to extraordinary faith and actions. Some were uneducated and lacked eloquence of speech, fearful yet trusting in God’s Providence. Others were beautiful, talented and brave, but were betrayed by their arrogance and inclination to sin. For some, the



Icon of Christ the Good Shepherd

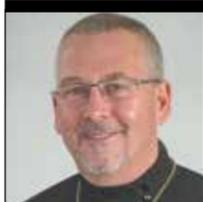
desire to *be big* through their own power—and sometimes in defiance of God—led to sorrow and a long road of repentance (the King and Psalmist David is a great example). Yet it is through those who accepted their “littleness” as a gift that God accomplished the great work of salvation. Mary, the “little” handmaid of the Lord (cf. Luke 1:48) became the “Theotokos we magnify.” Joseph, humble carpenter and quietly righteous man, was

tasked by God to be custodian and protector of the Word-become-flesh, God with us.

The story of our salvation is a *big deal!* But its most significant aspect is that it culminates in an event that is ultimately so *small*, and that this “littleness” was purposeful. God chose a “little way” to save us so that He could meet us where we are, establish an intimate and eternal connection with us, and provide a model for how we are to live our lives. As the Divine Liturgy proclaims Him, “the Almighty, all-powerful and ever-living God,” in whom “we live and move and have our being,” (Acts 17:28) is indeed *bigger* than all of us. And yet.... He chose to become *little* for us; so little that He entered into our existence like we did, a tiny blastocyst, an embryo, a fetus, a baby little enough to be contained in the womb of Mary. In Jesus, God allowed Himself to be overwhelmed by cavernous darkness, His tiny infant body almost swallowed up by the animals’ feed box. He was small enough to fit on His mother’s lap as Joseph led the family to desert lands, far from the looming danger of Herod’s sword. As He matured, “God with us” humbly obeyed His parents and learned the carpenter’s trade. The King of Kings forswore an earthly palace in favor of the charity of His followers. Jesus, Son of God, All-Encompassing and without limits, lowered

Himself to wash the feet of the Twelve, submit His cheek to the kiss that marked the place where He would be struck, to sink into the purple robe of mockery, and cut a small figure, naked and vulnerable, upon the wood of the Cross. This Jesus was “big enough” to become so little that He is contained in a chalice, in a tiny Eucharistic particle—in my heart and yours.

Christmas is, as they say, for “the little ones,” for children who anticipate not only the toys but the wonder of a season that is so *big* compared to them. Lights, music, decorative displays and glimmering stars atop towering trees delight and overwhelm them, and us. We are overcome with shopping and decorating, planning menus, and coordinating family time. The season’s strange spell on us too often compels us to *do, acquire, and produce*. Buy it, fix it, get it—make this holiday *bigger* and better than ever! This Christmas, we’d do well to follow Christ and be “big enough” to become *little*, to resist the allure of materialism, the temptation to compare ourselves or set unrealistic expectations. It takes courage (and holiness) to be *little*, to avoid chasing credit or seeking acclaim. But being *little* is the way of salvation, the way of peace, and the way into the heart of Christ. This Christmas, are you “big enough” to be God’s own *little one*? **ECL**



## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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

### MEET THE MAGI

The Gospel according to Saint Matthew reports that Jesus was recognized as Israel’s Messiah by some visiting dignitaries shortly after His birth. Matthew uses the Greek word *magoi* to describe these visitors and says simply that they journeyed “from the East.” A *magos* is someone versed in “magical” arts like astrology. They could well have served as advisors to some king. In English, we call them “wise men.”

Predicting the future from the stars (a practice roundly condemned by the Fathers of the Church and most recently by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#2116) was especially associated with Mesopotamia and Persia. The Akathist Hymn calls them “Chaldeans.” The troparion for Christmas points out how God used the Magi’s interest in astrology to lead them to the truth: “those who worshipped the stars, have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice.” Once they found Christ, the Magi left their pagan errors behind them.

There is another astrologer “from the East” in the Bible. In the last leg of the Exodus, as the Israelites were passing through Moab (east of the Jordan), King Balak hired a pagan prophet named Balaam to curse them (Numbers 22-24). Four times the prophet went through elaborate rituals without being able to pronounce the desired curse. In his fourth attempt, Balaam made this prediction: “I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall arise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). Balaam, the *magos* from the East, predicted a mysterious king of Israel identified by a star. The Magi of the Gospels followed that star to find the “newborn King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2).

We can find the Magi’s footprints in two other Old Testament texts. Envisioning a renewed Is-

rael after the Babylonian Exile, Isaiah (60:5-6) predicted: “The abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you . . . all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.”

Psalm 72 is addressed to an unnamed King, a descendant of David. Jesus’ contemporaries understood it to refer to the Messiah. The psalmist sings: “May the kings of Sheba and Saba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him . . . long may he live! May the gold of Sheba be given to him.” (Psalm 72:10-11 and 15).

Psalm 72 is why the Magi are sometimes called “kings.” Saint Matthew never said how many magi there were. The traditional number three presumes that each wise man brought one gift. The Armenian tradition counts and names twelve Magi!

Saba is in Arabia and the Fathers of the Church locate Sheba in Ethiopia. This is why Roman Catholic manger scenes depict one of the three “kings” as African. Byzantine liturgical texts simply celebrate the Magi as the first Gentiles to encounter Christ. The Akathist Hymn says they “became God-bearing heralds” who brought the Good News of Christ back home with them.

Saint Irenaeus of Lyon (*Adversus Haereses* III.9.2;

2nd century) was the first to see the Magi’s three gifts as symbols. You probably know this interpretation from the carol, *We Three Kings*. Gold represents Jesus’ kingship, incense points to His divinity, and myrrh looks ahead to His burial.

The Magi act like ambassadors on a state visit but things become tense when they pay a call to King Herod. They bring no gifts for Herod and their question about the “newborn King of the Jews” suggests that Herod (who called himself “King of the Jews”) might be out of a job. Herod attempts to dupe them into spying for him but the wise men prove wiser, as the Akathist Hymn puts it: “leaving Herod as a fool” and avoiding his court on their way home.

Our liturgical hymns frequently pair the noble Magi with the humble shepherds. Together, these witnesses to the birth of the Son of God tell us that no one is excluded from His plan of salvation. **ECL**



Icon of the Adoration of the Magi

## PILOT PRIEST SPENDS RETIREMENT BRINGING THE MASS AND SACRAMENTS TO RURAL CATHOLICS IN ALASKA

### Flying priest brings Catholic traditions to Interior Alaska villages

Original Article By Nancy Tarnai, printed May 13, 2017 in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner; Reprinted with permission by The Alaskan Shepherd/ Volume 55 Number 3/Summer 2017, reprinted with permission granted to Eastern Catholic Life

Father Jim Falsey doesn't walk, bike or drive to work; he flies a Cessna 182 named Yellow Bird.

"I've been fascinated with airplanes since I was 4 years old," Father Falsey said. After experimenting with skydiving in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he earned his private pilot's license in 1989.

Father Falsey said being able to fly himself to Tanana, Huslia, Galena, Nulato, Koyukuk and McGrath is an asset. "A plane is expensive but it gives you a lot of flexibility," he said. The plane he flies was donated to the Diocese of Fairbanks, by Ralph & Beverly Holzfaster--from Paxton, Nebraska, in 2014. It has been a true gift to Father Falsey's ministry.

Growing up in Michigan, Father Falsey began attending a seminary program in the ninth grade. He went on to earn two master's degrees, one in theology at the University of Detroit and another in counseling at Central Michigan University.

As a young man, he went backpacking and wilderness canoeing in Canada, and always wanted to visit Alaska. Father Falsey took a leave of absence from his priest duties in Michigan to serve in Nome in the 1990s. He flew his own plane to surrounding villages with Catholic churches or to villages without a church that had Catholic families.

When Father Falsey retired in 2013, he chose to return to Alaska as a volunteer. "I like the people in the villages and I love to fly," he said. In the winter, he goes to one village for Sunday services but in the summer, he's often able to visit two in one day.

Brother Bob Ruzicka, OFM, the Catholic Church's area coordinator of pastoral ministry, said Father Falsey brings a sense of hope to villagers. "He is a really good man and is so dedicated," Ruzicka said. "He always tries to be there when people need him the most. He really cares for the people of the villages and goes out of his way to help them."

Cynthia Erickson of Tanana has nothing but praise for Father Falsey. "We have been so blessed to have Father Jim serving us in Tanana," she said. "It's tough, fighting weather, cold winds, putting



The "Flying Priest," Father Jim Falsey, poses next to the Cessna 182, in Fairbanks. As the diocese's only licensed pilot priest, he looks forward to training seminarians to fly so they can bring the Mass and sacraments to the people of northern Alaska. The Diocese of Fairbanks has just 15 priests to serve 410,000 square miles, which means many rural parishioners must go weeks or even months without the Mass.

wing and engine covers on. It's a challenge for younger pilots, but Father never complains and happily does it."

When the flying priest comes to town, Erickson said the word gets out and the people come to Mass. "We have been lucky the last few years to have a priest for Christmas," Erickson said. "Father Jim just had a hip replacement in November, and he was back in the saddle a month later. He unbelievably came for Christmas Mass."

The villages are in dire need of spirituality, Erickson said. "It's the foundation for us; we need it desperately. We all need to work together to keep the candles on and encourage the families, especially our youth to come to church. Without a church in a village, we will crumble and our faith will eventually dissipate. Today more than ever, it is so important to encourage our villages to work together to keep our churches open." Erickson said Tanana's Catholics are grateful for the work and dedication of Father Falsey. "He is an angel in our eyes, bringing us together to worship. Words cannot express our appreciation," she said.

And while Father Falsey, 72, could be relaxing

in Florida, he laughed at that notion, stating that he prefers Alaska and wants to keep flying to villages a while longer.

Flying a plane here has its ups and downs. "You don't have to worry about air space but what's more challenging is the weather," Father Falsey said. "You can get out there and find snow squalls when the visibility drops to nothing and there is the risk of icing."

Carrying survival gear and knowing how to use it are essential, he said. Although Father Falsey is instrument rated, nearly all his flying is visual.

And the plane is the means to the end: providing Catholic families with Communion, Confession, weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

After Mass, Father Falsey wanders through the village visiting with people.

Each church provides him with a place to stay and locals sometimes invite him for meals.

"They are really good people," Father Falsey said. "I've learned to appreciate different cultures, different mindsets, and spirituality. There's a sense of sacredness, especially about the river. The river is life, providing food and transportation, but it can take life. I'm very aware of the spirit of the river."

He expressed concern and sadness about alcohol and drug abuse in his villages. "I don't know how to deal with it," he said. "I see it destroying people's lives."

Father Falsey encourages young seminarians to learn to fly so the villages' needs will continue to be met and three men have expressed interest.

"I never dreamed I would end up like this," Father Falsey said. "The reality of priesthood is far different from what I imagined when I first entered the seminary."

"I want to keep this up as long as I can. Alaska gets in your blood. It's the Great Land."



Father Jim Falsey officiates a funeral in July in Nulato, Alaska. Photo by Seminarian Fredrick Granheim

# ASK A PRIEST A QUESTION

Father Vasyl Chepelsky



## ARE EUCHARIST MINISTERS OK?

Dear Father,

I heard that there is a Byzantine Church which has Eucharistic ministers. I thought this wasn't allowed in the Byzantine Church. A deacon told me that it is against canon law. What is the truth and is it OK if a Byzantine Catholic receives from these ministers in a Roman rite church?

As we know, bishops and priests distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop or priest requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops or priests. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, the priest may use the help of deacons, and even the faithful to assist him in distributing the Holy Communion. These faithful become extraordinary ministers with the permission of the Eparchial Bishop for duration of time of necessity and as directed by the norms of the Canon Law and Particular Law and the norms of the Liturgical Commission. Since most of our congregations are not very large, we usually do not see extraordinary ministers helping the priest with the distribution of the Holy Communion, and having lay people as extraordinary ministers is very rare in our parishes, but still, it does exist.

So, what are the reasons that some of our Byzantine Churches may have Eucharistic Ministers? The most common one is the physical limitation

and inability of the priest to distribute Communion due to his age, or illness – whether temporary (for example, a broken arm), or permanent. There may be other valid reasons in which the Eparchial Bishop may allow Eucharistic Ministers to distribute the Holy Communion at the particular parish either temporary or during a longer period of time, as dictated by the pastoral need and his judgment. This is done in case another priest or deacon is not available to assist.

To have Eucharistic Ministers is not against the Canon Law. On the contrary, the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches (CCEO) very clearly states the following: “§1. The priest distributes the Divine Eucharist or if the particular law of his own Church *sui iuris* establishes it, also the deacon,” and: “§2. The synod of bishops of the patriarchal Church or the council of hierarchs is free to establish appropriate norms, according to which other Christian faithful can distribute the Divine Eucharist” (cf. Canon, # 709).

Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. In all matters, they should follow the guidance of the Eparchial Bishop and follow the direction of the parochial priest. Their number should not be increased beyond what is required for the orderly and reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Once these Ministers are properly trained and received necessary permissions, whether in Byzantine or Roman Catholic Church, it is fine to receive the Holy Communion from them.

This material is based on the article “*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*,” published by the USCCB and the information received from the representatives of our Eparchial Liturgical Commission.

As human beings, we constantly live in search, our human minds always wander about things, trying to find explanation and understanding. The quest for integral human fulfillment and our own destiny, other more or less important matters can leave us with many questions. In our lives, it is very important to find right answers to all the questions we have. Especially it is important when it concerns our faith and our spiritual journey. Finding the truth and getting a right answer is always liberating and helps us to make better choices, it brings us inner peace. It can be life changing.

If you have ever wondered what Catholics really believe or just questioned “why is that” about a certain topic, you now have the opportunity to find out. We look forward to your many questions....so ask away! **ECL**



## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian

### OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

When Jesus taught us how to pray, He directed us to address God as our Father in heaven. While it is true that God is fully present in every place, we know that heaven is where He dwells in majestic splendor (Is. 6). In this world, “we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). But, in heavenly glory, we will see and experience all that in this life we know only by faith in God’s word. The essence of heaven is seeing God as He is in Himself, knowing and loving Him completely, and thereby being perfectly united to Him for all eternity. Union with God in heaven will confer upon the soul a joy, peace, and blissful satisfaction that cannot be described or understood in this life on earth. Heavenly joy transcends our limited human understanding. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

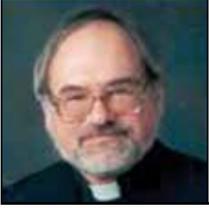
By His life, death, and resurrection, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ saved us by opening the gates of heaven that had been closed by sin. We appropriate His salvation by faith, repen-

tance, and baptism. Through our new birth (Jn. 3:3), heaven is our origin, our home and our goal. Here on earth, we are exiles and aliens, pilgrims in a strange land (1 Pt. 2:11, Ex. 2:22). Christ introduces His perfect prayer by directing our attention to heaven. In teaching us to pray to Our Father in heaven, we understand that prayer is required to get to heaven. To keep God’s commandments, resist temptation, and persevere in the state of friendship with God until death, we need divine assistance. This divine aid is called grace, and we acquire grace by prayer. If we don’t ask for and receive God’s help, we will not be able to keep God’s commandments, resist temptation, and persevere until death. If we fall into grave sin, we will not have the strength to repent and start again unless God gives us this strength, usually in response to prayer.

In addition to teaching us the necessity of prayer, we understand that every request we make in prayer must be for things that will help us achieve our eternal salvation and heavenly happiness. When we begin by saying, “Our Father,

who art in heaven,” we are saying that we genuinely desire those things that will help us reach the port of eternal salvation. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you” (Jn. 16:23). At first, it may seem like Jesus is giving us a blank check and assuring us that we will receive everything we pray for no matter what. But remember that the name “Jesus” means “God saves” or “salvation.” So, to ask for something in the name of Jesus is to ask for something that will help us to achieve salvation. We might paraphrase this promise as: “You will receive whatever you ask insofar as it is conducive to your salvation.” Saint Augustine says “nothing which is asked in a way detrimental to salvation is asked in the name of the Savior.” The Holy Apostle James writes, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions” (Js. 4:3).

When we pray to our Father in heaven, we remind ourselves that prayer is required to get to heaven and that we should ask for material things in the light of heaven. **ECL**



# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## HOW WE THINK ABOUT GOD

Saint Paul wrote, “Faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)” These virtues are called “theological virtues” in moral theology, because we can have faith and hope and we can only love as we should because of the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. The greatest of these is truly the virtue of love for others, which is the mark of the people of God in Christ. Love here is not to be identified with the pleasure that comes from sexual intercourse, but the openness of our whole being towards the good of others, for we are all created in the image of God. However, in this article, I want to talk about faith. Faith is also a serious problem in the world in which we live, because people with a narrow, materialistic view of the universe attack faith as superstition and a credulous belief in fairy tales. This is important because success in the world often resides in our ability to understand and manipulate the world we can perceive with our senses. The allure of this technology often blinds us to the deeper realities that really constitute our existence and well-being. Many leave the faith, feeling their former beliefs to be mere childish sentiment and indoctrination.

Even in my own childhood, the temptation to surrender to a technological world view was very strong. I pondered existence in many ways, for I did not wish to waste my life on what might prove to be only fables. Again, Saint Paul warned of this danger, for “if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching; empty, too, your faith” (1 Corinthians 15:4). I tried to reason why there must be a God. The Vatican I Council declared, “The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of human reason (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith* 2,1).” As I grew older, however, I began to realize that this brings us only to an intellectual conclusion, a necessary basis for faith, but not the whole commitment of our heart and mind and soul to a relationship with God that would transform and save us. Eventually, through faith, I was able to hear a call from God to service in his Church. We all must follow the faith journey of Saint Paul, who wrote, “When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child,

reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Many people are aware that there are many atheists in our society today. Sometimes it is claimed that a quarter of the population is atheist. The numbers may not actually be known, since many people hide their beliefs or non-beliefs. Most atheists simply live their life as if there is no God, and many people who live the same way claim to believe in God. Some atheists become militant about their negative faith, and will ridicule the idea of God and people who believe in God. I certainly do not deny their intelligence, but I also think many of the problems arise from their concepts of God. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, God becomes for them what is called a “straw man.” This means that they form an image of God that actually no one could believe in and then knock down that image. One need look only at cartoons that attempt to ridicule God, where He is depicted as an old man with a white beard throwing lightning flashes on the world—this is God as the pagan Zeus, and none of us, Christians included, can believe in a God like that.

Most of the time, the concepts of God are more subtle, but it may be reduced to this: God is conceived of as one more being in a series of beings, one more person in a series of persons, for example: Richard Nixon (real, because we have seen and heard him); Muhammed Ali (real); Sherlock Holmes (fictional); the Easter Bunny (fictional); Aaron Judge (real); God (fictional); Barack Obama (real), and others. However, God is not simply one more person among others, but He is the very ground of all being and of all who live, as Saint Paul tried to tell the Athenians by quoting a pagan philoso-

pher, “For ‘in him we live and move and have our being,’ as even some of your poets have said” (Acts 17:28). Unfortunately, even some believers play into this, and talk as if God were just one more being among other, “the man upstairs” they say, as if He lived at a different address than we do. Really, God is present to all of us, closer to us than we are to ourselves, as so many theologians have explained. Every one of us—atheist, agnostic, believer—claims that there is a “ground of being,” a principle by which what is reality exists. This we call God, and even for the atheists, mere chance becomes that God. If so, then nothing has any real meaning except that which we, as “accidental creatures” might accidentally give it. Many atheists also don’t believe in free will, they say it is a delusion. I think one prominent atheistic philosopher, Bertrand Russell, was honest when he said what it all meant, “That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving: that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve the individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday

brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation be safely built.”

As Christians, we do not have “unyielding despair,” but a living hope, for that, too is a gift of God. For there is a foundation of being, and it is most reasonable that this God is conscious and personal beyond our ability to comprehend. We believe that He communicates with us, not only in the depths of our soul, but through revelation to our eyes and ears, through our common faith in Christ, Who is God, and in Whom the fullness of God is present (Colossians 2:9; Ephesians 3:19; Hebrews 1:3). Indeed, Saint John the Theologian wrote, “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). **ECL**



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## SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

Father Lewis Rabayda

### DISILLUSION WITHOUT CHRIST

Personal responsibility is a large underlying theme of the teachings of Christ. We may not frame it this way, but by being given free will, each of us has the ability to act individually without the force of another acting upon us. When others persuade or force us to follow their ideas and actions they are acting with a disregard for our own free will and our God-given human dignity—they in turn treat us as objects and not as people. However, we were created by God, and when God breathed His breath of life into Adam and animated him, God gave mankind His divine spark, He gave us a part of Himself. Since we are joined to God in this way, our use of free will to choose His good as opposed to choosing slavery to sin, is choosing to live as God created us, to live as we truly are—we are not made for immorality and sin but are made for glory. So, acting as God has taught us is not coercion, but is an agreement with absolute truth and love. We should be weary of people forcing us to think and act in ways that are contrary to our life in Christ.

But given all of this free will, we also have the choice to leave God behind. For some who

have not been nurturing their life in Christ by neglecting His Church, the Sacraments, reading of Scripture, and by neglecting to pray to God, they have used their free will to close themselves off from wholeness. We are all hurt or broken in some way, we all have some type of deficiency. But some people have chosen to separate themselves from their Creator and Savior, and by doing so, they follow their own inclination and have become their own judge of what will make them happy and whole. It is the absence of seeking out Christ that leaves these hurt people to be disillusioned about the nature of reality. When people divorce themselves from reality, then any number of possible interpretations can enter in and influence life-changing decisions. And when people become their own arbiters of what is good and just, then they will no longer respect another person's ability of free will and will attempt to force their assertions on others.

When we fully embrace a life lived in Jesus Christ and His Church, we see reality as it truly is. We can see our own faults, we can see the brokenness of the world, the brokenness of other

people, and we recognize that no human effort will ever be able to fully alleviate this great suffering, no act of government or social institution will be able to fully implement justice as justice should be given—this is reserved for Christ at the final judgement, when all will be judged according to their works. When we live a life of prayer and practice the virtues in our everyday life, we have the promise of God's grace to illumine the nature of things to us, we have no disillusionment about the truth or where the truth comes from. We know the truth does not come from us, and we know that we cannot coerce others to abide by our own flawed notion of truth. But we do know that we can invite others to a life in Christ, so that they too can see the true Seat of Wisdom, the One Who Is, and the magnificent love of the Holy Trinity, and that this vision will heal our brokenness, and give us all strength to accept our limitations. **ECL**

## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



### COME, O JESUS, OUR SAVIOR

Advent in the Eastern Churches is a 40-day penitential season, beginning with the Vespers for the evening of the feast of the holy Apostle Philip, on November 14. Thus we call this season variously the Philippian Fast, Saint Philip's Fast, or the Advent Fast. For various reasons, this season had dropped out of our liturgical lives for a long time, but is increasingly being re-integrated into our lives in our parishes. If our Lord's death and resurrection is preceded by a 40-day preparation, so too should His coming into the world in the flesh for our salvation. Although it is a time of fasting prayer and almsgiving, in many parishes it is not as strict as the Great Fast in the light of our feasting at Thanksgiving, and the feasts of Saint Nicholas and the Maternity of Anna (the Conception of the Theotokos). But it behooves us to not be lax in our observance of this season by properly preparing ourselves to come before the cave in Bethlehem to greet our Lord at Christmas. It should be a time of prayer in our parishes with the Christmas Moleben or other appropriate services, but also in our homes. Indeed, the pre-Christmas season is a very stressful time for us in so many ways, and we are in need of these three pillars of holiness: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, to keep us centered on the true meaning of our celebration, and not be caught up in the ways that the World has corrupted the feast.

One thing that we should stress during this season is keeping Saint Philip's Fast in some real way in our homes. If we have reminders and traditions for our children, it can go a long way to-

wards keeping their minds from straying to the anticipation of toys and other gifts and engendering a more spiritual tone for Advent. We all have our Christmas traditions, such as when we put up the tree, when we decorate, and so on, but if we do not have a spiritual dimension, we should look for ways to do so.

One tradition that is popular with Roman Catholic families is the Advent Wreath. This wreath does not work well with the Eastern Catholics, of course, because the length of our Advent season is different. Years ago, I discovered a little book called "Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home," by father Anthony M. Coniaris. It's main purpose is to help develop the spirituality of the Christian family, especially for the children, and one of the great things about the book is that it deals with all of the feasts and traditions that are held in common with the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches. This book is readily available from Amazon, and I even purchased the Kindle version. Anyway, one of the sections deals with Advent, and Father Anthony has no qualms with adapting the Roman Catholic Advent Wreath to Eastern needs. I cannot print how he does this without violating copyright, of course, and I encourage you to invest in this book. But I will give you the basic outline. There are seven candles of different, significant, colors, arranged on a wreath, one for each week of the Fast and one for Christmas Eve. Each Sunday, attending the lighting of one of the candles, there are readings from Scripture, prayers, and Christmas carols. I have used this in parishes, usually doing this little ser-

vice before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. It has been popular, and I have even heard that the tradition continues even after I have left.

One central thing, though, is to faithfully attend all the Liturgies and other divine services offered at your parish, and bring your children. This should be the central part of your prayer during the Fast. Being in the community of your parish family, the one body anticipating the birth of our Lord, is an essential part of our journey to the cave at Bethlehem. All of this is to make the celebration of the Incarnation, Christ coming in the flesh, more central than any other aspect of the Christmas season, and the Feast itself.

There are many pages of hymns, psalms, and readings in our Festal Menaion anticipating the Feast of the Nativity, as we go from the Sunday of the Forefathers to the Feast itself, and choosing only one hymn is nigh on impossible! But I offer to you one from the Vespers for the Sunday Before Christmas:

*"Behold, the time of salvation is drawing near. O Cave, prepare yourself, for the Virgin is coming to give birth. O Bethlehem, O land of Judah, adorn yourself and be happy since the Lord will shine forth from you. O mountains and hills and lands around Judah, hearken, for Christ is coming that He may save His creation because He is the Lover of Mankind." (Pre-festive Aposticha)*

As we all journey together to the Cave at Bethlehem, may you have a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas! **ECL**



# SEMINARIAN REFLECTIONS

Seminarian Timothy Farris

## DARKER DAYS LEAD TO THE COMING LIGHT

For as much as the “spring forward” of our clocks is reviled for taking away precious sleep, the “fall back” is enjoyed and praised. Many arguments can be said rationalizing why we play with time. If I move my clock back, I get a much needed “extra” hour of sleep so long as my phone knows to adjust overnight. Everyone, including our politicians and employers, managed to agree that an extra hour be granted to us as a guaranteed snooze button. But the earth, the sun, and the moon carry on their business as God has set their paths. Genesis 1:14 and Psalm 104 agree that God has established for us seasons. This is by the earth tilting as it both spins and circles the sun. These spins give us days, this circling gives us years, and this tilting gives us seasons: seasons for growing and harvesting, rainy seasons, and scorchers.

Just a few months ago, while I was trekking a mountain side, the sun set at 8:30 PM, and last Monday I was in class at 4 PM watching the pink and violet rays stretch across the skies. In the summer and winter, the tilt of the earth gives us our largest extremes of daylight versus night. As we begin

to lose minutes of daylight per day at the end of the summer, we are not always attentive, but when school is back in session and the sun flees as we commute home, we notice how the sun seems to avoid us, rising after we wake up and setting as we come home. Lack of sunlight can play with our minds and moods.

As I watched that sun go down, my morale was shot, the day was spent and I had not accomplished what I had desired for myself. This day was no different than a similar day in September, but my sun was gone and despair crept in faster than I could dispel it. Our hymns have a fun “take” on Christ being our Sun of Righteousness, glimmering hope in our despair of sin. I gave an ECF lesson this year by taking the hymns of an entire weeks’ worth of Paul’s work of assembling liturgical propers to talk about how we Byzantine Christians sing our faith. The talk was on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept 14th) and how it was uncovered by the efforts of Saint Helena, mother of Saint Constantine the Great, via a vision. We sing of its prefiguration of Moses waving his staff in the form of

a cross over the Red Sea to open and close it, a saving grace to the Israelites, and also, how the Cross is the Tree of Life that would wipe away the effects of the accursed tree.

In the Divine Liturgy, the Troparion of the Nativity offers us a wonderful reflection in the darkness of winter. “Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge,” not of good and evil, but pure light and goodness. Christ is our revelation from our fallen state offering to us, like Moses, a path to the Promised Land, Heaven... for through it those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship you.” This is a nod to Greco-Roman “astro-latry,” but today we often put movie stars and sports stars on a pedestal that does not belong to them; we don’t call them gods, but through our focus and attention, we make them gods. But the Star attracted the Magi, Gentiles from a faraway land, to come and worship the newborn king. Jesus is already calling everyone the world-round to worship and enter into a relationship with Him, “... the Sun of Justice.” So many are the stars in the sky, but the Sun illuminates our

days, warding off darkness as the Son does for our souls. I enjoyed finding out that this word play of Sun and Son also works in Greek ἥλιος and υἱός: it doesn’t look the same but the sound is closer. “... and to know you, the Dawn from on High. Glory to you, O Lord!”

Philadelphia at its peak sees 15 hours per day of daylight in the summer but only 9.5 hours during the time of the Philip’s Fast. Fasting is not just our way of imitating Jesus’ 40 days in the desert as sometimes explained at Great Lent, but a way to increase a void within us, to enter into our temporal need to allow Christ to fill it with spiritual goodness. Many writers take to the analogy of a God-sized hole in us, one that we try to fill with entertainment, food, an extra hour’s snooze, or hobbies, but only God can fill this hole. Just as we don’t notice the sun retreating until it is mostly gone, we fast to reinvigorate our spiritual lives in Christ. As our days grow shorter, let us reflect on the coming Light, that which we profess is Light from Light, the Light that brings Salvation, the Light that was born unto us. Glory to Jesus Christ! **ECL**

### WHEN TRAVELING TO THE SOUTH THIS WINTER PLEASE VISIT OUR CHURCHES

<p><b>All Saints</b> 10291 Bayshore Road North Fort Meyers, FL 33917 1-239-543-6363</p>	<p><b>Epiphany of Our Lord</b> 2030 Old Alabama Road Roswell, GA 30076 1-770-993-0973</p>	<p><b>Holy Dormition</b> 17 Buckskin Lane Ormond Beach FL 32174 1-386-677-8704</p>	<p>Coconut Creek, FL 33073 1-954-429-0056</p>
<p><b>Saint Anne</b> 7120 Massachusetts Ave. New Port Richey, FL 34653 1-727-849-1190</p>	<p><b>Saint Basil the Great</b> 1475 N.E. 199th Street Miami, FL 33179-5162 1-305-651-0991</p>	<p><b>Saints Cyril and Methodius</b> 1002 Bahama Avenue Fort Pierce, FL 34982 1-772-595-1021</p>	<p><b>Saint Nicholas of Myra</b> 5135 Sand Lake Road Orlando, FL 32819 1-407-351-0133</p>
		<p><b>Our Lady of the Sign</b> 7311 Lyons Road</p>	<p><b>Saint Therese</b> 4265 13th Avenue North Saint Petersburg, FL 33713 1-727-323-4022</p>

## UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS

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### DECEMBER

- 6 Our Holy Father Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra  
*Solemn Holy Day*
- 8 Maternity of the Holy Anna (Immaculate Conception)  
*Solemn Holy Day\* Chancery closed*
- 17 Sunday of the Holy Forefathers  
*Second Sunday before Christmas*
- 24 Sunday of the Holy Fathers  
*Sunday before Christmas  
Vigil of Christmas*
- 25 The Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, According to the Flesh  
*Holy Day of Obligation\* Chancery closed  
Christ is born! Glorify Him!*

- 26 Synaxis of the Virgin Theotokos  
*Solemn Holy Day\* Chancery closed*
- 27 Holy Great Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen  
*Simple Holy Day*

### JANUARY

- 1 Circumcision of Our Lord  
Our Holy Father Basil the Great  
*Solemn Holy Day\* Chancery closed  
Happy New Year!*

### JULY

- 5-8 Byzantine Youth Rally  
*Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, PA*

### AUGUST

- 4-8 Altar Server Camp  
*Carpathian Village, Canadensis, PA*